Certain delightful English Towns

W. D. Howells

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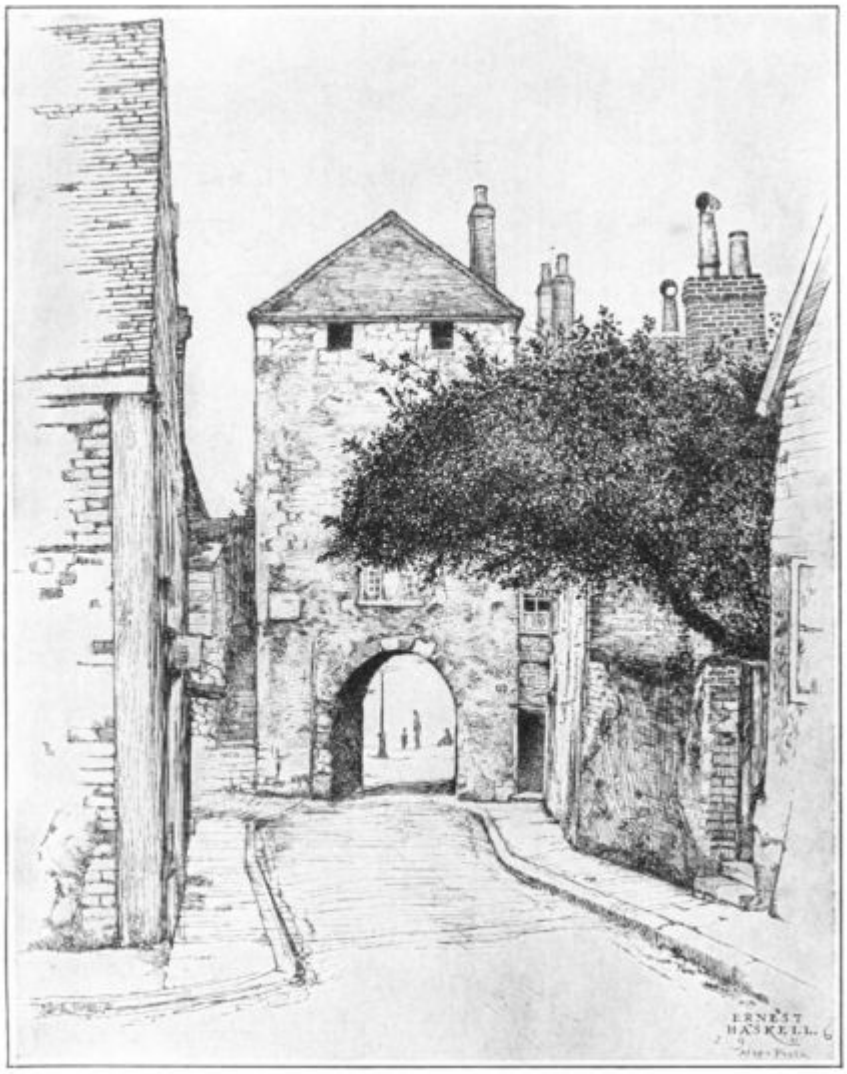

WESTGATE, SOUTHAMPTON

CERTAIN DELIGHTFUL ENGLISH TOWNS

WITH GLIMPSES OF THE PLEASANT COUNTRY BETWEEN

W. D. H O W E L L S

ILLUSTRATED

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CERTAIN DELIGHTFUL ENGLISH TOWNS

CERTAIN DELIGHTFUL ENGLISH TOWNS

I

THE LANDING OF A PILGRIM AT PLYMOUTH

NO American, complexly speaking, finds himself in England for the first time, unless he is one of those many Americans who are not of English extraction. It is probable, rather, that on his arrival, if he has not yet visited the country, he has that sense of having been there before which a simpler psychology than ours used to make much of without making anything of. His English ancestors who really were once there stir within him, and his American forefathers, who were nourished on the history and literature of England, and were therefore intellectually English, join forces in creating an English consciousness in him. Together, they make it very difficult for him to continue a new-comer, and it may be that only on the fourth or fifth coming shall the illusion wear away and he find himself a stranger in a strange land. But by that time custom may have done its misleading work, and he may be as much as ever the prey of his first impressions. I am sure that some such result in me will evince itself to the reader in what I shall have to say of my brief stay with the English foster-mother of our American Plymouth; and I hope he will not think it altogether to be regretted.

My first impressions of England, after a fourth or fifth visit, began even before I landed in Plymouth, for I decided that there was something very national in the behavior of a young Englishman who, as we neared his native shores, varied from day to day, almost from hour to hour, in his doubt whether a cap or a derby hat was the right wear for a passenger about landing. He seemed also perplexed whether he should or should not speak to some of his fellow-passengers in the safety of parting, but having ventured, seemed to like it. On the tender which took us from the steamer to the dock I fancied another type in the Englishman whom I asked which was the best hotel in Plymouth. At first he would not commit himself; then his humanity began to work in him, and he expressed a preference, and abruptly left me. He returned directly to give the reasons for his preference,

and to excuse them, and again he left me. A second time he came back, with his conscience fully roused, and conjured me not to think of going elsewhere.

I thought that charming, and I afterwards found the hotel excellent, as I found nearly all the hotels in England. I found everything delightful on the way to it, inclusive of the cabman's overcharge, which brought the extortion to a full third of the just fare of a New York cabman. I do not include the weather, which was hesitating a bitter little rain, but I do include the behavior of the customs officer, who would do not more than touch, with averted eyes, the contents of the single piece of baggage which he had me open. When it came to paying the two hand-cart men three shillings for bringing up the trunks, which it would have cost me three dollars to transport from the steamer to a hotel at home, I did not see why I should not save money for the rest of my life by becoming naturalized in England, and making it my home, unless it was because it takes so long to become naturalized there that I might not live to economize much.

It was with a pleasure much more distinct than any subliminal intimation that I saw again the office-ladies in our hotel. Personally, they were young strangers, but officially they were old friends, and quite as I had seen them first forty years ago, or last a brief seven; only once they wore bangs or fringes over their bright, unintelligent eyes, and now they wore Mamie loops. But they were, as always, very neatly and prettily dressed, and they had the well-remembered difficulty of functionally differencing themselves to the traveller's needs, so that which he should ask for a room and which for letters and which for a candle and which for his bill, remains a doubt to the end. From time to time with an exchange of puzzled glances, they unite in begging him to ask the head porter, please, for whatever it is he wants to know. They all seem of equal authority, but suddenly and quite casually the real superior appears among them. She is the manageress, and I never saw a manager at an English hotel except once, and that was in Wales. But the English theory of hotel-keeping seems to be house-keeping enlarged; a manageress is therefore more logical than a manager, and practically the excellence of English hotels attests that a manager could not be more efficient.

One of the young office-ladies, you never can know which it will be, gives you a little disk of pasteboard with the number and sometimes the price of your room on it, but the key is an after-thought of your own. You apply for it on going down to dinner, but in nearly all provincial hotels it is safe to leave your door unlocked. At any rate I did so with impunity. This was all new to me, but a greater novelty which greeted us was the table d'hôte, which has nearly everywhere in England replaced the old-time dinner off the joint. You may still have that if you will, but not quite on the old imperative terms. The joint is now the roast from the table d'hôte, and you can take it with soup and vegetables and a sweet. But if you have become wonted to the superabundance of a German steamer you will not find all the courses too many for you, and you will find them very good. At least you will at first: what is it that does not pall at last? Let it be magnanimously owned at the outset then, while one has the heart, that the cooking of any English hotel is better than that of any American hotel of the same grade. At Plymouth, that first night, everything in meats and sweets, though simple, was excellent; in vegetables there were green things with no hint of the can in them, but fresh from the southerner parts of neighboring France. As yet the protean forms of the cabbage family were not so insistent as afterwards.

Though we dined in an air so cold that we vainly tried to warm our fingers on the bottoms of our plates, we saw, between intervening heads and shoulders, a fire burning blithely in a grate at the farther side of the room. It was cold there in the dining-room, but after we got into the reading-room, we thought of it as having been warm, and we hurried out for a walk under the English moon which we found diffusing a mildness over the promenade on the Hoe, in which the statue of Sir Francis Drake fairly basked on its pedestal. The old

“THE PROMENADE ... A PROMONTORY PUSHED WELL OUT INTO THE SOUND”

sea-dog had the air of having lifted himself from the game of bowls in which the approach of the Spanish Armada had surprised him, and he must have already arrived at that philosophy which we reached so much later. In England it is chiefly inclement in-doors, but even out-doors it is well to temper the air with as vigorous exercise as time and occasion will allow you to take. Another monument, less personally a record of the Armada, balanced that of Drake at the farther end of the Hoe, and on top of this we saw Britannia leading out her lion for a walk: lions become so dyspeptic if kept housed, and not allowed to stretch their legs in the open air. We had no lion to lead out; and there was no chance for us at bowls on the Hoe that night, but we walked swiftly to and fro on the promenade and began at once to choose among the mansions looking seawards over it such as we meant to buy and live in always. They were all very handsome, in a reserved, quiet sort; but we had no hesitation in fixing on one with a balcony glassed in, so that we could see the sea and shore in all weathers; and I hope we shall not incommode the actual occupants.

The truth is we were flown with the beauty of the scene, which we afterwards found as great by day as by night. The promenade, which may

have other reasons for calling itself as it does besides being shaped like the blade of a hoe, is a promontory pushed well out into the sound, with many islands and peninsulas clustered before it, or jutting towards it and forming a safe roadstead for shipping of all types. Plymouth is not a chief naval station of Great Britain without the presence of war-ships in its harbor; and among the peaceful craft at anchor with their riding-lights showing in the deeps of the sea and air one could distinguish the huge kraken shapes of modern cruisers and destroyers, and what not. But like the embattled figures of the marine and land-going soldiery, flirting on the benches of the promenade with females as fearless as themselves, or jauntily strolling up and down under the moon, the ships tended to an effect of subjective peacefulness, as if invented merely for the pleasure of the appreciative stranger. We were, at any rate, very glad of them, and appreciated the municipal efforts in our behalf as gratefully as the imperial fortifications of the harbor. It must be confessed at once, if I am ever to claim any American superiority in these "trivial, fond records," which I shall never be able to help making comparative, that in what is done by the public for the public, we are hardly in the same running with England. It is only when we reflect upon our greater municipal virtue, and consider how the economies of our civic servants in the matter of beauty enable them to spend the more in good works, that we can lift up our heads and look down on what England has everywhere wrought for the people in such unspiritual things as parks and gardens, and terraces and promenades and statues. I could have wished that first evening, before I committed myself to any wrong impression or association, that I had known something more, or even anything at all, of the history of Plymouth. But I did not even know that from the Hoe, and possibly the very spot where I stood, the brave Trojan Cirenæus hurled the giant Goemagot into the sea. I was quite as far from remembering any facts of the British civilization which has always flourished so splendidly in the fancy of the native bards, and which has mingled its relics with those of the Roman, not only in the neighborhood of Plymouth, but all over England. As for the facts that Plymouth had been harried throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by the incursions of the French; that it was the foremost English port in the time of Elizabeth; that Drake sailed from it in 1585 to bring back the remnant of Raleigh's colony from Virginia; that one hundred and twenty-seven English ships waited in its waters to meet the Spanish

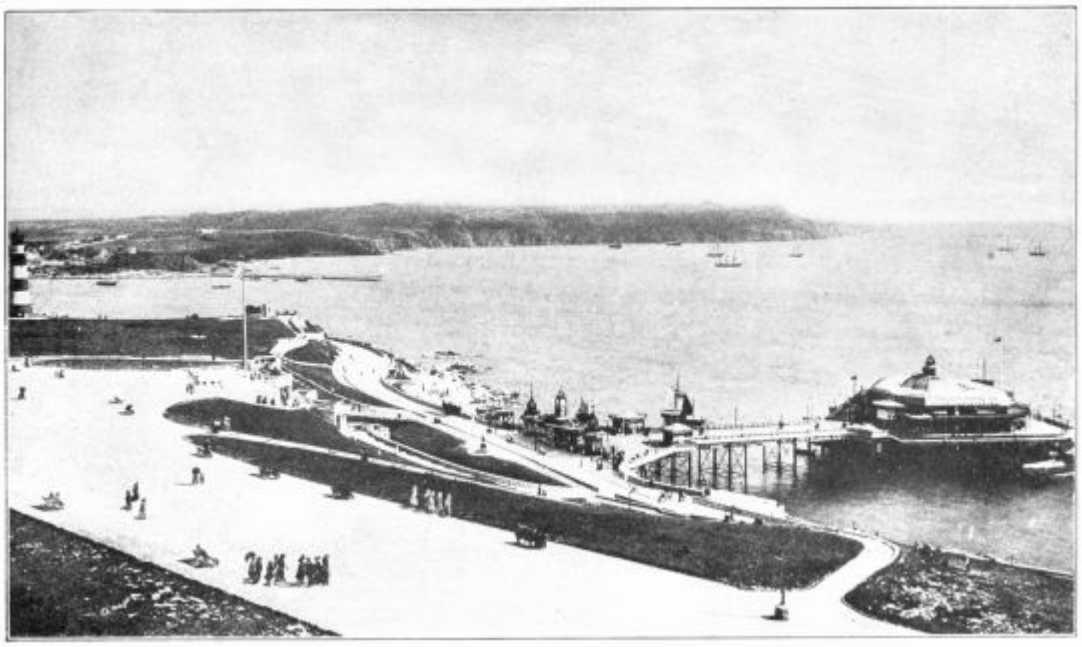
Armada; that it stood alone in the West of England for the Parliament in the Civil War; that Charles II. had signified his displeasure with it for this by building to overawe it the entirely useless fortress in the harbor; and that it was the first town to declare for William of Orange when he landed to urge the flight of the last Stuart: I do not suppose there is any half-educated school-boy but has the facts more about him than I had that first night in Plymouth when I might have found them so serviceable. I could only have matched him in my certainty that this was the Plymouth from which the *Mayflower* sailed to find, or to found, another Plymouth in the New World; but he could easily have alleged more proofs of our common conviction than I.

At sunset, which they have in Plymouth appropriately late for the spring season and the high latitude, there had been a splotch of red about six feet square in the watery west, promising the fine weather which the morning brought. It also brought more red coats and swagger-sticks in company with the large hats and glaring costumes which had not had so good a chance the night before, whether we saw them in our walk on the Hoe, or met them in the ramble through the town into which we prolonged it. Through the still Sunday morning air there came a drumming and bugling of religious note from the neighboring fortifications, and while we listened, a general officer, or perhaps only a colonel, very tight in the gold and scarlet of his uniform, passed across the Hoe, like a pillar of flame, on his way to church. But I do not know that he was a finer bit of color, after all, than the jet-black cat with a vivid red ribbon at her neck, which had chosen to crouch on the ivied stone-wall across the way from our hotel, in just the spot where the sun fell earliest and would lie longest. There was more ivy than sun in Plymouth, that is the truth, and this cat probably knew what she was about. There was ivy, ivy everywhere, and there were subtropical growths of laurel and oleander and the like, which made a pleasant confusion of earlier Italy and later Bermuda in the brain, and yet was so characteristic of that constantly self-contradictory England.

Many things of it that I had known in flying and poising visits during fifty years of the past began to steal back into my consciousness. The nine-o'clock breakfast, of sole and eggs and bacon, and heavy bread and washy coffee, was of the same moral texture as the sabbatical silence in the pale

sunny air, which now I remembered so well, with some weird question whether I was not all the while in Quebec, instead of Plymouth, and the strong conviction at the same time that this was the absurdest of obsessions. The Hoe was not Durham Terrace, but it looked down on a sort of Lower Town from a height almost as great, and the spread of the harbor, with a little help, recalled the confluence of the St. Lawrence and the St. Charles. But the rows of small houses that sent up the smoke of their chimney-pots were of yellow brick, not of wood or gray stone, and their red roofs were tiled in dull weather-worn tints, and not brilliantly tinned.

Why, I wonder, do we feel such a pleasure in finding different things alike? It is rather stupid, but we are always trying to do it and fatiguing ourselves with the



LOOKING DOWN FROM THE HOE

sterile effect. At Plymouth there was so much to remind me of so much else that it was a relief to be pretty promptly confronted on the Hoe with something so positive, so absolute as a Bath chair, which at the worst could only remind me of something in literature. A stubby old man was tugging it over the ground slowly, as if through a chapter of Dickens; and a wrathful-looking invalid lady sat within, just as if she had got into it from a book. There was little to recall anything else in the men strolling about in caps and knickerbockers, with short pipes in their mouths, or, equally with short

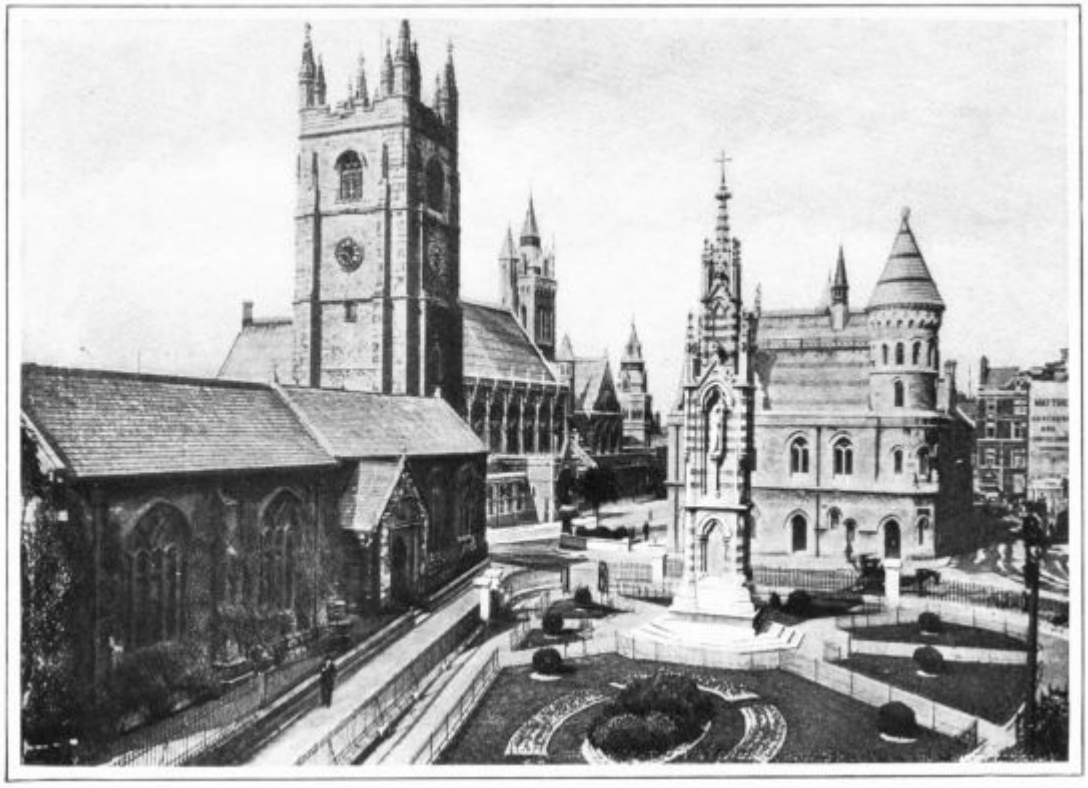
pipes, wheeling back and forth on bicycles. There were a few people in top-hats, who had unmistakably the air of having got them out for Sunday; though why every one did not wear them every day in the week was the question when we presently saw a shop-window full of them at three and sixpence apiece.

This was when we had gone down into the town from the Hoe, and found its quiet streets of an exquisite Sunday neatness. They were quite empty, except for very washed-up-looking worshippers going to church, among whom a file of extremely little boys and girls, kept in line and kept moving by a black-gowned church-sister, gave us, with their tender pink cheeks and their tender blue eyes, our first delight in the wonderful West-of-England complexion. The trams do not begin running in any provincial town till afternoon on Sundays, and the loud-rattling milk-carts, bearing bright brass-topped cans as big as the ponies that drew them, seemed the only vehicles abroad. The only shops open were those for the sale of butter and eggs and fruit and flowers; but these necessaries and luxuries abounded in many windows and doorways, especially the flowers, which had already begun to arrive everywhere by tons from the Channel Islands, though it was then so early in March. It is not the least of the advantages which England enjoys that she has her Florida at her door; she has but to put out her hand and it is heaped with flowers and fruits from the Scilly Isles, while the spring is coming slowly up our way at home by fast-freight, through Georgia and the Carolinas and Virginia.

So many things were strange to me that I might have thought I had never been in Plymouth before, and so many things familiar that I might have fancied I had always been there. The long unimpressive stretches of little shops might have been in any second-class American city, which would likewise have shown the same exceptional number of large department stores. What it could not have shown were the well-kept streets, the reverently guarded heritage from the past in here and there a bit of antique architecture amid the prosperous newness; the presence of lingering state in the mansions peering over their high garden wall, or standing withdrawn from the thoroughfares in the quiet of wooded crescents or circles.

I doubt if any American city, great or small, has the same number of birds, dear to poetry, singing in early March, as Plymouth has. That

morning as we walked in the town, and that afternoon as we rode on our tram-top into the country, they started from a thousand lovely lines of verse, finches and real larks, and real robins, and many a golden-billed blackbird, and piped us on our way. Overhead, in the veiled sun, circled and swam the ever-cawing rooks, as they jarred in the anxieties of the nesting then urgent with them. They were no better than our birds; I will never own such a recreant thing. If I do not quite prefer a crow to a rook, I am free to say that one oriole or redbird or



A GROUP OF PUBLIC EDIFICES, MODERN PLYMOUTH

hermit-thrush is worth all the English birds that ever sang. Only, the English birds sing with greater authority, and find an echo in the mysterious depths of our ancestral past where they and we were compatriots.

Viewed from the far vantage of some rising ground the three towns of Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport, which have grown together to form one Plymouth, stretch away from the sea in huge long ridges thickly serried with the gables, and bristling with the chimney-pots of their lines of houses. They probably look denselier built than they are through the exaggerative dimness of the air which lends bulk to the features of every distant prospect

in England; but for my pleasure I would not have had the houses set any closer than they were on the winding, sloping line of the tram we had taken after luncheon. It was bearing us with a leisurely gait, inconceivable of an American trolley, but quite swiftly enough, towards any point in the country it chose; and after it had carried us through rows and rows of small, low, gray stone cottages, each with its pretty bit of garden at its feet, it bore us on where their strict contiguity ceased in detached villas, and let us have time to look into the depths of their encompassing evergreenery, their ivy, their laurel, their hedges of holly, all shining with a pleasant lustre. So we came out into the familiar provisionality of half-built house-lots, and at last into the open country quite beyond the town, with green market-gardens, and brown ploughed fields, patching the sides of the gentle knolls, laced with white winding roads, that lost their heads in the haze of the horizon, and with woodlands calling themselves "Private," and hiding the way to stately mansions withdrawn from the commonness of our course.

When the tram stopped we got down, with the other civilian persons of our tram-top company, and with the soldiers and the girls who formed their escort, and hurried beyond hearing of the loud-cackling, hard-mouthed, red-cheeked, black-eyed young woman, whom one sees everywhere in some form, and in whose English version I saw so many an American original that I was humbled with the doubt whether she might not have come out on the *Mayflower*. There were many other people more inoffensive coming and going, or stretching themselves on the damp new grass in a defiance of the national rheumatism which does not save them from it. At that time, though, I did not know but it might, and I enjoyed the picturesqueness of their temerity with an untroubled mind. I noted merely the kind looks which prevail in English faces of the commoner sort, and I thought the men better and the women worse dressed than Americans of the same order. Then, after I had realized the prevalence of much the same farming tradition as our own, in the spreading fields, and holloed my fancy up and away over the narrow lines climbing between them to the sky, there was nothing left to do but to go to town by a different tram-line from that which brought us. The man I asked for help in this bold enterprise had a face above the ordinary in a sort of quickness, and he seemed to find something unusual in my speech. He answered civilly and fully, as all the English do when you

ask them a civil question, without the friendly irony with which Americans often like to visit the inquiring stranger. Then he stopped short, checking the little boy he was leading by the hand, and said, abruptly, "You're not English!"

"No," I said, "we're Americans," and I added, "From New York."

"Ah, from New York!" he said, with a visible rush of interest in the fact that it never afterwards brought to another English face, so far as I could see. "From New York! Americans!" and he stood clutching the hand of the little boy, while I felt myself in the presence of a tacit drama, which I have not yet been able to render explicit. Sometimes I have thought it not well to try. It might have been the memory of sad experiences which had left a rancor for our country in his heart, and held him in doubt whether he might not fitly wreak it upon the first chance American he met. Again I fancied it might have been the stirring of some long-deferred hope, some defeated ambition, or the rapture of some ideal of us which had never had the opportunity to disappoint itself. I only know that he looked like a man above his class: an unhappy man anywhere, and probably in England most unhappy. I stupidly hurried on, and after some movement to follow me he let me leave him behind. Whoever he was or whatever his emotion, I hope he was worthy of the sympathy which here offers itself too late. If I could I would perhaps go back to him, and tell him that if he sailed for New York he might never find the America of his vision, but only a hard workaday world like the one he was leaving, where he might be differently circumstanced, but not differently conditioned. I dare say he would not believe me; I am not sure that I should believe myself, though I might well be speaking the truth.

The next day being Monday, it was quite fit that we should go to work with the rest of the world in Plymouth, and we set diligently about the business of looking up such traces of the Pilgrim Fathers as still exist in the town which was so kind to them in their great need of kindness. I will not pretend that the pathetic story recurred to me in full circumstance during our search for the exact place from which the *Mayflower* last sailed, when after she had come with her sister ship, the *Speedwell*, from Holland to Southampton, and then started on the voyage to America, she had been forced by the unseaworthiness of the *Speedwell* to put back as far as

Plymouth. Mr. W. E. Griffin, in his very agreeable and careful little book, *The Pilgrims in their Three Homes*, is able only to define the period of their stay there as "some time," but he tells us that the disappointed voyagers "were treated very kindly by the people of the Free Church, forming what is now the Grange Street Chapel, the *Mayflower* meanwhile lying off the Barbican." The weather was good while the two ships stayed, but when they sailed again the *Speedwell* returned to London with some twenty of the homesick or heart-sick, while all her other people stowed themselves with their belongings in the little *Mayflower* as best they could, and she once more put out to sea: a prison where the brutal shipmen were their jailers; a lazar where the seeds of death were planted in many that were soon to fill the graves secreted under the snow of the savage shore they were seeking.

I believe it was the visiting association of American librarians who caused, a few years ago, a flag-stone in the pavement of the quay where the *Mayflower* lay to be inscribed with her name and the date 1620, as well as a more explicit tablet to be let into the adjacent parapet. Perhaps our driver could have found these records for us, or we could have found them for ourselves, but I am all the same grateful for the good offices of several unoccupied spectators, especially a friendly matron who had disposed of her morning's stock of fish, and had now the leisure for indulging an interest in our search. She constituted herself the tutelary spirit of the neighborhood, which smelt of immemorial catches of fish, both from the adjacent market and from the lumpish, quaintly rigged craft crowding one another in the docks and composing in an insurpassable picturesqueness; and she directed us wherever we wanted to go.

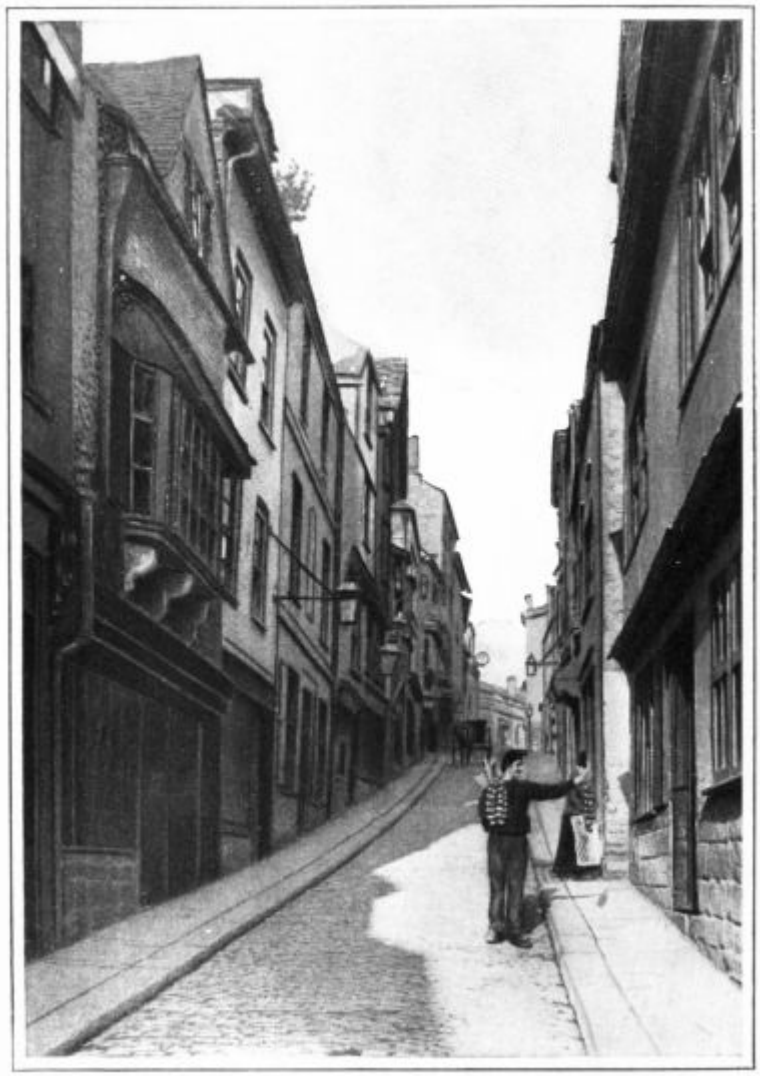
The barbican of the citadel from which the *Mayflower* sailed, before there was either citadel or barbican, is no great remove from the Hoe, which may justly enough boast itself "the first promenade in England," but it is quite in another world: a seventeenth-century world of narrow streets crooking up hill and down, and overhung by the little bulging houses which the pilgrims must have seen as they came and went on their affairs with the ship, scarcely bigger than the fishing-boats now nosing at the quay where she then lay. Whatever it was in the *Mayflower's* time, it is not a proud neighborhood in ours, nor has it any reason to be proud; for it is apparently what is indefinitely called a purlieu. At one point where I climbed a steep

thoroughfare to look at what no doubt unwarrantably professed to be a remnant of "Cromwell's castle," I met an elderly man, who was apparently looking up truant school-children, and who said, quite without prompting, "This used to be 'ell upon earth," with something in his tone implying that it might still be a little like it. We could not get into the ruin, the solitary who tenanted its one habitable room being away on a visit, as a neighbor put her head out of a window opposite to tell us.

Probably the traveller who wishes for a just impression of the Plymouth of 1620 will get it more reliably somewhat away from the immediate scene of the *Mayflower's* departure. There are old houses abundantly overhanging their first stories, after the seventeenth-century fashion, in the pleasanter streets which keep aloof from the water. If he is more bent upon a sense of modern Plymouth he will do best to visit her group of public edifices, the Guild Hall, the Law Courts, the Library, and see all that I did not see of the vast shipping which constitutes her one of the greatest English ports, and the government works which magnify her importance among the naval stations of the world.

It is always best to leave something for a later comer, and I may seem almost to have left too much by any one whom I shall have inspired to linger in Plymouth long enough after landing to get his sea-legs off. But really I was continually finding the most charming things. The very business aspects of Plymouth had their charm. I saw a great prosperity around me, but there was no sense of the hustle which is supposed alone to create prosperity with us. I dare say that below the unruffled surface of life there is sordid turmoil enough, but I did not perceive it, and I prefer still to think of Plymouth as the first of the many places in England where the home-wearied American might spend his last days in the repose of a peaceful exile, with all the comforts, which only much money can buy with us, cheaply about him. He could live like a gentleman in Plymouth for about half what the same state would cost him in his own air, unless he went as far inland as the inexpensive Middle West, and then it would be dearer in as large a town. He could keep his republican self-respect in his agreeable banishment by remembering how Plymouth had held for the Commonwealth in Cromwell's time, and the very name of the place would bring him near to the heroic Plymouth on the other shore of the Atlantic. I

speak from experience, for even in my two days' stay with the mother Plymouth I had now and then a vision of the daughter Plymouth, on the elm-shaded slopes of



OLD HOUSES ALOOF FROM THE WATER

her landlocked bay, filially the subordinate in numbers and riches with which she began her alien life. Still of wood, as the English Plymouth is still of stone, and newer by a thousand years, she has an antiquity of her own precious to Americans, and a gentle picturesqueness which I found endearing when I first saw her in the later eighteen-sixties, and which I now recalled as worthy of her lineage. Perhaps it was because I had always thought the younger Plymouth would be a kind dwelling-place that I fancied a potential hospitality in the elder. At any rate I thought it well, while I was on the ground, to choose a good many eligible residences, not only among the proud mansions overlooking the Hoe, but in some of the streets whose gentility had decayed, but which were still keeping up

appearances in their fine roomy old houses, or again in the newer and simpler suburban avenues, where I thought I could be content in one of the pretty stone cottages costing me forty pounds a year, with my holly hedge before me belting in a little garden of all but perennial bloom.

We had chanced upon weather that we might easily have mistaken for climate. There was the lustre of soft sunshine in it, and there was the song of birds in the wooded and gardened pleasaunces which opened in several directions about the Hoe, and seemed to follow the vagarious lines of ancient fortifications. Whether weather or climate, it could not have been more suitable for the excursion we planned our last afternoon across that stretch of water which separates Plymouth from the seat of the lords who have their title from the great estate. The mansion is not one of the noble houses which are open to the public in England, and even to get into the grounds you must have leave from the manor-house. This will not quite answer the raw American's expectation of a manor-house; it looks more like a kind of office in a Plymouth street; but if you get from it as guide a veteran of the navy with an agreeable cast in his eye, and an effect of involuntary humor in his rusty voice, you have not really so much to complain of. In our own case the veteran's intelligence seemed limited to delivering us over at gates to gardeners and the like, who gave us back to his keeping after the just recognition of their vested interests, and then left him to walk us unsparingly over the whole place, which had grown as large at least as some of our smaller States, say Connecticut or New Jersey, by the time we had compassed it. We imagined afterwards that he might have led us a long way about, not from stupidity, but from a sardonic amusement in our protests; and we were sure he knew that the bird he called a nightingale was no nightingale. It was as if he had said to himself, on our asking if there were none there, "Well, if they want a nightingale, let 'em have it," and had chosen the first songster we heard. There were already songsters enough in the trees about to choose any sort from, for we were now in Cornwall, and the spring is very early in Cornwall. There were primroses growing at the roots of the trees in the park; in the garden closes were bamboos and palms, and rhododendrons in bloom, with cork-trees and ilexes, springing from the soaked earth which the sun damply shining from the spongy heavens could never have dried. The confusion of the tropical

and temperate zones in this air, which was that of neither or both, was somewhat heightened by the first we saw of those cedars of Lebanon which so abound in England that you can hardly imagine any left on Lebanon. It was a dark, spreading tree, with a biblical seriousness and an oriental poetry of aspect, under whose low shelving branches one might think to find the scripturalized childhood of our race. The gardens, whether English or French or Italian, appealed to a more sophisticated consciousness; but it had all a dim, blurred fascination which words refuse to impart, and the rooks, wheeling in their aërial orbits overhead, seemed to deepen the spell with the monotony of their mystical incantations. There were woodland spaces which had the democratic friendliness of American woods, as if not knowing themselves part of a nobleman's estate, and which gave the foot a home welcome with the bedding of their fallen leaves. But the rabbits which had everywhere broken the close mossy turf with their burrowing and thrown out the red soil over the grass, must have been consciously a part of the English order. As for the deer, lying in herds, or posing statuesquely against the sky on some stretch of summit, they were as absolutely a part of it as if they had been in the peerage. A flag floated over the Elizabethan mansion of gray stone (rained a fine greenish in the long succession of springs and falls), to intimate that the family was at home, and invite the public to respect its privacy by keeping away from the grounds next about it; and in the impersonal touch of exclusion which could be so impersonally accepted, the sense of certain English things was perfected. You read of them all your life, till you imagine them things of actual experience, but when you come face to face with them you perceive that till then they have been as unreal as anything else in the romances where you frequented them, and that you have not known their true quality and significance. In fiction they stood for a state as gracious as it was splendid, and welcomed the reader to an equal share in it; but in fact they imply the robust survival, in commercial and industrial times, of a feudal condition so wholly obsolete in its alien admirer's experience that none of the imitations of it which he has seen at home suggest it more than by a picturesqueness almost as provisional as that of the theatre.

What the alien has to confess in its presence is that it is an essential part of a system which seems to work, and in the simpler terms, to work

admirably; so that if he has a heart to which the ideal of human equality is dear, it must shrink with certain withering doubts as he looks on the lovely landscapes everywhere in which those who till the fields and keep the woods have no ownership, in severalty or in common. He must remember how persistently and recurrently this has been the history of mankind, how, while democracies and republics have come and gone, patrician and plebeian, sovereign and subject, have remained, or have returned after they had passed. If he is a pilgrim reverting from the new world to which the outgoing pilgrims sailed, there to open from the primeval woods a new heaven and a new earth, his dismay will not justly be for the persistence of the old forms which they left behind, but for the question whether these forms have not somehow fixed themselves as firmly and lastingly in his native as in his ancestral country. I do not say that any such anxieties spoiled the pleasure of my afternoon. I was perhaps expecting to see much more perfect instances of the kind, and I was probably postponing the psychological effect to these. It is a fault of travel that you are always looking forward to something more typical, and you neglect immediate examples because they offer themselves at the outset, or you reject them as only approximately representative to find that they are never afterwards surpassed. That was the case with our hotel, which was quite perfect in its way: a way rather new to England, I believe, and quite new to my knowledge of England.

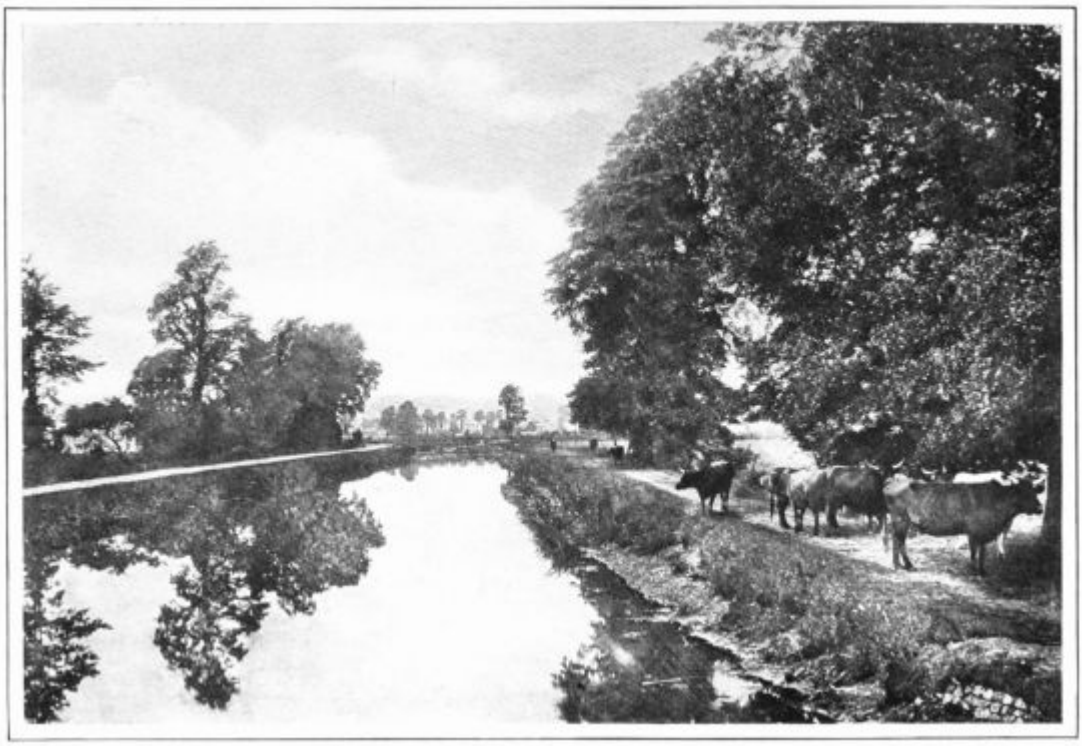
It is a sort of hotel where you can live for as short or as long a time as you will at an inclusive rate for the day or week, and always in greater comfort for less money than you can at home, except in the mere matter of warmth. Warm you cannot be in-doors, and why should not you go out-doors for warmth, when the subtropical growths in the well-kept garden, which never fails to enclose that kind of hotel, are flourishing in a temperature distinctly above freezing? They always had the long windows, that opened into the garden, ajar when we came into the reading-room after dinner, and the modest little fire in the grate veiled itself under a covering of cinders or coal-siftings, so that it was not certain that the first-comer who got the chair next to it was luckiest. Yet around this cold hearth the social ice was easily broken, and there bubbled up a better sort of friendly talk than always follows our diffidence in public places at home. Without

knowing it, or being able to realize it at that moment, we were confronted with a social condition which is becoming more and more general in England, where in winter even more than in summer people have the habit of leaving town for a longer or a shorter time, which they spend in a hotel like ours at Plymouth. There they meet in apparent fearlessness of the consequences of being more or less agreeable to one another, and then part as informally as they meet. But as yet we did not know that there was that sort of hotel or that we were in it, and we lost the earliest occasion of realizing a typical phase of recent English civilization.

II

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AT EXETER

THE weather, on the morning we left Plymouth, was at once cloudy and fair, and chilly and warm, as it can be only in England. It ended by cheering up, if not quite clearing up, and from time to time the sun shone so brightly into our railway carriage that we said it would have been absurd to supplement it with the hot-water foot-warmer which, in many trains, still embodies the English notion of car-heating. The sun shone even more brightly outside, and lay in patches much larger than our compartment floor on the varied surface of that lovely English country with which we rapturously acquainted and reacquainted ourselves, as the train bore us smoothly (but not quite so smoothly as an American train would have borne us) away from the sea and up towards the heart of the land. The trees, except the semitropical growths, were leafless yet, with no sign of budding; the grass was not so green as at Plymouth; but there were primroses (or cowslips: does it matter which?) in bloom along the railroad banks, and young lambs in the meadows where their elders nosed listlessly among the chopped turnips strewn over the turf. Whether it was in mere surfeit, or in an invincible distaste for turnips, or an instinctive repulsion from their frequent association at table, that the sheep everywhere showed this apathy, I cannot make so sure



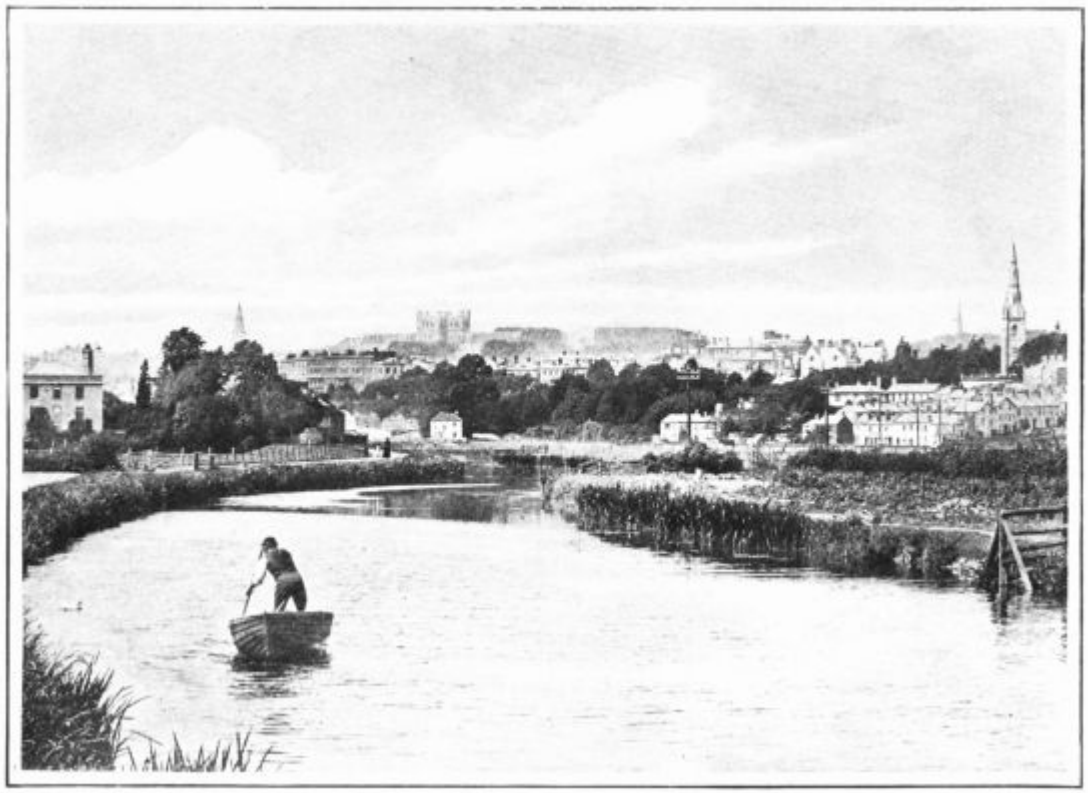
A BIT OF COUNTRY BETWEEN PLYMOUTH AND EXETER

as I can of such characteristic features of the landscape as the gray stone cottages with thatched roofs, and the gray stone villages with tiled roofs clustering about the knees of a venerable mother-church and then thinning off into the scattered cottages again.

As yet we were not fully sensible of the sparsity of the cottages; that is something which grows upon you in England, as the reasons for it become more a part of your knowledge. Then you realize why a far older country where the land is in a few hands must be far lonelier than ours, where each farmer owns his farm, and lives on it. Mile after mile you pass through carefully tilled fields with no sign of a human habitation, but at first your eyes and your thoughts are holden from the fact in a vision of things endeared by association from the earliest moment of your intellectual nonage. The primroses, if they are primroses and not cowslips, are a pale-yellow wash in the grass; the ivy is creeping over the banks and walls, and climbing the trees, and clothing their wintry nakedness; the hedge-rows, lifted on turf-covered foundations of stone, change the pattern of the web they weave over the prospect as your train passes; the rooks are drifting high or drifting low; the little streams loiter brimful through the meadows

steeped in perpetual rains; and all these material facts have a witchery from poetry and romance to transmute you to a common substance of tradition. The quick transition from the present to the past, from the industrial to the feudal, and back again as your train flies through the smoke of busy towns, and then suddenly skirts some nobleman's park where the herds of fallow deer lie motionless on the borders of the lawn sloping up to the stately mansion, is an effect of the magic that could nowhere else bring the tenth and twentieth centuries so bewilderingly together. At times, in the open, I seemed to be traversing certain pastoral regions of southern Ohio; at other times, when the woods grew close to the railroad track, I was following the borders of Beverly Farms on the Massachusetts shore, in either case recklessly irresponsible for the illusion, which if I had been in one place or the other I could have easily reversed, and so been back in England.

The run from Plymouth to Exeter is only an hour and a half, but in that short space we stopped four or five minutes at towns where I should have been glad to have stopped as many days if I had known what I lost by hurrying on. I do not know it yet, but I know that one loses so greatly in every sort of high interest at all the towns one does not stop at in England that one departs at last a ruined, a beggared man. As it was we could only avert our faces from the pane as we drew out of each tempting station, and sigh for the certainty of Exeter's claims upon us. There our first cathedral was waiting us, and there we knew, from the words which no guide-book fails to repeat, that we should find "a typical English city ... alike of Briton, Roman, and Englishman, the one great prize of the Christian Saxon, the city where Jupiter gave way to Christ, but where Christ never gave way to Wodin.... None other can trace up a life so unbroken to so remote a past." Whether, when we found it, we found it equal to the unique grandeur imputed to it, I prefer to escape saying by saying that the cathedral at Exeter is more than equal to any expectation you can form of it, even if it is not your first cathedral. A city of scarcely forty thousand inhabitants may well be forgiven if it cannot look an unbroken life from so remote a past as Exeter's.



“IN EXETER OUR FIRST CATHEDRAL WAS WAITING US”

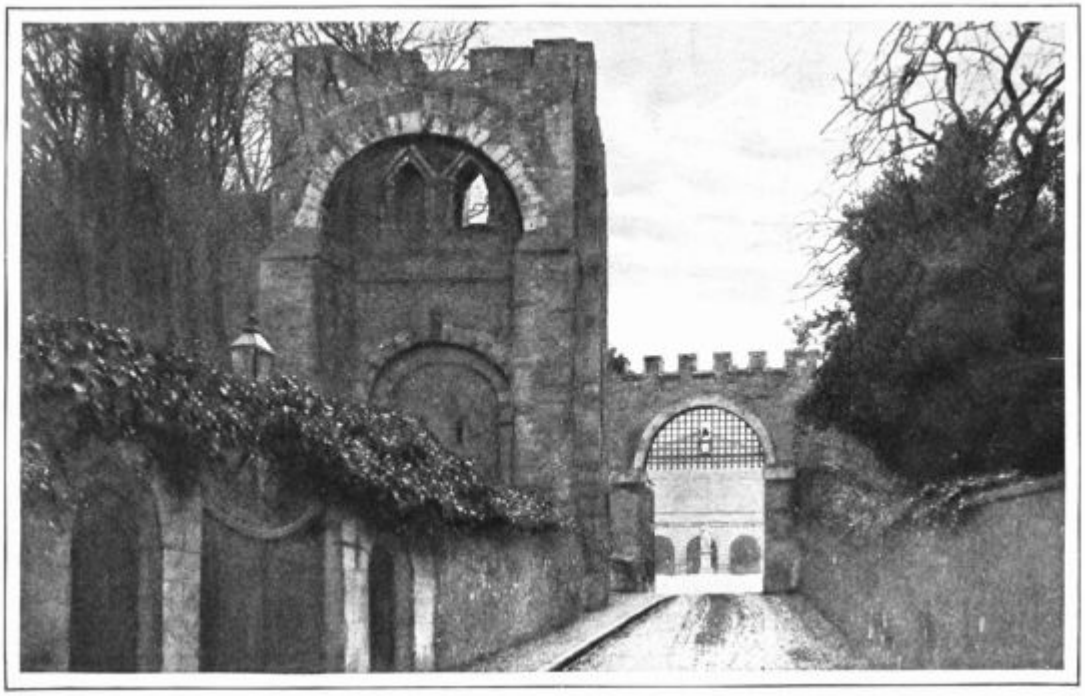
Chicago herself, with all her mythical millions, might not be able to do as much in the like case; when it comes to certain details I doubt if even New York would be equal to it.

I will not pretend that I was intimately acquainted with her history before I came to Exeter. I will frankly own that I did not drive up to the Butt of Malmsey in the hotel omnibus quite aware that the castle of Exeter was built on an old British earthwork; or that many coins, vases, and burial-urns dug up from such streets as I passed through prove the chief town of Devonshire to have been built on an important Roman station. To me it did not at once show its Romano-British origin in the central crossing of its principal streets at right angles; but the better-informed reader will recall without an effort that the place was never wholly deserted during the darkest hours of the Saxon conquest. The great Alfred drove the Danes out of it in 877, and fortified and beautified it, and Athelstan, when he came to Exeter in 926, discovered Briton and Saxon living there on terms of perfect amity and equality. Together they must have manned the walls in resisting the Northmen, and they probably united in surrendering the city to William

the Conqueror after a siege of eighteen days, which was long for an English town to hold out against him. He then built the castle of Rougemont, of which a substantial ruin yet remains for the pleasure of such travellers as do not find it closed for repairs; and the city held for Matilda in the wars of 1137, but it was finally taken by King Stephen. In 1469 it was for the Red Rose against the White when the houses of Lancaster and York disputed its possession, and for the Old Religion against the New in the time of Henry VIII.'s high-handed reforms, when the Devonshire and Cornish men fought for the ancient faith within its walls against his forces without. The pretender Perkin Warbeck (a beautiful name, I always think, like a bird-note, and worthy a truer prince) had vainly besieged it in 1549; and in the Civil War it was taken and retaken by King and Parliament. At some moment before these vicissitudes, Charles's hapless daughter Henrietta, who became Madame of France, was born in Exeter; and in Exeter likewise was born that General Monk who brought the Stuarts back after Cromwell's death.

The Butt of Malmsey had advertised itself as the only hotel in the cathedral close, and as we had stopped at Exeter for the cathedral's sake we fell a willing prey to the fanciful statement. There is of course no hotel in the cathedral close, but the Butt of Malmsey is so close to the cathedral that it may have unintentionally confused the words. At any rate, it stood facing the side of the beautiful pile and getting its noble Norman towers against a sky, which we would not have had other than a broken gray, above the tops of trees where one nesting rook the less would have been an incalculable loss. One of the rooms which the managers could give us looked on this lovely sight, and if the other looked into a dim court, why, all the rooms in a cathedral close, or close to a cathedral, cannot command views of it.

We had of course seen the cathedral almost before we saw the city in our approach, but now we felt that the time spent before studying it would be time lost and we made haste to the great west front. To the first glance it is all a soft gray blur of age-worn carving, in which no point or angle seems to have failed of the touch which has blent all the archaic sanctities and royalties of the glorious screen in a dim sumptuous harmony of figures and faces. Whatever I had sceptically read,



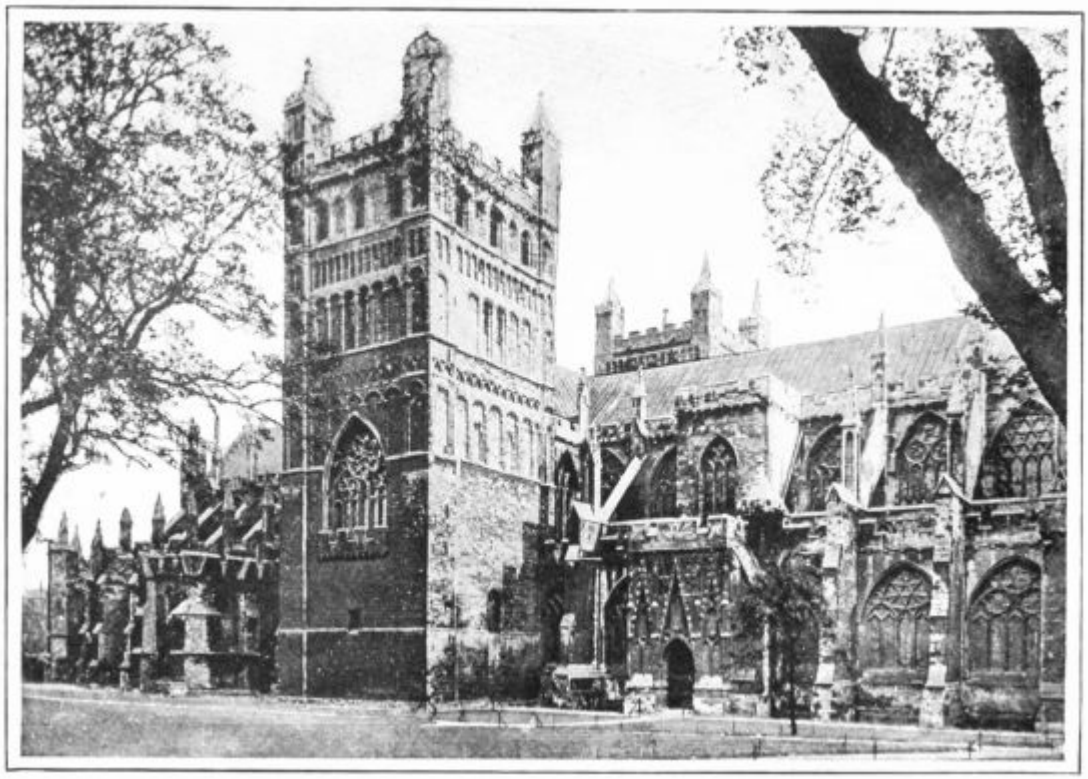
THE CASTLE OF ROUGEMONT

and yet more impatiently heard, of the beauty of English cathedrals was attested and approved far beyond cavil, and after that first glance I asked nothing but submissively to see more and more of their gracious splendor. No wise reader will expect me to say what were the sculptured facts before me or to make the hopeless endeavor to impart a sense of the whole structure in descriptions or admeasurements. Let him take any picture of it, and then imagine something of that form vastly old and dark, richly wrought over in the stone to the last effects of tender delicacy by the miracles of Gothic art. So let him suppose the edifice set among leafless elms, in which the tattered rooks'-nests swing blackening, on a spread of close greensward, under a low welkin, where thin clouds break and close in a pallid blue, and he will have as much of Exeter Cathedral as he can hope to have without going there to see for himself; it can never otherwise be brought to him in words of mine.

Neither, without standing in that presence or another of its kind, can he realize what the ages of faith were. Till then the phrase will remain a bit of decorative rhetoric, but then he will live a meaning out of it which will die only with him. He will feel, as well as know, how men built such temples in an absolute trust and hope now extinct, but without which they could never

have been built, and how they continued to grow, like living things, from the hearts rather than the hands of strongly believing men. So that of Exeter grew, while all through the tenth and eleventh centuries the monks of its immemorial beginning were flying from the heathen invasions, but still returning, till the Normans gave their monastery fixity in the twelfth century, and the long English succession of bishops maintained the cathedral in ever-increasing majesty till the rude touch of the Tudor stayed the work that had prospered under the Norman and Plantagenet and Lancastrian kings. If the age of faith shall extend itself to his perception, as he listens to the afternoon service in the taper-starred twilight, far back into the times before Christ, he may hear in the chanting and intoning the voice of the first articulate religions of the world. The sound of that imploring and beseeching, that wailing and sighing, which drifts out to him through the screen of the choir will come heavy with the pathos of the human abasing itself before the divine in whatever form men may have imagined God, and seeking the pity and the mercy of which Christianity was not the first to feel the need. Then, if he has a sense of the unbroken continuity of ceremonial, the essential unity of form, from Pagan to Roman and from Roman to Anglican, perhaps he will have more patience than he otherwise might with the fierce zeal of the fanatics who would at last away with all ceremonial and all form, and would stand in their naked souls before the eternal justice and make their appeal direct, and if need be, through their noses, to Him who desireth not the death of a sinner.

Unless the visitor to Exeter Cathedral can come into something of this patience, he will hardly tolerate the thought of the Commonwealth's-men who deemed that they were doing God's will when they built a brick wall through it, and listened on one side to an Independent chaplain, and on the other to a Presbyterian minister. It is said that they "had great quiet and comfort" in their worship on each side of their wall, which was of course taken down directly after the Restoration. For this no one can reasonably grieve; and one may of course rejoice that Cromwell's troopers did not stable



“THE CATHEDRAL ... A SOFT GRAY BLUR OF AGE-WORN CARVING”

their horses in Exeter Cathedral. They forbore to do so in few other old churches in England, but we did not know how to value fully its exemption from this profanation in our first cathedral. We took the fact with an ignorant thanklessness from our guide-book, and we acquiesced, with some surprise, in the lack of any such official as a verger to instruct us in the unharmed monuments. The printed instructions which we received from the placard overhanging a box at the gate to the choir did not go beyond the elementary precept that we were each to put sixpence in it; after that we were left free to look about for ourselves, and we made the round of the tombs and altars unattended.

The disappointment which awaits one in English churches, if one’s earlier experience of churches has been in Latin countries, is of course from the want of pictures. Color there is and enough in the stained windows which Cromwell’s men sometimes spared, but the stained windows in Exeter are said to be indifferent good. In compensation for this, there are traces of the frescoing which once covered the walls, and which Cromwell’s men neglected to whitewash. They also heedlessly left unspoiled that wonderful Minstrel’s Gallery stretching across the front of the choir, with

its fourteen tuneful angels playing forever on as many sculptured instruments of stone. For the rest the monuments are of the funereal cast to which the devout fancy is pretty much confined in all sacred edifices. There is abundance of bishops lying on their tombs, with their features worn away in the exposure from which those of many crusaders have been kept by their stone visors. But what was most expressive of the past, which both bishops and crusaders reported so imperfectly, was the later portrait statuary, oftenest of Elizabethan ladies and their lords, painted in the colors of life and fashion, with their ruffs and farthingales worn as they were when they put them off, to rest in the tombs on which their effigies lie. It is not easy to render the sense of a certain consciousness which seemed to deepen in these, as the twilight of the closing day deepened round them in the windows and arches. If they were waiting to hold converse after the night had fallen, one would hardly have cared to stay for a share in their sixteenth-century gossip, and I could understand the feeling of the two dear old ladies who made anxiously up to us at one point of our common progress, and asked us if we thought there was any danger of being locked in. I did my poor best to reassure them, and they took heart, and were delightfully grateful. When we had presently missed them we found them waiting at the door, to thank us again, as if we had saved them from a dreadful fate, and to shake hands and say good-bye.

If it were for them alone, I should feel sensibly richer for my afternoon in our first cathedral. But I think my satisfaction was heightened just before we left, by meeting a man with a wheelbarrow full of coal which he was trundling through “the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault” to the great iron stoves placed on either side of the nave to warm the cathedral, and contribute in their humble way to that perfect balance of parts which is the most admired effect of its architectural symmetry. As he stopped before each stove and noisily stoked it from a clangorous shovel, the simple sincerity of this bit of necessary house-keeping in the ancient fane seemed to strike a note characteristic of the English civilization, and to suggest the plain outrightness by which it has been able to save itself sound through every age and fortune. The English have reared a civic edifice more majestic than any the world has yet seen, but in the temple of their liberty and their loyalty a man with a wheelbarrow full of coal has always been

frankly invited to appear when needed. It is this mingling of the poetical ideal and the practical real which has preserved them at every emergency, and but for his timely ministrations church and state would alike have fared ill in the past. He has kept both habitable, and to any one who visits cathedrals with a luminous mind the man with the wheelbarrow of coal will remain as distinctly a part of the impression as the processioning and recessioning celebrants coming and going in their white surplices, with their red and black bands; or even the singing of the angel-voiced choir-boys, who as they hurry away at the end of the service do not all look as seraphic as they have sounded. There is often indeed something in the passing regard of choir-boys less suggestive of the final state of young-eyed cherubim than of evil provisionally repressed.

I do not say that I thought all this before leaving the cathedral in Exeter, or till long afterwards. I was at the time rather bent upon seeing more of the town, in which I felt a quality different from that of Plymouth though it pleased me no better. The manageress of the Butt of Malmsey had boasted already of the numbers of nobility and gentry living in the neighborhood of the little city, where, she promised, we should see ten private carriages for every one in Plymouth. I did not keep count, but I dare say she was right. What was more to my crude pleasure was the sight of the many Tudor, and earlier than Tudor, houses in the High Street and the other streets of Exeter, with their second stories overhanging their first, to that effect of baffle in the leaded casements of their gables which we fancy in the eyes of stout gentlemen who try to catch sight of their feet over the intervening bulge of their waistcoats. They are incomparably picturesque, those Tudor houses, and as I had afterwards occasion to note from some of their interiors, they mark a beginning of domestic comfort, which, if not modern on the American terms, is quite so on the English.

To the last, I had always to make my criticisms of the provision for the inner house in England, but my conviction that the English had little to learn of us in providing for the inner man began quite as early as in my first walks about Exeter, where the most perverse American could not have helped noting the abundance and variety of the fruits and vegetables at the green-grocers'. Southern Europe had supplied these better than Florida and California supply them with us at the same season in towns the size of

Exeter, or indeed in any less luxurious than our great seaboard cities. Counting in the apples and oranges from South Africa and the Pacific colonies of Great Britain, we are far out of it as to cheapness and quality. Then, no place in England is so remote from one sea or another as not always to have the best and freshest fish, which as the dealers arrange them with an artistic eye for form and color, make, it must be owned, a more appetizing show than the thronging shapes of carnage which start from the butchers' doors and windows, and bleed upon the sidewalk, and gather microbes from every passing gust. There is something peculiarly loathsome in these displays of fresh meat carcases all over England, which does not affect the spectator from the corded and mounded ham and bacon in the grocers' shops, though when one thinks of the myriads of eggs needed to accompany these at the forty million robust English breakfasts every morning, it is with doubt and despair for the hens. They seem equal to the demand upon them, however, like every one and everything else English, and they always lay eggs enough, as if every hen knew that England expected her to do her duty.

We sauntered through Exeter without a plan, and took it as it came in a joy which I wish I could believe was reciprocal, and which was at no moment higher than when we found at the corner of the most impressive old place in Exeter the office of a certain New York insurance company. As smiling fate would have it, this was the very company in which I was myself insured, and I paused before it with effusion, and shook hands with the actuary in the spirit. In the flesh, if he was an Englishman, he might not have known what to do with my emotion, but with Englishmen in the spirit the wandering American always finds himself cordially at home. One must not say that the longer they have been in the spirit the better; some of them who are actually still in the flesh are also in the spirit; but a certain historical remove is apt to relieve friends of that sort of stiffness which keeps them at arm's-length when they meet as contemporaries. At the other end of Bedford Circus, where I had my glad moment with the insurance actuary, I found myself in the presence of that daughter of Charles I., the Princess Henrietta, who was born there near three hundred years ago, and whose life I had lately followed with pathos for her young exile from England, through her girlhood in France, and through her unhappy marriage

with the King's brother Monsieur, to the afternoon of her last day when she lay so long dying in the presence of the court, as some thought, of poison. I could not feel myself an intrusive witness at that strange scene, which now represented itself in Bedford Circus, with the courtiers coming and going, and the doctors joining their medical endeavors with the spiritual ministrations of the prelates, and the poor princess herself taking part in the speculations and discussions, and presently in the midst of all incontinently making her end.

I suppose it would not be good taste to boast of the intimacy I enjoyed with the clergy in the neighborhood of the cathedral, by favor of their translation into a region much remoter than the past. Without having the shadow of acquaintance with them and without removing them for an instant from their pleasant houses and gardens in the close at Exeter, I put them back a generation, and met them with familiar ease in the friendly circumstance of Trollope's many stories of cathedral towns. I am not sure they would have liked that if they had known it, and certainly I should not have done it if they had known it; but as it was I could do it without offence. When we could rend ourselves from the delightful company of those deans, and canons, and minor canons, and prebendaries, with whom we really did not pass a word, we went a long idle walk to an old-fashioned part of the town overlooking the Exe from the crest of a hill, where certain large out-dated mansions formed themselves in a crescent. We instantly bought property there in preference to any more modern neighborhood, and there our subliminal selves remain, and stroll out into the pretty park and sit on the benches, and superintend the lading and unlading of the small craft from foreign ports in the old ship-canal below: the oldest ship-canal in the world, indeed, whose beginnings Shakespeare was born too late to see. We do not find the shipping is any the less picturesque for being much entangled in the net-work of railroad lines (for Exeter is a large junction), or feel the sticks and spars more discordant with the smoke and steam of the locomotives through which they pierce, than with the fine tracery of the trees farther away.

I was never an enemy of the confusion of the old and new in Europe when Italy was all Europe for me, and now in England it was distinctly a pleasure. It is something we must accept, whether we like it or not, and we

had better like it. The pride of the old custodian of the Exeter Guildhall in the coil of hot-water pipes heating the ancient edifice was quite as acceptable as his pride in the thirteenth-century carvings of the oaken door and the oak-panelled walls, the portraits of the Princess Henrietta and General Monk, and the swords bestowed upon the faithful city by Edward IV. and Henry VII. I warmed my chilly hands at the familiar radiator while I thawed my fancy out to play about the medieval facts, and even fly to that uttermost antiquity when the Roman Præetorium stood where the Guildhall stands now. Still, I was not so warm all over but that I was glad to shun the in-doors inclemency to which we must have returned in the hotel, and to prolong our stay in the milder air outside by going a drive beyond the city into the charming country. I do not say that the country was more charming than about Plymouth, but it had its pleasant difference, which was hardly a difference in the subtropical types of trees and shrubs. There were the same evergreens hedging and shading, too deeply shading, the stone cottages of the suburbs as we had seen nearer the sea; but when we were well out of the town, we had climbed to high, rolling fields, which looked warm even when the sun did not shine upon them; there were brown bare woods cresting the hills, and the hedge-rows ran bare and brown between the ploughed fields and the verdure of the pastures and the wheat. Behind and below us lay the town, clustering about the cathedral which dwarfed its varying tops to the illusion of one level.

We had driven out by a handsome avenue called, for reasons I did not penetrate, Pennsylvania Road. Stately houses lined the way, and the wealth and consequence of the town had imaginably transferred themselves to Pennsylvania Road from the fine old crescent where we had perhaps rashly invested; though I shall never regret it. But we came back another way, winding round by the first English lane I had ever driven through. It was all, and more, than I could have asked of it in that quality, for it was so narrow between the tall hedges, which shut everything else from sight, that if we had met another vehicle, I do not know what would have happened. There was a breathless moment when I thought we were going to meet a market-cart, but luckily it turned into an open gateway before the actual encounter. There must be tacit provision for such a chance in the British Constitution, but it is not for a semi-alien like an American to say what it is.

We were apparently the first of our nation to reach Exeter that spring, for as we came in to lunch we heard an elderly cleric, who had the air of lunching every day at the Butt of Malmsey, say to his waiter, “The Americans are coming early this year.” We had reasons of our own for thinking we had come too early; probably in midsummer the old-established cold of the venerable hostelry is quite tolerable. If I had been absolutely new to the past, I could not have complained, even in March, of its reeling floors and staggering stairways and dim passages; these were as they should be, and I am not saying anything against the table. That again was better than it would have been at a hotel in an American town of the size of Exeter, and it had a personal application at breakfast and luncheon that pleased and comforted; the table d’hôte dinner was, as in other English inns, far preferable to the indiscriminate and wasteful superabundance for which we pay too much at our own. It is of the grates in the Butt of Malmsey that I complain, and I do not know that I should have cause to complain of these if I had not rashly ordered fire in mine. To give the grate time to become glowing, as grates always should be in old inns, I passed an hour or two in the reading-room talking with an elderly Irish gentleman who had come to that part of England with his wife to buy a place and settle down for the remnant of his days, after having spent the greater part of his life in South Africa. He could not praise South Africa enough. Everything flourished there and every one prospered; his family had grown up and he had left seven children settled there; it was the most wonderful country under the sun; but the two years he had now passed in England were worth the whole thirty-five years that he had passed in South Africa. I agreed with him in extolling the English country and climate, while I accepted all that he said of South Africa as true, and then I went up to my room.

With the aid of the two candles which I lighted I discovered the grate in the wall near the head of the bed, and on examining it closely I perceived that there was a fire in it. The grate would have held quite a double-handful of coal if carefully put on; the fire which seemed to be flickering so feebly had yet had the energy to draw all the warmth of the chamber up the chimney, and I stood shivering in the temperature of a subterranean dungeon. The place instantly gave evidence of being haunted, and the testimony of my nerves on this point was corroborated by the spectral play

of the firelight on the ceiling, when I blew out my candles. In the middle of the night I woke to the sense of something creeping with a rustling noise over the floor. I rejected the hypothesis of my bed-curtain falling into place, though I remembered putting it back that I might have light to read myself drowsy. I knew at once that it was a ghost walking the night there, and walking hard. Suddenly it ceased, and I knew why: it had been frozen out.

III

A FORTNIGHT IN BATH

THE American who goes to England as part of the invasion which we have lately heard so much of must constantly be vexed at finding the Romans have been pretty well everywhere before him. He might not mind the Saxons, the Danes, the Normans so much, or the transitory Phœnicians, and, of course, he could have no quarrel with the Cymri, who were there from the beginning, and formed a sort of subsoil in which conquering races successively rooted and flourished; but it is hard to have the Romans always cropping up and displacing the others. He likes well enough to meet them in southern Europe; he enjoys their ruins in Italy, in Spain, in France; but the fact of their presence in Britain forms too great a strain for his imagination. By dint of having been there such a long time ago they seem to have anticipated any novelty there is in his own coming, and by having remained four hundred years they leave him little hope of doing anything very surprising in a stay of four months. He is gnawed by a secret jealousy of the Romans, and when he lands in Liverpool, as he commonly does, and discovers them in possession of the remote antiquity of Chester, where he goes for a little comfortable mediævalism before pushing on to wreak himself on the vast modernity of London, he can hardly govern his impatience. Their vestiges are less intrusive at Plymouth and Exeter than at Chester, but still I think the sort of American I have been fancying would have been incommoded by a sense of them in the air of either place, and, if he had followed on with us to Bath, would have found no benefit from the springs which they frequented two thousand years earlier, so fevered must have been his resentment.

The very beginnings of Bath were Roman, for I suppose Prince Bladud is not to be taken as serious history, though he is poetically important as the putative prototype of King Lear (I believe he had also the personal advantage of being a giant), and he is interesting as one of the few persons who have ever profited by the example of the pigs. Men are constantly

warned against that, in every way, but Prince Bladud, who went forth from his father's house a leper, and who observed the swine under his charge wallowing in the local waters and coming out cured from his infection, immediately tried them himself, and recovered and lived to be the father of an unnatural family of daughters. By inspiring Shakespeare with the theme of his great tragedy, he was the first to impart the literary interest to Bath which afterwards increased there until it fairly rivalled its social and pathological interest. But the Romans have undoubtedly a claim to the honor of building a city on the site of the present town; under their rule it became the favorite resort of the gayety which always goes hand in hand with infirmity at medicinal springs, and if you dig anywhere in Bath, now, you come upon its vestiges. A little behind and below the actual Pump Room, these are so abundant that, if you cannot go to Herculaneum or Pompeii, you can still have a fair notion of Roman luxury from the vast tanks for bathing, the stone platforms, steps, and seats, the vaulted roofs and columns, the furnaces for heating the waters, and the system of pipes for conveying it from point to point. The plumbing, in its lavish use of material, attests the advance of the Romans in the most actual and expensive of the arts; and the American invader must recognize, with whatever of gall and bitterness, that his native plumbers would have little to teach those of the conquerors who possessed Britain two thousand years before him.

If he had been coming with us from Exeter the morning we arrived, he might, indeed, have triumphed over the Romans in the comfort of his approach, for, after all, there are few trains like the English trains to give you a sense of safety, snugness, and swiftness. I like getting into them from the level of the platform, instead of climbing several steps to reach them, as we do with ours, and I like being followed into my compartment by one of those amiable porters who abound in English stations, and save your arms from being pulled out of their sockets by your hand-baggage. They are the kindest and carefullest of that class whom Lord Chesterfield nobly called his unfortunate friends, and who in England are treated with a gentle consideration almost equal to their own, and as porters they are so grateful for the slightest recompense of their service. I have seen people give them twopence, for some slight office, or nothing when they were people who could not afford something; but I never saw an English porter's face

clouded by the angry resentment which instantly darkens the French porter's brow if he thinks himself underpaid, as he always seems to do. It did not perceptibly matter to the English porter whether he followed me into a first-class or a third-class carriage, and it was from a mere love of luxury and not from the hope of gratifying any sense of superiority to the fellow-being with my hand-baggage that I ended by travelling first-class for short hauls in England. On the expresses, like those from London to Edinburgh, you can make the journey third-class in perfect comfort, and with no great risk of overcrowding, but not, I should say, in the way-trains.

We had come third-class from Plymouth to Exeter in a superstition preached us before leaving home, that everybody now went third-class in England, that to go first-class was sinfully extravagant, and that to go second-class was to chance travelling with valets and lady's-maids. But in coming on from Exeter we thought we would risk this contamination, and, not realizing that the first-class rate was no greater than ours with the cost of a Pullman ticket added, I boldly "booked" second-class. But so far from finding ourselves in a compartment with valets and lady's-maids, in whose company I hope we should have avouched our quality by promptly perishing, we were quite alone, except for the presence of a lady who sat by the window knitting, knitting, knitting. She did not look up, but from time to time she looked out, till our interchanges of joy in the landscape seemed to win upon her, and then she looked round. Her glance at the member of our party whose sex seemed to warrant her in the overture was apparently reassuring. She asked if we would like the window closed, and we pretended that we would not, but she closed it, and then she arranged her needles in her knitting, and folded her knitting up, and put it firmly away in her bag, and began to talk. Evidently she liked talking, but evidently she liked listening, too, and she let us do our share of both in confirming the tacit treaty of amity between our nations. She spoke

GREAT PULTENEY STREET

of the Americans, not as cousins, but as brothers and sisters; and I began to be sorry for all the unkind things I had said of the English, and mutely to pray that she might never see them, however just they were. She had been in America, as well as most other parts of the world, and we tried hard for some mutual acquaintance. Our failure did not matter; we were friends for that trip and train at least, and when we came to Bristol, where our own party was to change, we were fain to run away from our tea in the restaurant to take the hand held out to us from the window of her parting train.

It was very pretty, and we said, If the English were all going to be like that! I do not say that they actually were, and I do not say they were not; but no after-experience could affect the quality of that charming incident, and all the way from Bristol to Bath we turned again and again from the landscape, that lay soaking in the rains of the year before, and celebrated our good-fortune. We were still in its glamour when our train drew into Bath; and in our wish to be pleased with everything in the world to which it rapt us, we were delighted with the fitness of the fact that the largest buildings near the station should be, as their signs proclaimed, corset-manufactories. We read afterwards that corset-making was, with the

quarrying of the Bath building-stone, the chief business interest of the place, as such a polite industry should be in a city which was for so long the capital of fashion. Our pleasure in it was only less than our joy in finding that our hotel was in Pulteney Street, where the Allens of “Northanger Abbey” had their apartment, and where Catherine Morland had so often come and gone with the Tilneys and the Thorpes, and round the farthest corner of which the dear, the divine, the only Jane Austen herself had lived for two years in one of the large, demure, self-respectful mansions of the neighborhood.

Our hotel scarcely distinguished, and it did not at all detach itself from the rank of these handsome dwellings; and everything in our happy circumstance began at once to breathe that air of gentle association which kept Bath for a fortnight the Bath of our dreams. There was a belief with one of us that he had come to drink the waters, but an early consultation with possibly the most lenient of the medical authorities of the place, who make the doctors of German springs seem such tyrannous martinets, disabused him. Since he had brought no rheumatism to Bath, his physician owned there was a chance of his taking some away; but in the mean time he might go once a day to the Pump Room, for a glass of the water lukewarm, and be a little careful of his diet. A little careful of his diet, he who had been furiously warned on his peril at Carlsbad that everything which was not allowed was forbidden! But he found that the Bath medical men said the same thing to the patients whom he saw around him, at the hotel, doubled up with rheumatism, and eating and drinking whatever their stiffened joints could carry to their mouths. All the greater was the miraculous virtue of the waters, for the sufferers seemed to make rapid recovery in spite of themselves and their doctors. There were no lepers among them, and since Prince Bladud’s day few are noted as having resorted to Bath; but there is rheumatism enough in England to make up the defect of leprosy, and the American, who had come with only a mild dyspepsia, found himself quite out of the running, or limping, with his fellow-invalids.

He had apparently not even brought an American accent with his malady, and that was a disappointment to one of the worst sufferers, who constantly assured him, in a Scotch burr so thick that he had to be begged to speak twice before he could be understood, that he was the only American

without a twang whom he had ever met. The twangless dyspeptic wished at times to pretend that he was only twangless in British company, and that when his party went to their rooms they talked violently through their noses till they were out of breath, as a slight compensation for their self-denial in society. But, upon the whole, the Scotch gentleman was so kind and sweet a soul, and seemed, for all his disappointment, to value the American so much as a phenomenon that he forebore, and in the end he was not sorry.

He would have been sorry to have put himself at odds with any of the pleasant people at that hotel, who seemed to regard their being thrown together as a circumstance that justified their speaking to one another much more than the wont is in American hotels. They were more conversible even than those at the Plymouth hotel; the very women talked to other women without fear; and the Americans, if they had been nationally vainer than they were, might have fancied a specially hospitable consideration of their case. In hotels of that agreeable type there is, besides the more formal drawing-room, a place called the lounge, where there are writing-desks and stationery, and a large table covered with the day's papers, and a comfortable fire (or, at least, the most comfortable in the house) burning in the grate; and here people drop in before breakfast and after dinner, and chat or read or write, as they please. It is all very amiably informal and uncommitting, and in our Bath hotel there were only two or three kept at a distance in which they were not molested. There was all the while a great nobleman in the house who was apparently never seen even by those superior people. He came, sojourned, and departed in as much secrecy as a great millionaire would at home, and I could not honestly say that he psychologically affected the others any more than the presence of a great millionaire would have affected the same number of Americans. Perhaps they were less excited, being more used to being avoided by great noblemen in the course of many generations. What I know is that they were very friendly and intelligent, and, if their talk began and ended with the weather, there was plenty of weather to talk about.

There was almost as much weather and as various as the forms of cabbage at dinner, which here first began to get in their work on the imagination, if not the digestion. Whatever else there was of vegetable fibre, there was always some form of cabbage, either cabbage in its simple

and primitive shape, or in different phases of cauliflower, brussels sprouts, broccoli, or kale. It was difficult to escape it, for there was commonly nothing else but potatoes. But one night there came a dish of long, white stems, delicately tipped with red, and looking like celery that had grown near rhubarb. We recognized it as something we had admired, longingly, ignorantly, at the green-grocers', and we eagerly helped ourselves. What was it? we had asked; and before the waiter could answer that it was sea-kale we had fallen a prey to something that of the whole cabbage family was the most intensely, the most passionately cabbage.

Apart from the prevalence of this family, the table was very good and well-imagined, as I should like to say once for all of the table at every English hotel of our experience. Occasionally the ideal was vitiated by an attempted conformity to the raw American appetite, as it arrived unassorted and ravenous from the steamers. In a moist cold that pierced to the marrow you were offered ice-water, and sometimes the "sweets" included an ice-cream of the circumference and thickness of a dollar, which had apparently been put into the English air to freeze, but had only felt its well-known relaxing effect. One drinks, of course, a great deal of the excellent tea, and, indeed, the afternoon that passes without it is an afternoon that drags a listless, alexandrine length along till dinner, and leaves one to learn by experience that a thing very essential to the local meteorology has been omitted. With us, tea is still a superfluity and in some cases a naughtiness; with the English it is a necessity and a virtue; and so apt is man to take the color of his surroundings that in the rare, very rare, occasions when he is not offered tea in an English house, the American comes away bewildered and indignant. I suppose nothing could convey the feelings of an equally defrauded Englishman, who likes his tea, and likes it good and strong; in fact, tea cannot be good without being strong. While I am about this business of noting certain facts which are so essential to the observer's comfort, but which I really disdain as much as any reader can, I will say that the grates of the hotel in Bath were distinctly larger than those at Plymouth and were out of all comparison with those at Exeter. They did not, indeed, heat our rooms, even at Bath, but if they had been diligently tended I think they would have glowed. In the corridors there were radiators, commonly cold, but sometimes perceptibly warm to the touch.

The Americanization of the house was completed by the elevator, which, being an after-thought, was crowded into the well of the staircase. It was a formidable matter to get the head porter, in full uniform, to come and open the bottom of the well with a large key, but it could be done; I saw rheumatic old ladies, who had come in from their Bath chairs, do it repeatedly.

When, however, you considered the outside of our hotel, you would have been sorry to have it in any wise Americanized. The front of it was on Pulteney Street, where it leaves that dear Laura Place which blossomed to our fancy with the fairest flowers of literary association; but at the back of it there was a real garden, and the gardens of other houses backing upon it, and the kitchen doors of these houses had pent-roofs which formed sunny exposures for cats of the finest form and color. When there was no sun there were no cats; but they could not take the rest of the prospect into the warm kitchens (I suppose that even in England the kitchens must be warm) with them, and so we had it always before our eyes. With gardens and little parks, and red-tiled house-roofs, bristling with chimney-pots and church-spires, it rose to a hemicycle of the beautiful downs, in whose deep hollows Bath lies relaxing in her faint air; and along the top the downs were softly wooded, or else they carried deep into the horizon the curve of fields and pastures, broken here and there by the stately bulk of some mansion set so high that no Bath-chairman could have been induced by love or money to push his chair to it. All round Bath these downs (a contradiction in terms to which one resigns one’s self with difficulty in the country where they abound) rise, like the walls of an immense scalloped cup, and the streets climb their slope, and can no otherwise escape in the guise of country roads, except along the bank of the lovely Avon. By day, except when a

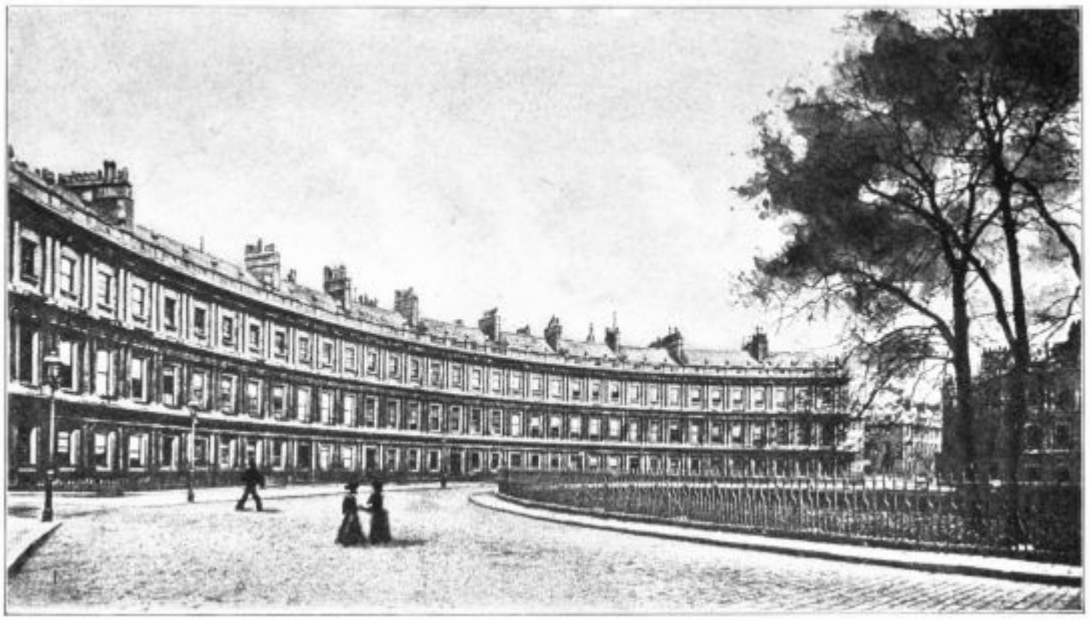
THE RED-TILED HOUSE-ROOFS AND CHURCH SPIRES OF BATH

fog came down from the low heaven and took them up into it, the form of the downs was a perpetual pleasure to the eye from our back windows, and at night they were a fairy spectacle, with the electric lamps starring their vague, as if they were again part of the firmament.

When, later, we began to climb them, either on foot or on tram-top, we found them in command of prospects of Bath which could alone have compensated us for the change in our point of view. The city then showed large out of all proportion to its modest claim of population, which is put at thirty or forty thousand. But in the days of its prosperity it was so generously built that in its present decline it may really be no more populous than it professes; in that case each of its denizens has one of its stately mansions to himself. I never like to be extravagant, and so I will simply say that the houses of Bath are the handsomest in the world, and that if one must ever have a whole house to one's self one could not do better than have it in Bath. There one could have it in a charming quiet square or place, or in the shallow curve of some high-set crescent, or perhaps, if one were very, very good, in that noblest round of domestic edifices in the solar system—I do not say universe—The King's Circus. This is the triumph of the architect Wood, famous in the architectural annals of Bath, who built it in such beauty, and with such affectionate mastery of every order for its

adornment, that his ghost might well (and would, if I were it) come back every night and stand glowing in a phosphorescent satisfaction till the dreaming rooks, in the tree-tops overhead, awoke and warned him to fade back to his reward in that most eligible quarter of the sky which overhangs The King's Circus. I speak of him as if he were one, and so he is, as a double star is one; but it was Wood the elder who, in the ardor of his youth at twenty-three, imagined the Circus which his son realized. Together, or in their succession, they wrought the beautification of Bath from an amateur meanness and insufficiency to the effect for which the public spirit of their fellow-citizens supplied the unstinted means, and they left the whole city a monument of their glory, without a rival in unity of design and completeness of execution.

In the fine days when Bath was the resort of the greatness to which such greatness as the Woods' has always bowed, every person of fashion thought he must have some sort of lodgment of his own, and, if he were a greater person than the common run of great persons, he must have a house. He might have it in some such select avenues as Milsom Street and Great Pulteney Street, or in St. James's Square or Queen's Square, or in Lansdowne Crescent or the Royal Crescent, but I fancy that the ambition of the very greatest could not have soared beyond a house in the Circus. As I find myself much abler to mingle with rank and fashion in the past than in the present, I was always going back to the Circus after I found the way, and making believe to ring at the portals set between pillars of the Ionic or Corinthian orders, and calling upon the disembodied dwellers within, and talking the ghostly scandal which was so abundant at Bath in the best days. In that way one may be a ghost one's self without going to the extreme of dying, and then may walk comfortably back to dinner at one's hotel in the flesh. In my more merely tourist moments I went and conned all the tablets let into the walls of the houses to record the memorable people who once lived in them. In my quality of patriot I lingered longest before that where



CIRCUS FROM BENNET STREET

the great Earl of Chatham had lived: he who, if he had been an American as he was an Englishman, while a foreign foe was landed on his soil would never had laid down his arms—never, never, never! The eloquent words filled my own throat to choking, and the long struggle fought itself through there on the curbstone with an obstinate valor on the American side that could result only in the independence of the revolted colonies. Then, in a high mood of impartial compassion, I went and paid the tribute of a sigh at that other house of the Circus, so piteously memorable for us Americans, where Major André had once sojourned. Was it in Bath, and perhaps while he dwelt in the Circus, that he loved Honora Sneyd? Almost anything tender or brave or fine could have been there; and I was not surprised to find that Lord Clive of India and Gainsborough of all the world were in their times neighbors of Lord Chatham and Major André. What other famous names were inscribed on those simple tablets (so modestly that it was hard to read them), I do not now recall, but when one is reminded, even by his cursory and laconic Baedeker, that not only the first but the second Pitt was a sojourner in Bath with other such sojourners as Burke, Nelson, Wolfe, Lawrence, Smollett, Fielding, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Fanny Burney, Jane Austen, Southey, Landor, Wordsworth, Cowper, Scott, and Moore, and a whole nameless herd of titles and royalties, one perceives that many more celebrities than I have mentioned must have lived in the Circus.

Many very nice people must live there yet, but it has somewhat gone off into business of the quieter professional type, and I would not swear that behind the tracery of a transom here or there I did not find a lurking suggestion of Apartments. I am quite ready to make oath to at least one such suggestion in the very centre of Lansdowne Crescent, where I was about buying property because of its glorious site and its high, pure air. I instantly transferred my purchase to the Royal Crescent, where I now have an outlook forever over the new Victoria Park and down into the valley of the Avon, with the river running as of old between fields and pastures in a landscape of insurpassable loveliness.

But you cannot anywhere get away from the beautiful in Bath. For the temperate lover of it, the soft brownish tone of the architecture is in itself almost of a delicate sufficiency; but if one is greedier there is an inexhaustible picturesqueness in the winding and sloping streets, and the rounding and waving downs which they everywhere climb as roads when they cease to be streets. I do not know that Bath gives the effect of a very obvious antiquity; a place need not, if it begins in the age of fable, and descends from the earliest historic period with the tradition of such social splendor as hers. She has a superb mediæval abbey for her principal church which is a cathedral to all æsthetical intents and purposes; for it is not less beautiful and hardly less impressive than some cathedrals. Mostly of that perpendicular Gothic, which I suppose more mystically lifts the soul than any other form of architecture, it is in a gracious sort of harmony with itself through its lovely proportions; and from the stems of its clustered columns, the tracery of their fans spreads and delicately feels its way over the vaulted roof as if it were a living growth of something rooted in the earth beneath. The abbey began with a nunnery founded by King Osric in 676 and rose through a monastery founded later by King Offa to be an abbey in 1040, attached to the bishopric of Wells; but it waited its final grandeur and glory from Bishop Oliver King, who while visiting Bath in 1499 saw in a dream angels ascending and descending by a ladder set between the throne of God and an olive-tree, wearing a crown, and heard a voice saying, “Let an Olive establish the crown, and a King restore the church.” Moved by this vision, which was as modest as most dreams of charges delivered from on high, the bishop set vigorously about the work, but before it was perfected, the piety

of Henry VIII. being alarmed by the pope's failure to bless his divorces, the monastery was with many others suppressed, and the church stripped of everything that could be detached and sold. The lands of the abbey fell into private hands, and houses were built against the church, of which an aisle was used as a street for nearly a hundred years, even after it had been roofed in and restored, as it was early in the seventeenth century, by another bishop who had not been authorized in a dream.

The failure of Cromwell's troopers to stable their horses in it is another of those conspicuous instances of their negligence with which I was destined to be confronted in the sacred edifices so conscientiously despoiled by Henry VIII. But among the most interesting monuments of the interior is one to that Lady Waller, wife of the Parliamentary general, Sir William Waller which more than repairs the oversight of the Puritan soldiery. Her epitaph is of so sweet and almost gay a quaintness that I will frankly transfer it to my page from that of the guide-book, though I might easily pretend I had copied it from the tomb.

"Sole issue of a matchless paire,
Both of their state and virtues heyre;
In graces great, in stature small,
As full of spirit as voyd of gall;
Cheerfully grave, bounteously close,
Holy without vain-glorious showes;
Happy, and yet from envy free,
Learn'd without pride, witty, yet wise,
Reader, this riddle read with mee,
Here the good Lady Waller lies."

There is almost an exultant note in this, and in its rendering of a most appreciable personality is a hint of the quality of all Bath annals. These are the history less of events than characters, marked and wilful, and often passing into eccentricity; and in the abbey is the municipal monument of the chiefest of such characters, that Beau Nash—namely, who ruled the fashion of Bath for forty or fifty years with an absolute sway at a period when fashion was elsewhere a supreme anarchic force in England. The very sermon which I heard in the abbey (and it was a very good and forcible homily), was of this personal quality, for taking as his theme the divine

command to give, the preacher enlarged himself to the fact that the flag of England was then flying at half-mast on the abbey, and that all the court would presently be going into mourning for the death of the Duke of Cambridge, in obedience to the King's command; and "How strange," the preacher reflected, "that men should be so prompt to obey an earthly sovereign, and so slow to obey the King of Kings, the lord of lords." But he did not reflect as I did for him, though I had then been only a week in England, and was very much less fitted to do it, that in the close-knit system which he himself was essentially part of, there was such a consciousness of social unity, identity, as has never been anywhere else on earth, much less spiritually between the human and divine, since Jehovah ceased conversing with the fathers of the children of Israel. I do not report it as a message, then and there delivered to me in round terms, but I had in my cheap sympathy with the preacher, a sense of the impossibility of his ideal, for between any decently good King of England and his subjects there is such affiliation through immemorial law and custom as never was between a father and his children, any more than between a God and his creatures. When the King wills, in beautiful accordance with the laws and customs, it is health for the subjects to obey, as much as for the hands or feet of a man's body when he wishes to move them, and it is disease, it is disorder, it is insanity for them to disobey, whereas it is merely sin to disregard the divine ordinances, and is not contrary to the social convention or the ideals of loyalty. But I could not offer this notion to the preacher in the Abbey of Bath, and I am not sure that my readers here will welcome it with entire acceptance.

From time to time, in those first days the sense of England (not the meaning, which heaven forbid I should attempt to give) sometimes came upon me overwhelmingly; and I remember how once when I sat peacefully at dinner, a feeling of the long continuity of English things suddenly rose in a tidal wave and swept me from my chair, and bore me far away from the soup that would be so cold before I could get back. There, like one

"Sole sitting by the shores of old romance,"

I visualized those mostly amiable and matter-of-fact people in their ancestral figures of a thousand years past, and foresaw them substantially

the same for a thousand years to come. Briton and Phœnician and Roman and Saxon and Dane and Norman, had come to a result so final in them that they would not change, if they could, and for my pleasure I would not have had them change, though in my American consciousness I felt myself so transient, so occasional, so merely provisional beside them. Such as I then saw them, passing so serenely from fish to roast, from salad to sweets, or as I could overhear them, talking of the weather with an effect of bestowing novelty upon the theme by their attention to it, they had been coming to Bath for untold generations with the same ancestral rheumatism which their humid climate, their inclement houses, and their unwholesome diet would enable them to hand down to a posterity remote beyond any horizons of the future. In their beautiful constancy, their heroic wilfulness, their sublime veracity, they would still be, or believe themselves, the first people in the world; and as the last of the aristocracies and monarchies they would look round on the classless equalities of the rest of the world with the pity which being under or over some one else seems always to inspire in master and man alike. The very gentleness of it all, testified to the perfection of their ultimation, and the universally accepted form by which the servant thanked the served for being served, and the served thanked the servant for serving, realized a social ideal unknown to any other civilization. There was no play of passion; the passions in England mean business; no voice rose above the high chirpy level, which all the voices reached; not a laugh was heard; the continental waiters who were there to learn the English language had already learned the English manner, which is a supreme self-containment; but the result was not the gloom which Americans achieve when they mean to be very good society in public places; far less was it a Latin gayety, or a Germanic fury of debate. The manner was such indeed that in spite of my feeling of their unity of nature and their continuity of tradition, I could scarcely believe that the people I saw in these psychological seizures of mine were one with the people who had been coming to Bath from their affairs in the towns, or from their pleasures in the country, ever since the English character had evolved itself from the blend of temperaments forming the English temperament. Out of what they had been how had they come to be what they were now, and yet not essentially changed? None of the causes were sufficient for the effect; the effect was not the logic of the causes.

History is rather darkling after the day of Prince Bladud and his pigs, and the Romans testify of their resort to the healing waters by the mute monuments left of the ancient city, still mainly buried under the modern town, rather than by any written record, but after the days of Elizabeth the place begins to have a fairly coherent memory of its past. In those days the virtue of the waters was superior to such material and moral tests as the filth of streets where the inhabitants cast the sewage of their houses and the butchers slaughtered their cattle and left the offal to rot, and the kine and swine ran at large, and the bathers of both sexes wallowed together in the springs, after the manner of their earliest exemplars, and were pelted with dead cats and dogs by the humorous spectators. This remained much the condition of Bath as late as the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and it was not till well into the eighteenth that the springs were covered and enclosed. Even then they were not so covered and enclosed but that the politer public frequented them to see the bi-sexual bathing which was not finally abolished till the reign of the good Beau Nash.

If any one would read all about Nash and the customs (there were no manners) which he amended, I could not do better than commend such a one to the amusing series of sketches reprinted from the *Bath Chronicle*, by William Tyte, with the title of *Bath in the Eighteenth Century, its Progress and Life described*. It is only honest (but one is honest with so much effort in these matters) to confess my indebtedness to this most amusing and very valuable book, and to warn the reader that a great deal of the erudition which he will note in my page can be finally traced to Mr. Tyte's. He will learn there at large why I call Beau Nash good though he was a reprobate in so many things, a libertine and gambler, and little better than a blackguard when not retrieving and polishing others. It seems to be essential to the civic and social reformer that he should more or less be of the quality of the stuff he deals with; we have seen that more than once in our municipal experience; and Nash, who reformed Bath, might in turn have asked a like favor of Bath. He was, in the English and the eighteenth century terms, that familiar phenomenon which we know as the Boss; and his incentive was not so much the love of virtue as the love of rule. By the pull on the reins he knew just how close he might draw them, and when and where he must loose the curb. He could refuse to allow the royal Princess Amelia a single

dance after the clock struck eleven; he could personally take off the apron of the Duchess of Queensbury and tell her that "none but Abigails appeared in white aprons," as he threw it aside; he could ask a country squire who wore his spurs to the ball, if he had not forgotten his horse; he could forbid ladies coming in riding-hoods; he could abolish the wearing of swords; he could cause the arrest of any one giving or accepting a challenge; but he could not put down gaming or drinking, and he did not try, either by the irony of the written rules for the government[A] of Bath Society, or by the sarcastic by-laws which he orally added on occasions. He was one of those Welshmen who, at all periods have invaded England so much less obviously than the Scotch, and have come so largely into control of the Sassenach, while seeming to merge and lose themselves in the heavy mass. He had the hot temper of his race; but he was able to cool it to a very keen edge, and he cut his way through disorder to victory. He wished to establish an etiquette as severe as that of the French or English court, and he succeeded, in a measure. But though not an easy Boss, he was a wise one and he really moulded the rebellious material to a form of propriety if not of beauty. When he passed to his account, insolvent both morally and financially, it lapsed again under the succeeding Masters of Ceremony to its elemental condition, and social anarchy followed; a strife raged between the old and new assembly rooms for primacy, and at a ball, where the partisans of two rival candidates for the mastership met in force, a free fight followed the attempt of a clergyman's wife to take precedence of a peer's daughter; "the gentlemen fought and swore; the ladies, screaming, tore each other's garments and headgear; the floor was strewn with fragments of caps, lappets, millinery, coat-tails and ruffles. The non-combatants hurried to the exits, or mounted the chairs near the walls to be out of danger or to watch the foes mauling and bruising each other." Before the fight ended the Mayor of the city had to appear and read the Riot Act three times.

Of course matters could not go on so. Both the contestants for the Master of the Ceremonies retired and a third was chosen. The office though poorly paid, and wholly unremunerative except in hands so skilled as those of Nash (who died poor by his own fault, but who lived rich), was honored in him by a statue in the Pump Room and a monument in the Abbey. This to be sure was after his death, but the place was always of such dignity that in

1785 Mr. J. King, “who had highly distinguished himself in the British army during the American war,” by no means disdained to take it. His distinction does not form any ornament of our annals as I recall them, but that is perhaps because it was achieved to our disadvantage. He had indeed the rare honor of introducing Jane Austen’s most charming hero to her sweetest and simplest heroine; but though he could fearlessly present Henry Tilney to Catherine Morland, his courage was apparently not equal to upholding his general authority with the satirical arrogance of Nash. Where Nash would have laid down the law and enforced it if need be with his own hands, King “humbly requested,” though in the matter of wearing hats “at the cotillions or concerts or dress balls,” our distinguished enemy plucked up the spirit to warn any lady who should “through inattention or any other motive infringe this regulation, that she must not take it amiss if she should be obliged to take off her hat or quit the assembly.”

From Nash’s time onward several Masters of Ceremonies were scandalized by people’s giving tickets for the entertainments to their domestics, and one of them took public notice of the evil. “Servants, hair-dressers, and the improper persons who every night occupy some of the best seats, and even presume to mix with the company, are warned to keep away, and to spare themselves the mortification of being desired to withdraw, a circumstance which will inevitably happen if they continue to intrude themselves where decency, propriety and decorum forbid their entrance.”

Apparently in spite of all the efforts of all the Masters of Ceremonies, society in Bath was not only very fast, which society never minds being, but a good deal mixed, which it professes not to like, though it was at the same time always very gay. When at last the respective nights of the New Assembly Rooms and the Old Assembly Rooms were ascertained, the fashionable week began on Monday with a Dress Ball at the New Rooms; it continued on Tuesday with Public Tea and Cards at the New Rooms; on Wednesday with a Cotillion Ball at the Old Rooms; on Thursday with a Cotillion Ball at the New Rooms, and Tea and Cards at the Old Rooms; on Friday with a Dress Ball at the Old Rooms; on Saturday with Public Tea and Cards at the Old Rooms; and it ended on Sunday with Tea and Walking, alternately at the New Rooms and the Old Rooms. The cost of all these pleasures either to the person or the pocket, was not so great as might be

imagined from their abundance. The hours were early, and except for the gaming, and the drinking that slaked the dry passion of chance, the fun was over by eleven o'clock. Then the last note was sounded, the last step taken, the last sigh or the last look exchanged, so that those who loved balls might not only tread the stately measures of that time with far less fatigue than the more athletic figures of our period cost, but might be at home and in bed at the hour when the modern party is beginning. For their pleasure they paid in the proportion of a guinea for twenty-six dress balls, and half a guinea for thirty fancy balls. Two guineas supplied two tickets for twelve concerts, and sixpence admitted one to the Rooms for a promenade and a cup of tea.

It will be seen that with that "large acquaintance" which Mrs. Allen so handsomely but hopelessly desired for Catherine Morland at her first ball, where they had no acquaintance at all, one could have a very good time at Bath for a very little money, and every one apparently who had the money could have the good time. There were many public gardens, where all sorts of people went for concert-breakfasts, and for tea and for supper, at a charge of a shilling, or the classic one-and-six. Jane Austen writes in one of her charming letters that she liked going to the concerts of Sydney Gardens because, having no ear for music, she could best get away from it there; but there were besides the Villa Gardens, the Bagatelle, and the Grosvenor Gardens, which were most resorted to because they were so convenient to the Pump Rooms. Some of the lawns, if not the groves of these gardens still remains, and hard by the Avon babbles still, rushing under the walls and bridges of the town, with a busy air of knowing more than it has time to tell of the old-time picnics on its grassy shores, and the water-parties on its tumultuous bosom, as well as the fireworks and illuminations in its bowers. The river indeed is one of the chief beauties of Bath, winding into it through a valley of the downs, and curving through it with a careless grace which leaves nothing to be asked.

The highest moment of fashion in Bath seems to have been when the Princess Amelia, daughter of George II., came to drink its waters and partake its pleasures in 1728. She was rather a plain body, no longer young, very stout, and with a simple taste for gambling, fishing, riding, and beer. "Her favorite haunt," says Mr. Tyte, "was a summer-house by the riverside in Harrison's Walk, where she often was seen attired in a riding-habit and a

black velvet postilion-cap tied under her chin." But she also liked to wear when on horseback "a hunting-cap and a laced scarlet coat," which must have set off her red face and portly bulk to peculiar advantage. Her particular friend was a milliner in the abbey church-yard who wrote verses in praise of the princess and of Bath, but she seems to have been friendly enough with people of every kind and she went freely to the dress balls, the fancy balls, the teas, the walks, the breakfast-concerts, the gardens, and whatever else there was of elegant or amusing in the place. One of the customs of Bath was the ringing of the abbey bells to welcome visitors of distinction, who were expected to pay the vergers in proportion to the noise made for them. This custom was afterwards abused to include any comer from whom money could reasonably or unreasonably be hoped for, as the supposed writer in the *New Bath Guide* records. But the custom has long been obsolete, and no American invader arriving by train need fear being honored and plundered through it.

It would be idle to catalogue the princes and princesses, dukes and duchesses, lords and ladies, and titles of all degrees who resorted to Bath both before and after the good Amelia, and if one began with the other and real celebrities, the adventurers, and authors, and artists, and players, there would be no end, and so I will not at least begin yet. We were first of all concerned in looking up the places which the divine Jane Austen had made memorable by attributing some scene or character of hers to them, or more importantly yet by having dwelt in them herself. I really suppose that it was less with the hope of being helped with the waters that I went regularly to the Pump Room and sipped my glass of lukewarm insipidity, than with the insensate expectation of encountering some of her people, or perhaps herself, a delicate elusive phantom of ironical observance, in a place they and she so much frequented. I cannot say that I ever did meet them, either the characters or the author, though it was here that Catherine Morland first met the lively but unreliable Isabel Thorpe, and vainly hoped to meet Henry Tilney after dancing with him the night before. "Every creature in Bath except himself was to be seen in the room at different periods of the fashionable hours; crowds of people were every moment passing in and out, up the steps and down."

I reconciled myself to a disappointment numerically greater than Catherine's for there was not only no Tilney, but no crowd. At mid-day there would be two or three score persons scattered about the stately hall, so classically Palladian in its proportions, and so fitly heavy and rich in decoration, all a dimness of dark paint and dull gold, in which the sufferers sat about at little tables where they put their glasses, and read their papers, after they became so used to coming that they no longer cared to look at the glass cases full of Roman and Saxon coins and rings and combs and bracelets. There was nothing to prevent people talking except the overwhelming tradition of the talk that used to flow and sparkle in that place a century ago. But they did not talk; and in the afternoon they listened with equal silence to the music in the concert-room. In the Pump Room there was the largest and warmest fire that I saw in England, actually lumps of coal, openly blazing in a grate holding a bushel of them; in the withdrawal of the others from it one might stand and thaw one's back without infringing anybody's privileges or preferences. Under the Pump Room were the old Roman Baths with the old Romans represented in their habits of luxury by the goldfish that swam about in the tepid waters, and, as I was advised by a guide who started up out of the past and accepted a gratuity, liked it.

I visited these baths as a tourist, but as a patient whose prescription did not include bathing I saw nothing of the modern baths. There the sexes no longer bathe together, and in their separation and seclusion you have no longer the pleasure enjoyed by the spectator in the days of the *New Bath Guide*, when—

> " 'Twas a glorious sight to behold the fair sex
> All wading with gentlemen up to their necks."

The modern equipment of the baths is such that the bathers are not now put into baize-lined sedan-chairs and hurried to their lodgings and sent to bed there to perspire and repose; and the chances of seeing a pair of rapacious chairmen settling the question of a disputed fare by lifting the lid of the box, and letting the cold air in upon the reeking lady or gentleman within, are reduced to nothing at all. In the ameliorated conditions, unfavorable as they are to the lover of dramatic incident, many and marvellous recoveries from

rheumatism are made in Bath, and we saw people blithely getting better every day whom we had known at the beginning of the fortnight very gloomy and doubtful, and all but audibly creaking in their joints as they limped by. This was in spite of a diet which must have sent the uric acid gladly rioting through their systems, and of a capricious variety of March weather which was everything that wet and cold, and dry and raw, could be in an air notoriously relaxing to the victim whom it never released from its penetrating clutch.

I put it in this way so as to be at ease in the large freedom of the truth rather than bound in a slavish fidelity to the fact. The fact is that in the succession of days that were all and more than here suggested, there were whole hours of delicious warmth when one could walk out or drive out in a sunny mildness full of bird-song and bee-murmur, with the color of bloom in one's eyes and the odor of flowers in one's nostrils. It is not from having so rashly bought property right and left in every eligible and memorable quarter of Bath the very first day that I now say I should like to live there always. The reader must not suspect me of wishing to unload upon him, when I repeat that I heard people who were themselves in the enjoyment of the rich alternative say that you had better live in Bath if you could not live in London. A large contingent of retired army and navy officers and their families contribute to keep society good there, and it is a proverb that the brains which have once governed India are afterwards employed in cheapening Bath. Rents are low, but many fine large houses stand empty, nevertheless, because the people who could afford to pay the rents could not afford the state, the equipment of service and the social reciprocity so necessary in England, and must take humbler dwellings instead. Provisions are of a Sixth Avenue average in price, and in the article of butcher's meat of a far more glaring and offensive abundance. I do not know whether it is the tradition of the Bath bun which has inspired the pastry-shops to profuse efforts in unwholesome-looking cakes and tarts, but it seemed to me that at every third or fourth window I was invited by the crude display to make way entirely with the digestion which the Bath waters were doing so little to repair. When one saw everywhere those beautiful West of England complexions, the wonder what became of that bilious superfluity of pastry was a mystery from which the mind still recoils.

But this is taking me from the social conditions of Bath, of which I know so little. I heard it said, indeed, that the wheels of life were uncommonly well-oiled there for ladies who had to direct them unaided, and it seemed to me that the widowed or the unwedded could not be more easily placed in circumstances of refinement which might be almost indefinitely simplified without ceasing to be refined. There are in fact large numbers of single ladies living at Bath in the enjoyment of that self-respectful civic independence which the just laws of Great Britain give them; for they vote at all elections which concern the municipal spending of their money, and are consequently not taxed without their consent, as our women are. Such is their control in matters which concern their comfort that it is said the consensus of feminine feeling has had force with the imperial government to prevent the placing of a garrison in Bath, on the ground that the presence of the soldiers distracted the maids, and enhanced the difficulties of the domestic situation.

The glimpse of the Bath world, which a happy and most unimagined chance afforded, revealed a charm which brought to life a Boston world now so largely of the past, and I like to think it was this rather than the possession of untold real estate which made me wish to live there always; and advise others to do so. Just what this charm was I should be slower to attempt saying than I have been to boom Bath; but perhaps I can suggest it as a feminine grace such as comes to perfection only in civilizations where the brightness and alertness of the feminine spirit is peculiarly valued. Bath could not have been so long a centre of fashion and infirmity, of pleasure and pain, without evolving in the finest sort the supremacy of woman, who is first in either. The lingering tradition of intellectual brilliancy, which spreads a soft afterglow over the literary decline of Boston, is of the same effect in the gentle city where the mere spectacle of life became penetrated with the quality of so many spritely witnesses. If the grace of their humor, the gayety of their spirit, the sweetness of their intelligence have remained to this time, when the spectacle of life has so dwindled that the observed are less than the observers, it would not be wonderful, for the essential part of what has been anywhere seems always to haunt the scene, and to become the immortal genius of the place. In a more literal sense Bath is haunted by the past, for it is the favorite resort of numbers of interesting ghosts, whose

characters are well ascertained and whose stories are recounted to you, if you have so much merit, by people who have known the spectres almost from childhood. Some of them have the habit of preferably appearing to strangers; but perhaps they drew the line at Americans.

I forget whether the almond-trees were in bloom or not when we came to Bath, but I am sure they continued so throughout our stay, and I found them steadily blossoming away elsewhere for a month afterwards. There is no reason why they should not, for they have no work to do in the way of ripening their nuts, and they lead a life as idle and unfinal as the vines and fig-trees of Great Britain, which also blossom as cheerfully and set their fruit, and carry it through the seasons in a lasting immaturity. I never thought the almond in bloom as rare a sight as the peach, whose pale elder sister it is; but in the absence of the peach, I was always glad of it, in a dooryard or over a garden wall. Where the walls were low enough to lean upon, as they sometimes were round the vegetable gardens, it was pleasant to pause and contemplate the infinite variety of cabbage held in a green arrest by the mild winter air, but destined to an ultimation beyond the powers of the almond, the grape and the fig. There seemed to be a good many of these gardened spaces in the town, as well as in the outskirts where more new houses were going up, in something of the long leisure of the vegetation. The famous Bath building-stone is in fact so much employed elsewhere that there may not be enough of it for home use, and that may account for the slow growth of the place; but if I lived there I should not wish it to grow, and if I were King of Bath, in due succession from Beau Nash, I would not suffer one Bath-stone to be set upon the other within its limits. The place is large enough as it is, and I should hate to have it restored to its former greatness. There was indeed only too little decay in it, but there was at least one gratifying instance in the stately mansion at the end of our street,—falling or fallen to ruin, with its Italian style rapidly antedating the rough classic of the Roman baths, in the effect of a sorrowful superannuation,—which I could not have rescued from dilapidation without serious loss. The hollow windows and broken doors and toppled chimneys, the weather-stained walls and pillars painted green with mould, were half concealed, half betrayed, by the neglected growth of trees, and a wilding thicket had sprung up over the lawn, penetrated by wanton paths in spite of

warnings against trespassing by severely worded sign-boards. Whose the house was, or why it was abandoned I never learned, and I do not know that I wished to learn; it was so satisfying as it was and for what it was. It stood on the borders of Sydney Gardens, which the authorities were slowly, too slowly for our pleasure, putting in order for some sort of phantasmal season.

We never got into them, though we longed to make out where it was that Jane Austen need not hear the music when she went to the concerts. But it was richly consoling, in these failures to come unexpectedly upon the house in which she had lived two years with her mother, and to find it fronting the ruining mansion and the tangled shrubbery that took our souls with so sorrowful a rapture. At the moment we discovered it, there was a young girl visible through the dining-room window feeding a quiet gray cat on the floor, and a gray parrot in a cage. She looked kind and good, and as if she would not turn two pilgrims away if they asked to look in over the threshold that Jane Austen's feet had lightly pressed, but we could not find just the words to petition her in, and we had to leave the shrine unvisited. It occurs to me now that we might have pretended to mistake the tablet in the wall for a sign of apartments, but we had not then even this cheap inspiration; and we could only note with a longing, lingering look, that the house was very simple and plain, like the other houses near.

The literary tradition of the neighborhood is supported in one of these by the presence of a famous nautical novelist, who has often shipwrecked and marooned me to my great satisfaction, on reefs and desolate islands, or water-logged me in lonely seas. He lived even nearer the corner of Pulteney Street where we were in our hotel, and where we much imagined taking one of the many lodgings to let there, but never did. We looked into some, and found them probably not very different from what they were when the Allens went into theirs with Catherine Morland. We decided that this was just across the way from our hotel, and that Mrs. Allen saw us from her window whenever we went or came. We were sure also that we met Lady Russell and Anne Elliot driving out of *Persuasion* through Pulteney Street, when Anne noticed Captain Wentworth coming towards them, and supposed from Lady Russell's stare, that she was equally moved by the vision, but found she was "looking after some window curtains, which Lady

Alicia and Mrs. Frankland were telling" her of as "being the handsomest and best hung of any in Bath."

Our hotel fronted not only on Pulteney Street, but also on Laura Place, a most genteel locality indeed where we knew as soon as Sir Walter Elliot that his cousin "Lady Dalrymple had taken a house for three months and would be living in style." I do not think we ever made out the house, and we were more engaged in observing the behavior of the wicked John Thorpe driving poor Catherine Morland through Laura Place after he had deceived her into thinking Henry Tilney, whom she had promised to walk with, had gone out of town, and whom she now saw passing with his sister. On a happier day, as the reader will remember, Catherine really went her walk with the Tilneys, and in sympathy and emulation we too climbed the steep slopes of "Beechen Cliff, that noble hill whose beautiful verdure and hanging coppice render it so striking an object from almost every opening in Bath." You now cross the railroad to reach it, and pass through neighborhoods that were probably pleasanter a hundred years ago; but the view of the town in the bottom of its bowl must be as fine as ever, though we found no hanging coppice from which to commend it. Still, as our wont was, we bought several pieces of property that pleased us, and I still have a few suburban houses in that quarter which I could offer the reader at a sacrifice. The truth is that in spite of having the Tilneys and Catherine for company we did not like the Beechen Cliff as well as its rival acclivity, Sion Hill, which forms the opposite rim of Bath, and is not so arduous of approach. A lady who lived not quite at the top, but above the Bath chair line, declared it the third-best air in England, without indicating the first or second. The air was at least more active than we were in our climb, but with a driver who got down and helped his horses walk up with us, we could enjoy there one of the loveliest prospects in the world. The fineness of the air was attested probably by the growth of ivy, which was the richest I saw in England, where the ivy grows so richly in every place. It not only climbed all the trees on that down, and clothed their wintry nakedness with a foliage perpetually green, but it flung its shining mantles over the walls that shut in the mansions on the varying slopes, and densely aproned the laps of the little hollows of the lawns and woods. It had the air of feeling its life in every leaf, and of lustily reaching out for other conquests, like the

true weed it is in Old England, and not the coddled exotic which people make it believe it is in New England. I do not know that I ever lost the surprise of it in its real character; I only know that this surprise was greatest for me on those happy heights.

The modern hand-book which was guiding our steps about Bath advised us that if we would frequent Milsom Street about four o'clock we should find the tide of fashion flowing through it; but the torrent must have been very rapid indeed, for we always missed it, and were obliged to fill the rather empty channel with the gayety of the past. There are delightful shops everywhere in Bath, and so many places to buy old family silver that it seems as if all the old families must have poured all their old silver into them, till you visit other parts of England, and find the same superabundance of second-hand plate everywhere. But it is in Milsom Street that most of the fine shops are, and I do not deny that you will see some drops of the tide of fashion clustered about their windows. Other drops have percolated to the tea-rooms, where at five o'clock there is a scene of dissipation around the innocent cups. But there was no reason why we should practise the generous self-deceit of our hand-book regarding the actual Milsom Street, when we had its former brilliancy to draw upon. Even in the time of Jane Austen's people it was no longer "residential," though it was not so wholly gone to shops as now. The most eligible lodgings were in it, and here General Tilney sojourned till he insisted on carrying Catherine off to Northanger Abbey with his children. "His lodgings were taken the very day after he left them, Catherine," said Mrs. Allen, afterwards. "But no wonder; Milsom Street, you know." Still, the finest shops prevailed there, then, and when Isabella Thorpe wished to punish the two young men who had been so impertinently admiring her, by following them, she persuaded Catherine that she was taking her to a shop-window in Milsom Street to see "the prettiest hat you can imagine ... very like yours, with coquelicot ribbons instead of green." In Milsom Street, sweet Anne Elliot first meets Captain Wentworth after he comes to Bath, and he is much confused. But it is no wonder that so many things happen in or through Milsom Street in Bath fiction, for it leads directly, or as directly as a street in Bath can, from the New Assembly to the Old Assembly which were called, puzzlingly

enough for the after-comer, the Upper Rooms and the Lower Rooms, as if they were on different floors of the same building, instead of separated a quarter of a mile by a rise of ground. The street therefore led also to the Pump Room and to the divers parades and walks and gardens, and was of prime topographical importance, as well as literary interest.

We could not visit the Lower Rooms because they were burned down a great while ago, but for the sake of certain famous heroines, and many more dear girls unknown to fame, we went to the Upper Rooms, and found them most characteristically getting ready for the Easter Ball which the County Club was to give, and which promised to relume for one night at least the vanished splendors of Bath. The Ballroom was really noble, and there were sympathetic tea-rooms and cloakrooms, and the celebrated octagonal room in the centre, where workmen were hustling the pretty and gallant ghosts of former dances with their sawing and hammering, and painting and puttying, and measuring the walls for decorations. I do not know that I should have minded all that, though I hate to have the present disturbing the past so much as it must in England; but something very tragical happened to me at the Upper Rooms which branded that visit in my mind. A young fellow civilly detached himself from the other artisans and showed us through the place, and though we could have easily found the way ourselves, it seemed fit to return his civility in silver. Sixpence would have been almost too much, but in my pocket there was a sole coin that enlarged itself to my dismay to the measure of a full moon. I appealed to my companion, but when did ever a woman have money unless she had just got it from a husband or father? The thought struck me that for once I might behave as shabbily as I should always like to do; but I had not the courage. Slowly, with inward sighs, I drew forth my hand and bestowed upon that most superfluous youth, for five minutes' disservice, a whole undivided half-crown, received his brief "Thankyesir," rendered as if he took half-crowns every day for that sort of thing, and tottered forth so bewildered that I quite forgot the emotion proper to the place where Catherine Morland went to her first ball, and Anne Elliot first met Captain Wentworth after coming to Bath. It was there that Catherine had to sit the whole evening through without dancing or speaking with a soul, and was only saved by overhearing two gentlemen speak of her as "a pretty girl." Such words had

their due effect; she immediately thought the evening pleasanter than she had found it before, her humble vanity was contented; she ... went to her chair in good humor with everybody, and perfectly satisfied with her share of public attention.

I should have liked immensely to look on at the County Ball which was to assemble all the quality of the neighborhood on something like the old terms, and I heard with joy the story of ten gay youths who returned from one of the last balls in Bath chairs, drawn through the gray dawn in Milsom Street by as many mettlesome chairmen. Only when one has studied the Bath chair on its own ground, and seen the sort of gloomy veteran who pulls it, commonly with a yet gloomier old lady darkling under its low buggy-top, can one realize the wild fun of such an adventure. It might not always be safe, for the chairman sometimes balks, and in case of sharp acclivities altogether refuses to go on, as I have already told.

In paying our duty to the literary memories of the town we did not fail to visit the church of St. Swithin, in the shadow of which Fanny Burney lies buried with the gentle exile who made her Madame d'Arblay, and a very happy wife after the glory of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* began to be lost a little in the less merited success of *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*. The gate was locked and we were obliged to come away without getting into the church-yard, but we saw "about where" one of the great mothers of English fiction lay; and the pew-opener, found for us with some difficulty and delay by an interested neighbor, let us into the church, and there we revered the tablets of the kindly pair. They were on the wall of the gallery, and I thought they might have been nearer together, but hers was very fitly inscribed; and one could stand before it, and indulge a pensive mood in thoughts of the brilliant girl's first novel, which set the London world wild and kept Dr. Johnson up all night, mixed with fit reflections on her father's ambition in urging her into the service of the "sweet Queen" Charlotte, where she was summoned with a bell like a waiting-maid, and the fire of her young genius was quenched.

If one would have a merrier memory of literary Bath, let him go visit the house, if he can find it, of the Reverend Dr. Wilson, in Alfred Street, where the famous Mrs. Macaulay, the first English historian of her name, presided as a species of tenth muse, and received the homage of whatever was

academic in the rheumatic culture of Bath. She was apparently the idol of the heart as well as the head (it was thought to have been partially turned) of the good man whose permanent guest she was. He put up a marble statue to her as History in his London parish church, and had a vault made near it to receive her remains when she should have done with them. But before this happened, History fell in love with Romance in the person of a young man many years her junior, and on their marriage the reverend doctor irately removed her statue from the chancel of St. Stephen's, and sold her vault for the use of some less lively body. Her new husband was the brother of a Dr. Graham who had formerly travelled with Lord Nelson's beautiful Lady Hamilton and exhibited her "reclining on a celestial bed" as the Goddess of Health and Beauty. On the night of Mrs. Macaulay's birthday the physician presented her with an address in which he claimed, by virtue of his mud baths, "the supreme blessedness of removing under God, the complicated and obstinate maladies your fair and very delicate frame was afflicted with." The company danced, played, and talked, and went out to a supper of "syllabubs, jellies, creams, ices, wine-cakes, and a variety of dry and fresh fruits, particularly grapes and pineapples."

The literary celebrities who visited Bath, or sojourned, or lived there were not to be outnumbered except in London alone, if in fact the political capital exceeded in them. Mr. Tyte mentions among others De Foe, who stopped at Bath in collecting materials for his *Tour of Great Britain*; and who met Alexander Selkirk there, and probably imagined Robinson Crusoe from him on the spot. Richard Steele came and wrote about Bath in the *Spectator*. Gay, Pope and Congreve, Lady Mary Wortley Montague, Fielding and Mrs. Radcliffe came and went; and Sheridan dwelt there in his father's house, and met the beautiful Miss Linley, woed, won, went off to Paris with her and wedded her, and returned to fight two duels in defence of her honor. Goldsmith and Johnson and Boswell resorted to the waters; Lord Chesterfield wrote some of his letters from a place where worldly politeness might be so well studied; Walpole some of his where gossip so abounded. De Quincey was a school-boy in Bath; Southey spent his childhood there, and Coleridge preached there, as he did in many other Unitarian pulpits in England; Cowper wrote his "Verses on finding the Heel of a Shoe at Bath" after coming to see his cousin, Lady Hesketh, there; Burke met his wife

there, and so did Beckford, who wrote *Vathek*, meet his. Christopher Anstey, the author of that humorous, that scandalous, that amusing satire, the *New Bath Guide*, lived most of his life in the city he delighted to laugh at.

The list might be indefinitely prolonged, but the name which most attracts, after the names of Jane Austen and Fanny Burney, is the name of Charles Dickens. He must have come to Bath when he was very young, and very probably on some newspaper errand; for when he wrote *The Pickwick Papers* he was still a reporter. His genius for boisterous drollery was not just the qualification for dealing with the pathetic absurdities of a centre of fashion which was no longer quite what it had been. The earlier decades of the nineteenth century found Bath in a social decline which all her miraculous waters could not medicine. But the members of the Pickwick Club went to a ball at the Upper Rooms where some noble ladies won a good deal of Mr. Pickwick's money; and he had already visited the Pump Room. Dickens derides the company at both places with the full force of his high spirits and riots in the description of Mr. Pickwick's introduction to the Master of the Ceremonies, Angelo Cyrus Bantam, Esq. The exaggerated caricature preserves some traits of the M.C.'s, his illustrious predecessors; and perhaps some such bold handling as Dickens could best render the personal effect of a beau of the period. He "was a charming young man of not more than fifty, dressed in a very bright-blue coat with resplendent buttons, black trousers, and the thinnest possible pair of highly polished boots. A gold eyeglass was suspended from his neck by a short, broad black ribbon, a gold snuff-box was lightly clasped in his left hand ... and he carried a pliant ebony cane with a heavy gold top. His linen was of the very whitest, finest and stiffest; his wig of the glossiest, blackest and curliest.... His features were contracted into a perpetual smile. 'Welcome to Ba-ath, sir. This is indeed an acquisition. Most welcome to Ba-ath.... Never been in Ba-ath, Mr. Pickwick?... Never in Ba-ath! He! he! Mr. Pickwick, you are a wag. Not bad, not bad. Good, good. He! he! he! Re-mark-able!' "

This might have happened, but it does not seem as if it had happened, and one sighs amid the horse-play for "the touch of a vanished hand," like Jane Austen's, to give delicacy and precision to the picture. The Pickwick Club first put up at the White Hart, just opposite the Pump Room, but it was

while living in “the upper portion of the Royal Crescent,” that Mr. Winkle had his amusing adventure with Mrs. Dowler, whose husband had fallen asleep after promising to sit up for her return from a ball. The elderly reader will probably remember better than the younger how Mr. Winkle went down-stairs in his bed-gown and slippers to let the lady in, and then had the door blown to behind him, and was obliged to plunge into her sedan-chair to hide himself from the mockeries of a party coming into the

THE GUINEA-PIG MAN

Crescent; how he fled to escape her infuriated husband, and in Bristol found Mr. Dowler, who had also fled from Bath to escape Mr. Winkle and the consequences of his own violent threats. It was at the house of the Master of Ceremonies in Queen's Square that "a select company of Bath footmen" entertained Sam Weller at a "friendly swarry consisting of a boiled leg of mutton and the usual trimmings," but I am unable to give the number where Sam's note of invitation instructed him to ring at the "airy bell."

In fact, on going back to the Bath episode of the *Pickwick Papers*, one finds so much make-believe required of him that the remembrance of one's earlier delight in it is a burden and a hindrance rather than a help. You could

get on better with it if you were reading it for the first time, and even then it would not seem very like what he probably saw. You would be sensible of the elemental facts, but in the picture they are all jarred out of semblance to life. The effect is quite that of a Cruikshank illustration, abounding in impossible grotesqueness, yet related here and there to reality by an action, an expression, a figure. It is screaming farce, or it is shrieking melodrama; the mirror is held up to nature, but nature makes a face in it. Nevertheless, on an earlier visit to England, I had once seen a water-side character getting into a Thames steam-boat who seemed to me exactly like a character of Dickens; and in Bath I used often to meet a little, queer plinth of a man, whose nationality I could not make out, but every inch of whose five feet was full of the suggestion of Dickens. His face, topped by a frowzy cap, was twisted in a sort of fixed grin, and his eyes looked different ways, perhaps to prevent any attempt of mine to escape him. He carried at his side a small wicker-box which he kept his hand on; and as he drew near and halted, I heard a series of plaintive squeaks coming from it. “Make you perform the guinea-pig?” he always asked, and before I could answer, he dragged a remonstrating guinea-pig from its warm shelter, and stretched it on the cage, holding it down with both hands. “Johnny die queek!” he commanded, and lifted his hands for the instant in which Johnny was motionlessly gathering his forces for resuscitation. Then he called exultantly, “Bobby’s coming!” and before the police were upon him, Johnny was hustled back into his cosy box, woefully murmuring to its comfort of his hardship; and the queer little man smiled his triumph in every direction. The sight of this brief drama always cost me a penny; perhaps I could have had it for less; but I did not think a penny was too much.

IV

A COUNTRY TOWN AND A COUNTRY HOUSE

THERE were so many pleasing places within easy reach of Bath that it was hard to choose among them, and Bath itself was so constantly pleasing that it was a serious loss to leave it for a day, for an hour. I do not know, now, why we should have gone first, when we gathered force to break the charm, to Bradford-on-Avon. If we did not go first to Wells it was perhaps because we balanced the merits of an eighth-century Saxon Chapel against those of a twelfth-century Cathedral, and felt that the chapel had prior claim. Possibly, spoiled as we were by the accessibility of places in England, and relaxed as we were by the air of Bath, we shrank from spending five or six hours in the run to Wells when we could get to and from Bradford in little or no time. Wells is one of the exceptions to the rule that in England everything is within easy reach from everywhere, or else Bath is an exception among the places that Wells is within easy reach of. At any rate we were at Bradford almost before we knew it, or knew anything of its history, which there is really a good deal of.

The best of this history seems to be that when in the year 652 the Saxon King of Wessex overcame the Britons in a signal victory, he did not exterminate the survivors, but allowed them to become the fellow-subjects of their Saxon conquerors under his rule. Just how great a blessing this was it would not be easy to say at the actual distance of time, but it seems to have been thought a good deal of a blessing for a King of Wessex to bestow. To crown it, some fifty years later, a monastery was founded in Bradford, by St. Aldhelm, a nephew of the King. A chapel was built on the site of the uncle’s battle with the Britons, and such as it was then such we now saw it, the vicar of the parish having not long ago rescued it from its irreligious uses as a cottage dwelling and a free school, and restored it spiritually and materially to its original function. It is precious for being the only old church in England which is wholly unchanged in form, and though very small and very rude it is pathetically interesting. It seemed somehow much

older than many monuments of my acquaintance which greatly antedated it; much older, say, than the Roman remains at Bath, for it is a relic of the remote beginning of an order of things, and not the remnant of a fading civilization. No doubt the Saxons who built it on the low hill slope where it stands, in a rude semblance of the Roman churches which were the only models of Christian architecture they could have seen, thought it an edifice of the dignity since imparted to it by the lapse of centuries. Without, the grass grew close to its foundations, in the narrow plot of ground about it, and the sturdy little fabric showed its Romanesque forms in the gray stone pierced by mere slits of windows, which gave so faint a light within that, after entering, one must wait a moment before attempting to move about in the cramped, dungeon-like space. With the simple altar, and the chairs set before it for worshippers, it gave an awful sense of that English continuity on which political and religious changes vainly

SAXON CHAPEL AT BRADFORD

Wholly unchanged in form since it was built in the eighth century

break: the parts knit themselves together again, and transmit the original consciousness from age to age. The type of beauty in the child who sold us

permits to see the chapel and followed us into it was in like manner that of the Saxon maids whose hulking fathers had beaten in battle the fierce, dark little Britons on that spot twelve hundred years before: the same blazing red cheeks, the same blue, blue eyes, the same sunny hair which has always had to make up for the want of other sunniness in that dim clime, falling round the fair neck. No doubt the snuffles with which the pretty creature suffered were also of the same date and had descended from mother to daughter in the thirty generations dwelling in just such stone-cold stone cottages as that where we found her. It was one of a row of cottages near the chapel, of a red-tiled, many-gabled, leaden-sashed, diamond-paned picturesqueness that I have never seen surpassed out of the theatre, or a Kate Greenaway picture, and was damp with the immemorial dampness that inundated us from the open door when we approached. What perpetuity of colds in the head must be the lot of youths in such abodes; how rheumatism must run riot among the joints of age in the very beds and chimney-corners! Better, it sometimes seemed, the greatest ugliness ever devised by a Yankee carpenter in dry and comfortable wood than the deadly poetry of such dwellings.

But there were actually some wooden houses in Bradford, or partially wooden, which the driver of our fly took us to see when we had otherwise exhausted the place. They had the timbered gables of the Tudor times when the English seemed to build with an instinct for domestic comfort earlier unknown and later lost; but otherwise Bradford was of stone, stony. It studded the slopes of its broken uplands with warts and knots of little dwellings, and had a certain foreignness, possibly imparted by the long abode of the Flemish cloth-workers whom an enterprising manufacturer invited to the place centuries before, and whose skill established its ancient industry in a finer product and a greater prosperity. Now, one reads, the competition of the same art in Yorkshire has reduced the weavers of Bradford to a fifth of their number fifty years ago. But the presence of the Flemings was so influential in the seventeenth century that they had a quarter of their own, and altogether there were intimations in Bradford so Continental, the raw rainy day of our visit, that I thought if it could have had a little sun on it there were moments when it might have looked Italian.

Perhaps not, and I do not mean that in its own way it was not delightful. We wandered from the station into it by a bridge over the Avon that was all

a bridge could be asked to be by the most exacting tourist, who could not have asked more, midway, than a guardhouse which had become a chapel, and then a lock-up, and finally an object of interest merely. When we had got well into the town, and wanted a carriage, we were taken in charge by the kindest policeman that ever befriended strangers. If not the only policeman in Bradford, he was the only one on duty, and his duty was mainly, as it seemed, to do us any pleasure he could. He told us where we could find a fly, and not content with this, he went in person with us to the stable-yard, and did not leave us till he had made a boy come out and promise us a fly immediately. Never, even when girdled by the protecting arm of a blue giant resolved to bring my gray hairs in safety to some thither side of Fifth Avenue or Broadway, have I known such sweetness in a minister of the law. We could only thank him again and again, and vainly wish that we might do something for him in return. But what can one do for a policeman except offer him a cigar? But if one does not smoke?

The stable-boy seemed a well-grown lad in that character, but when he put on a metal-buttoned coat and a top-hat, and coachman's boots in honor of us, he shrank into the smallest-sized man. It seemed the harder, therefore, that when he proposed to bow us into the fly with fit dignity, and pulled open the door, it should come off its hinge and hang by its handle from his grasp. But we did what we could to ignore the mortifying incident, and after that we abetted him in always letting us out on the other side.

His intelligence was creditable to him as a large boy, if not as a small man, and but for him we should not have seen those timbered houses which were in a street dreadfully called, with the English frankness which never spares the sensibilities of strangers, The Shambles. With us shambles are only known in tragic poetry; in real life they veil their horror in delicate French and become *abattoirs*; but as that street in Bradford was probably the Shambles in 652, the year of the great Saxon victory over the Britons, it was still so called in the year of our visit, 1904. We did not complain; the houses were not so wooden as we could have wished for the sake of the rheumatism and snuffles within, but they must have been drier than houses entirely of stone. Besides we had just come warm from the Italian aspect of one of the most charming houses I saw in England, and we did not really much mind the discomfort of others. The house was that Kingston House,

world-famous for having been reproduced in papier-maché at the last Universal Exposition in Paris, which a wealthy cloth-manufacturer had had built for himself about 1600 by Giovanni of Padua, and it was full of beautiful Italian feeling in an English environment. Masses of cold, cold evergreen shrubs hide it from the street, but at the moment the rain was briefly intermitting, and we surprised it, as it were, in a sort of reverie of the South under an afternoon sky, hesitating from gray to blue. At this happy instant the place was embellished by a peacock, sweeping with outspread tail the farthest green of a long velvet lawn, and lending the splendor of his color to a picture richly framed by a stretch of balustrade. The house, with English shyness (which it surely might have overcome after being shown as the most beautiful house in England), faced away from the street, towards a garden which sloped downward from it, towards a dove-cote with pigeons in red and mauve cooing about its eaves and roofs, and mingling their deep-throated sighs with the murmur of a mill somewhere beyond the Avon.

There were other beautiful and famous houses not far from Bradford, but our afternoon was waning, and we consoled ourselves as we could with the old Barton Barn, which was built two hundred years after King Etheldred had given the manor to the abbess of Shaftesbury, and became locally known as the tithe-barn from its use in receiving the dues of the church in kind during the long simple centuries when they were so paid. It is a vast, stately structure, and is now used for the cow-barn of a dairy farmer, whose unkempt cattle stood about, knee-deep in the manure, with the caked and clotted hides which the West of England cattle seem to wear all winter. It did not look such a place as one would like to get milk from in America, but if we could have that

KINGSTON HOUSE, BRADFORD
Built by Giovanni of Padua, about 1600

old cow-barn, without the cows, at home, I think we might gainfully exchange our neatest and wholesomest dairy for it. The rich superabundance of the past in England is what always strikes one, and the piety with which the past is preserved and restored promises more and more of antiquity. I am sure the Barton Barn at Bradford is only waiting for some public-spirited magnate who will yet drive the untidy kine from its shelter, clean up, and sod and plant its yard, and with the help of some reverent architect renew it in the image of its prime, and stock it as a museum with the various kinds of tithes which in the ages of faith the neighboring churls used to pay into it for the comfort of the clergy here, and the good of their own souls hereafter.

When we got well away from the tithe-barn we felt the need of tea, and we walked back from the station where our large boy, or little man, had put us down, to the shop of a green-grocer, which is probably the most twentieth-century building in Bradford. It is altogether of wood, and behind the shop, where the vegetables vaunted themselves in all the variety of cabbage, there is a clean little room, with the walls and roof sheathed in

matched and painted pine. In this cheerful place, two rustics, a man and a boy, were drinking tea at the only table, but at our coming they politely choked down all the tea that was in their cups, and in spite of our entreaties hurried out with their cheeks bulged by what was left of their bread and butter. It was too bad, we murmured, but our hostess maintained that her late guests had really done, and she welcomed us with a hospitality rendered precious by her dusting off the chairs for us with her apron: I do not know that I had ever had that done for me before, and it seemed very romantic, and very English. The tea and butter were English too, and excellent, as they almost unfailingly are in England, no matter how poor the place where they are supplied, and the bread was no worse than usual. In a morsel of garden under the window some gillyflowers were in bloom, and when we expressed our surprise, the kind woman went out and gathered some for us: they bloomed pretty well all the winter, there, she said; but let not this give the fond reader too glowing an idea of the winter's warmth in the West of England. It only proves how sturdy the English flowers are, and how much raw cold they can stand without turning a petal.

Before our train went, we had time to go a longish walk, which we took through some pleasant, rather new, streets of small houses, each with its gardened front-yard hedged about it with holly or laurel, and looking a good, dull, peaceful home. It may really have been neither, and life may have been as wild, and bad, and fascinating in those streets as in the streets of any American town of the same population as Bradford. There was everything in the charming old place to make life easy; good shops, of all kinds, abundant provisions, stores, and not too many licensed victuallers, mostly women, privileged to sell wine and spirits. Yet, as the twilight began to fall, Bradford seemed very lonely, and we thought with terror, what if we should miss our train back to Bath! We got to the station, however, in time to cower half an hour over a grate in which the Company had munificently had a fire early in the day; and to correct by closer observation of an elderly pair an error which had flattered our national pride at the time of our arrival. In hurrying away to get the only fly at the station the lady had then fallen down and the gentleman had kept on, leaving her to pick herself up as she could, while he secured the fly. Perhaps he had not noticed her falling, but we chose to think the incident very characteristically middle-class English;

for all we knew it might be a betrayal of the way all the English treated their wives. Now the same couple arrived to take the train with us for Bath, and we heard them censuring its retard in accents unmistakably American! We fell from our superiority to our English half-brothers instantly; and I think the little experience was useful in confirming me in the resolution throughout my English travels to practise that slowness in sentencing and executing offenders against one's native ideals and standards which has always been the conspicuous ornament of English travellers among ourselves.

The day that we drove out from Bath to a certain charming old house which I wish I could impart my sense of, but which I will at once own the object of a fond despair, was apparently warm and bright, but was really dim and cold. That is, the warmth and brightness were superficial, while the cold and dimness were structural. The fields on either side of the road were mostly level, though here and there they dipped or rose, delicately green in their diaphanous garment of winter wheat, or more substantially clad in the grass which the winter's cold had not been great enough to embrown. Here and there were spaces of woodland, withdrawn rather afar from our course, except where the trees of an avenue led up from the highway to some unseen mansion. To complete the impression you must always, under the tender blue sky, thickly archipelagoed with whity-brown clouds, have rooks sailing and dreamily scolding, except where they wake into a loud clamor among the leafless tops surrounding some infrequent roof. There are flights of starlings suddenly winging from the pastures, where the cows with their untidily caked and clotted hides are grazing, and the sheep are idling over the chopped turnips, and the young lambs are shivering with plaintive cries. Amid their lamentations the singing of birds makes itself heard; the singing of larks, or the singing of robins, Heaven knows which, but always angelically sweet. The bare hedges cross and recross the fields, and follow the hard, smooth road in lines unbroken save near some village of gray walls and red roofs, topped by an ancient church. In the background, over a stretch of embankment or along the side of a low hill, sweeps a swift train of little English cars, with a soft whirring sound, as unlike the giant roar of one of our expresses as it is unlike the harsh clatter of a French *rapide*. The

white plumes of steam stretch after it in vain; break, and float thinner and thinner over the track behind.

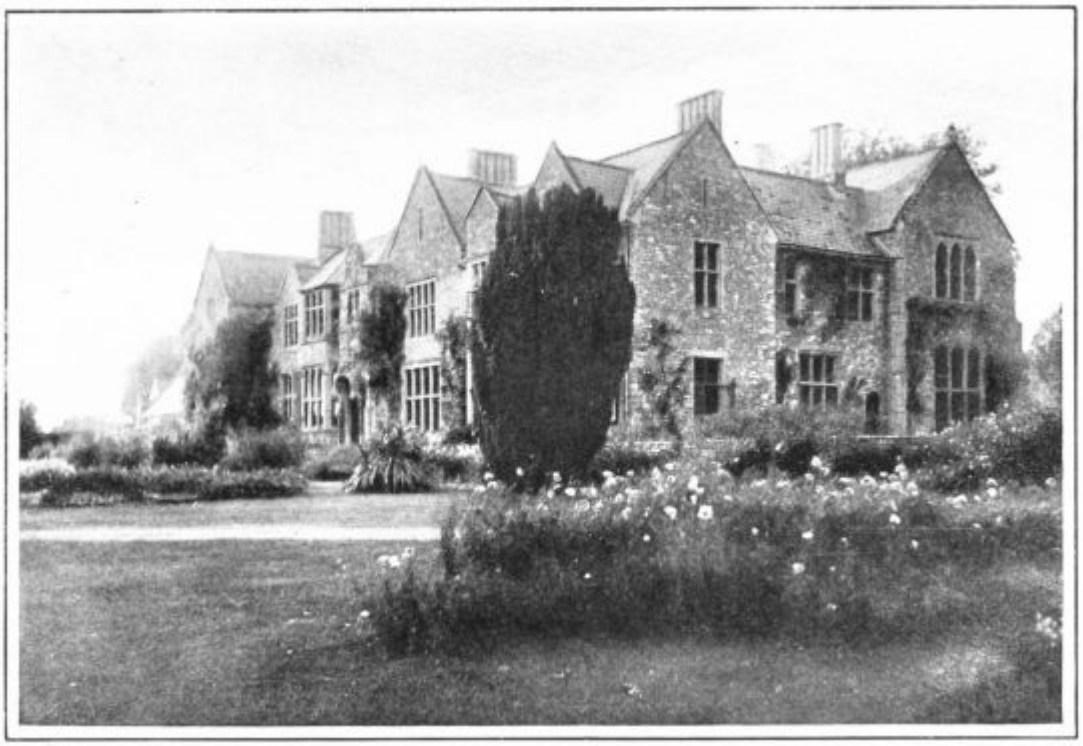
There were, except in the villages, very few houses; and we met even fewer vehicles. There was one family carriage, with the family in it, and a sort of tranter's wagon somewhere out of Hardy's enchanted pages, with a friendly company of neighbors going to Bath inside it. At one exciting moment there was a lady in a Bath chair driving a donkey violently along the side of the road. A man slashing and wattling the lines of hedge, or trimming the turf beside the foot-path, left his place in literature, and came to life as the hedger and ditcher we had always read of. Beneath the hedges here and there very "rathe primroses" peered out intrepidly, like venturesome live things poising between further advance and retreat. The road was admirable, but it seemed strange that so few people used it. The order in which it was kept was certainly worthy of constant travel, and we noted that from point to point there was a walled space beside it for the storage of road-mending material. At home we should dump the broken stone in the gutter near the place that needed mending, or on the face of the highway, but in England, where everything is so static, and the unhurried dynamic activities are from everlasting to everlasting, a place is specially provided for broken stone, and the broken stone is kept there.

The drive from Bath to our destination was twelve miles, and the friend who was to be our host for the day had come as far on his wheel to ask us. It was the first of many surprises in the continued use of the bicycle which were destined to confound strangers from a land whose entire population seemed to go bicycle-mad a few years ago, and where now they are so wholly recovered that the wheel is almost as obsolete as the russet shoe. As both the wheel and the russet shoe are excellent things in their way, though no American could now wear the one or use the other without something like social suicide, the English continue to employ them with great comfort and entire self-respect. They fail so wholly to understand why either should have gone out with us that one becomes rather ashamed to explain that it was for the same reason that they came in, merely because everybody had them.

Our friend had given us explicit directions for our journey, and it was well that he did so, for we had two turnings to take on that lonely road, and

there were few passers whom we could ask our way. We really made the driver ask it, and he did not like to do it, for he felt, as we did, that he ought to know it. I am afraid he was not a very active intelligence, and I doubt if he had ever before been required to say what so many birds and flowers were. I think he named most of them at random, and when it came at last to a very common white flower, he boldly said that he had forgotten what it was. As we drew near the end of our journey he grew more anxiously complicated in the knowledge of our destination which he acquired. But he triumphed finally in the successive parleys held to determine the site of a house which had been in its place seven or eight hundred years, and might, in that time have ceased to be a matter of doubt even among the farther neighbors. It was with pride on his part and pleasure on ours that suddenly and most unexpectedly, when within a few yards of it, he divined the true way, and drove into the court-yard of what had at times been the dower-house, where we were to find our host and guide to the greater mansion.

As this house is a type of many old dower-houses I will be so intimate as to say that you enter it from the level of the ground outside, such a thing as under-pinning to lift the floor from the earth and to make an air-space below being still vaguely known in England, and in former times apparently unheard of. But when once within you are aware of a charm which keeps such houses in the inviolate form of the past; and this one was warmed for us by a hospitality which refined itself down to the detail of a black cat basking before the grate: a black cat that promptly demanded milk after our luncheon, but politely waited to be asked to the saucer when it was brought. From the long room which looked so much a study that I will not call it differently, the windows opened on the shrubberies and lawns and gardens that surround such houses in fiction, and keep them so visionary to the comer who has known them nowhere else that it would be easy to transgress the bounds a guest must set himself, and speak as freely of the people he met there as if they were persons in a pleasant book. Two of them, kindred of the



SUTTON COURT, ONE OF ENGLAND'S HISTORIC HOUSES

manor-house and of the great house near, had come from three or four miles away on their wheels. Our host himself, the youngest son of the great house, was a painter, by passion as well as by profession, and a reviewer of books on art, such as plentifully bestrewed his table and forbade us to think of the place in the ordinary terms as a drawing-room. It seemed to me characteristic of the convenient insular distances that here, far in the West, almost on the Welsh border, he should be doing this work for a great London periodical, in as direct touch with the metropolis as if he dwelt hard by the Park, and could walk in fifteen minutes to any latest exhibition of pictures.

When he took us after luncheon almost as long a walk to his studio, I fancied that I was feeling England under my feet as I had not before. We passed through a gray hamlet of ten or a dozen stone cottages, where, behind or above their dooryard hedges, they had gradually in the long ages clustered near the great house, and a little cottage girl, who was like a verse of Wordsworth, met us, and bidding us good-day, surprised us by dropping a courtesy. It surprised even our friends, who spoke of it as if it were almost the last courtesy dropped in England, and made me wish I could pick it up, and put it in my note-book, to grace some such poor page as this: so pretty

was it, so shy, so dear, with such a dip of the suddenly weakening little knees.

We were then on our way to see first the small gray church which had been in its place among the ancient graves from some such hoary eld as English churches dream of in like places all over the land, and make our very faith seem so recent a thing. It was in a manner the family chapel, but it was also the spiritual home of the lowlier lives of village and farm, and was shared with them in the reciprocal kindness common in that English world of enduring ties. There for ages the parish folk had all been christened, and all married, and all buried, and there in due time they had been or would be forgotten. The edifice was kept in fit repair by the joint piety of rich and poor, with the lion's share of the expense rightfully falling to the rich, as in such cases it always does in England; and within and without the church the affection of the central family had made itself felt and seen, since the Christian symbols were first rudely graven in the stone of the square church-tower.

The name of the family always dwelling in that stately old house whither we were next going had not always been the same, but its nature and its spirit had been the same. An enlightened race would naturally favor the humane side in all times, and the family were Parliamentarian at the time England shook off the Stuart tyranny, and revolutionist when she finally ridded herself of her faithless Jameses and Charleses. In the archives of the house there are records of the hopes vainly cherished by a son of it who was then in New York, that our own revolt against the Georgian oppression might be composed to some peaceful solution of the quarrel. It was not his fault that this hope was from the first moment too late, but it must be one of his virtues in American eyes that he saw from the beginning the hopelessness of any accommodation without a full concession of the principles for which the colonies contended. In the negotiation of the treaty at Versailles in 1783 he loyally did his utmost for his country against ours at every point of issue, and especially where the exiled American royalists were concerned. Our own commissioners feared while they respected him, and John Adams wrote of him in his diary, "He pushes and presses every point as far as it can possibly go; he has a most eager, earnest, pointed spirit."

This was the first baronet of his line, but the real dignity and honor of the house has been that of a race of scholars and thinkers. Their public spirit has been of the rarer sort which would find itself most at home in the literary association of the place, and it has come to literary expression in a book of singular charm. In the gentle wisdom of sympathies which can be universal without transcending English conditions, the *Talk at a Country House*, as the book modestly calls itself, strays to topics of poetry, and politics, and economics, and religion, yet keeps its allegiance to the old house we were about to see as a central *motif*. It was our first English country house, but I do not think that its claim on our interest was exaggerated by its novelty, and I would willingly chance finding its charm as potent again, if I might take my way to it as before. We came from the old church now by the high-road, now through fringes of woodland, and now over shoulders of pasturage, where the lesser celandine delicately bloomed, and the primrose started from the grass, till at last we emerged from under the sheltering boughs of the tall elms that screened the house from our approach. There was a brook that fell noisily over our way, and that we crossed on a rustic bridge, and there must have been a drive to the house, but I suppose we did not follow it. Our day of March had grown gray as it had grown old, and we had not the light of a day in June, such as favored an imaginary visitor in *Talk at a Country House*, but we saw the place quite so much as he did that his words will be better than any of my own in picturing it.

"The air was resonant with rooks as they filled the sky with the circles in which they wheeled to and fro, disappearing in the distance to appear again, and so gradually reach their roosting trees.... I might call them a coruscation of rooks.... On my left I saw ... the old battlemented wall, and a succession of gables on either side ... and one marked by a cross which I knew must be the chapel.... The old, battlemented wall had a flora of its own: ferns, crimson valerian, snap-dragons, and brier-roses ... and an ash and a yew growing on the battlements where they had been sown no doubt by the rooks. And as I passed through an archway of the road, the whole house came in view. It was not a castle nor a palace, but it might be called a real though small record of what men had been doing there from the time of the Doomsday Book to our own."

As we grew more acquainted with it, we realized that at the front it was a building low for its length, rising gray on terraces that dropped from its level in green, green turf. Some of the long windows opened down to the grass, with which the ground floor was even. Above rose the Elizabethan, earlier Tudor, and Plantagenet of the main building, the wings, and the tower of the keep. The rear of the house was enclosed by a wall of Edward II.'s time, and beyond this was a wood of elms, tufted with the nests of that eternal chorus of coruscating rooks. At first we noticed their multitudinous voices, but in a little while they lost all severalty of sound, like waves breaking on the shore, and I fancied one being so lulled by them that one would miss them when out of hearing, and the sense would ache for them in the less soothing silence.

The family was away from home, and there were no reserves in the house, left in the charge of the gardener, as there must have been if it were occupied. But I do not hope to reproduce my impressions of it. I can only say that a sense of intellectual refinement and of liberal thought was what qualified for me such state as characterized the place. The whole structure within as well as without was a record of successive temperaments as well as successive tunes. Each occupant had built up or pulled down after his fancy, but the changes had left a certain physiognomy unchanged, as the mixture of different strains in the blood still leaves a family look pure. The house, for all its stateliness, was not too proud for domesticity; its grandeur was never so vast that the home circle would be lost in it. The portraits on the walls were sometimes those of people enlarged to history in their lives, but these seemed to keep with the rest their allegiance to a common life. The great Bess of Hardwicke, the "building Bess," whose architectural impulses effected themselves in so many parts of England, had married into the line and then married out of it (to become, as Countess of Shrewsbury, one of the last jailers of Mary Queen of Scots), and she had left her touch as well as her face on its walls, but she is not a more strenuous memory in it than a certain unstoried dowager. She, when her son died, took half the house and left half to her daughter-in-law, whom she built off from herself by a partition carried straight through the mansion to the garden wall, with a separate gate for each.

In her portrait she looks all this and more; and a whole pathetic romance lives in the looks of that lady of the first Charles's time who wears a ring pendent from her neck, and a true-lovers' knot embroidered on the back over her heart, and who died unwedded. There were other legends enough; and where the pictures asserted nothing but lineage they were still very interesting. They were of people who had a life in common with the house, wives and mothers and daughters, sons and husbands and fathers, married into it or born into it, and all receiving from it as much as they imparted to it, as if they were of one substance with it and it shared their consciousness that it was the home of their race. We have no like terms in America, and our generations, which are each separately housed, can only guess at the feeling for the place of their succession which the generations of such an English house must feel. It would be easy to overestimate the feeling, but in view of it I began to understand the somewhat defiant tenderness with which the children of such a house must cherish the system which keeps it inalienably their common home, though only the first-born son may dwell in it. If there were no law to transmit it to the eldest brother they might well in their passion for it be a law unto themselves at any sacrifice and put it in his hands to have and hold for them all.

In my own country I had known too much graceless private ownership to care to offer the consecrated tenure of such an ancestral home the violence of unfriendly opinions of primogeniture. But if I had been minded to do so, I am not sure that this house and all its dead and living would not have heard me at least tolerantly. In England, with the rigid social and civic conformity, there has always been ample play for personal character; perhaps without this the inflexible conditions would be insufferable, and all sorts of explosions would occur. With full liberty to indulge his whim a man does not so much mind being on this level or that, or which side of the social barrier he finds himself. But it is not his whim only that he may freely indulge: he may have his way in saying the thing he thinks, and the more frankly he says it the better he is liked, even when the thing is disliked. These are the conditions, implicit in everything, by which the status, elsewhere apparently so shaky, holds itself so firmly on its legs. They reconcile to its contradictions those who suffer as well as those who enjoy, and dimly, dumbly, the dweller in the cottage is aware that his

rheumatism is of one uric acid with the gout of the dweller in the great house. Every such mansion is the centre of the evenly distributed civilization which he shares, and makes each part of England as tame, and keeps it as wild, as any other. He knows that hut and hall must stand or fall together, for the present, at least; and where is it that there is any longer a future?

It seems strange to us New-Worldlings, after all the affirmation of history and fiction, to find certain facts of feudalism (mostly the kindlier facts) forming part of the status in England as they form no part of it with us. It was only upon reflection that I perceived how feudal this great house was in its relation to the lesser homes about it through many tacit ties of responsibility and allegiance. From eldest son to eldest son it had been in the family always, but it had descended with obligations which no eldest son could safely deny any more than he could refuse the privileges it conferred. To what gentlest effect the sense of both would come, the reader can best learn from the book which I have already named. This, when I had read it, had the curious retroactive power of establishing the author in a hospitable perpetuity in the place bereft of him, so that it now seems as if he had been chief of those who took leave of us that pale late afternoon of March, and warned us of the chill mists which shrouded us back to Bath. As we drove along between the meadows where the light was failing and the lambs plaintively called through the gloaming, we said how delightful it had all been, how perfectly, how satisfyingly, English. We tried again to realize the sentiment which, as well as the law, keeps such places in England in the ordered descent, and renders it part of the family faith and honor that the ancestral house should always be the home of its head. I think we failed because we conceived of the fact too objectively, and imagined conscious a thing that tradition has made part of the English nature, so that the younger brother acquiesces as subjectively in the elder brother's primacy as the elder brother himself, for the family's sake. We fancied that in their order one class yielded to another without grudging and without grasping, and that this, which fills England with picturesqueness and drama, was the secret of England. In the end we were not so sure. We were not sure even of our day's experience; it was like something we had

read rather than lived; and in this final unreality, I prefer to shirk the assertion of a different ideal, which all the same I devoutly hold.

V

AFTERNOONS IN WELLS AND BRISTOL

EVEN the local guide-book, which is necessarily optimistic, owns that the railroad service between Bath and Wells leaves something to be desired. The distance is twenty miles, and you can make it by the Great Western in something over two hours, but if you are pressed for time, the Somerset and Dorset line will carry you in two. As we were nationally in a hurry, though personally we had time to spare, we went and came by this line, mostly in a sort of vague rain, which favored the blossoming of the primroses along the railroad bank. Not that any part of the way needed rain; great stretches of the country lay soaking in the rainfall of the year before, which had not had sun enough to diminish its depth or breadth. In fact, on the eve of the sunniest and loveliest summer which perhaps England ever saw, the whole West looked in March as if wringing it out and hanging it up to dry in a steam-laundry could alone get the wet out of it. The water lay in wide expanses in the meadows, the plethoric streams swam chokeful; in the ditches men were at work with short scythes cutting the rank weeds out to give the flood a little course, but where it was to run was a question which did not answer itself.

We were in a third-class compartment, and we had the advantage of the simple life getting in and out of a train that seemed to stop oftener than it started. Our ever-changing fellow-passengers were mostly mothers of large little families: babies in arms, and babies slightly bigger, sisters and brothers pendent at arm's-length from the mother-hands, all with flaring blue eyes and flaming red cheeks, and flaxen hair and mild, sweet faces. Everybody was good, and helped these helpless families to mount and dismount; the kindly porters came and went with their impracticable bundles, and the passengers handed the brothers and sisters after the baby-burdened mother, or took them from her so that she might stumble into the carriage without falling upon her detached offspring. They were beautifully polite in word and deed, so that it was a consolation to hear and see them.

Shortly after our journey began, our tram was apparently run down by an old man and his granddaughter who got in blown and panting from their chase of half a mile before overtaking us. They were of the thin blond type of some English country folks, with a milder color in their cheeks than usual, and between his age and her youth they had about a third of the natural allowance of teeth. Agriculture is apparently nowhere favorable to the preservation of teeth; the rustic theory is that when a tooth offends one should pluck it out; but in England they never expect to replace it, while with us they pluck out all the others and replace them with new ones from the dentist's, so that when you see good teeth in a country mouth you know where they come from. Their want of teeth did not prevent the old man and the little girl from beginning to eat as soon as they could get their breath. They were going on a visit to her aunt, it seemed, and she was provisioned against the chances of famine in the hour's journey by a plentiful supply of oranges and apples and cakes in a net bag. "Us 'ad a 'ard chase, didn't us?" the old man asked her, with a sociable glance round the place. The little girl nodded with her mouth full, while her fingers explored the bag for more cakes to fill it when it should be empty, and the old man leaned tenderly towards her and suggested, "Couldn't your little 'and find something for me, too?" She drew forth an orange and a cake and gave them to him. Then they munched on, he garrulously, she silently; with what teeth they had between them they must have managed to masticate their food, and there is every probability that they reached their journey's end without famishing.

We had only two changes to make in our twenty miles, and as we were on the swift train that made the distance in two hours, we did not mind some delay at each change. It was just lunch-time when we reached Wells, and had ourselves driven in the hotel omnibus, a tremendously rackety vehicle, to The Swan. This bird's plumage was much disarranged by some sort of Easter preparations, and there were workmen taking down and hanging up decorations. But there was quiet in the coffee-room, where over a cold, cold, luncheon we shivered in sympathy with the icy gloom of the basement entrance of the inn, where an office-lady darkled behind her office-window, apparently in winter-long question whether she would be warmer with it shut or open. It was an inn of the old type, now happily obsolescent, which if it cannot smell directly of a stable-yard, does what it

can by smelling of the stable-boy in its doorway. We had not, however, come to Wells for the Swan, but for the cathedral, and as we could look out at its loveliness from the window where we ate lunch, we had really nothing to complain of. We had indeed something specially to be glad of, for we could there get our first glimpse of the cathedral through the Dean's Eye, or if this is not quite honest, from over the Dean's Eyebrow, so to call the top of the fifteenth-century gate, which commands the finest approach to the cathedral. When you have passed through the Dean's Eye it may not be quite as if you had passed through the Needle's Eye; but if I were an American millionaire who had my doubts of the way I was going I might have fancied myself achieving a feat even more difficult than the camel's, and to be entering the Kingdom as I crossed the lawn inside the gate, and moved in my rapture towards the divine edifice. All the English cathedrals are beautiful, but among those which are most beautiful the Wells cathedral is next to the cathedral of Ely, in my memory. I am not speaking of stateliness or grandeur, but of that more refined and exquisite something which makes a supreme appeal in, say, the Church of St. Mark's at Venice. I came away from the Wells cathedral saying to myself that there was a loveliness in it for which there was no word but feminine; and if this conveys any notion to the reader's mind, I shall be glad to leave him for the rest to any pictures of it he can find.

Of course we followed the verger through it in the usual way, but I could not make any one follow me with as much profit. It had its quaint details, and its grotesque details, from the bursting fun of the ages of faith, as well as its expressions of simple reverence, all blending to the sort of tender beauty I have tried to intimate, and it had its great wonder of an inverted arch, through which one looked at its glories as with one's head held upside down. I do not know but the 1325 clock of Peter Lightfoot, monk of Glastonbury, is as great a wonder as the inverted arch.

WELLS CATHEDRAL, FROM SOUTHEAST

We were so fortunate as to be present when it struck the hour, and so we saw the four knights on horseback go riding round, and the seated man kick two small bells with his heels, as he has been doing every fifteen minutes for nigh six hundred years. For the ordinary lay-mind on its travels, I suppose, this active personage is one of the great attractions of the cathedral next after the toothache-man in one of the capitals who pulls his mouth open to show his aching tooth. He has been much photographed, of course, but he is to be seen *in situ* just above that bishop's tomb which is sovereign, through the bishop's merits, for the toothache. The verger, who told us this, left us to suppose that the tomb had been too difficult of application to the tooth of the sufferer above, and that this was why he was still appealing to the public sympathy.

We offered him a mute condolence after we had sated ourselves with the beauty of the most beautiful chapter-house in the world, ascending and descending by the foot-worn wide crossing sweep of the unique stairway, and then walking through into the Vicar's Close, and the two rows of Singers' Houses, like cottages in a particularly successful stage perspective. As we passed one of these histrionic habitations, each with its lifelike dooryard and its practicable gate, three of the clerical students, who have an immemorial right to lodge with the singers, came out gayly challenging one

another which way they should walk, and deciding on Tor Hill, wherever that was, and then starting off at a good round pace in the rain. The doubting day had sorrowed and sowed to that effect, and when the verger had led us through the cloister aisle into the gardens of the bishop's palace the grounds were so much like waters that there seemed no reason why the ducks should not have been sailing on the lawn as well as the moat. This, with the embattled wall, is said, and probably fabled, to have formed the defence of his house for a certain bishop whose life was threatened by the monks of Bath, who if they had waited five hundred years in the idea of suddenly descending upon him by our swift train, would have found him prepared to give them a warm reception. But the day of our visit there were no belligerent monks; the place was almost peacefully picturesque, with no protection needed but an umbrella against the rain heavily dripping from the ivy of the ruined cloister arches, and goloshes against the water of the sopping earth.

It was the idea of one of us who had found an ancient almshouse very amusingly characteristic on a former English journey, that we could not do better, after the cathedral, than go to one of the several time-honored charitable foundations in Wells. We had our choice of several, including one for six poor men, and one for twelve poor men and two poor women. But we must have selected the largest, where both poor men and poor women dwell. Such people do not end their days in the snugness of such places with anything of the disgrace which attaches to paupers with us. Their lot is rather a coveted honor, and on their level is felt to add dignity to the decline of life. Each old woman has her kitchen, and each old man his kitchen garden (always edged with simple flowers); and they have a stated income, generally six or seven shillings a week, with which they provision themselves as they please.

We did not find the matron of the place we chose without some difficulty, or some apologetic delay for her want of preparation. But she was really well enough, when she came, though it was charing-day, and the whole house was even better prepared, which was the essential thing. I cannot say that the inmates seemed especially glad to see their poor American relations, but there was no active opposition to our visit, and we did our best to win the favor of three old men shown as specimens in the

large common room where they were smoking by the chimney, and, if I am any judge of human nature, criticising the management down to the motives of the original benefactor in the fourteenth century. We had some brief but not unfriendly parley, and after offering a modest contribution towards the general tobacco-fund, we said good-bye to these meritorious old men, who made a show of standing up, but did not really do so, I think. The matron would have left the door open, but I bethought me to ask if they would not rather have it shut, and they said with one voice that they would. I closed it with the conviction that they would instantly begin talking about us, and not to our advantage, but I could not blame them. Age is censorious, poverty is apt to be envious, infirmity is not amiable and we were not praiseworthy. Upon the whole I hope they gave it us good and strong; for I am afraid that the next pensioner whom we visited thought better of us than we deserved. I got the notion that she was in some sort a show pensioner, and that therefore we had not taken her unawares. Her room was both parlor and kitchen, and was decorated no less with her cooking apparatus than the china openly set about the wall on shelves. She was full of smiles and little polite bobs, and most willing to have her room admired, even to the bed that crowded her table towards her grate, and left a very snug fit for her easy-chair. One could see that the matron prized her, and expected us to do so, and we did so, especially when she showed us a flower in a pot which her son had given her. Perhaps we exaggerated the comforts of her room in congratulating her upon it, but this was an error in the right direction, and we did what we could to repair it by the offer of a shilling. If it is permitted to the spirits of benefactors in heaven to take pleasure in their good deeds on earth, it must have been a source of satisfaction for five hundred years (as they count time here) to the founder of this charity when he thought of how many humble fellow-creatures he had helped, and was helping. Perhaps they do not care, up there; but the chance is worth the attention of people looking about for a permanent investment. I think every one ought to earn a living, and when past it ought to be pensioned by the state, and let live in comfort after his own fancy; but failing this ideal, I wish the rich with us would multiply foundations after the good old English fashion, in which the pensioners, though they dwelt much in common, could keep a semblance of family life and personal independence.

Of course Wells, as its name says, was once a watering-place, though never of so much resort as Bath; but now its healing springs bubble or ooze forth in forgottenness, with not a leper or even a rheumatic to avail of them. It was very, very anciently a mining-town, and long afterwards a shoe-town, with an interval of being a place of weavers, but it was never an industrial centre. It has never even been very historical, though Henry VII. stopped there in his campaign against the Pretender Perkin Warbeck, and after centuries the followers of another pretender—the luckless, worthless, but otherwise harmless bastard of Charles II., the Duke of Monmouth, who was making war against his uncle, James II.—occupied the city and stripped the lead from the

MARKET-PLACE, WELLS

cathedral roof for bullets; they otherwise dishonored its edifice, Cromwell's soldiers having failed to do so. By the beginning of this century the population of the town had dwindled to less than five thousand. But these, in their flat streets of snug little houses, we thought well supplied with good shops, and the other comforts of life, and we found them of an indefatigable civility in telling and showing us our way about. We had still some time to spare when finally their kindness got us to the station of the Somerset and Dorset line, where, as a friendly old man whom we found there before us justly remarked, "Us must wait for the train; it won't wait for we."

There was another old man there, in a sort of farmer's gayety of costume, with leathern gaiters reaching well to his knees, and a jaunty, low-crowned hat, who promptly made our acquaintance and told us that he was eighty years old, and that he had lately led the singing of a Methodist revival-meeting. "And every one said my voice was as strong in the last note as the first." He then sang us a verse from a hymn in justification of the universal opinion, and in spite of his functional piety was of an organic levity which, with his withered bloom and his lively movement on his feet, recalled the type of sage eternized by Mr. Hardy in Granfer Cantle. Upon the whole we were glad to be rid of him when he quitted the train on which we started together, and left us to the sadder society of a much younger man. He too was a countryman, and he presently surprised me by owning

that he had once been a fellow-countryman. He had indeed lived two years in a part of Northern Ohio where I once lived, and the world shrank in compass through our meeting in the Somerset and Dorset line. “And didn’t you like it?” “Oh, yes; *I* liked it. After I came back I was the homesickest man! But my wife couldn’t get her health there.” Privately, I thought I would have preferred Glastonbury, where this kindly man got out, to Orwell, Ashtabula County, Ohio; but we all have our tastes, and I made him a due show of sympathy in his regret for my native land.

When our two hours of travel were rather more than up, we found ourselves again in Bath after a day which I felt to have been full of exciting adventure. But I ask almost as little of life as of literature in the way of incident, and perhaps the reader will not think my visit to Wells especially stirring. In that case I will throw in the fact of a calf tied at one of the stations where we changed, and lamentably bellowing in the midst of its fellow-passengers, but standing upon its rights quite as if it had booked first-class. When I add that there was a sign up at this station requiring all persons to cross the track by the bridge, and that without exception we contumaciously trooped over the line at grade, I think the cup of the wildest lover of romance must run over.

Of our subsequent afternoon in Bristol, what remains after this lapse of time except a pleasing impression? We chose a wet day because there were no dry days to choose from. But a wet day of the English spring is commonly better than it promises, and this one made several unexpected efforts to be fine, and repeatedly succeeded. Bristol is no nearer Bath than Wells is, but there are no changes, and we arrived in half an hour and drove at once through the rather uninteresting streets to the beautiful old church of St. Mary Redcliffe. There we found the verger (or perhaps one should say the sexton) as ready to receive us, having just finished mopping the floor, as if he had been expecting us from

BRISTOL HARBOR AND DRAWBRIDGE

the foundation of the church in the thirteenth century. One has not often such a welcome, even from a verger, and I make this occasion to say that few things add more to the comfort of sight-seeing travel than an appreciative verger. He imparts a quality of his church or cathedral to the sight-seer, who feels himself Early English or at least Perpendicular Gothic under his flattering ministrations, and he supplements the dry facts of the guide-book with those agreeable touches of fable which really give life to history.

St. Mary Redcliffe is so rich in charming associations, however, as scarcely to need the play of the sacristan's imagination for the adornment of her past. She is easily, as Queen Elizabeth so often-quotedly said, "the fairest, the goodliest, and most famous parish church in England," and is more beautiful and interesting than the cathedral of her city, if not more graceful in form and lovely in detail than any other church in Europe. One scarcely knows which of her claims on the reader's interest to mention first, but perhaps if the reader has a feeling heart for genius and sorrow he will care most for St. Mary Redcliffe because Chatterton lies buried in her shadow. Or, if he is not buried there, but at St. Andrews, Holborn, in London, as Peter Cunningham claims, there is at least his monument at St. Mary's Redcliffe to give validity to the verger's favorite story. The bishop forbade the poor suicide to be buried in the church-yard, and he was

interred in a space just outside; but later the vestry bought this lot and enclosed it with the rest, and so beat the bishop on his own consecrated ground. I could not give a just sense of how much the verger triumphed in this legend, but apparently he could not have been prouder of it if he had invented it. He pointed out, at no great remove, a house in or near which Chatterton was born; and he must have taken it for granted that we knew the boy had pretended to find the MS. of his poems in an old chest in the muniment-room, over the beautiful porch of the church, for he did not mention it. He was probably so absorbed in the interest which Chatterton conferred upon St. Mary Redcliffe that he did not think to remind us that both Coleridge and Southey were married in the church. Southey was born in Bristol, and they both formed part of a little transitory provincial literary centre, which flourished there before the rise of the Lake School under the fostering faith of Joseph Cottle, the publisher, himself an epic poet of no mean area.

But St. Mary Redcliffe has peculiar claims upon the reverence of Americans from its monument of Admiral Penn, father of him who founded the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The formidable old sailor's gauntlets, cuirass, and helmet hang upon the wall above the monument, and near by is the rib of a whale which John Cabot is said to have slain in Labrador. Less endearing associations for us, and less honorable to the city are those of the slave-trade which Bristol long carried on to her great gain and shame. Slavery was common there, not only in the Saxon and Norman days, but practically far down the centuries into the eighteenth. In the earlier times youths and maidens were roped together and offered for sale in the market; people sold their own children abroad; and in the later times, Bristol prospered so greatly in the exportation of young men and women to the colonies, that when this slavery was finally put an end to, it was found just to compensate her merchants and ship-owners in the sum of nearly a million dollars for their loss in the redemptioners whom they used to carry out and sell for their passage-money.

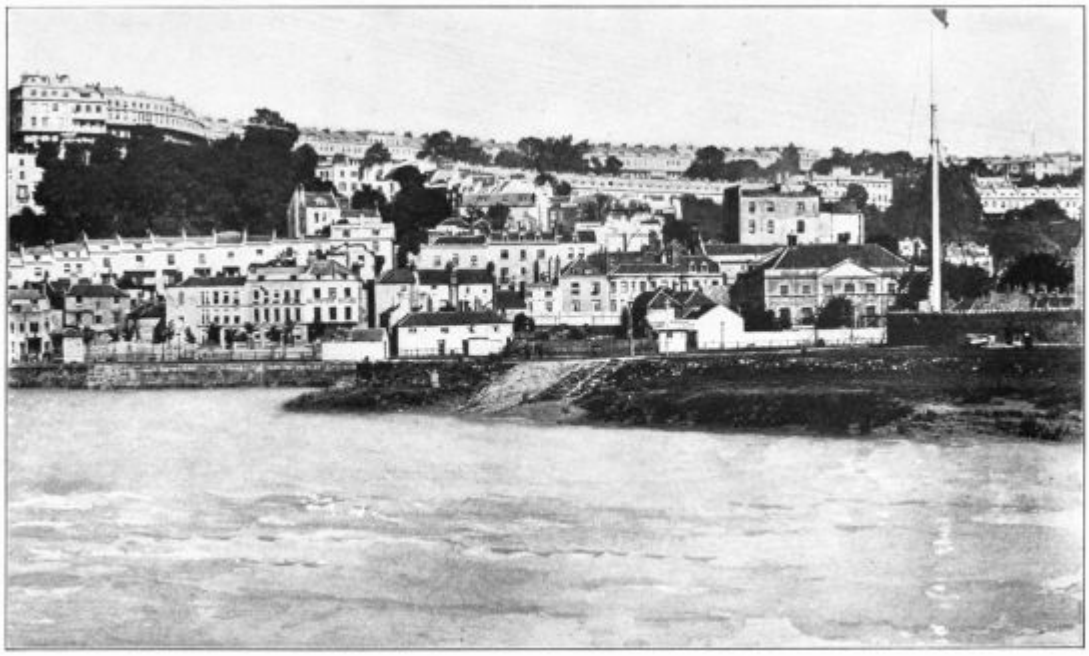
In the strange contemporaneity of the worst and the best things Bristol grew in grace; beautiful churches rose, and then her people fought the fight out of Romanism into Protestantism; in the civil war she held for the Parliament against the King, and was taken by Rupert and retaken by

Cromwell. A hundred years after, the great religious awakening to be known as Methodism, began in and about Bristol. Whitefield preached to the miners at Kingswood, and then Wesley, whose help he had invoked, came and preached to all classes, in the town and out, moving them so powerfully to seek salvation, that many who heard him fell down in swounds and fits, and "roared for the disquietness of their hearts," while tens of thousands were less dramatically saved from their sins. Yet another hundred years and the spirit miraculously responded to the constant prayer of George Müller for means to found the Orphanages, which witness the wonder at this day to any tourist willing to visit them. Without one specific or personal appeal, alms to the amount of three million dollars flowed in upon him, and helped him do his noble work.

Riches abounded more and more in Bristol, but the city continued almost to the nineteenth century in a mediæval inconvenience, discomfort, and squalor. A horse and cart could not pass through her tortuous streets, and trucks drawn by dogs transported her merchandise; down to 1820 heavy wagons were not permitted for fear of damaging the arches of the sewers, and sledges were used. All the same, there was from the beginning a vehement and powerful spirit of enterprise, and Bristol is connected with our own history not only by the voyages of the Cabots to our savage northern shores in the fifteenth century, but by the venture of the *Great Western*, which, in 1838, made the first steam passage of the Atlantic Ocean. In honor of the relations established by her mariners between the old world and the new, I over-ruled our driver's genteel reluctance from the seafaring quarter of the town, and had him take us to as much of the port of Bristol as possible. I am not sure that I found the points from which either the *Matthew* sailed for America in 1497, or the *Great Western* in 1838, but I am sure that nothing more picturesque could have rewarded my vague search. Among the craft skirting the long quays there was every type of vessel except the Atlantic liner which had originated there; but the steamers, which looked coast-wise and river-going, contributed their full share to the busy effect. This for the moment was intensified by the interest which a vast crowd of people were taking in the raising of a sunken barge. Their multitude helped to embarrass our progress through the heaps of merchandise, and piles of fish, and coils of chain and cordage, and trucks

backing and filling; but I would not have had them away, and I only wish I knew, as they must later have known, whether that barge was got up in good shape.

On one shore were ranks of warehouses, and on the other, the wild variety of taverns and haunts of crude pleasure, embracing many places for the enjoyment of strong waters, such as everywhere in the world attract the foot wandering ashore at the end of a sea-leg. Their like may have allured that Anglicized Venetian, John Cabot, when he returned from finding Newfoundland, and left his ship to enjoy the ten pounds which Henry VII. had handsomely sent him for that purpose, as an acknowledgment of his gift of a continent. It is not to be supposed that there were then so many and so



CLIFTON, FROM ASHTON MEADOWS

large shops as now intersperse the pleasure-resorts in the port of Bristol; I question whether Cabot, if he had strained his eyes over-seas by looking out for new hemispheres, could have found there a whole building lettered over with the signs of an optician, and I do not yet see just why such a semi-scientist should so abound there now. But I shall always be sorry I did not go to him to replace the eye-glasses I had broken, instead of poorly driving to the shop of an optician in one of the best city streets. It was a very handsome street full of shops, such as gave a due notion of the sufficiency of Bristol to all demands of wealth and ease, and I got an excellent pair of

glasses; but if I had bought my glasses in the port, I might perhaps have seen the whole strenuous past of the famous place through them, and even "stared at the Pacific" with the earliest of her circumnavigating sons. However, we cannot do everything, and we did not even see that day the cathedral which St. Mary Redcliffe so much surpasses, for anything we know to the contrary. We could and did see the beautiful Norman gateway of the Abbey, which it is no treason to our favorite church to allow she has none to equal, and passing under its sumptuously carven arches into the cathedral we arrived at the side of the regretful verger. He bade us note that the afternoon service was going on, and how the Elder Lady Chapel with its grotesque sculptures in the mediæval taste, which used to have fun in the decoration of sacred places with all sorts of mocking fancies, was impossible to us at the moment.

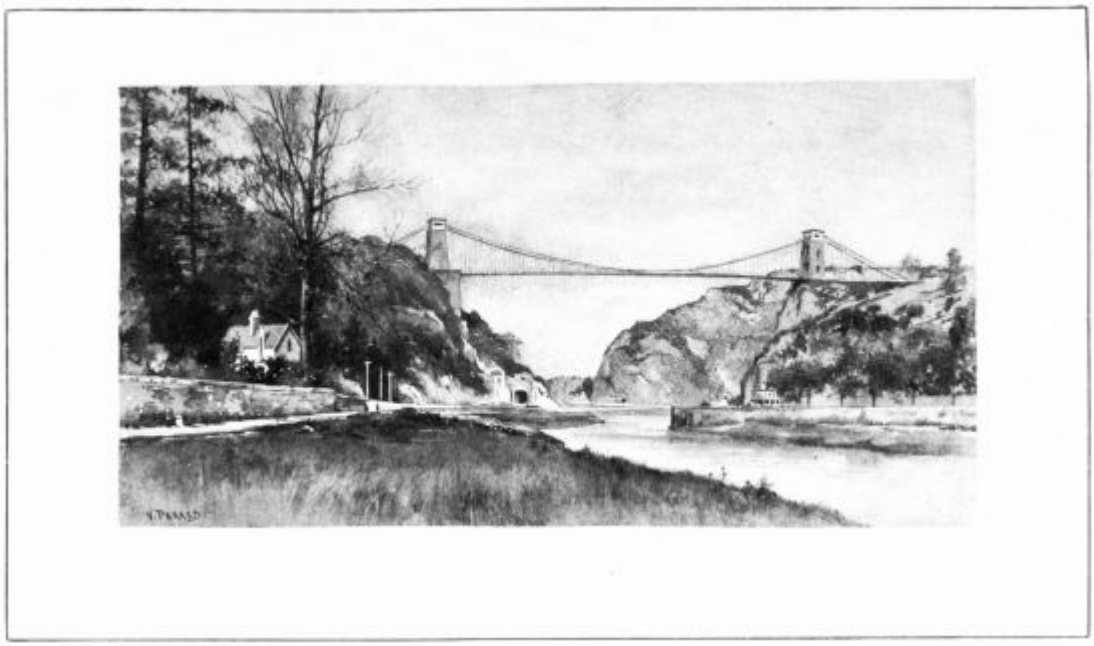
But the Bristol cathedral is not one of the famous English cathedrals, and our regret was tempered by this fact, though the verger's was not. I tried to appease him with a promise to come again, which I should like nothing better than to keep, and then we drove off. We were visiting almost without a plan this storied and noble city, which so much merited to be carefully and intelligently seen, and it was by mere grace of chance that we now happened upon one of the most interesting houses in it. In the graveyard of St. Peter's church the hapless poet, Richard Savage, who was buried at the cost of the jailer of the debtors' prison where he died, and we must have passed the tablet to his memory in finding our unheeding way to St. Peter's Hospital behind the church. This is one of the most splendid survivals of the statelier moods of the past in that England which is full of its records. A noted alchemist built it, whether for his dwelling or whether for the mystic uses of his art, in the thirteen-hundreds, but it is gabled and timbered now in the fashion of the sixteenth century, and serves as the official home of the Bristol Board of Guardians. Once it belonged to a company of merchant adventurers, and their ships used to float up to its postern-gate, and show their spars through the leaden sash of its windows, still kept in their primal picturesqueness. The whole place within is a wonder of carven mantels and friezes and ceilings; and so sound that it might well hold its own for yet five hundred years longer.

It was the first of those mediæval houses which gave us a sense of English comfort hardly yet surpassed in modern English interiors; and here first we noted the devotion of the English themselves to the monuments of their past. The Americans who visit objects of interest on the continent are apt to find themselves equalling in number, if not outnumbering their fellow-Anglo-Saxons of English birth; but in England they are a most insignificant minority. The English are not merely globe-trotters, they are most incessant travellers in their own island. They are always going and coming in it, and as often for pleasure as business, apparently. At any rate the American who proposes coming into a private heritage of the past when he visits his ancestral country finds himself constantly intruded upon by the modern natives, who seem to think they have as good right to it as he. This is very trying when he does not think them half so interesting as himself, or half so intelligently appreciative. He may be the most dissident of dissenters, the most outrageously evangelical of low-churchmen, but when he is pushed by a clerical-looking family of English country folk, father, mother, sister-in-law, and elderly and younger daughters, almost out of hearing of the vergeress's traditions of St. Peter's Hospital, he cannot help feeling himself debarred of most of the rights established by our Revolution. It is perhaps a confusion of emotions; but it will be a generous confusion if he observes, amidst his resentment, the listless inattention of the young girl, dragged at the heels of her family, and imaginably asking herself if *this* is their notion of the promised holiday, the splendid gayety of the long-looked-for visit to Bristol!

Before my own visit to that city my mind was much on a young Welsh girl whose feet used to be light in its streets, more than a hundred years ago, and who used in her garb of Quaker grandmother to speak of her childhood days there. She had come an orphan from Glamorganshire, to the care of an aunt and uncle at Bristol, and there she grew up, and one day she met a young Welshman from Breconshire who had come on some affair of his father's woollen-mills to the busy town. She was walking in the fields, and when they passed, and she looked back at him, she found he was looking back at her; and perhaps if it were not for this surprising coincidence, some other hand than mine might now be writing this page. In her Bristol days she did not wear the white kerchief crossed at her neck above the gown of

Quaker drab, nor the cap hiding the gray hair, but some youthful form of the demure dress in which one could better fancy her tripping across the field and looking back, in the path where she still pauses, in a dear and gentle transmutation of girlhood and grandmotherhood.

It might have been over the very field where she walked that we drove out to the suburb of Clifton, where Bristol mostly lives. It is the more beautiful Allegheny City of a less unbeautiful Pittsburg, but otherwise it bears the same relation to Bristol as the first of these American towns bears to the last. Nobody dwells in Bristol who can dwell in Clifton, and Clifton has not only the charm of pleasant houses and gardens, with public parks and promenades, and schools and colleges, and museums and galleries, as well as almost a superabundance of attractive hotels, but it is in the midst of nature as grand as that of the Niagara River below the falls. The Avon's currents and tides flow between cliffs, spanned by Brunel's exquisite and awful suspension-bridge, that rise thickly and wildly wooded on one side, and on the other, built over to its stupendous verge with shapes of the stately and dignified architecture, civic and domestic, which characterizes English towns. The American invader draws a panting breath of astonishment in the presence of scenery which eclipses his native landscape in savage grandeur as much as in civilized loveliness, and meekly wonders, on his way through that mighty gorge of the Avon, how he could have come to England with the notion that she was soft and tame in her most spectacular moods. He does not call upon the



GORGE OF THE AVON, WITH ST. VINCENT'S ROCKS

hills to hide his shame, lest the cliffs that beetle dizzyingly above him should only too complaisantly comply. But he promises himself, if he gets back to Bath alive, to use the first available moment for taking a reef in his national vanity where it has flapped widest. Of course it will not do in Bath to wound the local susceptibilities by dwelling upon the surviving attractions of Clifton as a watering-place, but he may safely and modestly compare them with those of Saratoga.

VI

BY WAY OF SOUTHAMPTON TO LONDON

WE left Bath on the afternoon of a day which remained behind us in doubt whether it was sunny or rainy; but probably the night solved its doubt in favor of rain. It was the next to the last day of March, and thoughtful friends had warned us to be very careful not to travel during the impending Bank holidays, which would be worse than usual (all Bank holidays being bad for polite travellers), because they would also be Easter holidays. We were very willing to heed this counsel, but for one reason or another we were travelling pretty well all through those Easter Bank holidays, and except for a little difficulty in finding places in the train up from Southampton to London, we travelled without the slightest molestation from the holiday-makers. The truth is that the leisure classes in England are so coddled by the constitution and the by-laws that they love to lament over the slightest menace of discomfort or displeasure, and they go about with bated breath warning one another of troubles that never come.

Special trains are run on all lines at Bank holiday times, and very particularly special trains were advertised for those Easter Bank holidays in the station at Bath, but as we were taking a train for Southampton on the Saturday before the dread Monday which was to begin them, we seemed to have it pretty much to ourselves. The Midland road does not run second-class cars, and so you must go first or third, and we being as yet too proud to go third, sought a first-class non-smoking compartment. The most eligible car we could find was distinctly lettered “Smoking,” but the porter said he could paste that out, and by this simple device he changed it to non-smoking, and we took possession.

We were soon running through that English country which is always pretty, and seems prettiest wherever you happen to be, and though we did not and never can forget Bath, we could not help tricking our beams a little, in response to the fields smiling through the sunny rain, or the rainy sun. It was mostly meadowland, with the brown leafless hedges dividing pasture

from pasture, but by-and-by there began to be ploughed fields, with more signs of habitation. Yet it was as lonely as it was lovely, like all the English country, to which the cheerfulness of our smaller holdings is wanting. What made it homelike, in spite of the solitude, was the occurrence in greater and greater number of wooden buildings. We conjectured stone villages somewhere out of sight, huddled about their hoary churches, but largely the gray masonry of the West of England had yielded to the gray weather-boarding of the more southeasterly region, where at first only the barns and out-buildings were of wood; but soon the dwellings themselves were frame-built.

Was it at otherwise immemorable Shapton we got tea, running into the cleanly, friendly station from the slopes of the shallow valleys? It must have been, for after that the sky cleared, and nature in a cooler air was gayer, as only tea can make nature. They trundled a little cart up to the side of the train, and gave us our cups and sandwiches, bidding us leave the cups in the train, as they do all over England, to be collected at some or any other station. After that we were in plain sight of the towers and spires of Salisbury, the nearest we ever came, in spite of much expectation and resolution, to the famous cathedral; and then we were in the dear, open country again, with white birches, like those of New England, growing on the railroad banks; and presently again we were in sight of houses building, and houses of pink brick already built, and then, almost without realizing it, we were in the suburbs of Southampton, and driving in a four-wheeler up through the almost American ugliness of the main business street, and out into a residence quarter to the residential hotel commended to us.

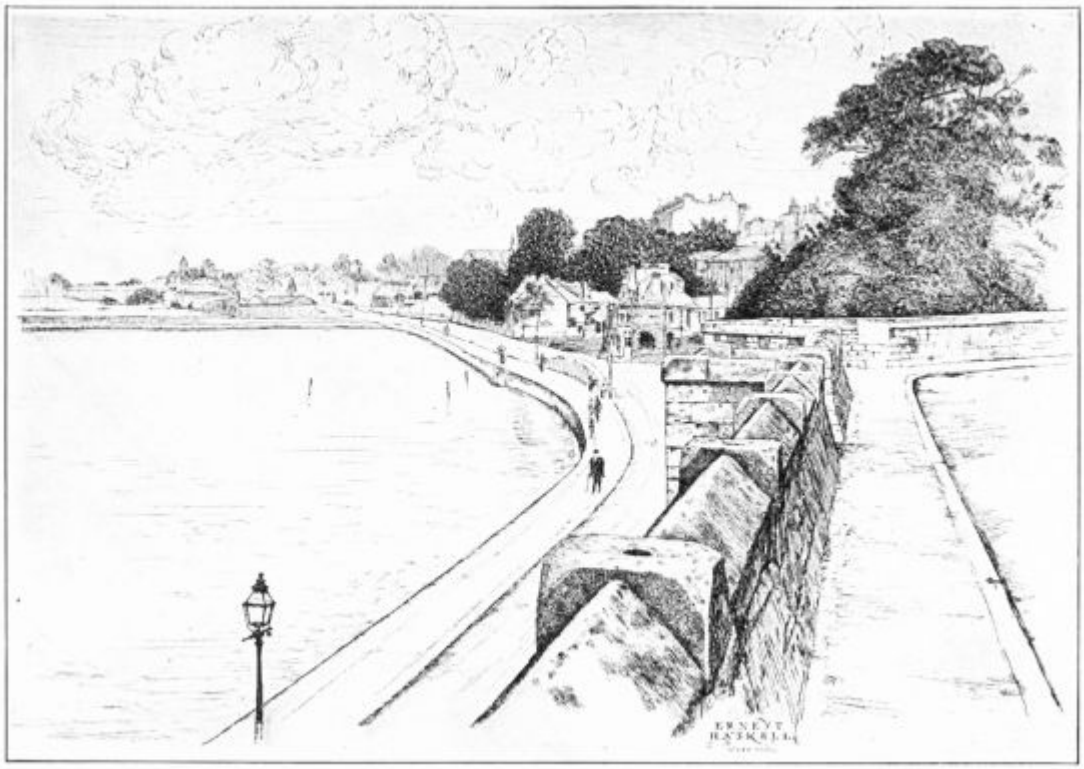
It was really very much a private house, for it was mainly formed of a stately old mansion, which with many modern additions, actual and prospective, had been turned to the uses of genteel boarding. But it had a mixed character, and was at moments everything you could ask a hotel to be; if it failed of wine or spirits, which could not be sold on the premises, these could be brought in from some neighboring bar. The transients, as our summer hotels call them, were few, and nearly all the inmates except ourselves were permanent boarders, in the scriptural and New England proportion of seven women to one man. It was a heterogeneous company of insular and colonial English, but always English, whether from the

immediate neighborhood, or Canada, or South Africa, or Australia. At separate small tables in an older dining-room, cooled by the ancestral grate, or in a newer one, warmed by steam-radiators just put in, we were served abundant breakfasts of bacon and eggs and tea and toast, and table d'hôte luncheons and dinners, with afternoon tea and after-dinner coffee in the drawing-room. For all this, with rooms and lights and service, we paid ten shillings a day, and I dare say the permanents paid less. Bedroom fires were of course extra, but as they gave out no perceptible heat, they ought not to be counted, though they had a certain illuminating force, say a five candle-power, and rendered the breath distinctly visible.

We had come down to Southampton in a superstition that, being to the southward, it would be milder than Bath, where the spring was from time to time so inclement, but finding it rather colder and bleaker, we experimented a little farther to the southward, a day or two after our arrival, and went to the Isle of Wight. The sail across the Solent, or whatever water is was we crossed, was beautiful, but it was not balmy, and when we reached Cowes, after that dinner aboard which you always get so much better in England than in like conditions with us, we found it looking not so tropical as we could have liked, but doubtless as tropical as it really was. The pretty town curved round its famous yacht harborage in ranks of summer hotel-like houses, with green lattices and a convention of out-door life in their architecture, such as befitted a mild climate; but we were keeping on to the station where you take train for Ventnor, on the southern shore of the island, which has to support the reputation of being the English Riviera. We did not know then how bad the Italian Riviera could be, and doubtless we blamed the English one more than we ought. We ought, indeed, to have been warmed for it by the sort of horseback exercise we had on the roughest stretch of railway I can remember, in cars whose springs had been broken in earlier service on some mainland line of the monopoly now employing them on the Isle of Wight, and defying the public to do anything about it, as successfully as any railroad of our own republic. We had a hope and an intention of seeing flowers, which we fulfilled as we could with the unprofitable gayety of the blossomed furze by the waysides; and more and more we fancied a forwardness in the spring which was doubtless mainly of our invention. From our steamer we had a glimpse of Osborne Castle, the

favorite seat of the good queen who is gone, and we wafted our thoughts afar to Carisbrooke, where the hapless Charles I. was for a time captive, playing fast and loose, in feeble bad faith, with the victorious Parliament, when it would have been willing to treat with him. But you cannot go everywhere in England, especially in one day, though home-keeping Americans think it is so small, and we had to leave Newport and its Carisbrooke castle aside in our going and coming between Ryde and Ventnor.

It was well into the afternoon when we reached Ventnor, and took a fly for the time left us, which was largely tea-time, by the reckoning of the girl in the nice pastry-shop where we stopped for refreshment. She said that the season in Ventnor was July and August, but the bathing was good into October, and we could believe the pleasant Irishman in our return train who told us that it was terribly hot in the summer at Ventnor. The lovely little town, which is like an English water-color, for the rich, soft blur of its grays, and blues and greens, has a sea at its feet of an almost Bermudian variety of rainbow tints, and a milky horizon all its own, with the sails of fishing-boats, drowning in it, like moths that had got into the milk. The streets rise in amphitheatrical terraces from the shore, and where they cease to have the liveliness of watering-place

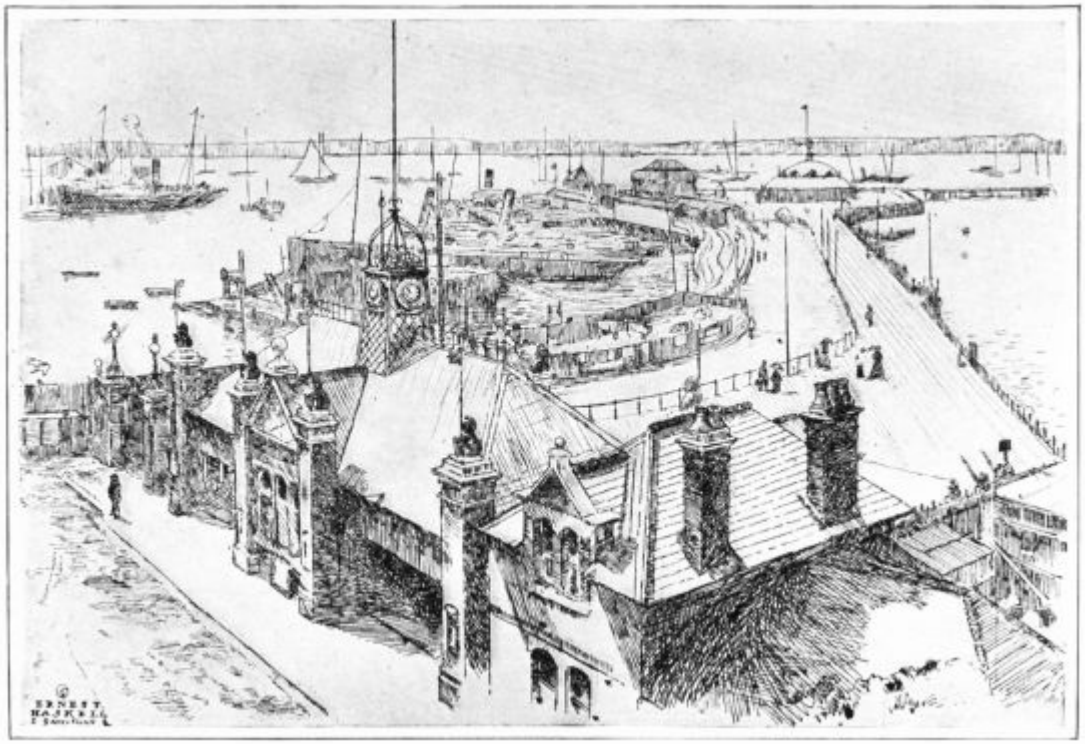


THE SOUTH SHORE, SOUTHAMPTON

shops, they have the domesticity of residential hotels and summer boarding-houses, and private villas set in depths of myrtle and holly and oleander and laurel; some of the better-looking houses were thatched, perhaps to satisfy a sentiment for rusticity in the summer boarder or tenant. The intelligent hunchback who drove our fly, and instructed us in things of local interest far beyond our capacity, named prices at these houses which might, if I repeated them, tempt an invasion from our own resorts, if people did not mind suffering in July and August for the sake of the fine weather in November. Doubtless there are some who would not mind being shut southward by the steep and lofty downs which prevent the movement of air as much in summer as in winter at Ventnor. The acclivities are covered with a short, wiry grass, and on the day of our visit the boys of Ventnor were coasting down them on a kind of toboggans. Besides this peculiar advantage, Ventnor has the attraction, common to so many English towns and villages, of a Norman church, and of those seats and parks of the nobility and gentry which one cannot long miss in whatever direction one goes, in a land where the nobility and gentry are so much cherished.

The day had been hesitating between rain and sun as usual, but it had decided for rain when we left Ventnor, where we had already found it very cold in-doors, over the tea and bread and butter, which they gave us so good. By the time we had got back to Ryde, the frigidity of the railway waiting-room, all the colder for the fire that had died earlier in the day, was such that it seemed better to go out and walk up and down the platform, in the drive of the rain, as hard and fast as one could, than to stay within. In these conditions the boat appeared to be longer in coming than it really was, and when it came it was almost too well laden with the Bank-holiday folk whom we had been instructed to dread. At Cowes, more young men and young girls of a like sort came on board, but beyond favoring us with their loud confidences they did us no harm, and it was quite practicable to get supper. They were of the chorus-girl level of life, apparently, and there was much that suggested the stage in their looks and behavior, but they could not all have been of the theatre, and they were better company than the two German governesses who had travelled towards Ventnor with us, and filled the compartment with the harsh clashing of their native consonants. The worst that you could say of the trippers was that they were always leaving the saloon door open, and letting in the damp wind, which had now become very bitter, but English people of every degree are always leaving the door open, and these poor trippers were only like the rest of their nation in that. One young lady lay with her feet conspicuously up on the lounge which she occupied to the exclusion of four or five other persons, but by-and-by she took her feet down, and the most critical traveller could not have affirmed that it was characteristic of Easter Bank-holiday ladies to stretch themselves out with their feet permanently up on the cushions. When we landed at Southampton, and drove away in a cab, we had an experience which was then novel, but ceased to be less and less so. It seemed that the pier was a private enterprise, and you must pay toll for its use, or else not arrive or depart on that boat.

So many of our fellow-countrymen come ashore from their Atlantic liners at Southampton, and rush up to London in two hours by their steamer trains, without



“THE PIER WAS A PRIVATE ENTERPRISE”

any other sense of the place than as a port of entry, that I feel as if I were making an undue claim upon their credulity in proposing it as a city having a varied literary and historical interest. Yet Southampton is a city of no mean memories, with a history going back into the dark of the first invasions, and culminating early in the fable of King Canute’s failure to browbeat the Atlantic. The men who won Cressy, Poictiers and Agincourt set sail from it, and fifty ships and more made ready there for the Armada. In turn it was much harried by the French, but the Dutch, whom Alva drove into exile, settled in the town and helped prosper it with their industries, till the Great Plague brought it such adversity that the grass, which has served the turn of so much desolation, grew in its streets. With the continuous wars of England and France it rose again, and now it is what every American traveller fails to see as he hurries through it. I have not thought it needful to mention that in the ages when giants abounded in Britain, Southampton had one of the worst of that caitiff race, who was baptized against his will, but afterwards eloping with his liege lady, was finally slain.

The place was so attractive socially, a hundred-odd years ago, that Jane Austen’s family, when they came away from Bath, could think of no

pleasanter sojourn. She wrote some of her most delightful letters from Southampton, and of course we went and looked up the neighborhood where she had lived. No trace of that precious occupancy is now left beside the stretch of the ancient city wall from which the Austens' garden overlooked a beautiful expanse of the Solent, but we made out the place, and for the rest we gave ourselves to the pleasure of following the course of the old city wall, which, with its ivied arches, its towers and battlements all agreeably mouldering and ruinous, is better, as far as it goes, than the walls of either Chester or York, conscious of their entirety, and of their claim upon the interest of travel. Southampton is so very modern in the prosperity which has made it the rival of Liverpool as the chief port of entry from our country, that we ought rather to have devoted ourselves to its docks than its walls, and we did honestly try for them. But there is always something very disappointing about docks, and though I went more than once for a due impression of them at Southampton, I constantly failed of it. I tried coming upon them casually at first; at last I drove expressly to them, and when I dismounted from my cab, and cast about me for the sensation they should have imparted, and demanded of my cabman, "Where are the docks?" and he said, "Here they are, sir," I could not make them out, and was forced to conclude that they had been taken in for the time.

I had no such difficulty with the prison into which Dr. Isaac Watts's father was put for some of those opinions which in former times were always costing people their personal liberty. In my mind's eye I could almost see his poor wife bringing their babe and suckling the infant hymnologist under the father's prison window; and I was in such rich doubt of Dr. Watts's birthplace in French Street, that with two houses to choose from, I ended by uncovering to both. I think it was not too much honor to that kind, brave soul, who got no little poetry into his piety, and was neither very severe about theology on earth, nor exigent of psalm-singing in heaven, where he imagined a pleasing conformity in the conditions to the tastes and habits of the several saints in this life. If the reader thinks that I overdid my reverence in the case of this poet, let him set against it my total failure to visit either the birthplace or the baptismal church of another Southampton poet, that Charles Dibdin, namely, whose songs were much on

British tongues when Britain was making herself mistress of the seas, and which possibly breathe still from the lips of

> "The sweet little cherub who sits up aloft,
> Keeping watch o'er the life of poor Jack."

Early in my English travels I found it well to leave something to the curiosity of after-seekers, and there is so much to see in every English city, town, village, country neighborhood, road, and lane that I could always leave unseen far more than I saw. I suppose it was largely accidental that I gave so much of my time to the traces of the Watts family, but perhaps it was also because both the prison and the house (in which, whichever it was, the mother kept a boarding-house while she nurtured her nine children, and the good doctor began his Greek and Latin at five years of age), were in the region of the old church of St. Michael's which will form another compensation at Southampton for the American who misses the docks. Its architecture was amongst my earliest Norman, and was of the earliest Norman of any, for the church was built in 1100 by monks who came over from Normandy. It was duly burned by the French two centuries later in one of their pretty constant incursions; they burned only the nave of the church, but they left the baptismal font rather badly cracked, and with only the staple of the lock which used to fasten the lid to keep the water from being stolen. I do not know why the baptismal water should have been stolen, but perhaps in those ages of faith it was a specific against some popular malady, leprosy or the black death, or the like. The sacristan who showed me the font, showed me also the tomb of a bad baronet of the past, a very great miscreant, whose name he could not remember, but who had done something awful to his wives; and no doubt he could easily have told me why people stole the water. He was himself an excellent family man, or at least highly domesticated, if one might judge from his manner with his own wife, who came in demanding a certain key of him. Husband-like, he denied having it; then he remembered, and said, "Oh, I left it in the pocket of my black coat." He was not at all vexed at being interrupted in telling me about the bad baronet, whose tomb, he made me observe, had not a leaf or blossom on it, though it was Easter Sunday, and the old church, which was

beautifully rough and simple within, was decked with flowers for the festival.

Outside, the prevalence of Easter was so great that we had failed of a street cab, and had been obliged to send to the mews (so much better than a livery-stable, though probably not provided now with falcons) for a fly, and we felt by no means sure that we should be admitted to the beautiful old Tudor house, facing the church of St. Michael's, which goes by the name of King Henry VIII.'s Palace. They are much stricter in England concerning the holy days of the church than the non-conforming American imagines. On Good Friday there were neither cabs nor trams at Southampton in the morning, and only Sunday trains were run on the Great Southwestern to London; though on the other hand the shops were open, and mechanics were working; perhaps they closed and stopped in the afternoon. But we summoned an unchurchly courage for the Tudor house, and when we rang at the postern-gate—it ought to have been a postern-gate, and at any rate I will call it so—it was opened to us by a very sprightly little old lady, with one tooth standing boldly up in the centre of her lower jaw, unafraid amid the surrounding desolation. She smiled at us so kindly that we apologized for our coming, and said that we did not suppose we could see the palace, and then she looked grave, and answered, "Yes, but you'll have to pay a fee, sir," I undertook that the fee should be paid, and then she smiled again, and led the way from her nook in it, through one of the most livable houses I was in anywhere in England. I will use the privilege of the superficial and cursory observation of the hurried tourist, to which we are so well accustomed in English travellers among ourselves, and say that the English did not know what domestic comfort was till the times of the Tudors, and were apparently forgetful of it afterwards. This palace of Henry VIII., which is rather simple for a palace, but may very well have been the sojourn of Anne Boleyn and her daughter Queen Elizabeth in their visits to Southampton, was divided above and below into large rooms, wainscotted in oak, of a noble shapeliness, and from cellar to attic was full of good air, without the draughts which the earlier and later English have found advantageous in perpetuating the racial catarrh and rheumatism. The apartments were of varying dignity from the ground floor up, and the basement was so wholesome, that before the time of the present owner, who

had restored it to its former state, a family with eleven children lived there in the greatest health as long as they were allowed to stay. Even in the attic, the rooms, though rough, were pleasant, and there were so many that one of them had got lost and could never be found, though the window of it still shows plainly from the outside. This and much more the friendly dame recounted to us in our passage through a mansion, which we found so attractive that we of course tacitly proposed to buy it and live in it always. Then she led us out into her kitchen-garden, running to the top of the ancient city wall, and undermined, as she told us, by submarine passages.

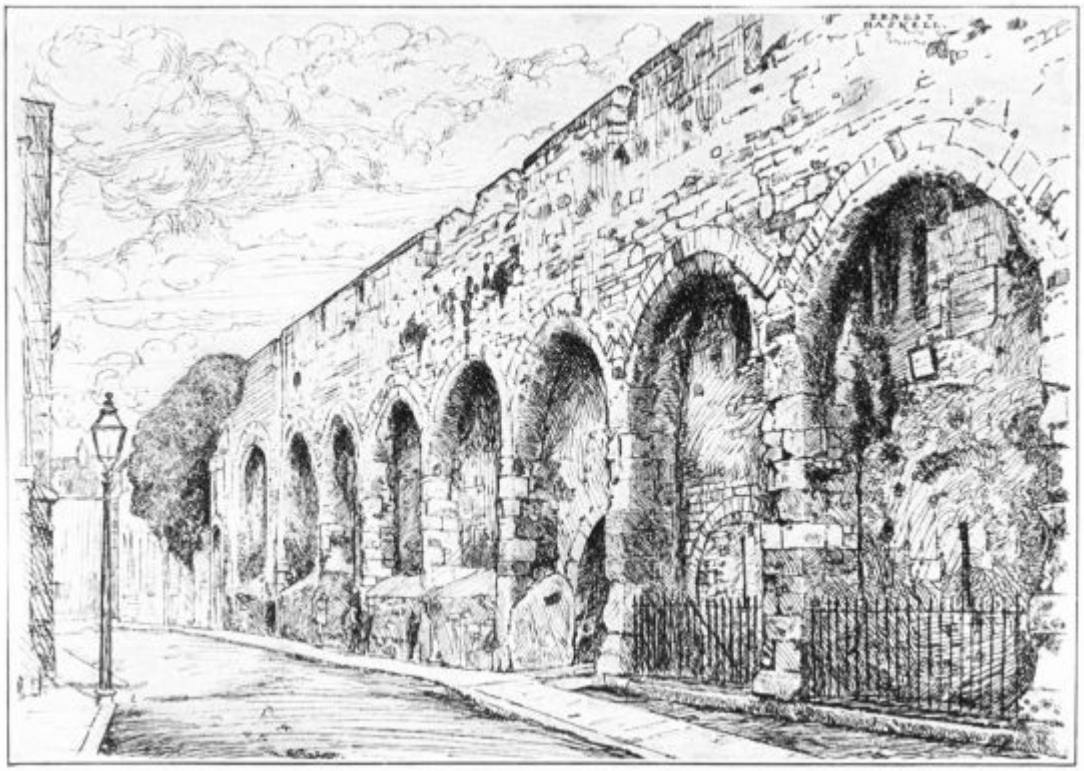
But we could only find a flight of stone steps descending to the street level below, where, if the reader is of a mind to follow, he will find the wall falling wholly away at times, and at times merging itself in the modern or moderner buildings, and then reappearing in arches, topped with quaint roofs and chimneys, and here and there turned to practical uses in little workshops, much as old walls are in the dear Italian towns which we Americans know rather better than the English, though the English ruins are befriended by a softer summer, prolonging itself with its mosses and its ivy never sere deep into winters almost as mild as Italy's. In an avenue reluctantly leaving the ancient wall and winding deviously into the High Street, are the traces, in humbler masonry, of the jambs and spandrels of far older arches in the façade of an edifice presently a cow stable, but famed to have been the palace of that King Canute who was mortified to find his power inferior to the sea's, and sharply rebuked his courtiers when they had induced him to set his chair in reach of the tides which would not ebb at his bidding. The tides have now permanently ebbed from the scene of the king's discomfiture, and as this royal Dane was otherwise so able and shrewd a prince as to have made himself master of England if not of her seas, we may believe as little as we like of the story. For my part, I choose to believe it every word, as I always have believed it, and I think it should still be a lesson to royalty, which is altogether too credulous of its relative importance to the rest of the universe.

In the most conspicuous niche of the beautiful old Bargate, which remains sole of the seven portals of the city, and still spans with its archway the High Street hard by where Porter's Lane creeps into it from Canute's cow stable, is the statue of another British prince who was to take a seat

even farther back than Canute's, under an overruling providence. In this effigy George III. naturally wears the uniform of a Roman warrior, but perhaps the artificial stone of which it is composed more aptly symbolizes the extremely friable nature of human empire. One never can look at any presentment of the poor, good, mistaken man without the softness of regret for his long sufferings, or without gratitude for what he involuntarily did for us as a people in forcing us to rid ourselves of royalty for good and all; yet with our national prejudice, it is always a surprise for the American to find him taken seriously in England. On the Bargate he seems to stand between us and the remoter English antiquity to which we willingly yield an unbroken allegiance. When I looked on the mediæval work of the Bargate, I easily felt myself, in a common romantic interest, the faithful subject of Edward III. or Richard III., but when I came down to George III. I had to draw the line; and yet he was a better and not unwiser man than either of the others. You can say of Edward III. that he was luckier in war than George III., but then he had not the Americans to fight against as the allies of the French.

We were so well advised not to fail of seeing the ruins of Netley Abbey, which is such a little way off from Southampton across the river Itchen, that I should strongly counsel, in my turn, all fellow-countrymen arriving on whatever line, to keep half a day from London, and give it to that most beautiful and pathetic place. It was our first ruin in England, but though we saw ruins afterwards of great merit, none ever surpassed it in charm, and none remains so sweet and pensive a memory. From the strenuous modern city you reach this dim, mediæval shadow by way of what they poetically call at Southampton the Floating Bridge, and which, before we came to it, we fancied some form of stately pontoon, but found simply the sort of ferry-boat common in earlier times on American rivers East and West, forced by the tide on supporting chains from one shore to the other. At our landing on the farther side we agreed with the driver of a fly, who justly refused to abate his reasonable charge, to carry us along the borders of the Itchen in a rapture which might have been greater if the wind had not been so bitter. But it was great enough, and when we dismounted at the gate of the abbey, and made our way to its venerable presence over turf that yielded perhaps too damply to the foot, we had our content so absolute, that not the

sunniest day known to the English climate could have added sensibly to it. I do not believe that we could have been happier in it even if we had known all the little why and how together with the great when of its suppression by Henry VIII. Even now I cannot supplement the conjecture of the moment by anything especially dramatic from history. Netley Abbey, like the rest of the religious houses which Henry hammered down, was suppressed in the general hope of pillage, defeated by the fact that its income was rather less than a hundred and fifty pounds a year, which even in the money of the



THE OLD TOWER WALL

time was no great booty. The king had as little to envy those Cistercian monks in their life as their income, except perhaps their virtues, which he would not have wished to share. For, as our faithful guide-book told us, they slept hard on the plank of wooden boxes, and unless food were given them in alms they ate neither fish, flesh, fowl, eggs, butter nor cheese, but only a spare porridge—twice a day, and in Lent once. They never spoke except sometimes in their parlor, on religious topics, and on a journey they could only ask questions, which they must ask if possible by signs. They that transgressed the rules were whipped, or stretched upon the stone floor during mass. For their greater humiliation the heads of the order were entirely shaven, which if the wind blew from the sea in their day, as piercingly as it blew in ours, was not so comfortable as it was picturesque for the monks going about bareheaded in their white robes. Yet their hospitality was great and constant, and their guest-hall was so often full that Horace Walpole, in his much-quoted letter about their ruined house, could speak with insinuation of their “purpled abbots,” as if these perhaps led a life of luxury not shared by the humbler brethren. His picture of the abbey is so charming and so true that one may copy it once again, as still the best

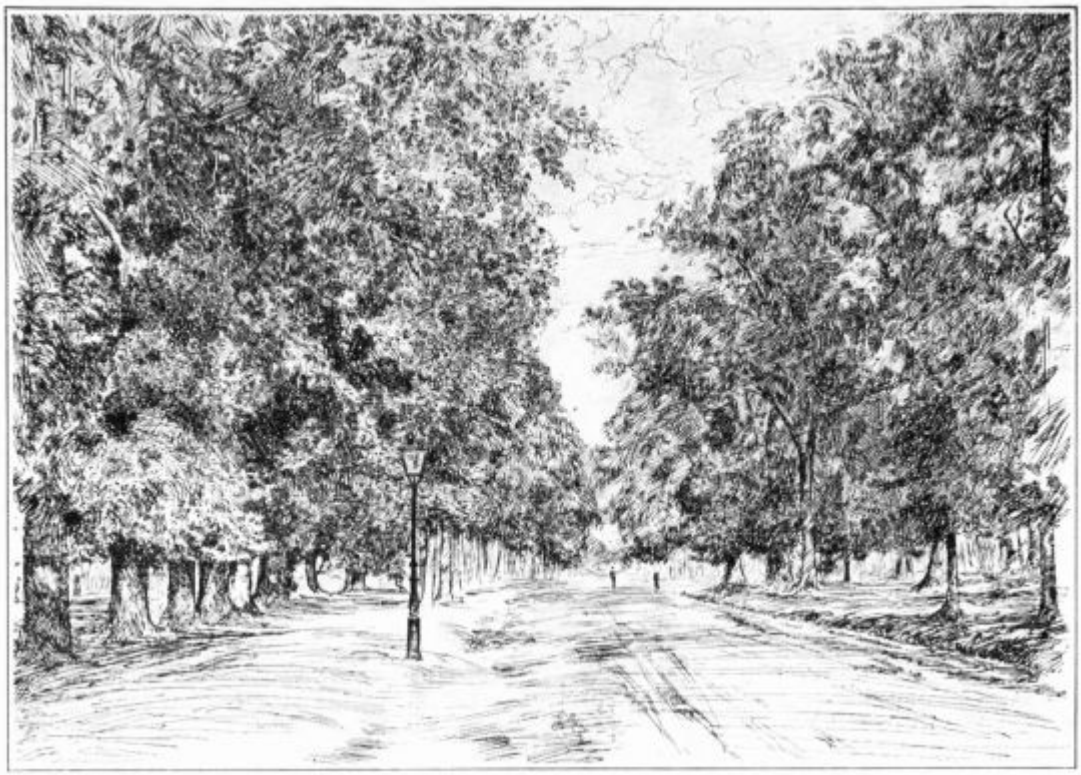
thing that could be said of it: “How shall I describe Netley to you? I can only tell you that it is the spot in the world which I and Mr. Chute wish. The ruins are vast and retain fragments of beautiful fretted roofs, pendent in the air, with all variety of Gothic patterns of windows topped round and round with ivy. Many trees have sprouted up among the walls, and only want to be increased by cypresses. A hill rises above the Abbey, enriched with wood. The fort in which we would build a tower for habitation, remains with two small platforms. This little castle is buried from the Abbey, in the very centre of a wood, on the edge of a wood hill. On each side breaks in the view of the Southampton Sea, deep, blue, glittering with silver and vessels. In short, they are not the ruins of Netley, but of Paradise. Oh, the purpled abbots! What a spot they had chosen to slumber in! The scene is so beautifully tranquil, yet so lively that they seem only to have retired into the world.”

What can one have to say of Netley after this, even to the romantic touch of the absent cypresses? We came suddenly upon the ruin, and with little parley at the porter’s lodge where they charge admittance and sell photographs, we stood within its densely ivied walls, the broken arches beetling overhead, and the tall trees repairing their defect with a leafless tracery showing fine against a gray sky hesitating blue, and the pale sun filtering a wet silver through the clouds. In places the architecture still kept its gracious lines of Gothic or Norman design; there were whole breadths of wall to testify of the beauty and majesty that had been, and where walls were marred or shattered, the ivy had bound up their wounds, or tufts of soft foliage distracted the eye from their wrongs. Underfoot the damp grass was starred with the earliest flowers of spring, violets, celandine, primrose; and among the flocks of pigeons that made their homes in the holes of the masonry left by the rotting joists, the golden-billed English blackbirds fluttered and sang. You could trace the whole shape of the edifice, and see it almost as it once stood, but the ivy which holds it up is also pulling it down. The decay seems mostly from the winds and rains, and the insidious malice of vegetation, but men have aided from time to time in the destruction, though not without the censure of their fellow-men. It is told, indeed, that a purchaser of the ruin, two hundred years ago, was so wrought upon by the blame of his friends when he wished to use its hallowed stone for other

building, that he began to dream of his own death by a keystone falling from one of the arches he was destroying; his death actually happened, though it was a heavy timber, and not a stone that crushed him. Everything in the neighborhood of the ruin was in keeping with it: a baronial mansion among the woods of an adjoining hill, villas within their shrubbery, and when we came to drive back to the ferry, many pleasant farms and pretty cottages behind their hedges of holly and whitethorn. An unusual number of these were thatched, in the tradition of rustic roofs which is slowly, though very slowly, dying out. The machine-threshed straw is so broken that it does not make a good thatch, and the art of the thatcher is passing with the quality of his material. Still we saw some new thatches, with occasionally an old one so rotten that it must have been full of the vermin which such shelters collect, and which could have walked away with it. Now and then we met country people on our way, looking rather sallow and lean, but our driver, perhaps from his contact with town-bred luxury, had a face of the right purple, and here and there was a rustic visage of the rich, south-of-England color showing warm in the pale sunset light.

When we had seen Netley Abbey, all the rest of the Southampton region was left rather impoverished of the conventional touristic interest, but any friend of man could still find abundant pleasure in it by mounting a tram-top and riding far out towards the Itchen, along winding streets of low brick houses, each with its little garden at the front or side, and with its hedge of evergreen. Often these kindly looking homes were overhung by almond-trees, palely pink, in bloom, and sometimes when they were more pretentious, though they were never arrogant, they stood apart, all planted round with shrubs and trees, like the dwellings in Hartford. The tram's course was largely through umbrageous avenues, or parklike spaces such as seem to abound at Southampton, with now and then a stretch of gleaming water, and here and there an open field with people playing cricket in it. Swarms of holiday-makers strolled up and down, and though it might be a Sunday, with no signs of a bad conscience in their harmless recreations. There was much evidence of church-going in the morning, but little or nothing in the afternoon. The aspect of the crowd was that of comfortable wage-earners or shopkeepers for the most part, such as the flourishing port maintains in ever-increasing multitude, with none of the squalor which

seems so inseparable from prosperity in Liverpool. The crowd affirms the modern advance of Southampton in its rivalry with the commercial metropolis of the north, but we were well content in one of our walks to lose ourselves from it, and come upon a neighborhood of fine old houses, standing in wide grounds, now run wild with neglected groves, but speaking with the voices of their secular rooks of the social glory which has long departed. These mansions meant that once there was a local life of ease and splendor which could hold its own against London, as perhaps the life of no other place in England now does. If you took them at twilight, their weed-grown walks simply swarmed with ghosts of quality, in a setting transferred bodily from the pages of old novels.



“THE TRAM’S COURSE WAS LARGELY THROUGH UMBRAGEOUS AVENUES”

We had not the strength, social or moral, which their faded gentility represented, to resist the pull of the capital, and in a few days, shrivelled each to less than its twenty-four hours by the chill spring air, we yielded, and started for London on the maddest, merriest afternoon of all the glad Bank holidays of that Easter time. They have apparently not so much leisure for good manners at Southampton as at Bath, or even at Plymouth;

the booking-clerk at the station met inquiries about trains as snubbingly as any ticket-seller of our own could have done, and so we chanced it with one of the many expresses, on first-class tickets that at any other time would have insured us a whole compartment. As it was they got us two seats more luxurious than money could buy in an American train, and we were fain to be content. We were the more content, because, presently, we were running through a forest greater than I can remember as in these latter days bordering any American railroad. Miles and miles of country were thickly wooded on either side, with only such cart-tracks and signs of woodcraft as make the page of Thomas Hardy so wild and primitive after twenty centuries of Briton, Roman, Saxon, Dane, and Norman, in that often mastered but never wholly tamed England. We came now and then to a wooden farm-house with its wooden barns and outhouses, in an image of home which we would not have had more like if we could: we had not come to England to be back in America. Yet such is the perversity of human nature, that I who here am always idealizing a stone house as the fittest habitation of man, and longing to live in one, exulted in these frame cottages, and would have preferred one for my English dwelling; even the wood-built stations we whisked by had a charm because they were like the clapboarded depots, freight and passenger, at our rustic junctions. Everywhere in England one sees building of wood to an amazing extent, though the lumber for it is not cut from English woods, but comes rather from Norway and elsewhere in the densely timbered north. Of course it did not characterize the landscape even in the region of the New Forest, which but for its name we should think so old, but the gray stone of the West-of-England farmsteads and cottages had more and more given way to the warm red brick of the easterly south. This, as we drew near London, paled to the Milwaukee yellow, here and there, and when this color prevailed it was smirched and smutted with the smoke holding the metropolis hidden from us till we could, little by little, bear its immensity.

VII

IN FOLKESTONE OUT OF SEASON

HOW long the pretty town, or summer city, of Folkestone on the southeastern shore of Kent has been a favorite English watering-place, I am not ready to say; but I think probably a great while. Very likely the ancient Britons did not resort to it much; but there are the remains of Roman fortifications on the downs behind the town, known as Cæsar's camp, and though Cæsar is now said not to have known of camping there, other Roman soldiers there must have been, who could have come down from the place to the sea for a dip as often as they got liberty. It is also imaginable that an occasional Saxon or Dane, after a hard day's marauding along the coast, may have wished to wash up in the waters of the Channel; but they could hardly have inaugurated the sort of season which for five or six weeks of the later summer finds the Folkestone beaches thronged with visitors, and the surf full of them. We ourselves formed no part of the season, having come for the air in the later spring, when the air is said to be tonic enough without the water. It is my belief that at no time of the year can you come amiss to Folkestone; but still it is better to own at the outset that you will not find it very gay there if you come at the end of April.

We thought we were doing a very original if not a very distinguished thing in putting our hand-baggage into a fly at the station, and then driving with it from house to house for an hour and more in search of lodgings. But the very first people whom we told said they had done the same, and I dare say it is the common experience at Folkestone, where, even out of season, the houses whose addresses you have seem to be full-up, as the lodging-house phrase is, and where although every other house in the place has the sign of "Apartments" in the transoms, or the drawing-room windows, or both, you have the greatest difficulty in fixing yourself. When one address after another failed us, the driver of our fly began to take pity on us: too great pity for our faith, for we began to suspect him of carrying us to apartments in which he was interested; but we were never able to prove it,

and by severely opposing him, we flattered ourselves that we did not finally go where he wanted. Perhaps we did, but if so it was the right place for us. If one landlord had not what we wished, or had nothing, he cheerfully referred us to another, and when we had seen the lodgings we decided were the best, we did not and could not make up our minds to take them until we tried yet one more, where we found the landlord full-up, but where he commended us to the house we had just left as one of singular merit, in every way, and with a repute for excellent cooking which we would find the facts justify. We drove back all the more strenuously because of a fancied reluctance in our driver, and found the landlord serenely expectant on the pleasant lawn beside his house; he accepted our repentant excuses, and in another minute we found ourselves in the spacious sitting-room which had become ours, overlooking the brick-walled gardens of the adjoining houses in the shelter,

THE BEACH, FOLKESTONE

which slowly, very slowly, became the shade of a grove of tall, slim, young trees. When a trio of tall, slim, young girls intent upon some out-door sport in an interval of the rain, lounged through this grove, we felt that we could not have made a mistake; when a black cat provided itself for one of the garden walls, our reason was perfectly convinced. Fortune had approved

our resolution not to go, except in the greatest extremity, to any sort of boarding-house, or any sort of hotel, private, residential, temperant or inebriant, varying to the type of sea-side caravansary which is common to the whole world, but to cling to an ideal of lodgings such as we had cherished ever since our former sojourn in England, and such as you can realize nowhere else in the world.

Our sitting-room windows did not look out upon the sea, as we had planned, but with those brick walls and their tutelary cat, with these tall, slim, young trees and girls before us, we forgot the sea. As the front of our house was not upon the Leas (so the esplanaded cliffs at Folkestone are called), you could not see the coast of France from it, as you could from the house-fronts of the Leas in certain states of the atmosphere. But that sight always means rain, and in Folkestone there is rain enough without seeing the coast of France; and so it was not altogether a disadvantage to be one corner back from the Leas on a street enfilading them from the north. After the tea and bread and butter, which instantly appeared as if the kettle had been boiling for us all the time, we ran out to the Leas, and said we would never go away from Folkestone. How, indeed, could we think of doing such a thing, with that lawny level of interasphalted green stretching eastward into the town that climbed picturesquely up to meet it, and westward to the sunset, and dropping by a swift declivity softened in its abruptness by flowery and leafy shrubs? If this were not enough inducement to an eternal stay, there was the provisionally peaceful Channel wrinkled in a friendly smile at the depth below us, and shaded from delicate green to delicate purple away from the long, brown beach on which it amused itself by gently breaking in a snowy surf. In the middle distance was every manner of smaller or larger sail, and in the offing little stubbed steamers smoking along, and here and there an ocean-liner making from an American for a German port; or if it was not an ocean-liner, we will call it so. Certainly there could be no question of the business and pleasure shipping drawn up on the beach, on the best terms with the ranks of bathing-machines patiently waiting the August bathers with the same serene faith in them as the half-fledged trees showed, that end-of-April evening, in the coming of the summer which seemed so doubtful to the human spectator. For the prevailing blandness of the atmosphere had keen little points and edges of

cold in it; and vagarious gusts caught and tossed the smoke from the chimney-pots of the pretty town along the sea-level below the Leas, giving away here to the wooded walks, and gaining there upon them. Inspired by the presence of a steel pier half as long as that of Atlantic City, with the same sort of pavilion for entertainments at the end, we tried to fancy that the spring was farther advanced with us at home, but we could only make sure that it would be summer sooner and fiercer. In the mean time, as it was too late for the military band which plays every fine afternoon in a stand on the Leas, the birds were singing in the gardens that border it, very sweetly and richly, and not obliging you at any point to get up and

THE PIER WITH ITS PAVILION

take your hat off by striking into “God Save the King.” I am not sure what kind of birds they were; but I called them to myself robins of our sort, for upon the whole they sounded like them. Some golden-billed blackbirds I made certain of, and very likely there were larks and finches among them, and nightingales, for what I knew. They all shouted for joy of the pleasant evening, and of the garden trees in which they hid, and which were oftener pleasant, no doubt, than the evening. The gardens where the trees stood spread between handsome mansard-roofed houses of gray stucco, of the same type as those which front flush upon the Leas, and which prevail in all

the newer parts of Folkestone; their style dates them of the sixties and seventies of the last century, since when not many houses seem to have been built in Folkestone.

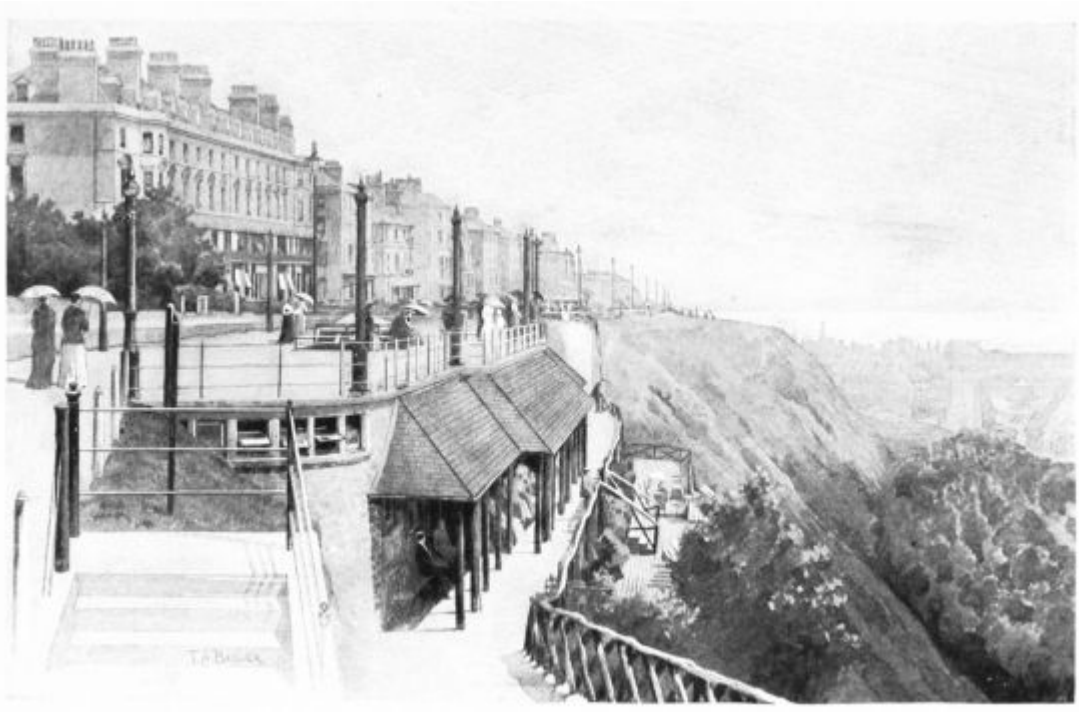
Probably these handsome houses were not meant for the lodgings that they have now so largely if not mostly become. It is said that the polite resident population has receded before the summer-folk who have come in and more and more possessed the place, and to whom the tradesman class has survived to minister. At any rate it is the fate of Folkestone to grow morally and civically more and more like Atlantic City, which somehow persists in offering itself in its wild, wooden ugliness for a contrast as well as a parallel of the English watering-place. Nothing could be more unlike the Leas than the Board Walk; nothing more unlike their picturesque declivity than the flat sands on which the vast hotels and toy cottages of the New Jersey summer-resort are built; nothing more unlike the mild, many-steamered, many-schoonered expanse of the Channel, than the immeasurable, empty horizon, and the long, huge wash of the ocean. Yet, I say, there is a solidarity of gay intent and of like devotion to brief alien pleasures in which I find the two places inseparable in my mind.

If such a thing were possible, I should like to take the promenaders on the Leas whom I saw in April, 1904, and interchange them with the same number of those whom I saw two months before on the Board Walk fighting their way against the northeasterly gale that washed the frozen foam far in under it against the frozen sand. Yes, I should be satisfied if I could only transpose the placid, respectable Bath-chairmen of the Leas, and the joyous darkys who pushed the wheeled wicker-chairs of the Board Walk, and turned first one cheek and then another to the blast, or took it in their shining teeth, as they planted their wide, flat feet, wrapped in carpet, with a rhythmical recklessness on the plank. I should like, if this could be done, to ask the first, “Isn’t this something like Folkestone?” and the last, “Isn’t this like Atlantic City?”

Perhaps it is only the sea that is alike in both, and the centipedal steel piers that bestride it in either. The sea makes the exile at home everywhere, for it washes his native shore and the alien coast with the same tides, and only to-day the moss cast up on the shore at Dover breathed the odor that

blows in the face of the stroller on Lynn Beach, or the Long Sands at York, Maine.

We were going by a corner of it to see the landing of the passengers from the Calais boat, and to gloat upon what the misery of their passage had left of them; but before we could reach the deck they had found shelter in their special train for London. It used to be one of the chief amusements of the visitors at Folkestone to witness such dishevelled debarkations at their own



THE SHELTER UNDER THE LEAS

piers, and we had promised ourselves the daily excitement of the spectacle; but the arrival of the boats had been changed so as to coincide with our lunch hour, and we pretended that it would have been indelicate to indulge ourselves with it when really it was merely inconvenient.

There are entertainments of an inoffensive vaudeville sort in the pavilion on the pier, and yet milder attractions in the hall of the Leas Pavilion, which for some abstruse reason is sunk some ten or twelve feet below the surrounding level. The tea was yet milder than the other attractions: than the fair vocalist; than the prestidigitator who made a dozen different kinds of hats out of a square piece of cloth, and personated their historical wearers in them; than the cinematograph; than the lady orchestra which so often

played pieces “By Desire” that the programme was almost composed of them. A diversion in the direction of ice-cream was not lavishly fortunate: the ice-cream was a sort of sweetened and extract-flavored snow which was hardly colder than the air outside.

At Folkestone we were early warned against the air of the sea-level, which we would find extremely relaxing, whereas that of the Leas, fifty feet above was extremely bracing. We were not able always to note the difference, but at times we found the air even on the Leas extremely relaxing when the wind was in a certain quarter. Once, in a long, warm rain, I found myself so relaxed in the street back of the Leas, that but for the seasonable support of a garden wall against which I rested, I do not know how I should have found strength to get home. You constantly hear, in England, of the relaxing and bracing effects of places that are so little separated by distance, that you wonder at the variance of their hygienic qualities. But once master the notion and you will be able to detect differences so subtle and so constant that from bench to bench on the Leas at Folkestone you will be sensible of being extremely relaxed and extremely braced, though the benches are not twenty rods apart. The great thing is to forget these differences, and to remember only that the birds are singing, and the sun shining equally for all the benches.

The sun is, of course, the soft English sun, which seems nowise akin to our flaming American star, but is quite probably the centre of the same solar system. The birds are in the wilding shrubs and trees which clothe the front of the cliffs, and in the gardened spaces on the relaxing levels, spreading below to the sands of the sea; and they are in the gardens of the placid, handsome houses which stand detached behind their hedges of thorn or laurel. This is their habit through the whole town, which is superficially vast, and everywhere agreeably and often prettily built. It is overbuilt, in fact, and well towards a thousand houses lie empty, and most of those which are occupied are devoted to lodgings and boarding-houses, while hotels, large and little, abound. There are no manufactures, and except in the season and the preparatory season, there is no work. Folkestone has become very fashionable, but it is no longer the resort of the conservative or the aristocratic, or even the æsthetic. These turn to other air and other conditions, where they may step out-of-doors, or wander informally about

the fields or over the sands. A great number of smaller places, more lately opened, along the everywhere beautiful English shore, supply simplicity at a far lower rate than you can buy formality in Folkestone.

THE FISH-MARKET AT FOLKESTONE

But the birds say nothing of all this, especially in the first days of your arrival, when it is only a question whether you shall buy the most beautiful house on the Leas, or whether you shall buy the whole town. Afterwards, your heart is gone to Folkestone, and you do not mind whether you have made a good investment or not. By this time though the Earl of Radnor still owns the earth, you own the sky and sea, for which you pay him no ground rent. Of your sky perhaps the less said the better, but of your sea you could not brag too loudly. Sometimes the sun looks askance at it from the curtains

of cloud which he likes to keep drawn, especially when it is out of season, and sometimes the rainy Hyades vex its dimness, but at all times its tender and lovely coloring seems its own, and not a hue lent it from the smiling or frowning welkin. I am speaking of its amiable moods, it has a muddiness all its own, also, when the Hyades have kept at it too long. But on a seasonably pleasant day, such as rather prevails at Folkestone, in or out of season, I do not know a much more agreeable thing than to sit on a bench under the edge of the Leas, and tacitly direct the movements of the fishermen whose sails light up the water wherever it is not darkened by the smokes of those steamers I have spoken of. About noon they begin to make inshore, towards the piers which form the harbor, and then if you will leave your bench, and walk down the long, sloping road from the Leas into the quaint, old seafaring quarter of the town, you can see the fishermen auctioning off their several catches.

Their craft, as they round the end of the breakwater, and come dropping into the wharves, are not as graceful as they looked at sea. In fact, the American eye, trained to the trimmer lines of one shipping in every kind, sees them lumpish and loggish, with bows that can scarcely know themselves from sterns, and with stumpy masts and shapeless sails. But the fishermen themselves are very fine: fair and dark men, but mostly fair, of stalwart build, with sou'westers sloping over powerful shoulders, and the red of their English complexions showing through their professional tan. With the toe of his huge thigh-boot one of them tenderly touches the edge of the wharf, as the boatload of fish swerves up to it, and then steps ashore to hold it fast, while the others empty a squirming and flapping heap on the stones. The heaps are gathered into baskets, and carried to the simple sheds of the market, where the beheading and disembowelling of fish is forever going on, and there being dumped down on the stones again, they are cried off by one of the crew that caught them. I say cried because I suppose that is the technical phrase, but it is too violent. The voice of the auctioneer is slow and low, and his manner diffident and embarrassed; he practises none of the arts of his secondary trade; he does nothing, by joke or brag, to work up the inaudible bidders to flights of speculative frenzy; after a pause, which seems no silenter than the rest of the transaction, he ceases to repeat the bids, and his fish, in the measure of a bushel or so, have gone for a

matter of three shillings. A few tourists, mostly women, of course, form the uninterested audience. A few push-cart dealers were there with their vehicles the day of my visit. Some boys were trying to get into mischief and to compromise some innocent, confiding dogs as their accomplices. One vast fish-woman, in a man's hat, with enormous hips and huge flanks, moved ponderously about, making jokes at the affair, and shaking with bulky laughter.

The affair was so far from having the interest promised, that I turned from it towards the neighboring streets of humble old-fashioned houses, and wondered in which of them it would have been that forty-three years before a very home-sick, very young American, going out to be a consul in Italy, stopped one particularly black midnight and had a rasher of bacon. It seemed to me that I was personally interested in this incident, as if I had been personally a party to it, and it was recalled for my amusement, how a little old man, in a water-side fur cap of the Dickens type, came to the front-door of that humble house, and, by the dim light of the candle he bore, recognized the two companions of the young American, who had made friends with them on the journey from London, where they dwelt, and where they had left all their aspirates except a few which they misplaced. I think they must have been commercial travellers going to Paris upon some business occasion, and used to the transit of the Channel, which was much more dependent then than it is now, in its beginnings and endings, on the state of the tide, so that it was no surprise either for them or for that old man to meet at midnight on his threshold in a negotiation for supper. He set about getting it with what always calls itself, in no very intimate relation to the fact, cheerful alacrity, and at a rather smoky fire in the parlor grate he set the tea-kettle singing, and burned the toast, and broiled the bacon, which he then put sizzling before his guests, famished, but gay and glad of heart. Even the heavy heart of the very homesick, very young American was lifted by the simple cheer; and it seemed to him that while there might have been and doubtless would be better bacon, there actually was none half so good in the world. He had no distinct recollection of the Channel crossing afterwards, and so it must have been good, and he could recall little of the journey to Paris or the sojourn there. Being as proud as he was poor, he travelled second-class incognito, but some sense of an official quality must

have transpired from his mysterious reticence, for at Paris when they were taking different trains from the same station, one of those good fellows came to his car-window to shake hands. It was in that dark hour of the civil war when the feeling between England and America was not the affection of these halcyon days, but the good fellow put it in the form of a kindly gibe. “I say,” he mocked, holding the American’s hand, “don’t make it too ’ot to ’old us, down there?” Then he waved his hand and disappeared, smiling out of that darkness of time and space which has swallowed up so many smiling faces.

That darkness had swallowed up the humble Folkestone house, so that it could not be specifically found, but there were plenty of other quaint, antiquated houses, of which one had one’s choice, clinging to the edge of the sea, and the foot of the steep which swells away towards Dover into misty heights of very agreeable grandeur. In the narrow street that climbs into the upper and newer town, there are curiosity shops of a fatal fascination for such as love old silver, which is indeed so abundant in the old curiosity shops of England everywhere as to leave the impression that all the silver presently in use is fire-new. There are other fascinating shops of a more practical sort in that street, which has a cart-track so narrow that scarce the boldest Bath chair could venture it. When it opens at top into the new wide streets you find yourself in the midst of a shopping region of which Folkestone is justly proud, and which is said to suggest to “the finer female sense,” both London and Paris. Perhaps it only suggests a difference from both; but at any rate it is very bright and pleasant, especially when it is not raining; and there are not only French and English modistes but Italian confectioners; one sees many Italian names, and their owners seem rather fond of Folkestone, of which they may mistake the air for that of the Riviera. I wish they would not guard so carefully from the people at the Leas Pavilion the secret of the meridional ice-cream.

This street of shops (which abounds in circulating libraries) soon ceases in a street of the self-respectful houses of the local type, and from the midst of these rises the bulk of the Pleasure Gardens Theatre, to which I addicted myself with my love of the drama without even the small reciprocity which I experience from it at home. In the season, the Pleasure Gardens adjacent

are given up to many sorts of gayety, but during our stay there was no merriment madder than the hilarity of a croquet tournament; this, I will own, I had not the heart to go and pay sixpence to see.

But at no season does Folkestone cease to be charming, if not in itself, then out of itself. A line of omnibusses as well as a line of public automobiles runs to the delightful old village of Hythe, which is mainly a single street of low houses, with larger ones, old mansions and new villas on the modest heights back of its sea-level, where the sea is first of all skirted by a horse-car track. The cars of this pass the ruins of certain old martello towers between the sea and the long canal dug at the beginning of the last century as part of the defences against the Napoleonic invasion, apparently in the hope that such of the French as escaped the dangers of the Channel would fall into the canal and be drowned. But the chief object of interest at Hythe, beside the human interest, is the ancient church. It is of the usual mixture of Norman and Gothic characteristic of old English churches, but it has the peculiar merit of a collection of six hundred skulls, which with some cords of the relative bones wellnigh fill the whole crypt. These sad evidences of our common mortality are not æsthetically ordered, as in the Church of the Capuchins at Rome, but are simply corded up and ranged on shelves. The surliest of vergers ventures no fable such as you would be very willing to pay for, and you are left to account for them as you can, by battle, by plague, by the slow accumulation of the dead in unremembered graves long robbed of their tenants. It is hard for you, in the presence of their peculiar detachment, to relate these smiling ground-plans of faces—

"Neither painted, glazed nor framed,"—

to anything at any time like the life you know in yourself, or to suppose that there once passed in these hollow shells, even such poor thoughts as do not quite fill your own skull to bursting.

It is, nevertheless, rather a terrible little place, that crypt, and you come out gladly into the watery sunshine, and stray among the tombs, where you are not daunted by the wide bill-board conspicuously erected near the entrance with the charges of corporation, vicar and sexton for burial in that holy ground, lettered large upon the panel. That is the English outrightness,

you say, that is the island honesty, and you try, rather vainly, to match it with a like publication in such a place at home which should do us equal credit. Other

THE ANCIENT CHURCH AT HYTHE

things were very like country graveyards at home, though not those strange, coffin shapes of stones which lie on so many graves in Kent, and keep the funeral fact so strongly before the living. But there were the grass-grown graves; the weather-beaten monuments, the wandering brambles, the ineffectual flowers. Besides, there was the ever present ivy, ever absent with us; and over the Gothic portal of the church was a grotesque, laughing mask, with open mouth, out of which a sparrow flew from her nest somewhere within the wrinkled cheeks. As if that were the signal for it the chimes began to ring in the square, gray church tower, and to fill the listening air with the sweetest, the tenderest tones. The bells of St. Leonard's at Hythe are famous for their tenderness, their sweetness, and it was no uncommon pathos that flowed from their well-tuned throats, and melted our hearts within us. Doubtless at the same hour of every afternoon the forbidding verger returns to the crypt which he has been showing to people all day at threepence a head, and weeps for the hardness of his

manner with emotional tourists. At any rate the bells have made their soft appeal to him every afternoon for the hundred and fifty-eight years since 1748, when a still older tower of the church fell down, and they were put up with the new one.

The church-yard was half surrounded by humble houses of many dates, and we came down by one of these streets to the main thoroughfare of Hythe at the moment two little girls were wildly daring fate at the hands of the local halfwit, who was tottering after them, with his rickety arms and legs flung abroad as he ran, in his laughter at their mocking. It was a scene proper to village life anywhere, but what made us localize it in the American villages we knew was coming suddenly on the low wooden cottage which stood flush upon the sidewalk, exactly in the way of wooden houses of exactly the same pattern, familiar to our summer sojourn in many New England towns. It might have stood, just as it was, except for its mouldering and mossgrown tile-roof, on any back street of Marblehead, or Newburyport, or Portsmouth, New Hampshire; yet it seemed there in Hythe by equal authority with any of the new or old brick cottages. There are in fact many wooden houses, both old and new, in Hythe and Sandgate, and other sea-shore and inland towns of the Folkestone region; the old ones follow the older American fashion in their size and shape, and the newer ones the less old; for there are summer cottages of wood in the style that has ultimately prevailed with us. Many by the sea emulate the æsthetic forms of these, but in brick, and only look like our summer cottages at a distance. The real wooden houses when not very ancient, are like those we used to build when we were emerging from the Swiss chalet and Gothic villa period, and the jig-saw still lent its graceful touch in the decoration of gable and veranda; and they are always painted white.

In all cases they either look American or make our houses of the like pattern look English in the retrospect. On the line of the South Eastern Railway in Kent are many wooden stations of exactly the sort I remember on the Fitchburg Railroad in Massachusetts. They could have been transposed without disturbing their consciousness; but what of the porter at one of the Kentish stations whom I heard calling the trains with the same nasal accent that I used to hear announcing my arrival at n'Atholl, and n'Orange, Massachusetts? Was he a belated Yankee ancestor, or was the

brakeman of those prehistoric days simply his far progenitor? Is there then nothing American, nothing English, and are we really all one?

In the window of the little pastry shop at Hythe where we got some excellent tea, there were certain objects on a lavish platter whose identity we scarcely ventured to establish, but "What are these?" we finally asked.

"*Doughnuts*," the reply came, and we could not gasp out the question:

"But where are the baked beans, the fish-balls?"

We might well have expected them to rise like an exhalation from the floor, and greet us with the solemn declaration, "We are no more American than you are, with your English language, which you go round with here disappointing people by not speaking it through your nose. We and you are of the same immemorial Anglo-Saxon tradition; we are at home on either shore of the sea; and we shall attest the unity of the race's civilization in all the ages to come."

This would have been a good deal for the baked beans and the fish-balls to say, but it would not have been too much. In that very village of Hythe, where we lunched the Sunday after in a sea-side cottage of such an endearingly American interior that we could not help risking praise of it for that reason, there was a dish which I thought I knew as I voraciously ate of it. I asked its honored name, and I was told, "Salt haddock and potatoes," but all the same I knew that it was inchoate fish-balls, and I believe they had left the baked beans in the kitchen as more than my daunted intelligence could assimilate at one meal. The baked beans! What know I? The succotash, the chowder, the clam-fritters, the hoe-cake, the flapjacks, the corned-beef hash, the stewed oyster, with whatever else the ancient Briton ate—

"When wild in the woods the noble savage ran,"

and felt his digestion affected by a weird prescience of his transatlantic posterity.

They do not serve hot tamales on the Leas of Folkestone yet, and perhaps they never will, now that our national fickleness has relegated to a hopeless back-numbership the hot-tamale-man, in his suit of shining white with his oven of shining brass, and impoverished our streets of their joint

picturesqueness. It is possible that in the season they serve other sorts of public food on the Leas, but I doubt it, for the note of Folkestone is distinctly formality. I do not say the highest fashion, for I have been told that this is "the tender grace of a day that is dead" for Folkestone. The highest fashion in England, if not in America, seeks the simplest expression in certain moments; it likes to go to little sea-shore places where it can be informal, when it likes, in dress and amusement, where it can get close to its neglected mother nature, and lie in her lap and smoke its cigarette in her indulgent face. So at least I have heard; I vouch for nothing. Sometimes I have seen the Leas fairly well dotted with promenaders towards evening; sometimes, in a brief interval of sunshine, the lawns pretty fairly spotted with people listening in chairs to the military band. On bad days—and my experience is that out of eighteen days at Folkestone fourteen are too bad for the band to play in the Pavilion, there is a modest string-band in the Shelter. This is a sort of cavern hollowed under the edge of the Leas, where there are chairs within, and without under the veranda eaves, at tuppence each, and where the visitors all sit reading novels, and trying to shut the music from their consciousness. I think it is because they dread so much coming to "God Save the King," when they will have to get up and stand uncovered. It is not because they hate to uncover to the King, but because they know that then they will have to go away, and there is nothing else for them to do.

Once they could go twice a day to see the Channel boats come in, and the passengers sodden from seasickness, limply lagging ashore. But now they are deprived of this sight by the ill-behavior of the railroad in timing the boats so that they arrive in the middle of lunch and after dark. It is held to have been distinctly a blow to the prosperity of Folkestone, where people now have more leisure than they know what to do with, even when they spend all the time in the dressing and undressing which the height of the season exacts of them. Of course, there is always the bathing, when the water is warm enough. The bathing-machine is not so attractive to the spectator as our bath-house, with the bather tripping or limping down to the sea across the yellow sands; but it serves equally to pass the time and occupy the mind, and for the American onlooker it would have the charm of novelty, when the clumsy structure was driven into the water.

I have said yellow sands in obedience to Shakespeare, but I note again that the beach at Folkestone is reddish-brown. Its sands are coarse, and do not pack smoothly like those of our beaches; at Dover, where they were used in the mortar for building the castle, the warder had to blame them as the cause of the damp coming through the walls and obliging the authorities to paint the old armor to keep it from rusting. But I fancy the sea-sand does not enter into the composition of the stucco on the Folkestone houses, one of which we found so pleasantly habitable. Most of the houses on and near the Leas are larger than the wont of American houses, and the arrangement much more agreeable and sensible than that of our average houses; the hallway opens from a handsome vestibule, and the stairs ascend from the rear of the hall, and turn squarely, as they mount half-way up. But let not the intending exile suppose that their rents are low; with the rates and taxes, which the tenant always pays in England, the rents are fully up to those in towns of corresponding size with us. Provisions are even higher than in our subordinate cities, especially to the westward, and I doubt if people live as cheaply in Folkestone as, say, in Springfield, Massachusetts, or certainly Buffalo.

For the same money, though, they can live more handsomely, for domestic service in England is cheap and abundant and well-ordered. Yet on the other hand, they cannot live so comfortably, nor, so wholesomely. There are no furnaces in these very personable houses; steam-heat is undreamed of, and the grates which are in every room and are not of ignoble size, scarce suffice to keep the mercury above the early sixties of the thermometer's degrees. If you would have warm hands and feet you must go out-of-doors and walk them warm. It is not a bad plan, and if you can happen on a little sunshine out-of-doors, it is far better than to sit cowering over the grate, which has enough to do in keeping itself warm.

One could easily exaggerate the sense of sunshine at Folkestone, and yet I do not feel that I have got quite enough of it into my picture. It was not much obscured by fog during our stay; but there were clouds that came and went—came more than they went. One night there was absolute fog, which blew in from the sea in drifts showing almost like snow in the electric lamps; and at momently intervals the siren horn at the pier lowed like some unhappy cow, crazed for her wandering calf, and far out from the blind

deep, the Boulogne boat bellowed its plaintive response. But there was, at other times, sunshine quite as absolute. Our last Sunday at Folkestone was one of such sunshine, and all the morning long the sky was blue, blue, as I had fancied it could be blue only in America or in Italy. Besides this there remains the sense of much absolute sunshine from our first Sunday morning, when we walked along under the Leas, towards Sandgate, as far as to the Elizabethan castle on the shore. We found it doubly shut because it was Sunday and because it was not yet Whitmonday, until which feast of the church it would not be opened. It is only after much trouble with the almanac that the essentially dissenting American discovers the date of these church feasts which are confidently given in public announcements in England, as clearly fixing this or that day of the month; but we were sure we should not be there after Whitmonday, and we made what we could of the outside of the castle, and did not suffer our exclusion to embitter us. Nothing could have embittered us that Sunday morning as we strolled along that pleasant-way, with the sea on one side and the sea-side cottages on the other, and occasionally pressing between us and the beach. Their presence so close to the water spoke well for the mildness of the winter, and for the winds of all seasons. On any New England coast they would have frozen up and blown away; but here they stood safe among their laurels, with their little vegetable gardens beside them; and the birds, which sang among their budding trees, probably never left off singing the year round except in some extraordinary stress of weather, or when occupied in plucking up the sprouting peas by the roots and eating the seed-peas. To prevent their ravage, and to restrict them to their business of singing, the rows of young peas were netted with a somewhat coarser mesh than that used in New Jersey to exclude the mosquitoes, but whether it was effectual or not, I do not know.

I only know that the sun shone impartially on birds and peas, and upon us as well, so that an overcoat became oppressive, and the climb back to the Leas by the steep hill-side paths impossible. If it had not been for the elders reading newspapers, and the lovers reading one another’s thoughts on all the benches, it might have been managed; but as it was we climbed down after climbing half-way up, and retraced our steps towards Sandgate, where we took a fly for the drive back to Folkestone. Our fly driver (it is not the

slang it sounds) said there would be time within the hour we bargained for to go round through the camp at Shorncliff, and we providentially arrived on the parade-ground while the band was still playing to a crowd of the masses who love military music everywhere, and especially hang tranced upon it in England. If I had by me some particularly vivid pots of paint instead of the cold black and white of print, I might give some notion in color of the way the red-coated soldiery flamed out of the intense green of the plain, and how the strong purples and greens and yellows and blues of the listeners' dresses gave the effect of some gaudy garden all round them; American women say that English women of all classes wear, and can wear, colors in their soft atmosphere that would shriek aloud in our clear, pitiless air. When the band ceased playing, and each soldier had paired off and strolled away with the maid who had been simple-heartedly waiting for him, it was as gigantic tulips and hollyhocks walking.

The camp at Shorncliff is for ten thousand soldiers, I believe of all arms, who are housed in a town of brick and wooden cottages, with streets and lanes of its own; and there many of the officers have their quarters as well as the men. Once these officers' families lived in Folkestone, and something of its decay is laid to their removal, which was caused by its increasing expensiveness. Probably none of them dwell in the tents, which our drive brought us in sight of beyond the barrack-town, pitched in the middle of a green, green field, and lying like heaps of snow on the verdure. The old church of Cheriton, with a cloud of immemorial associations, rose gray in the background of the picture, and beyond the potential goriness of the tented field a sheep-pasture stretched, full of the bloodless innocence of the young lambs, which after imaginably bounding as to the tabor's sound from the martial bands, were stretched beside their dams in motionless exhaustion from their play.

It was all very strange, that sunshiny Sunday morning, for the soldiers who lounged near the gate of their camp looked not less kind than the types of harmlessness beyond the hedge, and the emblems of their inherited faith could hardly have been less conscious of the monstrous grotesqueness of their trade of murder than these poor souls themselves. It is all a weary and disheartening puzzle, which the world seems as far as ever from guessing out. It may be that the best way is to give it up, but one thinks of it

helplessly in the beauty of this gentle, smiling England, whose history has been written in blood from the earliest records of the heathen time to the latest Christian yesterday, when her battle-fields have merely been transferred beyond seas, but are still English battle-fields.

What strikes the American constantly in England is the homogeneousness of the people. We at home have the foreigner so much with us that we miss him when we come to England. When I take my walks in the mall in Central Park I am likely to hear any other tongue oftener than English, to hear Yiddish, or Russian, or Polish, or Norwegian, or French, or Italian, or Spanish; but when I take my walks on the Leas at Folkestone, scarcely more than an hour from the polyglot continent of Europe, I hear almost nothing but English. Twice, indeed, I heard a few French people speaking together; once I heard a German Jew telling a story of a dog, which he found so funny that he almost burst with laughter; and once again, in the lower town, there came to me from the open door of an eating-house the sound of Italian. But everywhere else was English, and the signs of *Ici on parle Français* were almost as infrequent in the shops. As we very well know, if we know English history even so little as I do, it used to be very different. Many of these tongues in their earlier modifications used to be heard in and about Folkestone, if not simultaneously, then successively. The Normans came speaking their French of Stratford-atte-Bow, the Saxons their Low German, the Danes their Scandinavian, and the Italians their vernacular Latin, the supposed sister-tongue and not mother-tongue of their common parlance. It was not the Latin which Cæsar wrote, but it was the Latin which Cæsar heard in his camp on the downs back of Folkestone, if that was really his camp and not some later Roman general's. The words, if not the accents of these foreigners are still heard in the British speech there; the only words which are almost silent in it are those of the first British, who have given their name to the empire of the English; and that seems very strange, and perhaps a little sad. But it cannot be helped; we ourselves have kept very few Algonquin vocables; we ourselves speak the language of the Roman, the Saxon, the Dane, the Norman in the mixture imported from England in the seventeenth century, and adapted to our needs by the newspapers in the twentieth. We may get back to a likeness of the Latin to which the hills behind Folkestone echoed two thousand years ago, if the

Italians keep coming in at the present rate, but it is not probable; and I thought it advisable, for the sake of a realizing sense of Italian authority in our civilization to pay a visit to Cæsar's camp one afternoon of the few when the sun shone. This took us up a road so long and steep that it seemed only a due humanity to get out and join our fly driver (again that apparent slang!) in sparing his panting and perspiring horse; but the walk gave us a better chance of enjoying the entrancing perspectives opening seaward from every break in the downs. Valleys green with soft grass and gray with pasturing sheep dipped in soft slopes to the Folkestone levels; and against the horizon shimmered the Channel, flecked with sail of every type, and stained with the smoke of steamers, including the Folkestone boat full of passengers not, let us hope, so sea-sick as usual.

Part of our errand was to see the Holy Well at which the Canterbury Pilgrims used to turn aside and drink, and to feel that we were going a little way with them. But we were so lost in pity for our horse and joy in the landscape, that we forgot to demand these objects and their associations from our driver till we had remounted to our places, and turned aside on the way to Cæsar's camp. Then he could only point with his whip to a hollow we had passed unconscious, and say the Holy Well was there.

"But where, where," we cried, "is the pilgrim road to Canterbury?"

Then he faced about and pointed in another direction to a long, white highway curving out of sight, and there it was, just as Chaucer saw it full of pilgrims seven hundred years ago, or as Blake and Stothard saw it six hundred years after Chaucer. I myself always preferred Stothard's notion of these pious folk to Blake's; but that is a matter of taste. Both versions of them were like, and they both now did their best to repeople the empty white highway for us. I do not say they altogether failed; these things are mostly subjective, and it is hard to tell, especially if you want others to believe your report. We were only subordinately concerned with the Canterbury pilgrims; we were mainly in a high Roman mood, and Cæsar's camp was our goal.

The antiquity of England is always stunning, and it is with the breath pretty well knocked out of your body that you constantly come upon evidences of the Roman occupation, especially in the old, old churches which abound far beyond the fondest fancy of the home-keeping American

mind. You can only stand before these walls built of Roman brick, on these bricked-up Roman arches, and gasp out below the verger's hearing, "Four hundred years! They held Britain four hundred years! Four times as long as we have lived since we broke with her!" But observe, gentle and trusting reader, that these Roman remains are of the latest years of their domination, and very long after they had converted and enslaved the stubbornest of the Britons, while at Cæsar's camp, if it was his, we stood before the ghosts of the earliest invaders, of those legionaries who were there before Christ was in the world, and who have left no trace of their presence except this fortress-grave.

Very like a grave it was, with huge, long harrows of heavily sodded earth made in scooping out the bed of the moat, and resting upon some imaginable inner structure of stone or brick. They fronted the landward side of a down which seawardly was of too sharp an ascent to need their defence. Rising one above another they formed good resting-places for the transatlantic tourists whom the Roman engineers could hardly have had in mind, and a good playground for some children who were there with their mothers and nurses. A kindly-looking young Englishman had stretched himself out on one of them, and as we approached from below was in the act of lighting his pipe. It was all, after those two thousand years, very peaceable, and there were so many larks singing in the meadow that it seemed as if there must be one of them in every tuft of grass. It was profusely starred over with the small English daisies, which they are not obliged to take up in pots, for the winter here, and which seized the occasion to pass themselves off on me for white clover, till I found them out by their having no odor.

The effect was what forts and fields of fight always come to if you give them time enough; though few of the most famous can offer the traveller such a view of Folkestone and the sea as Cæsar's camp. We drove round into the town by a different road from that we came out by, and on the way I noted a small brick-making industry in the suburb, which could perhaps account both for the prosperity of Folkestone and for the overbuilding. Sadly we saw the great numbers of houses that were to be let or sold, everywhere, and we arrived at our lodgings and the conclusion together that four-fifths of the houses which were not to be let whole, were to be let

piecemeal in apartments. The sign of these is up on every hand, and the well-wisher of the sympathetic town must fall back for comfort as to its future on the prevalence of what has been waiting to call itself the instructural industry. Schools for youth of both sexes abound, and we everywhere saw at the proper hours discreetly guarded processions of fresh-looking young English-looking girls, carrying their complexions out into the health-giving air of the seas. As long as we could see them in their wholesome, pink-cheeked, blue-eyed innocence, we could hardly miss the fashion whose absence was a condition of one's being in Folkestone out of season.

Another compensation for being there untimely, as regarded fashion, was a glimpse of the English political life which I had one night in a "Liberal Demonstration" at the Town Hall. This I found as intellectually bracing as my two nights at the theatre were mentally relaxing. It was all the difference between the beach and the Leas, and nothing but a severe sense of my non-citizenship saved me from partaking the enthusiasm which I perceived all round me. I perceived also the good, honest odor of salt fish, such as was proper to the seafaring constituency whom one of the gentlemen on the platform was willing to represent in Parliament as the Liberal candidate. He was ranked in by rows of his friends of both sexes, and on the floor where I sat, as well as in the galleries there were great numbers of women, whom one seldom sees in political meetings at home, and great numbers of young men whom one sees almost as seldom. One lady on the platform, in evening dress, I fancied the wife of the young gentleman in evening dress who was standing (in England candidates do not *run*) for a neighboring parliamentary constituency, and who presently made an excellent and telling speech. At times the speakers all aimed some remark, usually semijocose, at the women, and there was evidence of the domestication, the homely intelligence of all ranks and sexes, in English politics, which is wholly absent from ours. The points made against the Tories were their selfish government of the nation in the interest of themselves and their families; the crushing debts and taxes heaped upon the English people by the mismanagement of the Boer war; the injustice of the proposed school law towards Dissenters; the absurdity and wickedness of the preferential tariff. It was all very personal to Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour, but

impersonally personal and self-respectful. As I came in the Folkestone candidate was speaking very clearly and cogently, but not very vividly, and the real spirit of the demonstration was not roused till a Liberal member of Parliament followed him in a jovial, witty, and forcible talk rather than a speech. He won the heart of the people, and especially the women, who laughed with him, and helped cheer him; there was some give and take between him and the audience, from which he was bantered as well as applauded; but all was well within the bounds of good-humor and good-manners. He genially roughed the working-men, whom he rallied on not getting everything they wanted, now when they had the vote and could vote what they chose. It was like the talk of a man to his family or his familiar friends, and gave the sense of the closely graduated intimacy of politics possible in a homogeneous community.

He was followed by that gentleman in evening dress, who spoke as forcibly, and addressed himself to the working-man, too, whom he invited to realize their power, and to "take their share in the kingship." The terms of his appeal made me tremble a little, but they were probably quite figurative, and embodied no danger to the monarchy. Still from a man in evening dress, and especially a white waistcoat, they were interesting; and I came away equally divided between my surprise at them, and my American misgiving for the fact that neither the gentleman proposing to represent a Folkestone constituency nor any of his friends was a resident of Folkestone. Such a thing, I reflected, was wholly alien to our law and custom, and could not happen except where some gentleman wished very much to be a Senator from a State of which he was not a citizen, and felt obliged to buy up its legislature.

VIII

KENTISH NEIGHBORHOODS, INCLUDING CANTERBURY

DOVER is a place which looks its history as little as any famous town I know. It lies smutched with smoke, along the shore, and it is as commonplace as some worthy town of our own which has grown to like effect in as many decades as Dover has taken centuries. The difference in favor of Dover is that when at last you get outside of it, you are upon the same circle of downs that backs Folkestone, and on the top of one of them you are overawed by the very noble castle, which too few people, who know the place as the landing of the Calais boat, ever think of. Up and steeply up we mounted, with a mounting sense of never getting there; but at last, after passing red-coated soldiers stalking upward, and red-cheeked children stooping downward to pick the wayside flowers, hardily blowing in the keen sea-wind, we reached the ancient fortress and waited in a court-yard till we were many enough to be herded through it by a warder of a jocosity which I have not known elsewhere in England. He had a joke for the mimic men in armor which had to be constantly painted to keep the damp off; for the thickness of the walls; for the lantern that flings a faint glimmer, a third way down the unfathomable castle well; for the disparity between our multitude and the French father and daughter whom he had shown through just before us. At different points he would begin, "I always say, 'ere," and then pronounce some habitual pleasantry. He called our notice to a crusader effigy's tall two-handed sword, and invited us to enjoy his custom of calling it " 'is toothpick."

All would not do. We kept sternly or densely silent; so far from laughing, not one of us smiled. In the small chamber which served as the bedroom of Charles I. and Charles II. on their visit to the castle, he showed the narrow alcove where the couch of these kings had once lurked, and then looked around at us and sighed deeply, as for some one to say that it was rather like a coal-cellar. In England, one does not make merry even with by-gone royalty; it is as if the unwritten law which renders it bad form to speak

with slight of any member of the reigning family were retroactive, and forbade trifling with the family it has displaced. I knew the warder was aching to joke at the expense of that alcove, and I ached in sympathy with him, but we both remained respectfully serious. His herd received all his humorous comment with a dulness, or a heartlessness, I do not know which, such as I have never seen equalled, in so much that, coming out last, I pressed a shy sixpence into his palm with the bated explanation, "That's for the jokes," and his sad face lighted up with a joy that I hope was for the appreciation and not for the sixpence.

We went once to Dover, but many times, as I have recorded, to Hythe, which was once the home of smuggling, and where there is still a little ale-house that poetically, pathetically, remembers the happy past by its sign of "Smuggler's Retreat." It is said that there was formerly smuggling pretty much along the whole coast, and there is a heartrending story of charred bales of silk, found in a farm-house chimney, long after they were hidden there, where the hearth-fires of many years had done their worst with them. It grieves the spirit still to think of the young hearts which those silks, timely and fitly worn, would have gladdened or captivated. But Hythe could hardly ever, even in the palmiest days of smuggling, have been a haunt of fashion, though the police-station, in the long, rambling street, had apparently once been an assembly-room, if one might trust the glimpses caught, from the top of one's charabanc, of the interiors of rooms far statelier than suit the simple needs or tastes of modern crime.

I do not know why my thought should linger with special fondness in Hythe, for all the region far and near was alive with equal allurements. Famous and hallowed Canterbury itself was only an hour or so away, and yet we kept going day after day to Hythe for no better reason, perhaps, than that the charabanc ran accessibly by the corner of our lodgings in Folkestone, while it required a special effort of the will to call a fly and drive to the station and thence take the train for a city whose origin, in the local imagination at least, is prehistoric, and was undeniably a capital of the ancient Britons. The generous ignorance in which I finally approached was not so ample as to include association with Chaucer's Pilgrims, or the fact that Canterbury is the seat of the primate of all England; and it distinctly faltered before extending itself to the tragic circumstances of Thomas à

Becket's murder. Otherwise it was most comprehensive, and I suppose that few travellers have perused the pages of Baedeker relating to the place with more surprise. The manual which one buys in all places is for the retrospective enjoyment and identification of their objects of interest, and my "Canterbury Official Guide to the Cathedral Church, and Hand-book of the City," could do no more than agreeably supplement, long afterwards, the prompt information of the indefatigable German.

The day which chose us for our run up from Folkestone was a heavenly fourth of May, when the flowers had pretty well all come up to reassure the birds of spring. There were not only cowslips and primroses in their convertible yellow, but violets visible if not recognizable along the railway sides, and the cherry-trees which so abound in Kent were putting on their clouds of bridal white and standing in festive array between the expanses of the hop-fields, in a sort of shining expectation. At first you think there cannot be more of anything than of the cherry-trees in Kent, which last so long in their beauteous bloom, that for week after week you will find them full-flower, with scarcely a fallen petal. But by-and-by you perceive that there are more hop-vines than even cherry-trees in Kent; and that trained first to climb their slender poles, and then to feel their way along the wires crossing everywhere from the tops of these till the whole landscape is netted in, they are there in an insurpassable plenitude. As yet, on our fourth of May, however, the hops, in mere hint of their ultimate prevalence, were just out of the ground, and beginning to curl about their poles, while the cherry-trees were there as if drifted by a blizzard of bloom. Here and there a pear-tree trained against a sunny wall attempted a rivalry self-doomed to failure; but the yellow furze gilded the embankments and the backward-flying plain with its honied flowers, already neighbored by purple expanses of wild hyacinth. What, in the heart of all this blossoming, was the great cathedral itself, when we came in sight of it, but a vast efflorescence of the age of faith, mystically beautiful in form, and gray as some pale exhalation from the mould of the ever-cloistered, the deeply reforested past?

Canterbury Cathedral, however, though it is so distinctive, and is the chief of the sacred edifices which have in all Christian times incomparably enriched the place, might be lost from it and be less missed than from any other town of cathedral dignity. Without it Canterbury would still be worthy

of all wonder, but with it, what shall one say? There is St. Martin's, there is St. Mildred's, there is St. Alphege's, there is the Monastery of St. Augustine, there is St. Stephen's, there is St. John's Hospital, and I know not what other pious edifices to remember the Roman and Saxon and Norman and English men, who, if they did not build better than they knew, built beautifuler than we can. But of course the cathedral towers above them all in the sky and thought, and I hope no reader of mine will make our mistake of immuring himself in a general omnibus for the rather long drive to the sacred fane from the station. A fly fully open to the sun, and creeping as slowly as a fly can when hired by the hour, is the true means of arrival in the sacred vicinity. In this you may absorb every particular of the picturesque course over the winding road, across the bridge under which the Stour rushes (one marvels whither, in such haste), overhung with the wheels of busy mills and the balconies of idle dwellings, in air reeking of tanneries, and so into the city by streets narrowing and widening at their own caprice, with little regard to the convenience of the shops. These seem rather to thicken about the precincts of the cathedral, where among those just without is a tiny restaurant which thinks itself almost a part of the church, and where some very gentlewomanly young women will serve you an excellent warm lunch in a room of such mediæval proportion and decoration that you can hardly refuse to believe yourself a pilgrim out of Chaucer. If the main dish of the lunch is lamb from the flocks which you saw trying to whiten the meadows all the way from Folkestone, and destined to greater success as the season advances, the poetic propriety of the feast will be the more perfect. After you have refreshed yourself you may sally out into the Mercery Lane whither the pilgrims used to resort for their occasions of shopping, and where the ruder sort kept up "the noise of their singing, with the sound of their piping, and the jingling of their Canterbury bells," which they made in all the towns they passed through on their devout errand. They were in Canterbury, according to good William Thorpe, who paid for his opinions by suffering a charge of heresy in 1405, "more for the health of their bodies than their souls.... And if these men and women be a month in their pilgrimage, many of them shall be an half year after great janglers, tale-tellers, and liars. They have with them both men and women that sing well wanton songs." But what of that, the archbishop before whom Thorpe was tried effectively demanded. "When one of them that goeth barefoot

striketh his foot against a stone ... and maketh him to bleed, it is well done that he or his fellow beginneth then a song ... for to drive away with such mirth the hurt of his fellow. For with such solace the travel and weariness of pilgrims is lightly and merrily brought forth."

Nevertheless, in spite of this archiepiscopal reasoning, the pilgrims seem to be largely a godless crew whom, if my reader has come in their company to Canterbury, he will do better to avoid while there, and betake himself at once to the cathedral when he has had his luncheon. It is easily of such interest, historical and architectural, that he may spend in it not only all that is left him of his fourth of May, but many and many days of other months before he has exhausted it. The interest will rather exhaust him if he forms one of that troop of twentieth-century pilgrims who are led sheeplike through the edifice under the rod of the verger. We fell to a somewhat severe verger, though the whole verger tribe is severe, for that matter, and were snubbed if we ventured out of the strict order of our instruction at the shrine where Thomas à Becket, become a saint by his passive participation in the act, was murdered. One lady who trespassed upon the bounds pointed out as worn in the stone by the knees of more pious pilgrims, in former ages, was bidden peremptorily "Step back," and complied in a confusion that took the mind from the arrogant churchman slain by the knights acting upon their king's passionate suspiration, "Is there no one to deliver me from this turbulent priest?"

Perhaps it was not the verger alone that at Canterbury caused the vital spirits to sink so low. There was also the sense of hopelessness with which one recalled a few shadowy details of the mighty story of the church, including, as it does, almost everything of civility and art in the successive centuries which have passed, eight of them, since it began to be the prodigious pile it is. St. Thomas, who, since he was so promptly canonized, must be allowed a saint in everything but meekness, is the prime presence that haunts the thought of the visitor, and yet it is no bad second if the French Protestant refugees, whom Elizabeth allowed to hold their services in the crypt, and who lived where they worshipped in their exile, possess it next; the Black Prince's armor and effigy are not in it, with these. The crypt is no longer their dwelling-place, but their rites (I suppose Calvinistic) are still solemnized there; and who knows but if the savage Puritans, who imagined they were abolishing episcopacy when they were destroying beauty, had been a little less barbarous they might not now enter third among the associations of the cathedral? We cannot doubt the sincerity of their self-righteousness, and there is a fine thrill in the story of how they

demolished “the great idolatrous window standing on the left hand as you go up into the choir,” if you take it in the language of the minister Richard Culmer, luridly known to neighboring men as “Blue Dick.” He himself bore a leading part in the vandalism, being moved by especial zeal to the work, not only because “in that window were seven large pictures of the Virgin Mary, in seven large glorious appearances,” but because “their prime cathedral saint, Archbishop Becket, was most rarely pictured in that window, in full proportion, with cope, rochet, crozier, and his pontificalibus.... A minister,” the godly Blue Dick tells us, modestly forbearing to name himself, “was on top of the city ladder, near sixty steps high, with a whole pike in his hand, rattling down proud Becket’s glassy bones, when others present would not venture so high.”

Of course, of course, it is all abominable enough, but it is not contemptible. The Puritans were not doing this sort of thing for fun, though undoubtedly they got fun out of it. They believed truly they were serving God in the work, and they cannot be left out of any count that sums up the facts making the English churches so potent upon the imagination. These churches were of a powerfuler hold upon my age than those that charmed my youth in Italy, because they bore witness not only to the great political changes in the life about them, but also to the succession of religious events. The order of an unbroken Catholicism is not of so rich a picturesqueness or so vital an importance as the break from the Roman Church, and then the break from the English Church, the first protestantism obeying the king’s will and the second the people’s conscience. Each was effected with ruinous violence, but ruin for ruin, that wrought by Henry VIII. is of twice the quantity and quality of that wrought by the zealots of the Commonwealth. When they tell you in these beautiful old places that Cromwell did so and so to devastate or desecrate them, you naturally, if you are a true American, and inherit in spirit the Commonwealth, take shame to yourself for brave Oliver; but you need not be in such haste. There was a Thomas Cromwell, who failed to “put away ambition,” when bidden by the dying Wolsey, and who served his king better than his God; and it was this Cromwell far more than Oliver Cromwell who spoiled the religious houses and the churches. A hundred years before the righteous Blue Dick “rattled down proud Becket’s glassy bones,” there were royal commissioners who

rattled out the same martyr's real bones, and profaned his tomb in such wise that one cannot now satisfy the piety which drew the pilgrims in such multitude to his knee-worn shrine. It is to be said for the first Cromwell and his instruments, who were not too good to stable their horses in a church here and there, like the Puritan troopers who hardly bettered their instruction, that they would forbear their conscientious violence if the churchmen would pay enough, whereas no bribe could stay the hands of such followers of the second Cromwell as Blue Dick when once they lifted their hands against "cathedral saints."

We revered whatever was venerable in the cathedral, and then came rather wearily out and sat down to rest on a friendly bench commanding a view of as much of the edifice as the eye can take in at a glance. That was much more than the pen could tell in a chapter, and I will only generalize the effect as such rich repose for soul and body as I should not know where else to find again. We sat there in a moment of positive sunshine, which poured itself from certain blue spaces in a firmament of soft white clouds. The towers and pinnacles of the mighty bulk, which was yet too beautiful to seem big, soared among the tender forms, the English sky is so low and the church was so high; and in and out of the coigns and crevices of its Norman, and early English, and Gothic, the rooks doing duty as pigeons, disappeared and appeared again. Naturally, there were workmen doing something to the roofs and towers, but as if their scaffolding was also Norman, and Gothic, and early English, it did not hurt the harmony of the architecture. When we could endure no more of the loveliness, we rose, and went about peering among the noble ruins of the cathedral cloisters, the work of the first Cromwell who tried to fear God in honoring the king, not the second Cromwell, who tried to honor God without fearing the king.

These are somehow more appealing than the ruins of St. Augustine's monastery, which is still a school for missionaries in its habitable parts. He began to build it while King Ethelbert yet mourned, in his conversion for his Christian Queen Bertha, but it was a thousand years growing to the grandeur which Henry VIII. spared and appropriated, and in which it remained to be the sojourn of all the sovereigns visiting Canterbury from his time till that of Charles II. It is not clear how it fell into its present dignified dilapidation, through the hands to which it was granted from age

to age; but it could not be a more sightly or reverently kept monument. The missionary school is like some vigorous growth clothing with new sap the flank of a mouldering trunk long since dead. It is interesting, it is most estimable; it tenderly preserves and uses such portions of the ancient monastery as it may; but the spirit turns willingly from it, and goes and hangs over some shoulder of orchard wall, and gloats upon the picturesqueness of broken, sky-spanning arches, ivied from their pillar bases to the tops of their mutilated spandrels.

It was here, I think, that we first saw that curious flintwork which so abounds in the parts of Kent: the cloven pebbles of black-rimmed white set in walls of such pitiless obduracy that the sense bruises itself against them, and comes away bleeding. The monks who wove these curtains of checkered masonry, what an adamantine patience they must have had! But the labor was the least part of their bleak life, which was well put an end to, soon after it was corrupted into something tolerable by the vices attributed to them. Vicious they could not have been in the measure that the not over-virtuous destroyers of their monasteries pretended, and I think that amid the ruins of their houses one may always rather fitly offer their memory the oblation of a pitying tear. I am not sure whether it was before or after we had visited the still older scene of St. Augustine's missionary effort at the church of St. Martin, that I paid some such tribute to his successors at the monastery; but the main thing is to have visited St. Martin's at any time. It is so old as to have forgotten not only its founders, who are dimly conjectured to have been some Christian soldiers of the Roman garrison in about the year 187, but also the name of its first tutelary saint, for St. Martin was not yet born when St. Martin's was built. He died about 395, and his fame crossed over from France with the good Bertha, when she came to wed the heathen King Ethelbert, of whose heathenism, with St. Augustine's help, she made such short and thorough work that after her death he became a Christian himself, and after his own death a saint. She dedicated the little Roman church to St. Martin, and she lies buried in a recess of the wall beside the chancel. The verger who showed us her stone coffin in its nook said, with a seeking glance from the corner of his eye: "This is where she is *supposed* to be buried. They say she is buried in two other places, but I think, as there is nothing to prove it, they might as well let her rest here."

He was probably right, and he was of a subacid saturnine humor which suited so well with the fabulous atmosphere of the place, or else with our momentary mood, that we voted him upon the whole the most sympathetic sexton we had yet known. He made, doubtless not for the first time, demurely merry with the brass of a gentleman interred beneath the chancel, who, being the father of three sons and ten daughters, was recorded to have had "many joys and some cares," and with the monumental stone of a patriarch who had died at a hundred and of whom he conjectured grimly that if he had not so many joys as his neighbor, he had fewer cares, since he had never married. If these jokes

ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, CANTERBURY

were the standard drolleries purveyed to all travellers, we yet imputed from them a more habitual humor to the English race than Americans are willing to give it credit for. I still fancy something national in his comment on the seven doors, now all but one walled up in the side of the church: Roman and Saxon and Norman doors, which formed a pretty fair allowance of exit from a place not much more than thirty feet long, even if one of the Saxon doors was appropriated to the Evil One for his sole use in retreating when hard pressed by the sermon within. I believe, or I wish to believe, that our

verger's caustic wit spared that sad memorial of past suffering and sorrow which one comes upon again and again in the old English churches, and which was called the Lepers' Squint in days when the word had no savor of mocking, and meant merely the chance of the outcasts to see the worship which their affliction would not suffer them to share.

It would be a pity to seem in any sort wanting in a sense of the solemnity of that pathetic temple, so old, so little, so significant of the history of the faith and race. The tasteful piety which is so universal in England, and is of such constant effect of godliness in an age not otherwise much vowed to it, keeps the revered place within and without in perfect repair; and I hope it is not too fantastic to suppose it in tacit sympathy with any stranger who lingers in the church-yard, and stays and stays for the beautiful prospect of Canterbury from its height. We drove from it through some streets of old houses stooped and shrunken with age, to that doting monument of the past which calls itself the Dane John, having forgotten just what its right name is. The immemorial mound, fifty feet high, which now forms the main feature of a pretty public garden, is fabled to be the monstrous barrow of those slain in a battle between the Danes and Saxons, but it need not be just that to "tease us out of thought" of our times; for wars are still as rife as in its own century, and dead men's bones can still be heaped skyward on the bloody fields. Some sixty or seventy years ago a public-spirited citizen of Canterbury planned and planted the pleasaunce one may now enjoy there, if one will leave one's carriage at the gate and stroll through it. Half of our little party preferred resting in the fly, seeing which a public-spirited citizeness came and protested against the self-denial with much entreaty. This unknown lady, hospitable and kindly soul, we afterwards fancied tardily fulfilling a duty to the giver of the garden which other ladies earlier spurned, if we may trust a local writer to whose monograph I owe more than I should like to own. "The gentry—for here in Canterbury, as elsewhere, we have our jarring spheres—consider the place unfashionable, and frequent it very little, because it is much frequented by the tradespeople, the industrious classes, and the soldiery; who, one and all, behave with exemplary propriety."

Another day of May, not quite so elect as our Canterbury fourth, we went to the village of Eelham, nearer Folkestone, and there found ourselves

in a most alluring little square with an inn at one corner and divers shops, and certain casual, wide-windowed, brick cottages enclosing it, and a windmill topping the low height above it. Windmills are so characteristic of Eelham Valley that we might not forbear visiting this, and I found the miller of as friendly and conversible a leisure as I could ask. Perhaps it was because he had a brother in Manitoba that we felt our worlds akin; perhaps because the varied experience of my own youth

THE NORMAN STAIRCASE IN THE CLOSE—CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

had confessedly included a year of milling. He said that he ground all kinds of grain, except wheat, for which the stones were too coarse, and he took toll of every third bushel, which did not seem too little. I should have liked to spend the day in his company, where I perceived I might be acceptably and comfortably silent when I would.

There must have been a church at Eelham, but there was a more noted church at Lyminge, two miles away, whither we decided to walk. The main object of interest at Eelham was an old Tudor manor-house, which we had not quite the courage, or perhaps the desire, to ask to see except from the

outside. The perspective from the sidewalk through the open doorway included a lady on a step-ladder papering the entry wall, and presently another lady, her elder, going in-doors from the garden, who was not averse to saying that there was plenty of room in the house, but it was much out of repair. We inferred that we were not conversing with the manorial family; when we asked how far it was to Lyminge, this old lady made it a half-mile more than the miller; and probably the disrepair of the mansion was partly subjective.

The road to Lyminge was longer than it was broad, though its measure was in keeping with an island where the roads cannot be of our continental width. It opened to a sky smaller than ours, but from which there fell a pleasant sunshine with bird-singing in it; and there was room enough on the borders of the lane for more wild flowers than often grow by our waysides. When the envious hedges suffered us a glimpse of them we saw gentle fields on either hand, and men at work in their furrows. From time to time we met bicyclers of both sexes, and from time to time people in dogcarts. Once we met a man with a farm-cart, who seemed willing, though dull, when we asked our way. "Turn to left just inside the windmill," he directed us; and by keeping outside of the mill, on a height beyond, we got to Lyminge.

I am sorry to report of the pastry-shop there that we had with our tea the only rancid butter offered us in England, and that in a country where the bread is always heavy and damp, it was here a little heavier and damper than elsewhere. But we were at Lyminge not for the pastry-shop, but the church, and that did not disappoint us, even to the foundation of the Roman edifice which is kept partly exposed beside it. The actual church is very Norman, and it is of that chilly charm which all Norman churches are of when the English spring afternoon begins to wane. From the tower down through the dim air dangled long bell-ropes bound with red stuff where the ringers seized them, and we heard, or seem now to have heard, that there had lately been a bell-ringing contest among them which must have stirred Lyminge to its centre. The day of our visit was market-day, and there had been cattle sales which left traces of unwonted excitement in the quiet streets, and almost thronged the bleak little station with the frequenters of the fair. One of these was of a type which I imagine is alien to the elder

country life. The young man who embodied it was so full of himself, and of his day's affairs, for which he was appropriately costumed in high boots and riding-breeches, that he overflowed in confidences to the American stranger. He told what cattle he had bought and what sold, and he estimated his gains at a figure which I hope was not too handsome. In return he invited the experience of the stranger whom he brevetted a cattle-dealer of perhaps a more old-fashioned kind, but whose errand at Lyminge on market-day was doubtless the same as his own. It was mortifying not to be able to comply, but my thoughts were still busy with the somewhat ghostly personage whom we had found deciphering an inscription on a stone in the church-yard, and whose weirdness was heightened by an impediment in his speech. He was very kind in helping us out in our mild curiosity, and I hope he has felt that brace in the change of air to Lyminge from Folkestone which he offered as a reason for his being where we met him. But he liked Lyminge, he said, and if one does not care much for the movements of great cities there may be worse places than the church-yard of Lyminge, where we left him in the waning light, gently pushing, not scraping, the moss from

> —the lay
> Graved on a stone beneath the aged thorn.

If the reader thinks we were too easily satisfied with the events of our excursion, he can hardly deny that the children and their mothers or aunts or governesses getting into the trains at the little country stations, with their hands full of wild flowers, and eyes bluer than their violets, were more than we had a right to. When at one of these stations a young man, with county-family writ large upon his face and person and raiment, escaped from a lady who talked him into the train, and then almost talked him out of it before it could start, we felt our cup run over. We instantly dramatized, out of our superabundant English fiction, the familiar situation of the pushing and the pushed which is always repeating itself; and in the lady's fawning persistence, and his solid, stolid resistance we had a moment of the sort of social comedy which should provoke tears rather than smiles. But the pushed always yield to the pusher in the end. This adamantine aristocrat, if such he was, was ultimately to be as putty between the fingers of the parvenue, if such she was, and since she was middle-aged enough to be the

mother of a marriageable daughter we foresaw her ultimately giving him her child with tears of triumph.

Travel is obliged to make up these little romances, or else it is apt to feel that it has had no genteel experiences, since it necessarily moves on the surfaces and edges of life. I was glad of any chance of the sort, and even of the humbler sort of thing which offered itself more explicitly, such as the acquaintance of a milkman and a retired exciseman, with whom I found myself walking outside of the pretty town of Rye on a May morning of sunny rain. At the entrance of a hop-field, where there was a foot-path inviting our steps across lots, the milkman eliminated himself with his cans and left us with the fact that hop-raising was not everything to the farmer that could be wished, and that if, after all his expenses, he could clear up a pound an acre at the end of the season, he was lucky. Up to that moment our discourse had been commonplace and business-like, but now it became sociological, it became metaphysical, it became spiritual, as befitted the conversation of a Scotchman and an American. The Englishman had been civil and been kind; he was intelligent enough in the range of his experiences; but he was not so vividly all there as the Scotch body, who eagerly inquired of the state of Presbyterianism among us. He did not push the question as to my own religious persuasion, but I met nowhere any Briton so generally interested in us. In the feeling promoted by this interest of his, we united in a good opinion of his actual sovereign, whom it was fit, as a pensioner who had been "for-r-ty years in his Majesty's sar-r-vice," he should praise as "a good-natured gentleman." As for the late queen he had no terms to measure his affection and reverence for her. I do not know now by what circuit we had reached these topics from the Scriptural subjects with which we started, or how it was he came to express the strong sense he had of the Saviour's civility to the woman of Samaria, as something that should be "a lesson to our gentry" in kindly behavior to the poor.

Wherever he now is, I hope my friendly Scot is well, and I am sure he is happy. Our weather included, from the time we met till we parted after crossing the wide salt-marsh stretching between Rye and the sea, every vicissitude of sun and rain, with once a little hail; but I remember only an unclouded sky, which I think was his personal firmament. I left him at the little house of the daughter whom he said he was visiting, outside the only

town-gate that remains to Rye from its mediæval fortifications. There is a small parade, or promenade, at a certain point near by, fenced with peaceful guns, from which one may overlook all that wide level stretching to the sea —with a long gash of ship-channel and boats tilted by the ebb on its muddy shores—and carrying the eye to the houses and vessels of the port. Rye itself was once much more impressively the port, but the sea left it long and long ago, standing like the bold headland it was, and still must look like when the fog washes in about its feet. It is an endearing little town, one of hundreds (I had almost said thousands) in England, with every comfort in the compass of its cosey streets; with a church, old, old, but not too dotingly Norman, and a lane opening from it to the door of a certain house where one might almost live on the entrancing perspective of its tower and its graveyard trees. A damp blind beggar on a stone, who was never dry in his life, and was, of course, a mere mass of rheumatic aches and pains, is a feature common to so many perspectives in England that he need not be dwelt upon. What is precious about Rye is that with its great charm it does not insist upon being dramatically different from those hundreds or thousands of other lovely old towns. It keeps its history to itself, and I would no more invite the reader to intrude upon its past than I would ask him to join me in invading the private affairs of any English gentleman. A few people who know its charm come down from London for the summer months; but there is a reasonable hope that it will never be newer or other than it is. I myself would not have it changed in the least particular. I should like to go there May after May as long as the world stands, and hang upon the parapet of the small parade and look dreamfully seaward over the prairie-like level, and presently find myself joined by a weak-eyed, weak-voiced elder who draws my attention to the blossoming hawthorns beside us. One is white and one is pink, and between them is a third of pinkish-white. He wishes to know if it is so because the bees have inoculated it, and being of the mild make he is, he rather asks than asserts, “They do inockerlate ’em, sir?”

IX

OXFORD

THE friendly gentleman in our railway carriage who was good enough to care for my interest in the landscape between London and Oxford (I began to express it as soon as we got by a very broad, bad smell waiting our train, midway, in the region of some sort of chemical works) said he was going to Oxford for the Eights. Then we knew that we were going there for the Eights, too, though as to what the Eights are I have never been able to be explicit with myself to this day, beyond the general fact that they are intercollegiate boat-races and implicate Bumps, two of which we saw with satisfaction in due time. But while the towers of Oxford were growing from the plain, a petrified efflorescence of the past, lovelier than any new May-wrought miracle of leaf and flower, we had no thought but for Oxford, and Eights and Bumps were mere vocables no more resolvable into their separate significances than the notes of the jargoning rooks flying over the fields, or the noises of the station where each of our passengers was welcomed by at least three sons or brothers, and kept from claiming somebody else's boxes in the confiding distributions from the luggage-vans. As our passengers were mostly mothers and sisters, their boxes easily outnumbered them, and if a nephew and cousin or next friend had lent his aid in their rescue in the worst cases, it could not have been superfluous. The ancient town is at other times a stronghold of learning, obedient to a tradition of cloistered men in whom the cloistered monk of other days still lingers, but at this happy time it was overflowed to its very citadel by a tide of feathered hats, of clinging and escaping scarfs, of fluffy skirts in all angelic colors; and I should not be true to that first impression of the meetings at the station, if I did not say that the meeters were quite lost, and well lost, in the multitude of the met. When they issued together from the place these contributed their advantageous disproportion to the effect of the streets, from which they swept the proper university life into corners and doorways, and up alleys and against walls, before their advancing flood.

Our own friend who, lief and dear as any son or brother or nephew or cousin of them all, came flying on the wings of his academic gown to greet us at the station, had in a wonderfully little while divined our baggage, and had it and us in an open carriage making a progress into the heart of the beautiful grove of towers, which nearer to, we perceived was no petrification, but a living growth from the soul of the undying youth coming age after age to perpetuate the university there. We began at once to see the body of this youth chasing singly or plurally down the streets, in tasselled mortar-boards, and gowns clipped of their flow, to an effect of alpaca jackets. Youth can, or must, stand anything, and at certain hours of the morning and evening no undergraduate may show himself in Oxford streets without this abbreviated badge of learning, though the streets were that day so full of people thronging to the Eights and the Bumps that studious youth in the ordinary garb of the unstudious could hardly have awakened

MAGDALEN TOWER

suspicion in the authorities. We were, in fact, driving through a largeish town, peopled beyond its comfortable wont, and noisy with the rush of feet and wheels far frequenter and swifter than those which set its characteristic pace.

Our friend knew we were not, poor things, there for a tumult which we could have easily had in New York, or even in London, and he made haste to withdraw us from it up into a higher place at the top of the Radcliffe Library, where we could look down on all Oxford, with the tumult subsiding into repose under the foliage and amid the flowers of the college gardens. It is the well-known view which every one is advised by the guide-books to seize the first thing, and he could not have done better for us, even

from his great love and lore of the place, than to point severally out each renowned roof and spire and tower which blent again for my rapture in a rich harmony with nothing jarring from the whole into any separately accentuated fact. I pretended otherwise, and I hope I satisfactorily seemed to know those tops and deeps one from another, when I ignorantly exclaimed, “Oh, Magdalen, of course! Christ Church! And is that Balliol? And Oriel, of course; and Merton, and Jesus, and Wadham—really Wadham? And New College, of course! And is *that* Brasenose?”

I honestly affected to remember them from a first visit twenty years before, when in a cold September rain I wandered about among them with a soul dry-shod and warmed by an inner effulgence of joy in being there on any sort of terms. But I remembered nothing except the glory which nothing but the superior radiance of being there again in May could eclipse. What I remember now of this second sight of them will not let itself be put in words; it is the bird which sings in the bush, and alertly refuses to double its value by coming into the hand. I could not now take the most trusting reader up into that high place, and hope to abuse his innocence by any feigned knowledge of those clustering colleges. All is a blur of leafy luxuriance, probably the foliage of the garden trees which embower the colleges, but not so absolutely such that it does not seem the bourgeoning and branching edifices themselves, a sumptuous Gothic suggestion, in stem and spray, of the stone-wrought beauty of the halls and chapels where nature might well have studied her effects of Perpendicular or Early English, or that spiritual Flamboyant in which she excels art. There remains from it chiefly a sense of flowery color which I suppose is from the nearer-to insistence of trees everywhere in bloom.

It was as if Oxford were decorated for the Eights by these sympathetic hawthorns and chestnuts and fond lilacs, and the whole variety of kind, sweet shrubs which had hung out their blossoms to gladden the pretty eyes and noses of the undergraduates’ visitors. We could not drive anywhere without coming upon some proof of the floral ardor; but perhaps I am embowering Oxford more than I ought with borrowed wreaths and garlands from the drive to the Norman church of Iffley where our friend took us, ostensibly because it could just be got in before lunch, but really because we needed some relief from the facts of Oxford which, stamped thickly, one

upon another, made us inexhaustible palimpsests of precious impressions. I am sure that if another could get at my memory, and wash one record clear of another, there would reveal itself such a perfect history of what I saw and did as would constitute every beholder a partner of my experiences. But this I cannot manage for myself, and must be as content as I can with revealing mere fragmentary glimpses of the fact, broken lines, shattered images, blurred colors. For instance, all I can get at, of that visit to the Norman church at Iffley, is the May morning air, with its sun and sweet, from which we passed to the gloom, richly chill, of the interior, and then from that again, into the sun and sweet, to have a swift look at the façade, with the dog-toothing of its arches, which I then for the first time received distinctly into my consciousness. A part of the precious concept, forever inseparable, is my recollection of the church warden's printed prayer that I would not lean against the chain-fencing before the façade, and of my grief that I could not comply without failing of the view of it which I was there for: without leaning against that chain one cannot look up at the dog-toothing, and receive it into one's consciousness.

As often I have thought of asking my reader to revisit Oxford with me, I have fancied vividly possessing them of this or that distinctive fact, without regard to the sequences, but I find myself, poor slave of all that I have seen and known! following myself, step by step through the uneventful events in the order of their occurrence; and if my reader will not keep me company, after luncheon, in my stroll across fields and through garden ways beyond my friend's house to that affluent of the Isis whose real name is the Cherwell, and which calls itself the Char, I know not how he is to get to the point where the Isis becomes the Thames, and where we are to see the first of the Eights, and two of the Bumps together. For except by this stroll we cannot reach the pretty water, so full, so slow, so bright, so dark, where we are to take boat, and get down to the destined point on its smooth breast, with a thousand other boats of every device, but mainly, but overwhelmingly, punts. The craft were all pushed or pulled by their owners or their owners' guests, who were as serenely and sweetly patient with the problem of getting to the Eights or the Bumps in time, as if the affair were subjective, and might be delayed by an effort of the will in the various cases.

As with other public things in England, this had such a quality of privacy that we seemed the only persons really concerned, and other people in other boats were as much figures painted in the landscape as the buttercups in the meadowy levels that stretched on either hand at our point of departure, and presently, changed into knots of boskage, overhanging the dreamy lymph. But I shall not get into my picture the sense of the lush grasses, with those little yellow lamps, or those Perpendicular boles, with their Early English arches, or their Flamboyant leafage, any more than I shall get in the sense of the shore gleamily wetting its root-wrought earthen brinks, or bringing the weedy herbage down to drink of the little river. River it was, though so little, and as much in scale with the little continent it helps to water, as any Ohio or Mississippi of ours is with our measureless peninsula. There is also something in that English air, which, in spite of the centuries of taming to man's hand leaves Nature her moods, her whims, of showing divinely and inalienably primitive, so that I had bewildering moments, on that sung and storied water, of floating on some wildwood stream of my Western boyhood. It has, so it appeared, its moments of savage treachery, and one still eddy where it lay smoothly smiling was identified as the point where two undergraduates had not very long ago been drowned. Sometimes the early or the later rams swell it to a flood, and spread it over those low pastures, in an image of the vaster deluges which sweep our immense stretches of river valley.

There was a kind of warm chill in the afternoon air, which bore all odors of wood and meadow, and transmitted the English voices with a tender distinctness. From point to point there were reaches of the water where we had quite a boat's-length of it to ourselves, and again there were sharp turns where it narrowed to an impossible strait and the congested craft must have got by one another through the air. The people in the punts, and canoes, and boats, were proceeding at their leisure, or lying wilfully or forgetfully moored by the flat shores or under the mimic bluffs. They struck into one another where they found room enough to withdraw for the purpose, and they were constantly grinding gunwale against gunwale, with gentle murmurs of deprecation and soft-voiced forgivenesses which had almost the quality of thanks. Then, before we knew it we were gliding under Magdalen bridge past bolder shores, and so, into wider and opener waters where, with

as little knowledge of ours the Char had become, or was by way of becoming the Thames which is the Isis. I believe it is still the Char where the bumps take place in the commodious expanses between the college barges tethered to the grassy shores. These barges were only a little more conspicuously aflame and aflutter with bright hats and parasols and volatile skirts than the shores; and they were all one fluent delight of color. On the shore opposite the barge where we were guests, there ran, soon after we had taken our first cups of tea, a cry of undergraduates, heralding the first of the two shells which came rowing past us. Then, almost ere I was aware of it the bow of a shell which was behind touched the stern of the shell which was before, and the first bump had been achieved. The thing had been so lightly and quickly done that the mere fact of the bump had not fully passed from the eye to the mind, when a glory wholly unexpected by me involved us: the shell which had made the bump belonged to our college, or at least the college to which our barge belonged. Shining in the reflected light, we rowed back up the Char to the point of our departure, and in the long, leisurely twilight found our first day in Oxford drawing on to night in the fragrant meadow.

Was it this night or the next that I dined in hall? There were several dinners in hall, and I may best be indefinite as to time as well as place. All civilized dinners are much alike everywhere, from soup to coffee, and it is only in certain academic formalities that a dinner in hall at Oxford differs from another banquet. One of these which one may mention as most captivating to the fancy fond of finding poetry in antique usage was the passing from meat in the large hall, portraited round the carven and panelled walls with the effigies of the college celebrities and dignities, into a smaller and cosier room, where the spirit of the gadding vine began its rambles up and down the glossy mahogany; and then into a third place where the fragrant cups and tubes fumed in the wedded odors of coffee and tobacco. If I remember, we went from the first to the last successively under the open heaven; but perhaps you do not always so, though you always make the transit, and could not imaginably smoke where you ate or drank.

Once, when the last convivial delight was exhausted, and there was a loath parting at the door in the grassy quadrangle under the mild heaven,

where not even a star intruded, I had a realizing sense of what Oxford could mean to some youth who comes to it in eager

“A BUMP”
H. W. Taunt & Co.

inexperience from such a strange, far land as ours, and first fully imagines it. Or perhaps it was rather in one of the lambent mornings when I strayed through the gardened closes too harshly called quadrangles that I had the company of this supposititious student, and wreaked myself in his sense of measureless opportunity. Not opportunity alone, but opportunity graced with all the charm of tradition, and weighted with rich scholarly convention, the outgrowth of the patient centuries blossoming at last in a flower from whose luminous chalice he should drink the hoarded wisdom of the past. I said to myself that if I were such a youth my heart would go near to break with the happiness of finding myself in that environment and privileged to all its possibilities, with nothing but myself to hinder me from their utmost effect. Perhaps I made my imaginary youth too imaginative, when I was dowering him with my senile regrets in the form of joyful expectations. It is said the form in which the spirit of the university dwells is so overmastering for some that they are fain to escape from it, to renounce their fellowships, and go out from those hallowed shades into the glare of the profane world gladly to battle “in the midst of men and day.”

Even of the American youth who resort to it, not all add shining names to the effulgent records of the place. They are indeed not needed, though they may be patriotically missed from the roll in which the native memories shine in every sort of splendor. It fatigues you at last to read the inscriptions which meet the eye wherever it turns. The thousand years of English glory stretch across the English sky from 900 to 1900 in a luminous tract where the stars are sown in multitudes outnumbering those of all the other heavens; and in Oxford above other places one needs a telescope to distinguish them. The logic of any commemoration of the mighty dead is that they will animate the living to noble endeavor for like remembrance. But where the mighty dead are in such multitude perhaps it is not so. Perhaps in the presence of their records the desire of distinction fails, and it is the will to do great things for the things' sake rather than the doer's which remains. The hypothesis might account for the prevailing impersonality of Oxford, the incandescent mass from which nevertheless from time to time a name detaches itself and flames a separate star in the zenith.

What strikes one with the sharpest surprise is not the memories of distant times, however mighty, but those of yesterday, of this forenoon, in which the tradition of their glory is continued. The aged statesman whose funeral eulogy has hardly ceased to echo in the newspapers, the young hero who fell in the battle of the latest conquest, died equally for the honor of England, and both are mourned in bronze which has not yet lost its golden lustre beside the inscriptions forgetting themselves in the time-worn lettering of the tablets on the walls, or the brasses in the floors. Thick as the leaves in Vallombrosa, they strew the solemn place, but in the religious calm of those chapels and halls there is no rude blast to scatter them, or to disturb the quiet in which for a few hundred or a few thousand years they may keep themselves from the universal oblivion.

When one strays through those aisles and under those arches, one fancies them almost as conscious of their sacred eld as one is one's self. Then suddenly one comes out into the vivid green light of a grassy quadrangle, or the flowery effulgence of a garden, where the banks of blossomed bushes are pushed back of the beds of glowing annuals by the velvety sward unrolled over spaces no more denied to your foot than the trim walks that

wander beyond their barrier, under the ivied walls, and to and from the foot-worn thresholds. To the eye it is all very soft and warm, and the breadths of enclosing masonry, the arched or pillared gables, the towers starting on their skyward climb, seem to bathe themselves in sun or cool themselves in shade alike mellow and mild. There are other senses that more truly take account of the thermometer and report it in very glowing moments as not registering much above the middle fifties. But you answer in excuse of it that it is so sincere, just as you ascribe to its scrupulous truthfulness the failure of the English temperament ever to register anything like summer heat. We boil in the torridity of an adoptive climate, but our ancestral suns were no hotter than those of the English are now; and where we have kept their effect in some such cold storage as that, say, of Boston, we probably impart no greater heat to the stranger. The spiritual temperature of Oxford, indeed, is much that of Old Cambridge, that Old Cambridge, Massachusetts, when it was far older, forty years ago, than it is now. Very likely, the atmospheres of all capitals of learning are of the same degree of warmth; and of a responsive salubrity, in the absence of malarial microbes. At any rate I was at once naturalized to Oxford through my former citizenship in Old Cambridge, and in a pleasing confusion found myself in both places at once with an interval of forty years foreshortened in a joint past and present.

The note of impersonality is struck in both places, but not so prevalently in Old Cambridge as in Oxford, where the genius of the place at some moment of divine inspiration,

> "Smote the chord of self, that trembling, passed in music out of sight."

As in the political frame of things the powerful English individualities pronounce themselves strongliest by their abnegation to a patriotic ideal, so in this finer and higher England, this England of the mind, what chiefly impresses the stranger is that mighty accord, that impersonal potency, which is the sum of the powerful wills, intellects, spirits severally lost in its collectivity. The master of this college, the president of that, the dean of the other, they all unite in effacing themselves, and letting the university, which is their composite personality, stand for them. As far as possible they refuse to stand for it, and the humor of the pose is carried to the very whim in the

custom which bars the Chancellor of the University from ever returning to Oxford after that first visit which he makes upon his appointment. My imagination does not rise to a height like his, but of all accessible dignities there seems to me none so amiable as the headship of one of those famous colleges. I will not, since I need not, choose among them, and very likely if one had one's choice, one might find a crumpled rose-leaf in the cushioned seat. Yet one could well bear the pain for the sake of the pleasure and the pride of feeling one's self an agency of that ancient and venerable impersonality and of denying one's self the active appearance. Scholarship, when it does not degenerate into authorship is the most negative of human things. It silently feeds itself full of learning, which is as free again to the famine of future scholarship; and in a world where pretty nearly all the soft warm things of privilege are so cruelly wrong, I can think of none so nearly innocent as those which lap the love of learning round in such an immortal home of study as Oxford. It is there so fitly housed, so properly served, so respectfully fed, so decorously clad, so beautifully environed, that it might almost dream itself a type of what should always and everywhere be an emanation of the literature to which it shall return after its earthly avatar, and rest, a blessed ghost, between the leaves of some fortunate book on an unvisited shelf of a vast silentious and oblivious library.

There is memory enough of lunches and dinners and teas, in halls and on lawns and in gardens, but as the reader was not asked, so cannot he in self-respect and propriety go. But there was one of the out-door affairs of which I may give him at least a picture-postal-card glimpse. No one's abnegated personality will be infringed, not even the university need shrink from the intrusion if the garden of no college is named. The reader is to stand well out of the way at a Gothic window looking on the green where the guests come and go under an afternoon heaven which constantly threatens to shower, and never showers; where the sun indeed appears just often enough to agree with the garden trees that it will add indescribably to the effect if their lengthening shadows can be cast over the sward with those of the Gothic tops around. A little breeze crisps the air, and the birds sing among the gossiping leaves of the hawthorns and of the laburnums. One great chestnut stands elect, apart, dense with spiky blossoms from the level of its lowest spreading boughs to the topmost peak of its massive cone.

Everywhere is the gracious architecture in which the mouldering Oxford stone, whether it is old or new, puts on the common antiquity.

I will not say that all the colleges seem crumbling to ruin, but the scaly and scabrous complexion of the surfaces is the impression remaining from the totality. The decay into which the stone almost instantly falls is sometimes rather dreadful to the casual glance in the plinths of those philosophers and sages about the Sheldonian Theatre, where the heads seem to be dropping away in a mortal decay. I believe they are renewed from time to time when they become too dreadful, but always in the same stone; and I do not know that I would have it otherwise in the statues or structures of Oxford. Where newness in any part would seem upstart and vulgar, every part looks old, whether it is of the last year or the first year. The smoke has blackened it, the damp has painted it a dim green; the latent disintegration of the stone has made its way to the surface, which hangs in warped scales or drops in finer particles. One would not have a different material used for building; brick or marble would affront the sensibilities, and deny the wisdom of that whole English system, in which reform finds itself authorized in usage, and innovation hesitates till it can put on the likeness of precedent.

It is interesting in Oxford to see how the town and the university grow in and out of each other. Like other towns of the Anglo-Saxon civilization it is occasional, accidental, anarchical, the crass effect of small personal ambitions and requisitions. In the course of so many centuries its commonness could not always fail of a picturesque quaintness, and perhaps it only seems without beauty or dignity because the generous collective spirit working itself out in the visible body of the university has created more of both than any other group of edifices in the world embodies. Those shapeless, shambling, casual streets, with their scattered dwellings and their clustering shops, find by necessity a common centre, without impressiveness or distinction. But in their progress or arrival, weakly widening here, or helplessly narrowing there, they often pass under the very walls of the venerable and beautiful edifices which constitute at once the real Oxford and the ideal Oxford, alike removed from the material Oxford of the town. Sometimes it is a wall that flanks a stretch of the commonplace thoroughfares; sometimes a gate or a portal under a tower giving into the

college quadrangle from which you pass by inner ways beneath inner walls to an inmost garden, where the creepers cling to the windows and the porches, or a space of ivied masonry suns itself above the odorous bushes and the daisied sward. It would be hard to choose among these homes of ancient lore; but happily one is not obliged to choose. They are all there for the looking, and one owns them, an inalienable possession for life. One would not will them away, if one could; they must remain forever to enrich the pious beholder with the vision which no words can impart.

The heart of the pilgrim softens in the retrospect even towards that municipal Oxford which forms the setting of their beauty, as a mass of common rock may shapelessly enclose a cluster of precious stones, crystals which something next to conscious life has deposited through the course of the slow ages in the rude matrix. He relents in remembering pleasant suburbs, through which the unhurried trams will bear him past tasteful houses, set in embowered spaces of greensward, and on past pretty parks into the level country where there are villas among grounds that will presently broaden into the acreage of ancestral-seats, halls, manors, and, for all I know, castles. Even the immediate town has moods of lurking in lanes apart from the busier streets, and offering the consolation of low, stone dwellings faced by college walls, and dedicated to the uses of furnished lodgings. If it should be your fortune to find your sojourn in one of these, you may look down from your front window perhaps into the groves that shade Addison's Walk; or you may step from your back door into a grassy nook where a tower or bastion of the old city wall will be hiding itself in a mesh of ivy. The lane before may be dusty with traffic and the garden behind may be damp with the rains that have never had intervals long enough to dry out of it; but the rooms with their rocking floors will be neatly kept, and if they happen to be the rooms of a reading or sporting undergraduate, sublet in some academic interval, you will find the tokens of his tastes and passions crowding the mantels and the walls. He has confided them with the careless faith of youth, to your chance reverence; he has not even withheld the photographs which attest his preference in actresses, or express a finer fealty in the faces self-evidently of mother or sister or even cousin, or some one farther and nearer yet.

It is everywhere much alike, that spirit of studious youth, at least in our common race, and I do not believe that if I had met a like number of Harvard men, going and coming in the mortar-boards and cropped gowns, in those quadrangles or gardens, I should have known them from the Oxford men I actually saw. They might have looked sharper, tenser, less fresh and less fair, not so often blue of eye and blond of hair, more mixed and differenced; but they would have had the same effect of being chosen for their golden opportunity by fortune, and the same gay ignorance of being favored above other youth. If one came to closer quarters and had to ask some chance question, the slovenlier speech of the Harvard men would have betrayed them in their answer, for even our oldest university has not yet taken thought of how her children shall distinguish themselves from our snuffling mass by the beauty of utterance which above any other beauty discriminates between us and the English. It is said that the youth of the parent stock are younger than our youth; but I know nothing as to this; and I could not say that their manners were better, except as the manners of the English are in being simpler. They are not better in being suppler: I should say that as life passed with him the American limbered and the Englishman stiffened, and that the first gained and the last lost in the power to imagine another which they both perhaps equally possessed in their shy nonage, and which chiefly, if not solely, enables men to be comfortable to their fellows. But here, as everywhere, I wish to be understood as making an inference vastly disproportioned to the facts observed. The stranger in any country must reflect that its people seem much less interested in themselves and their belongings than he is, and from the far greater abundance of their knowledge have far less to say of them. This may very well happen to a traveller from an old land among us; his zest for our novelty may fatigue us; just as possibly our zest for his antiquity may put us at odds with him. The spirit seeks in either case a common ground of actuality, achronic, ubiquitous, where it may play with its fellow soul among the human interests which are eternally and everywhere the same.

What these are I should be far from trying to say, but I think I may venture to recur to my memories of the mute music of Harvard for the dominant of the unheard melodies at Oxford. The genius of the older university seemed much the same as that of the younger under the stress of

ceremonial, and to have the quality of that stern acquiescence in the inevitable on the occasions of Commemoration Day that I remembered from Commencement Days in the past. The submission did not break into the furtively imparted jest which relieves the American temperament under fire, but the feeling of obedience to usage, the law-abiding instinct of the race, was the same in both. From both a gala pride was equally remote; the confident expectation of living through it, and not even a martyr exultance in the ordeal, was doubtless what sustained the participants. We have simplified form, but the English have simplified the mood of observing form, and in the end it comes to the same thing in them and in us. But there the parallel ceases. There is a riches of incident in the observance of Commemoration Day at Oxford, for which the sum of all like events in our academic world is but an accumulated poverty. We could not if we would emulate the continuous splendors of the time, for we lack not only the tradition but the environment in which to honor the tradition. If it were possible so to abolish space that Harvard and Yale and Princeton, say, and Columbia could locally unite, and be severally the colleges of one university, and assemble their best in architecture for its embodiment, something might be imaginable of their collectivity like what involuntarily, inevitably happens at Oxford on Commemoration Day. Then the dinners in hall on the eve and in the evening, the lunches in the college gardens immediately following the academical events of the Sheldonian Theatre, the architectural beauty and grandeur forming the avenue for the progress of the Chancellor and all his train of diverse doctors, actual and potential, might be courageously emulated, but never could be equalled or approached. Our emulation would want the color of the line which at Oxford comes out of the past in the bravery of the scarlets and crimsons and violets and purples which men used to wear, and before which the iridescent fashions of the feminine spectators paled their ineffectual hues. Again, the characteristic surrender of personality contributed to the effect. In that procession whatever were the individual advantages or disadvantages of looks or statures, all were clothed on with the glory of the ancient university which honored them; it was the university which passively or actively was embodied in them; and their very distinction would in a little while be merged in her secular splendor.

Of course we have only to live on a few centuries more and our universities can eclipse this splendor, though we shall still have the English start of a thousand years to overcome in this as in some other things. We cannot doubt of the result, but in the mean time we must recognize the actual fact, and I will own that I do not see how we could ever offer a *coup d'œil* which should surpass that of the supreme moments in the Sheldonian Theatre when the Chancellor stood up in his high place, in his deeply gold-embroidered gown of black, and accepted each of the candidates for the university's degrees, and then, after a welcoming clasp of the hand, waved him to the benches which mystically represented her hospitality. The circle of the interior lent itself with unimagined effect to the spectacle, and swam with faces, with figures innumerable, representing a world of birth, of wealth, of deed, populous beyond reckoning from our simple republican experience. The thronged interior stirred like some vast organism with the rustle of stuffs, the agitation of fans, the invisible movement of feet; but the master-note of it was the young life which is always the breath of the university. How much or little the undergraduates were there it would not do for a chance alien spectator to say. That they were there to do what they would with the occasion in the tradition of an irresponsible license might be affirmed, but it must be equally owned that they generously forebore to abuse their privilege. They cheered the Candidates, some more, some less, but there was, to my knowledge, none of the guying of which one hears much, beyond a lonely pun upon a name that offered itself with irresistible temptation. The pun itself burst like an involuntary sigh from the heart of youth, and the laugh that followed it was of like quality with it.

Then, the degrees being conferred, each with distinctive praise and formal acceptance in a latinity untouched by modern conjecture of Roman speech, there ensued a Latin oration, and then English essays and speeches from the graduates—thriftily represented, that the time should not be wasted, by extracts—and then a prize poem which did not perhaps distinguish itself so much in generals as in particulars from other prize poems of the past. If it had been as wholly as it was partially good—and there were passages that caught and kept the notice—it would have been a breach of custom out of tune and temper, as much as if the occasional latinity had been of the new Roman accent instead of that old English

enunciation as it was of right, there where Latin had never quite ceased to be a spoken language. All was of usage: the actors and the spectators of the scene were bearing the parts which like actors and like spectators had ancestrally borne so often that they might have seemed to themselves the same from the first century, the first generation, without sense of actuality. This sense might imaginably have been left, in any sort of poignancy, to the accidental alien, who in proportion as he was penetrated with it would feel it a contravention of the spirit, the taste, of the event.

I try for something that is not easily said, and being said at all, seems over-said; and I shrink from the weightiest impression of Oxford which one could receive, and recall those light touches of her magic, which as I feel them again make me almost wish that there had been no Eights, no Commemoration Day in my experience. Of course I shall fail to make the reader sensible of the preciousness of a walk from the Char through a sort of market flower-garden, where when I asked my way to a friend's house a kindly consensus of gardeners helped me miss the short cut; but I hope he will not be quite without the pleasure I knew in another row on that stream. Remembering my prime joys in its navigation, I gratefully accepted an invitation to a second voyage which was delayed till we could be sure it was not going to rain. Then we started for the boat where it lay not far off under a clump of trees, and where we were delayed in their seasonable shelter by a thunder-gust; but the clouds broke away and the sun shone, so that when our boat was bailed dry, we could embark in a light shower, and keep on our way unmolested by the fine drizzle that was really representing fine weather. If I had been native to the impulsive climate I should not have noticed these swift vicissitudes, and as it was I noticed them only to enjoy them on the still, bank-full water, where I floated with a delight not really qualified by the question whether the pond-lilies which padded it in places were of the fragrant family of our own pond-lilies. I was pursued by a kindred curiosity in regard to many other leaves and blossoms till one Sunday morning, when, as I found myself interrogating a shrub by the sunny walk of a college garden, it came to me that my curiosity was out of taste. The bush was not there specifically, but as an herbaceous expression of the University, and I had no more right to pass certain bounds with it in

my curiosity than I would have had to push any scholar of the place to an assertion of personality where he would have preferred to remain collective.

What riches of personality lay behind the collectivity I ought not, if I knew, to say. Again I take refuge, from the reader's quest, which I cannot help feeling in the indefinite attempt to suggest it, by saying that the collective tone is that of Old Cambridge, or more strictly, of Harvard. I remember that once a friend, coming in high June straight to Old Cambridge after a brief ocean interval from Oxford, noted the resemblance. As we walked under a Gothic archway of our elms, past the door-yards full of syringas and azaleas, with

showing on the other hand in the college enclosures, he said it was all very like Oxford. He must have felt the moral likeness, the spiritual likeness, as I did in Oxford, for physical or meteorological likeness there is none absolutely. It is something in the ambient ether, in the temperament, in the unity of high interests, in the mystical effluence from minds moving with a certain dirigibility in the upper regions, but controlled by invisible ties, in each case, to a common centre. It is the prevalence of scholarship, which characterizes the respective municipalities and which holds the civic bodies in a not ungraceful, not ungrateful subordination.

Something of the hereditary grudge between town and gown descended to Harvard from the English centres of learning; but the prompt assertion of town government as the sole police force forbade with us the question of jurisdictions which it is said still confuses the parties with a feeling of enmity at Oxford. The war of fists following the war of swords and daggers, which in the earliest times left the dead of both sides in the streets after some mortal clash, and kept each college a stronghold, even after that war had no longer a stated or formal expression, is forever past, but still the town and the gown in their mutual dependence hold themselves aloof in mutual antipathy. So I was told, but probably on both sides the heritage of dislike resides only in the youthfuler breasts, and is of the quality of those ideals which perpetuate hazing in our colleges, or which among boys pass forms of mischief and phases of superstition along on a certain level of age. All customs and usages are presently uninteresting, as one observes them from the outside, and can be precious on the inside only as they are endeared by association. What is truly charming is some expression of the characteristic spirit such as in Oxford forbids one of the colleges to part in fee with a piece of ground on which a certain coveted tree stands, but which allows it to lease that beautiful feature of the landscape to a neighboring college. A thing like that is really charming, and has forever the freshness of a whimsical impulse, where whimsical impulses of many sorts must have abounded without making any such memorable sign.

In the reticence of the place all sorts of silent character will have been accumulating through the centuries until now the sum of it must be

prodigious. But that is a kind of thing which if one has any direct knowledge of it one feels to be a kind of confidence, and which one lets one's conjecture play about, in the absence of knowledge, very guardedly. For my part I prefer to leave quite to the reader's imagination the charming traits of the acquaintance I would fain have made my friends. Sometimes they were of difficult conversation, but not more so than certain Old Cambridge men, whom I remembered from my youth; the studious life is nowhere favorable to the cultivation of the smaller talk; but now that so many of the Fellows are married the silence is less unbroken, and the teas, if not the dinners, recur in a music which is not the less agreeable for the prevalence of the soprano or the contralto note. It seemed to me that there were a good many teas, out-doors when it shone and in-doors when it rained, but there were never enough, and now I feel there were all too few. They had the *entourage* which the like social dramas cannot have for yet some centuries in our centres of learning; between the tinkle of the silver and the light clash of the china one caught the muted voices of the past speaking from the storied architecture, or the immemorial trees, or even the secular sward underfoot. But one must not suppose that the lawns which are velvet to one's tread are quite voluntarily velvet. I was once sighing enviously to a momentary host and saying of his turf that nothing but the incessant play of the garden-hose could keep the grass in such vernal green with us, when he promptly answered that the garden-hose had also its useful part in the miracle of his own lawn. I dared not ask if the lawnmower likewise lent its magic; that would have been

OXFORD—LOOKING UP THE ISIS
H. W. Taunt & Co.

going too far. Or at least I thought so; and in the midst of the surrounding reticences I always felt it was better not to push the bounds of knowledge.

There is so much passive erudition, hived from the flowers of a thousand summers in such a place of learning, that I felt the chances were that if the stranger came there conscious of some of his own little treasure of honey, he would find it a few thin drops beside the rich stores of any first apiarist to whom he opened it. In that long, long quiet, that illimitable opportunity, that generously defended leisure, the scholarship is not only deep, but it is so wide that it may well include the special learning of the comer, and he may hear that this or that different don who is known for a master in a certain kind has made it his recreation to surpass in provinces where the comer's field shrinks to parochial measure. How many things they keep to themselves at Oxford, it must remain part of one's general ignorance not to know, and it is more comfortable not to inquire. But out of the sense of their guarded, their hidden, lore may spring the habit of referring everything to the university, which represents them as far as they can manage not to represent it. They may have imaginably outlived our raw passion of doing,

and have become serenely content with being. This is a way of saying an illanguagible thing, and, of course, oversaying it.

The finer impressions of such a place—there is no other such in the world unless it is Cambridge, England, or Old Cambridge, Massachusetts,—escape the will to impart them. The coarser ones are what I have been giving the reader, and trying to pass off upon him in their fragility for something subtile. If one could have stayed the witchery of an instant of twilight in a college quadrangle, or of morning sunshine in a college garden, or of a glimpse of the High Street with the academic walls and towers and spires richly foreshortened in its perspective, or of the beauty of some meadow widening to the level Isis, or the tender solemnity of a long-drawn aisle of trees leading to the stream under the pale English noon, and could now transfer the spell to another, something worth while might be done. But short of this endeavor is vain. There was a walk, which I should like to distinguish from others, all delightful, where we passed in a grassy field over an old battle-ground of the Parliamentarians and the Royalists, and saw traces of the old lager-beads, the earthworks in which the hostile camps pushed closer and closer to each other, and left the word "loggerheads" to their language. But I do not now find this very typical, and I am rather glad that the details of my sojourn are so inextricably interwoven that I need not try to unravel the threads which glow so rich a pattern in my memory.

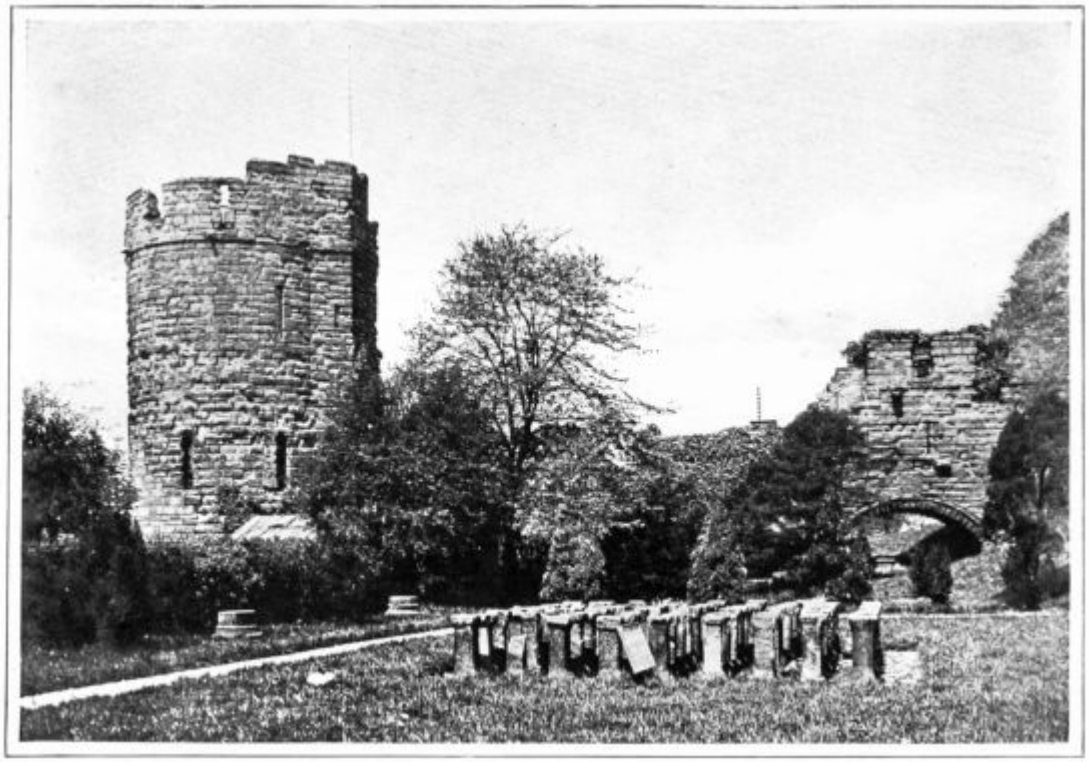
X

THE CHARM OF CHESTER

BECAUSE Chester is the handiest piece of English antiquity for new Americans to try their infant teeth on, I had fancied myself avoiding it as unworthy my greater maturity. I had not now landed in Liverpool, and as often as I had hitherto landed there before, I had proudly disobeyed the charge of more imperfectly travelled friends to be sure and break the run to London at Chester, for there was nothing like it in all England. Having indulged my haughty spirit for nearly half a century, one of the sudden caprices which undermine the firmest resolutions determined me to pass at Chester the day which must intervene before the steamer I was going to meet at Liverpool was due. Naturally I did everything I could to difference myself from the swarm of my crude countrymen whom I found there, and I was rewarded at the delightful restaurant in the Rows, where I asked for tea in my most carefully guarded chest-notes, with a pot of the odious oolong which observation has taught the English is most acceptable to the palate of our average compatriots, when they cannot get green tea or Japan tea. Perhaps it was my mortifying failure in this matter which fixed me in my wish never to be taken for an Englishman, except by other Americans whom it was easy to deceive.

The Americans abounded in Chester, not only on the present occasion but in my three successive chance visits to the place; and if they were by an immense majority nearly all of the same sex, they were none the worse for that. By pretty twos, by pretty threes, by yet larger lovely groups, and, in serious, middle-aged instances, singly, they wandered in and out of the plain old cathedral; they strayed through the Rows or arcades by which Chester distinguishes herself from other cities in having two-storied sidewalks; they clustered in the shops where the prices were adjusted to their ignorance of English values and they could pay as much for a pair of gloves as in New York or Chicago; they crowded the narrow promenade which tops the city wall; they haunted the historic houses, where they

strayed whispering about with their Baedekers shut on their thumbs, attentive to the instruction of the custodians; they rode on the tops of the municipal tram-cars with apparently no apprehension from their violation of the sacred American principle of corporational enterprise in transportation; they followed on foot the wanderings of the desultory streets; at the corners and before the quainter façades the sun caught the slant of their lifted eye-glasses and flashed them into an involuntary conspicuity. In all his round I doubt if his ray could have visited countenances of a more diffused intelligence, expressive of a more generous and truly poetic interest in those new things of the old English world on which they were now feeding full the longing, and realizing rapturously the dreaming, of the years and years of vague hopes. I could read from my own past the pathos of some lives, restricted and remote, to which the present opportunity was like a glad delirium, a glory of unimagined chance, in which they trod the stones of Old Chester as if they were the golden streets of the New Jerusalem. These



WATER-TOWER AND ROMAN REMAINS

and such as these have forever the better of those born to the manner; as for those assuming to be naturalized to the manner, they are not worthy to be

confounded with such envoys from the present to the past. It is only the newest Americans who ever really see England, and they are apt to see it in the measure of that simplicity for which sincerity is by no means a satisfactory substitute.

It could well be in a passion of humility that a sophisticated traveller might wish to hide himself from them in the depths of that Roman bath which apparently so few visitors to Chester see. We found it with some difficulty, by the direction of a kindly shop-woman who, though she had lived all her life opposite, could only go so far as to say she believed it was under a certain small newspaper and periodical store across the way. Asking the young man we found there, he owned the fact, and leaving a yet younger man in charge, he lighted a stump of candle, and led to a sort of cavern back of his shop, where the classic relic, rude but unmistakable, was. Rough, low pillars supported the roof and the modern buildings overhead, and the bath, clumsily shaped of stone, attested the civilization once dominant in Chester. Our guide had his fact or his fable concerning the spring which supplied the bath; but whether it is in summer or in winter that this spring almost wholly disappears, I am ashamed not to remember.

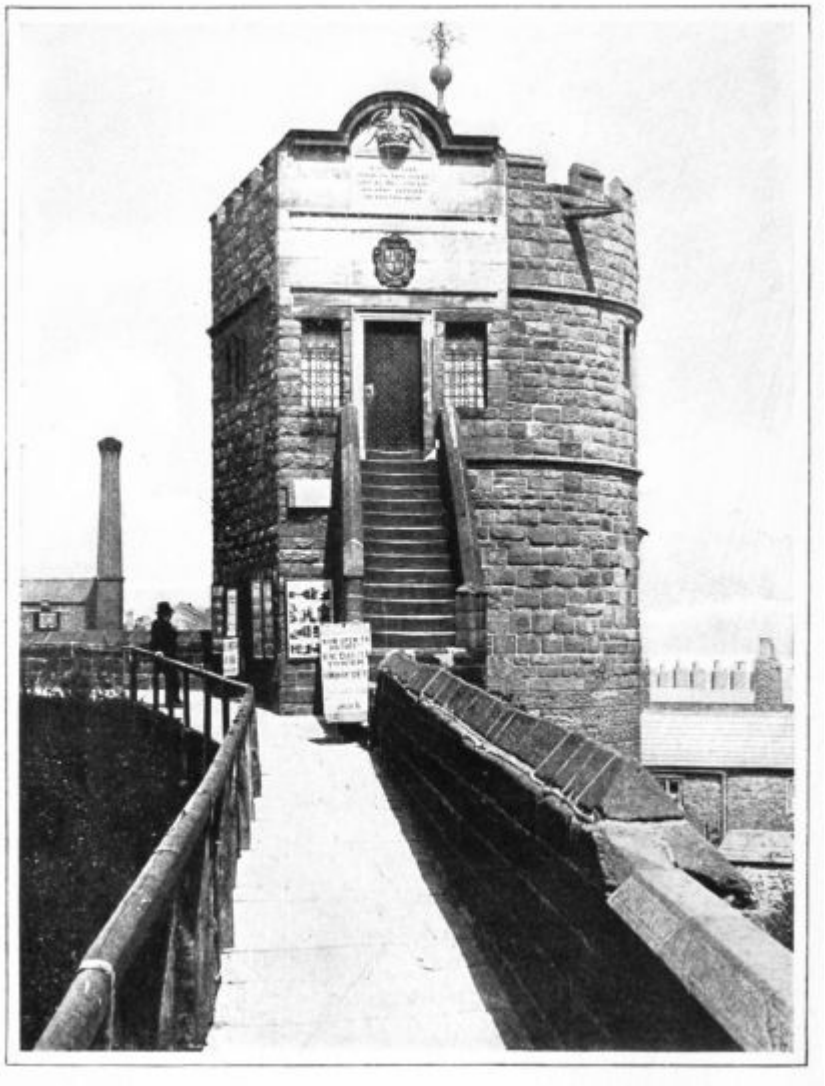
The Rome that was built upon Britain underlies so much of England that if one begins to long for its excavation one must be willing to involve so much mediæval and modern superstructure in a common ruin that one's wisdom must be doubted. So far as the Roman remains showed themselves to a pretty ignorant observer they did not seem worth digging out in their entirety; here and there an example seems to serve; they are the unpolished monuments of life in a remote and partially settled province, not to be compared, except at Bath and York, with those of Pompeii or Herculaneum. To be sure, if one knew they underlay New York, one would gladly level all the sky-scrapers in the town, that they might be given to the light. But in Chester it is another matter. There is already an interesting if not satisfactory collection of antiquities in Chester; and if it came to question of demolishing the delightful old wall, or the Rows, with God's Providence House, and Bishop Lloyd's House, or even the cathedral, though it is, to my knowledge, the least sympathetic of English cathedrals, one would wish to think twice. At the wall, especially, one would like to hesitate, walking perhaps all the way round the city on it, and pausing at discreet intervals to

repose and ponder. It does not convince everywhere of an equal antiquity; there are parts that are evidently restorations and parts that are reproductions, and the gates frankly own themselves modern. But there are towers that moulder and bastions that have plainly borne the brunt of time. In the circuit of the wall you may look down on the roofs of old Chester within, and that much larger and busier new Chester without, which stretches with its shops and mills and suburban cottages and villas into the pretty country, as far as you like. But our affair was never with that Chester; except where the country began under the walls, and widened away beyond the river Dee, with bridges and tramways presently lost to the eye in the shadow of pleasant groves, we cared for nothing beyond the walls. There were places where these dropped sheer to the waters of the Dee, which obliged us at one point of its flow with a vivid rapid, or (I will not be sure) the swift slope of a dam, where a man stood midway casting his line into the ripple. He could by some stretch of the imagination have been a Jolly Miller who lived on the river Dee, though I remember no mills in sight; and by an equal stroke of fancy, he could have been casting his line for the salmon with which the sands of Dee are also associated in song. I do not insist that the reader shall hazard either conjecture with me; but what I say is that all England is so closely netted over and embroidered with literary reminiscence, with race-memories, from the earliest hours of personal consciousness, that wherever the American goes his mind catches in some rhyme, some phrase, some story of fact or fable that makes the place more home to him than the house where he was born. That is the sweetness, the kindness of travel in England, and that is the enchanting strangeness. To other lands we relate ourselves by an effort, but there the charm lies waiting for us, to seize us and hold us fast with ties running to the inmost and furthermost of our earthly being.

At one point in our first ramble on the wall at Chester we came to a house built close upon it, of such quaintness and demureness that it needed no second glance, in the long June twilight, to convince us that one of Thomas Hardy’s heroines lived there; or if it did, no possible doubt of the fact could be left when we encountered at the descent to the next city gate the smartest of red-coated sergeants mounting the wall to go and pay court to her. Afterwards we found many houses level with the top of the wall,

with little gardened door-yards or leafy spaces beside them. I do not say they all had Hardy heroines in them; there were not sergeants enough for that; but the dwellings were all of an insurpassable quaintness and demureness, or only less quaint and less demure than the first. One of the most winning traits of the past wherever you find it is its apparent willingness to be friends with the present, to make room for it when it can, and to respond as far as possible to its commonplace and even sordid occasions. Like old walls that I had known in Italy, the old wall at Chester lent itself not only to the domestic but the commercial demands of to-day, and if the shops which it allowed to front upon its promenade were preferably those of dealers in bric-à-brac and second-hand books, still the principle is the same. In one of these shops was an old (it looked old) sundial which tempted and tempted the poor American, who knew very well he could not get it home without intolerable inconvenience and expense; and who tore himself from it at last with the hope of returning another day and carrying it all the way, if need be, to New York in his arms. As is the custom of sundials it professed to number only the sunny hours; but he had (or is this his subsequent invention?) the belief that somewhere on its round was indelibly if invisibly marked that gloomy moment of the September afternoon when King Charles looked from the Phœnix Tower hard by the shop where the dial lurked, and saw his army routed by the Parliamentarians on Rowton Moor. To be sure the moment was bright for the Parliamentarians; there is the consolation in every defeat that it is the victory of at least one side, and in this instance it was the right side which won.

You are advised that if you would see Chester Cathedral aright you had best look at it across the grassy space which lies between it and the wall near Phœnix Tower. It is indeed finest there, for it is a fane that asks distance, and if you go visit it by the pale twilight



KING CHARLES'S TOWER

at nine o'clock of the long June day, the brown stone it is built of will remind you less than it might at noon-day of the brown-stone fronts of the old New York streets. But who am I that I should criticise even the material body of any English cathedral? If we had this one of Chester in the finest American city, in Boston itself, we should throng to it with our guide-books if not our prayer-books, and would not allow that any ecclesiastical structure in the country compared with it. All that I say to my compatriots of either sex, who come to its Perpendicular Gothic fresh from the Oblique Doric of their Cunarders or White Stars at Liverpool, is: "Wait! Do not lavish your precipitate raptures all upon this good but plain edifice. Keep some of them rather for the gentler and lovelier dreams of architecture at

Wells, at Ely, at Exeter, and supremely the minster at York, to which you should not come impoverished of the emotions you have been storing up from the beginning of your æsthetic consciousness. Yet, stay! Forbear to turn slightingly from your first cathedral because some one tells you it is not the best. It will have more to say to that precious newness of yours (you cannot yet realize how precious your newness is) than fairer temples shall to your more shop-worn sensibility." It is always well in travel to cherish the first moments of it, for these are richer in potentialities of joy than any that can follow; and it is doubtless in the wise order of Providence that such a city as Chester should lie so near the great port of entry for three hundred thousand Americans that they may have something worthy of their emotions while they have still their sea-legs on, and may reel under the stroke without causing suspicion.

I have said how constantly one met them, how inevitably; and if they were wondering, willingly or unwillingly, what Chester could be bought for and sent home, in bulk or piecemeal, and set up again, say an hour from New York, just beyond Harlem River, I do not know that I should blame them. Naturally, there would be the question of the customs; the place could not be brought in duty free; but some nobler-minded millionaire might expand to the magnitude of the generous enterprise and offer to pay the duties if an equal sum toward the purchase could be raised. We should of course want only the Chester within the walls, but the walls and gates must be included.

Why should such a thing be impossible? Such a thing on a smaller scale, different in quantity but not in quality, had been dreamt of by a boldly imaginative Chicagoan, if we could believe the good woman in charge of the Derby House, up the little court out of Nicholas Street, where all that is left of the old town mansion of the noble Stanleys remains. This magnanimous dreamer had the vision of the Stanleys' town-house transplanted to the shores of Lake Michigan, and erected as a prime feature of the great Columbian Fair. He offered to buy it in fulfilment of his vision, so ran the tale, of whoever then could sell it; but when the head of the family to which it once belonged heard of the offer, he bought it himself in a quiver of indignation conceivably lasting yet, and dedicated it to the public curiosity forever, on the spot where its timbered and carven gables

have looked into a dingy little court ever since the earliest days of Tudor architecture. If we could trust the witness of the cards which strewed the good woman's table, it was American curiosity which mainly wreaked itself on the beautiful but rather uninhabitable old house our Chicagoan failed to buy. By hungry hundreds they throng to the place, and begin to satisfy their life-long famine for historic scenes in the mansion where Charles the First sojourned while in Chester, and whence the head of the house was taken out to die by the axe for his part in the royalist rising of 1657. So, in my rashness, I should have believed, but for the correction of Mr. Havell Crickmore, who says, in his pleasantly written and pleasantly pictured book about "Old Chester," that the Earl was "beheaded during the great Rebellion," which would shorten his life by some ten years, and make his death date 1647, not 1657. It does not greatly matter now; he would still be dead, at either date, and at either a touch of heroic humor would survive him in the story Mr. Crickmore repeats. Colonel Duckenfield of the Cromwellian forces asked him if he had no friend who would do the last office for him. "Do you mean, to cut my head off? Nay, if those men who would have my head off cannot find one to cut it off, let it stand where it is."

I have always liked to believe everything I read in guide-books, or hear from sacristans or custodians. In Chester you can believe not only the bleak Baedeker, with its stern adherence to fact, but anything that anybody tells you; and in my turn I ask the unquestioning faith of the reader when I assure him that he will find nothing so mediæval-looking out of Nuremberg as that street—I think it is called Eastgate Street—with its Rows, or two-story sidewalks, and its timber-gabled shops with their double chance of putting up the rates on the fresh American. Let him pay the price, and gladly, for there is no perspective worthier his money. I am not in the pay of a certain pastry-cook of the Rows, who makes the wedding-cakes for all the royal marriage feasts; but I say he will serve you a toasted tea-cake with the afternoon oolong he will try to put off on an American, such as you cannot buy elsewhere in England; only, you must be sure to eat the bottom half of the tea-cake, because most of the rich, sweet Cheshire butter will have melted tenderly into that. Go then, if you will, to the cathedral which I have been vainly seeking to decry, and study its histories, beginning with the

remnants of the original Norman church of the Conqueror's lieutenant and nephew Hugh Lupus, and ending with a distinctly modern restoration of the mediæval carvings in the eastern transept, wherein Disraeli and Gladstone are made grotesquely to figure, the one in building up the Indian Empire and the other in disestablishing the Irish Church. Somewhere in the historical middle distance are certain faded flags taken from the Americans at the battle of Bunker Hill, which we should always have won if our powder had not given out, and let the enemy capture these banners. The beauty of the Chapter House will subdue you, if you rebel against the sight of them, and I can certify to the solemnity of the Cloister, which I visited with due impression; but with what success a young girl was sketching a perspective of the cathedral I did not look over her shoulder to see.

How perverse is memory! I cannot recall distinctly the prospect across the Dee from the Watergate to which the Dee use to float its ships and from which it now shrinks far beyond the green flats. But I remember that in returning through a humble street from the Watergate, the children on the door-steps were eating the largest and thickest slices of bread and butter I saw in all England, where the children in humble streets are always eating large, thick slices of bread and butter. For the pleasure of riding on the municipal trams, and of realizing how much softer and slower they run than our monopolistic trolleys, we made, whenever we had nothing else to do, an excursion "across the sands of Dee" by the bridge which spans its valley, with always fragments of Kingsley's tender old song singing themselves in the brain, and with the visionary Mary going to call the cattle home, and the cruel, crawling foam from which never home came she.

Oh, is it fish, or weed, or floating hair,

in the tide that no longer laps the green floor that once was sand? Ask the young girls of fifty years ago, who could make people cry with the words! It was enough for me that I was actually in the scene of the tragedy, and more than all the British, Roman, Saxon, or Norseman antiquity of Chester. At the suburban extremity of the tram-line, or somewhere a little short of it, we were offered by sign-board a bargain in house-lots so phrased that it added thirty generations to the age of a region already old enough in all conscience. We were not invited to buy the land brutally in fee-simple,

outright; but it was intimated that the noble or gentle family to which it belonged would part with it temporarily on a lease of nine hundred and ninety-nine years. I hope we fully felt the delicacy, the pathos in that reservation of the thousandth year, which was the more appealing because it was tacit.

These lots were no part of the vast estate of the great noble whose seat lies farther yet out of Chester in much the same direction. It was one of the many aristocratic houses which I meant to visit in England, but as I really visited no other, I am glad that I gave way in the matter of a shilling to the driver of the fly who held that the drive to the place was worth that much more than I did. I tried hard for the odd shilling, as an affair of conscience and of public spirit; but the morning was of a cool-edged warmth, and of a sky that neither rained nor shone, and the driver of the fly was an elderly man who looked as if he would not lie about the regular price, though I pretended so strenuously it should be six and not seven shillings for the drive, and I yielded. After all (I excused my weakness to myself), it would have been seven dollars at home; and presently we were in the leafy damp, the leafy dark of the parkway within the gates of the great nobleman's estate beyond the Dee. Eight thousand acres large it stretches all about, and is visibly bounded only by the beautiful Welsh hills to the westward, and four miles we drove through the woodsy quiet of the park, which was so much like the woodsy quiet of forest-ways not so accessible at home. Birds were singing in the trees, and on the hawthorns a little may hung yet, though it was well into June. Rabbits—or if they were hares I mean no offence to the hares—limped leisurely away from the road-side. Coops of young pheasants, carefully bringing up to be shot in the season for the pleasure of noble or even royal guns, were scattered about in the borders of the shade; and grown cock and hen pheasants showed their elect forms through the undergrowth in the conscious pride of a species dedicated to such splendid self-sacrifice. In the open spaces the brown deer by scores lay lazily feeding, their antlers shining, or their ears pricking through the thin tall stems of the grass. Otherwhere in paddock or pasture, were two-year-olds or three-year-olds, of the blooded hunters or racers to whose breeding that great nobleman is said to be mostly affectioned, though for all I personally know he may be more impassioned of the fine arts, or have his whole

CHESTER CASTLE

heart in the study of realistic fiction. What I do personally know is that at a certain point of our drive a groom came riding one of his cultivated colts, so highly strung that it took fright at our harmless fly, and escaped by us in a flash of splendid terror that left my own responsive nerves vibrating.

From time to time notices to the public "earnestly requested" the visitor not to trespass or deface, instead of sternly forbidding him with a threat of penalties. They know how to do these things in England, and when our monopolists, corporate or individual, have come more generally to fence themselves away from their fellow-citizens they will learn how gracefully to entreat the traveller not to abuse the privileges of a visit to their grounds. Whether they will ever posit themselves in a landscape with the perfect pride of circumstance proper to a great English nobleman's place, no one can say; and if I mention that there was a whole outlying village of picturesque and tasteful houses appropriated to the immediate dependants of this nobleman, it is less with the purpose of instructing some future oil-king or beef-baron in the niceties of state, than of simply letting the reader know that we drove back to Chester by a different way from that we came by.

As for the palace of the nobleman, which did not call itself a palace, it was disappointing, just as Niagara is disappointing if you come to it with vague preconceptions of another sort of majesty. I myself was disappointed

in the Castle of Chester, which one would naturally expect to be Norman, "or at least Early English," but which one finds a low two-story edifice of Georgian architecture enclosing a parade-ground, with a main gate in the form of a Greek portico and a side entrance disguised as a small classic temple. But the castle is in the definite taste of a self-justified epoch, and consoles you with the belated Georgian—the Fourth Georgian—surviving into our own century not so very long after its universal acceptance. One could not build a castle in any other than classic terms in 1829, and I dare say that forty years later it would have been impossible to build an ancestral seat in any other style than the Victorian Gothic-Tudor-Mansard which now glasses its gables, roofs, and finials with so much satisfaction in the silvery sheet of water at its feet. The finest thing about it is that the nobleman who imagined or commanded it was of the same name and surname as the Norman baron whom William the Conqueror appointed to hold Chester for him, when he had reduced it after a tedious siege, and to curb the wild Welsh of the dim hills we saw afar.

I am not good at descriptions of landscape-gardening, but I like all the formalities of cropt lawns and clipt trees, and I would fain have the reader, if I could, stand with me at the window within the house which gives the best sight of these glories. That exterior part of the interior which is shown to the public in great houses seems wastefully rather than tastefully splendid. The life of the place could hardly be inferred from it; but there was a touch of gentle intimacy in the photograph, lying on one of the curiously costly tables, of the fair and sweet young girl who had lately become the lady of all that magnificence. She looked like so many another pretty creature in any land or clime that it was difficult to realize her state even with the help of the awed flunky who was showing the stranger through. He was of an imagination which admitted nothing ignoble in its belongings, so that in passing a certain bust with the familiar broken nose of the master he respectfully murmured, "Sir Michael Hangelo."

"*Who?*" the stranger joyfully demanded, wishing to make very sure of the precious fact; and the good soul repeated,

"Sir Michael *Hangelo*, sir."

Of course it was Sir Michelangelo, Bart.; nothing so low as the effigy of a knight could be admitted to that august gallery.

Am I being a little too scornful in all this? I hope not, though I own that in the mansions of the great it is difficult not to try despising them. The easy theory about a man whom you find magnificently housed in the heart of eight thousand acres, themselves a very minor portion of his incalculable possessions, is that he is personally to blame for it. In your generous indignation you wish to have him out, and his pleasure-grounds divided up into small farms. But this is a kind of equity which may be as justly applied to any one who owns more of the earth than he knows how to use. Who are they that fence large parts of Long Island, and much of the Hudson River scenery, which they have studded with villas never open to the public like that great house near Chester? I know a man who has two acres and a half on the Maine shore of the Piscataqua, and tills not a tenth of it; but I should be sorry to have him expropriated from the rest. We all, who have the least bit more than we need, are in the same boat, and we cannot begin throwing one another overboard, with a good conscience. What the people already struggling for their lives in the water have a right to do is another matter. They are the immense majority and they may vote anything they choose, even a cruel injustice.

The American, newly arrived in Chester after his new arrival in Liverpool, will be confronted with a stronghold of the past which he will not be able to overthrow perhaps during his whole stay in England, though he should spend the summer. Immemorial custom is intrenched there not only in the picturesqueness, the beauty, the charm, but the silent inexpugnable possession which time from the beginning has been fortifying. The outside has been made as goodly as possible, but within is the relentless greed of ages, fed strong with the prey of poverty and toil. Yet let him not rashly fling himself against its impregnable defences. It is not primarily his affair. Let him go quietly about with his Baedeker, and see and enjoy all he can of that ancient novelty, so dear to us new folk, and then when he is worn out with his pleasure, and sits down to his toasted tea-cake in that restaurant of the Rows where they will serve him a cup of our national oolong, let him ask himself how far the beloved land he has left has been true to its proclamations in favor of a fresh and finally just *Theilung der Erde*.

Having answered this question to his satisfaction, let him by no means hurry away from Chester that night or the next morning in the vain belief that greater historic riches await him in cities, farther away from his port of entry, in the heart of the land. Scarcely any shall surpass it, for if not a Roman capital like York or London, it was long a Roman camp, and a temple of Apollo replaced a Druid temple on the site of the present cathedral. The Britons were never pushed farther off than the violet hills where they still dwell, strong in their unintelligible tongue, with a taste for music and mysticism which seems never to have failed them. From those adjacent heights they harried in frequent foray their Roman and Saxon and Norman invaders, and only left off attacking Chester when the Early English had become the Later.

Chester was not only one of the stubbornest of the English cities in its resistance of William the Conqueror, but it held out still longer against Oliver the Conqueror in the war of the King and the Parliament. What part, if any, it had in the Wars of the Roses, I excuse myself for not knowing. The strong Henry Fourth led the weak Richard Second a captive through it, and there is record that the weaker Henry Sixth tried in vain to recruit his forces in it for his futile struggle with fate. The lucky Henry Seventh who had newly married royalty, and was no more king by right than the pretender who afterwards threatened his throne, sent a Stanley to the block for having spoken tolerantly of Perkyn Warbeck. But if there was any party in Chester for that pretender, there was none for the Stuart calling himself Charles III., for when he sent from Scotland an entreaty to the citizens for help, they took it as a warning to fortify their town against him. After that they had peace, and now the place is the great market for Cheshire cheese which is made in the fertile country round about, and vies with the New Jersey imitation in the favor of our own country.

The American who means to stop in Chester for the day, which may so profitably and pleasantly extend itself to a week, cannot do better than instruct himself more particularly in the history which I still find myself so ignorant, for all my show of learning. I would have him distrust this at every point, and correct it from better authorities. Especially I would have him mistrust a story told in Chester of the American who discovered a national origin in the guide-book’s mention of one of the Mercian kings

who extended his rule so far from the midland counties. The traveller read the word American, and pronounced it as the English believe we all do. “My dear,” he said to his wife, “this town was settled by the ’Murricans.”

XI

MALVERN AMONG HER HILLS

FROM the 10th to the 20th of July the heat was as great in London as the nerves ever register in New York. It was much more continuous, for our heat seldom lasts a week, and there it lasted nearly a fortnight, with a peculiar closeness from the damp and thickness from the smoke. That was why we left London, and went to Great Malvern, for a little respite.

Our run was through a country which frankly confessed a long drouth, such as parches the fields at home in exceptional summers. Rain had not fallen during the heat from which we were escaping, and the grain had been cut and stacked in unwonted safety from mould. There is vastly more wheat grown in England than the simple American, who expects to find it a large market-garden, imagines, and the yield was now so heavy that the stacked sheaves served to cover half the space from which they had been reaped. The meadow-lands were burned by the sun almost as yellow as the stubble; the dry grass along the railroad banks had caught fire from the sparks of the locomotive, and the flames had run through the hedges, into the pasturage and stubble, and at one place they had kindled the stacks of wheat, which farm-hands were pulling apart and beating out. The air was full of the pleasant smell of their burning, and except that the larks were spiring up into the dull-blue sky, and singing in the torrid air, it was all very like home.

I ventured to say as much to the young man whom I found sleeping in the full blaze of the sun in his corner of our carriage, and to whom I apologized for the liberty I had taken in drawing his curtain so as to shade his comely fresh face. He pardoned me so gratefully that I felt warranted in thinking he might possibly care to know of the resemblance I had noted. He said, “Ah!” in the most amiable manner imaginable, “which part of America?” But just as I was going to tell him, the train drew into the station at Oxford, and he escaped out of the carriage.

Before this he had remarked that we should find the drouth much worse as we went on, for we were now in the Valley of the Thames, which kept

the land comparatively moist. But I could not see that the levels of harvest beyond this favored region were different. Still the generous yield of grain half covered the ground; the fires along the embankments continued in places; in places the hay was just mown, and women were tossing it into windrows; at a country station where we stopped there were fat, heavy-fleeced sheep panting wofully in the cattle-pens; but the heat was no worse than it had been. The landscape grew more varied as we approached Worcester, where we meant to pass the night; low hills rose from the plain, softly wooded; and I find from my note-book that the weather was much mitigated by the amenity of all the inhabitants we encountered. I really suppose that the underlined record, "*universal politeness*," related mainly to the railway company's servants, but there must have been some instances of kindness from others, perhaps fellow-travellers, which I grieve now to have forgotten.

I have not forgotten the patience with which the people at the old inn-like hotel in Worcester bore our impatience with the rooms which they showed us, and which we found impossibly stuffy, and smelling of the stables below. The inn was a survival of the coaching days, when the stables formed an integral part of the public-house, but did not perfume the fiction which has endeared its ideal to readers. The dining-room was sultry, and abounded with the flies which love stables of the olden times, or indeed of any date. We sat by our baggage in an outer room till a carriage could be called, and then we drove back to the station, through the long, hot, dusty street by which we had come, with a poorish, stunted type of work-people crowding it on the way home to supper.

Somewhere in the offing we were aware of cathedral roofs and towers, and we were destined later to a pleasanter impression of Worcester than that from which we now gladly fled by the first train for Great Malvern. Our refuge was only an hour away, and it duly received us in a vast, modern hotel, odorous only of a surrounding garden into which a soft rain was already beginning to fall. A slow, safe elevator, manned by the very oldest and heaviest official in full uniform whom I have ever seen in the like charge, mounted with us to upper chambers, where we knew no more till we awoke in the morning to find the face of nature washed clean by that

gentle rain, and her breath fresh and sweet, coming from the grateful lips of the myriad flowers which embloom most English towns.

I may as well note at once that it was not a bracing air which we inhaled from them, and I do not suppose that the air is any more an adjunct of the healing waters at Great Malvern than the air at Carlsbad, for instance, where it is notoriously relaxing. The companionable office-lady at our hotel, who was also a sort of lady-butler, and carved the cold meats, candidly owned that the air at Great Malvern was lifeless, and she boldly regretted the two years she had passed in New England, as matron of a boys' reformatory. She said, quite in the teeth of an English couple paying their bill at the same time, that she was only living to get back there. They took her impatriotism with a large imperial allowance; and I shall always be sorry I did not ask them what kind of bird it was they had with them in a cage; I think they would have told me willingly, and even gladly, before they drove away.

We were ourselves driving away in search of lodgings, which, whether you like them or not after you find them, it is always so interesting to look up in England. It was our fate commonly to visit places in their season when lodgings were scarce and dear; and it was one of the surprises that Great Malvern had in store for us that it was in the very height of its season. We should never have thought it, but for the assurance of the lodging-house landladies, who united in saying so, and in asking twice their fee as an earnest of good faith. The charming streets, which were not only laterally but vertically irregular, and curved and rose and fell in every direction, were so far from thronged that we were often the only people in them besides the unoccupied drivers of other flies than ours, and the boys who had pony chairs for hire, and demanded height-of-the-season prices for them. Perhaps the fellow-visitors whom we missed from the street were thronging in-doors: the hotels were full up; the boarding-houses could offer only a choice of inferior rooms; the lodgings had nearly all been taken at the rates which astonished if they did not

MALVERN—THE TOWN

dismay us. But we found the pleasantest apartment left at last, and were immediately as much domesticated in it as if we had lived there ever since it was built. In front it faced, across the street, a wooded and gardened steep; in the rear, from the window of our stately sitting-room, we looked out over a vast plain, of tilth and grass and groves, cheered everywhere with farm villages or farm cottages, and the grander edifices of the local nobility and gentry, and the spires of churches. Farther off where the Cotswold Hills began to be blue, glimmered Cheltenham, where we could, with a glass strong enough, have seen the retired military and civil employés of the India service who largely inhabit the place, basking in a summer heat of familiar tropical fervor, and a cheapness suited to their pensions. In the same quarter there was also sometimes visible a blur of dim towers and roofs which the guide-book knew as Tewkesbury; in the opposite direction, Worcester with its cathedral more boldly defined itself. The landscape seemed so altogether, so surpassingly English, that one day when I had nothing better to do—as was mostly the case with me in Malvern—I set down its amiable features, which I wish I could assemble here in a portrait. First, there were orchard and garden trees of our own house (one of a dozen houses on the same curving terrace), with apples, pears, and plums belted in by the larches and firs that deepened towards the foot of the hill. Pretty, well-kept

dwellings of more or less state, showed their chimneys and slated or tiled roofs everywhere through the trees and shrubs at the beginning of what looked the level from our elevation. From these the plain stretched on, with hotels and churches salient from rows of red brick and gray stone cottages. Fields, now greening under the rains, but still keeping the warmer colors which the long drouth had given them, were parted into every angular form by rigid hedge-rows. They were fields of oats and grass, and sometimes wheat; but there were no recognizable orchards; and the trees that dotted the fields, singly and in clumps, massed themselves in forest effects in the increasing distance. They covered quite a third of the plain, which stretched twenty miles away on every hand, and were an accent of dark, harsh green amid the yellower tone of the meadows. The Cotswolds rising to the height of the Malvern Hills against the dull horizon (often rainy, now, but dull always), ended the immense level, where, coming or going, the little English railway trains, under their long white plumes of smoke, glided in every direction; and somewhere through the scene the unseen Severn ran.

Not to affront the reader's intelligence, but to note my own ignorance, until an unusually excellent local guide-book partially dispersed it, will I remind him that all this region was once a royal chase. Half a dozen forests, of which Malvern Forest was chief, spread "a boundless contiguity of shade" over the hills and plains in which the cruel kings, from Canute down to Charles I., hunted the deer consecrated to their bows and spears, and took the lives or put out the eyes of any other man that slew them without leave. But in virtue of the unwritten law by which the people's own reverts to them through the very pride of their expropriators, the dwellers in and about Malvern Chase had insensibly grown to have such rights and privileges in the wilderness that when Charles proposed to sell the woods they made a tumultuous protest; they rose in riot against the king's will, and he had to give them two-thirds of the Chase for commons, before he could turn the remaining third into the money he needed so much.

THE PRIORY CHURCH—NORTH VIEW

In the very earliest times Malvern seems to have been a British stronghold against the Romans, and perhaps, again, the Saxons; but otherwise its peaceful history is resumed in that of its beautiful Priory church, an edifice which is fabled to have begun its religious life as a Druid temple. On one of the three Beacons, as the chief of the Malvern Hills are called, after the three counties of Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford in which they rise,

"Twelve fair counties saw the blaze"

which signaled the approach of the Spanish Armada. But the local history is not of that dense succession of events, against whose serried points the visitor so often dashes himself in vain elsewhere in England. He can let his fancy roam up and down the vague past, with nothing, except the possible surrender of Caractacus to the Romans, very definitely important to hinder it, from the dawn of time to the year 1842, when the Priessnitz system of water-cure chose Malvern the capital of English hydropathy. The Wells of Malvern had always been famous for their healing properties, and now modern faith added itself to ancient superstition, and from the centre of belief thus established, a hydropathic religion spread throughout England. Its monuments still confront one everywhere in the minor hotels or major

boarding-houses which briefly call themselves Hydros, but probably do not attempt working the old miracles. There is still a commodious shrine for the performance of these in the heart of Malvern; but the place was plainly no longer the Mecca of the pilgrims of thirty or fifty years ago. The air of its hills indeed invites the ailing, who so abound in England, but the waters have found the level which even medicinal waters seek, and flow away in the obscurity attending the decline of so many once thronged and honored Spas.

I do not know that I particularly like ruinous ruins, but a decay that is still in tolerable repair is greatly to my mind. The better the repair, the greater my pleasure in it, and when we were once posited in our lodgings, I began to take comfort in the perfect neatness, the unfailing taste, the pious care with which the spirit of that dead Malvern guarded its sepulchre. There was all the apparatus of a social gayety beneficial to invalids, but not, so far as I could note, an invalid to profit by it, if it had been running. In a certain public garden, indeed, in the centre of the town, there was a sound of revelry emitted by a hidden band, in the afternoon and evening, but I had never the heart to penetrate its secret; within, the garden might not have looked so gay as it sounded. There were excellent large and little shops, including a book and periodical store, where you could get almost anything you wanted, or did not want, at watering-place prices. There was an Assembly building, always locked fast, and a very good public library where I resorted for books of reference, and for a word of intellectual converse with the kind assistant librarian who formed my social circle in Malvern. From somewhere in the dim valley at night there came bursts of fragmentary minstrelsy, which we were told by the maid was the professional rejoicing of Pierrots, a gleeful tribe summer England has borrowed from the French tradition almost as lavishly as the crude creations of our own burnt-cork opera. Wherever you go, among her thronged and thronging watering-places, these strongly contrasted figures meet and cheer you; even in Malvern there were strains of rag-time, mingling with the music of the Pierrots, which gave assurance of these duskier presences somewhere in the dark.

One afternoon we went to a politer entertainment in a lower room of the Assembly building, given by a company which had so vividly plastered the

dead walls (if this is specific) of Malvern with the announcements of their coming, that we hastened to be among the earliest at the box-office lest we should not get seats. To make sure of seeing and hearing we took two-shilling seats, which were at the front, and it was well we did so, for before the curtain rose, a multitude of fourteen people thronged to the one-shilling benches behind us. This number I knew from deliberate count, for the curtain, as if in a sad prescience of adversity, was long in rising. I do not think that company of artists would have been very cheerful under the best conditions; as it was they afforded us the very sorrowfulest amusement I have ever enjoyed. In that pathetic retrospect it seems to me that one man and woman of them sang at different times comic duets with tears in their voices. There were also from time to time joyless glees, and there was an interlude of dancing, so very, very blameless that it was all but actively virtuous in its modesty. A sense of something perpetually provincial, something irretrievably amateurish in the performers, penetrated the American spectators; and it is from a heart still full of pity that I recall how plain they were, poor girls, how floor-walkerish they were, poor fellows. They were as one family in their mutual disability and forbearance; if perhaps they each knew how badly the others were doing, they did nothing to show it; and in their joint weakness they were unable to spare us a single act of their programme. I have seldom left a hall of mirth in so haggard a frame, but perhaps if I had been more inured to Malvern I could have borne my pleasure better.

If this was not, strictly speaking, a concert, that was certainly a concert which I attended one evening at a Baptist chapel, where a company of Welsh miners sang like a company of Welsh angels. I was in hopes they would have sung in Welsh, which, as is well known, was the language of Paradise, but they sang in English as good as English ever can be in comparison; and instead of Bardic measures, it was all terribly classic, or when not classic, religious. As I say, though, the voices were divine, and I asked myself if such heavenly sounds could issue, at this remove, from the bowels of the Welsh mountains, what must be the cherubinic choiring from their tops! It was a very simple-hearted affair, that concert, and well encouraged by a large and cordial audience, thanks mostly, perhaps, to the vigilance of the lady pickets stationed down the lane leading to the chapel,

and quite into the street, with tickets for sale, who let no hesitating passers escape. I myself pleaded a sovereign in defence, but one of the fair pickets changed it with instant rapture, and I was left without excuse for the indecision in which I had gone out to see whether I would really go to the concert.

For the matter of that we were without excuse for staying on in Malvern, save that it was so very, very pleasant though so very, very dull. It was there, I think, that I formed the Spanish melon habit, which I indulged thereafter throughout that summer, till the fogs of London reformed me at end of September, when no more melons came from Spain. The average of Spanish melons in England is so much better than that of our cantaloupes at home that I advise all lovers of the generous fruit to miss no chance of buying them. The fruiterer who sold me my first in Malvern, said that in the palmy days of the place many Americans used to come, and he mentioned a New York millionaire of his acquaintance so confidently that I almost thought he was mine, and felt much more at home than before. I had more talk with this kind fruiterer than with any one else in Malvern, though I will not depreciate an interview with a jobbing mechanic from far Norfolk, who spent an afternoon washing our windows, and was conversible when once you started his torpid flow. He did not grasp ultra-Norfolk ideas readily, and he altogether lacked the brilliant fancy of the gay, rusty, frowsy ragged tramp who came one afternoon with a bunch of cat-tail rushes for sale, and who had vividly conceived of himself as a steel-polisher out of work. He might not have been mistaken; but if he was it could not spoil my pleasure in him, or in the weather which had now begun to be very beautiful, with blue skies almost cloudless, and quite agreeably hot. It being the 12th of August, a bank holiday fell on that day, and the town filled up with trippers (mysteriously much objected to in England), who seemed mostly lovers, and who arm in arm passed through our street. One indeed there was who passed without companionship, playing the accordeon, his eyes fixed in a rapture with his own music.

On several other days the town seemed the less reasoned resort of crowds of harmless young people, who perhaps thought they were seeing the world there, since it was the height of the Malvern season. They were at one time more definitely attracted by the Flower Show at the neighboring

seat of a great nobleman, which was opened by his lady with due ceremonies, and which enjoyed a greater popular favor. I myself followed with the trippers there, partly because I had long read of that kind of English thing without seeing it, and because in the spacious leisure of Malvern it was difficult to invent occupations that would fill the time between luncheon and dinner, even with an hour out for an afternoon nap.

It was just a pleasant drive to the nobleman's place, and my progress was attended by a sentiment of circus-day in the goers and comers on foot and in fly, and the loungers strewn on the grass of the road-sides and the open lots. At the gate of the nobleman's grounds, we paid a modest entrance, and there were still modester fees for several of the exhibits. One of these was a tent where under a strong magnifying-glass a community of ants were offering their peculiar domestic and social economy to the study of the curious. But, if I rightly remember, the pavilion which sheltered the flower-show was free to all who could walk through its sultry air without stifling; it was really not so much a show of flowers as of fruits and vegetables, which indeed bore the heat better. Another free performance was the rivalry, apparently of amateurs, in simple feats of carpentry and joiner-work as applied to fence-building; but this was of a didactic effect from which it was a relief to turn to the idle and useless adventures of the people who lost themselves in a maze, or labyrinthine hedge and shared the innocent hilarity of the spectators watching their bewilderment from a high ground hard by. All the time there was a band playing, which when it played a certain familiar rag-time measure was loudly applauded and forced to play it again and again. It was a proud moment for the exile from a country whose black step-children had contributed these novel motives to the world's music, in the intervals of being lynched.

The scene was all very familiar and very strange, with qualities of a subdued county fair at home, but more ordered and directed than such things are with us. As I say, I had long known its like in literature, and I was now glad to find it so realistic. My pleasure in it overflowed when the nobleman who had lent his premises for the show, came walking out among the people, bareheaded, in a suit of summer gray, with his lady beside him, and paused to speak, amid the general emotion, with a neat old woman of humble class, whose hand his lady had shaken. That, I said to myself, was

quite as it should be in its allegiance to immemorial tradition and its fidelity to fiction; it could have formed the initial moment of a hundred thousand English novels. If it could not have formed a like moment in American romance, it is because our millionaires, in their shyness of subpœnas or of interviews, do not yet open their private grounds for flower-shows. It needs many centuries to mellow the conditions for the effect I had witnessed, and we must not be impatient.

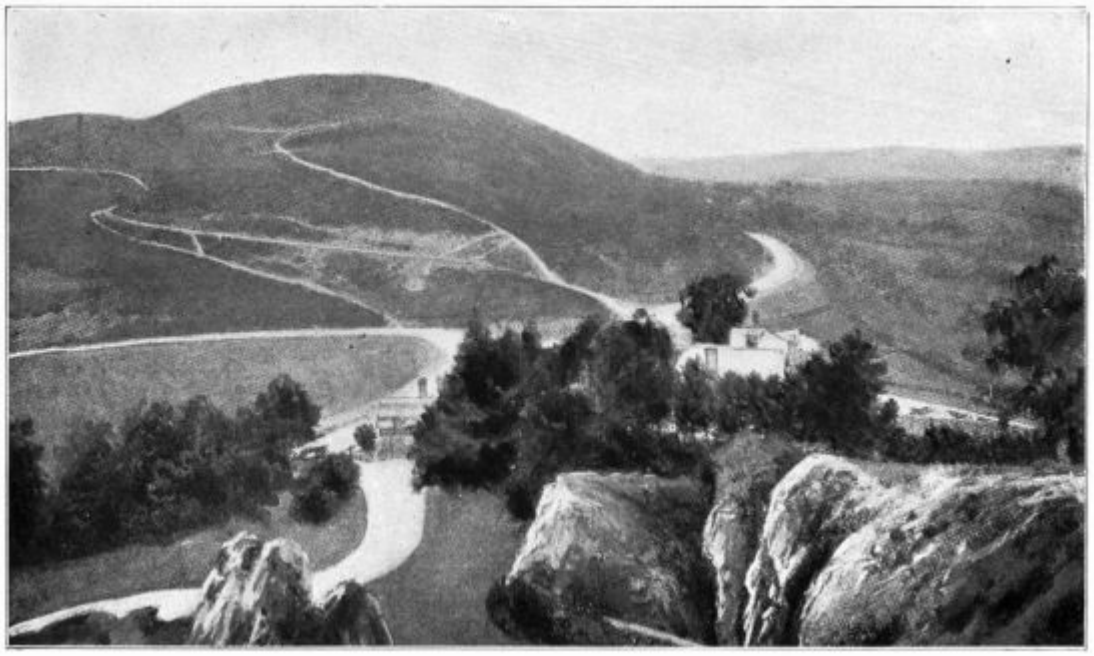
The lord and his lady had come out of a mansion that did not look very mediæval, though it had a moat round it, with ducks in the moat, and in the way to its portal a force of footmen to confirm any comer in his misgiving that the house was closed to the public, and to direct him to the pleasaunce beyond. This was a lawned and gardened place, enclosed with a green wall of hedge, and guarded on one side with succession of pedestals bearing classic busts. It was charming in the afternoon sun, with groups of people seriously, if somewhat awe-strickenly, enjoying themselves. The inferiors in England never take that ironical attitude towards their superiors which must long delay a real classification of society with us.

When there one accepts the situation, and becomes at least gentry if one can, with all the assumptions and responsibilities which station implies. I had a curious illustration of this in my own case when once I came to pay the driver of my fly at the end of an excursion. It had always been my theory that if only the people who exact tips would say what tip they expected, it would greatly simplify and clarify the affair. But now when this good-fellow said the fly would be twelve shillings for the two hours, which I mutely thought too much, and then added, “And two shillings for me,” I did not like it as well as my theory should have supported me in doing. Had I possibly been meaning to offer him one shilling? Heaven knows; but I found myself on the point of lecturing him for his greed, when I reflected that it would be of no use, at least in Malvern, for in Malvern when I went to a stable to engage a fly for other excursions, they always said it would be so much, and so much more for the driver. His tip, a good third of the whole cost, seemed an unwritten part of the tariff, but it was an inflexible law.

It is strong proof of the pleasantness of the drives that this novel feature could not spoil them for us, and we were always going them. There were pretty villages lurking all about in the shades of that lovely plain, which if

you passed through them on a Sunday afternoon, for example, had their people out in their best, with comely girls seen through the open doors of the above cottages, apparently waiting for company, or, in its defect, sitting on benches in their flowery door-yards and making believe to read.

The way was sometimes between tall ranks of trees, sometimes through lines of hedge, opening at the hamlets and closing beyond them. Once it ran by a vast



BRITISH CAMP, SHOWING ROMAN INTRENCHMENTS

enclosure, which looked like a neglected nursery, losing itself in a forest beyond. But we had really chanced upon one of the most characteristic features of English civilization. This neglected nursery was in fact a plantation of all woodland growths, for a game-preserve where later the gentleman who owned it would have the pleasure of killing the wild things resorting to it. We came to it fresh from our satisfaction with another characteristic feature: a village of low houses fronting on a green common, where geese and sheep were grazing, and poultry were set about in coops in the grass. Children were playing over it; men were smoking at the doors, and women doubtless were working within. The evening fire sent up its fumes from the chimneys, and a savory smell of cooking was in the air. It all looked very sociable, and if a little squalid, not the less friendly for that reason. It is from our literary associations with such scenes that we derive

our heartaches when we first leave our humble homes in America, where we have really no such villages, but only solitary farms, or bustling communities on the way to be business centres. A village like that could easily become a "Deserted Village," and an image of it, reflected in Goldsmith's dear and lovely poem, recurred to me from my far youth,

> "On Erie's banks, where tigers steal along,
> And the dread Indian chants his warlike song,"

and mixed with the reality as I drove through it.

The three great summits which are chief of the Malvern Hills are the Beacons of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, and Herefordshire; and nearest the town they are everywhere traversed by the paths which the founders of the water-cure taught to stray over their undulations in the fashion of the German spas, and on which the patients walked themselves into a wholesome glow after their douches, sprays, and drenches. They are very noble tops indeed, from which one may everywhere command a lordly prospect, but the most interesting, and the loftiest, is the Worcestershire Beacon, a brow of which the Britons fortified against the Romans. You can drive the greater part of the way to their earthwork, and if you make the climb to it you will not envy either enemy its possession. The views from it are enchanting, and the fortifications, with companies of sheep grazing sidelong on their glacis and escarpments, can still be easily traced by the eye of military science; but perhaps their chief attraction to the civilian is that they seem impregnable to the swarming flies which infest the road almost throughout its rise, and at the point where you leave your carriage are a quite indescribable pest. One could imagine the Romans hurrying up the steep to be rid of them, and beating the Britons out of their stronghold in order to secure themselves from the insect enemy on the breezy height. They must have bitten the bare legs of the legionaries fearfully and really rendered retreat impossible, while the Britons had no choice but to submit; for if it was at this point that the brave Caractacus surrendered with his following, rather than be forced down among those flies, he yielded to a military necessity, and I should be the last to blame him for it. I wondered how my driver was getting on among them, till I found that he had taken refuge in the opportune inn from which he issued, wiping his mouth, on my

descent from the embattled height; but the inn could not have been there in the Roman times.

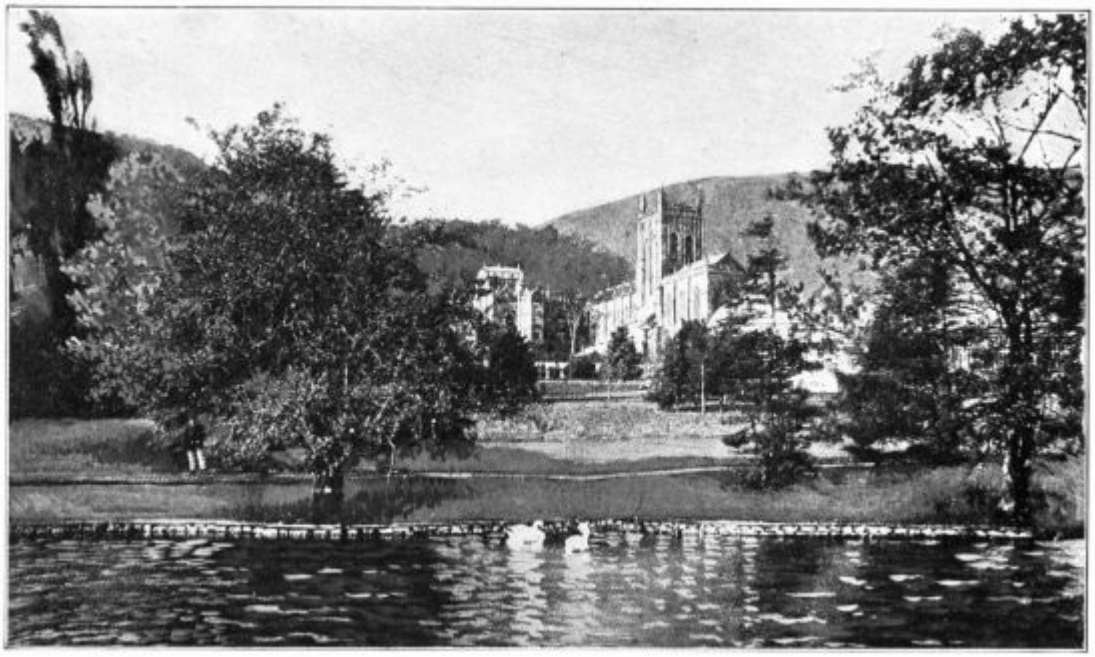
The best of the excursion was coming home by the Wyche, a tremendous cut through beetling walls of rock, which are truly, in the old eighteenth-century literary sense, horrid. Here, as several times before and after, I had to admire at that ignorance of mine in which I had supposed the British continent to be made up of a mild loveliness alone. It has often a bold and rugged beauty which may challenge comparison with our much less accessible grandeurs. It takes days for us to go to the Grand Cañon, or the Yellowstone, or the Yosemite, but one can reach the farthest natural wonder in England by a morning train from London. This handiness of the picturesque and the marvellous is in keeping with the scheme of English life, which is so conveniently arranged that you have scarcely to make an effort for comfort in it. One excepts, of course, the matter of in-door warmth; but out-doors you can always be happy, if you have an umbrella.

I could not praise too much the meteorological delightfulness of that fortnight in Great Malvern, when we had the place so much to ourselves, except for the incursionary trippers, who were, after all, so transient. What contributed greatly to our pleasure was the perfect repair in which the whole place was kept. Apparently the source of its prosperity and certainly its repute, was at the lowest ebb; but the vigilant municipality did not suffer the smallest blight of neglect to rest upon it; the streets were kept with the scruple which is universal in England and which in the retrospect makes our slattern towns and ruffian cities look so shameful; and all was maintained in a preparedness in which no sudden onset of invalids could surprise a weak point. The private premises were penetrated by the same spirit of neatness, and the succession of villas and cottages everywhere showed behind their laurel and holly hedges paths so trim and cleanly that if Adversity haunted their doors she could approach their spotless thresholds without wetting her feet or staining her skirts. It is gratuitous, of course, to suppose the inhabitants all dependent upon hydropathy for their prosperity, but it was certainly upon hydropathy that Malvern increased to her fifteen thousand; and the agreeable anomaly remains.

If ever the tide of sickness sets back there—and somehow I wish it might—the cultivated sufferer will find an environment so beautiful that it will

console him even for not getting well. Nothing can surpass the picturesqueness of those up and down hill streets of Malvern, or the easy variety of the walks and drives about it, up the hills, and down the valleys, and over the plains. If the sufferer is too delicate for much exercise, there is the prettiest public garden in which to smoke or sew, with a peaceful pond in it, and land and water growths which I did interrogate too closely for their botanical names, but which looked friendly if not familiar. Above all, if the sufferer is cultivated and of a taste for antique beauty, there is the Priory Church, which to a cultivated sufferer from our Priory Churchless land will have an endless charm.

At least, I found myself, who am not a great sufferer, nor so very cultivated, and with a passion for antiquity much sated by various travel in many lands, going again and again to the Priory Church in Malvern, and spending hours of pensive pleasure among the forgetting graves without, and the vaguely remembering monuments within. But not among these alone, for some of the most modern of the sculptures are the most beautiful and touching. In a church which dates easily from Early Norman times and not difficultly from Saxon days, a tomb of the Elizabethan century may be called modern, and I specially commend to the visitor that of



PRIORY CHURCH—SWAN POOL IN FOREGROUND

the Knotesford family to which the Priory passed after the dissolution of the monasteries. The good "Esquire, servant to King Henry the Eight," lies beside his wife, and at their sides kneel four of their daughters, with the fifth, who raised the monument to them, at her father's head. Nothing can mark the simple piety and filial sweetness of the whole group, which is of portraits in the realistic spirit of the time; but there is a softer, a sublimer exaltation in that ideal woman's figure, on a monument of our day, rising from her couch to hail her Saviour with "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." This work, in the spirit of Chantry, is in the spirit of all ages; and yet has my reader heard of Robert Hollins of Birmingham? If he has not, it will have for him the pathos which attaches to so much art bearing to the beholder no claim of the mind that conceived or the hand that wrought; and the Priory Church of Malvern is rich in such work of every older date. If the reader has a great deal of leisure, he will wish to study the fifteenth-century tiles which record so many sacred and profane histories, and the quaintly carven stalls with the grotesques of their underseats, and doubtless to do what he can with the stained-windows which survive, in almost unrivalled beauty, the devastation through malice and conscience, of so many others in England. A hundred, or for all I know, a thousand reverend and imperative details will keep him and recall him, day after day, and doubtless he will begin to feel a veneration for the zeal and piety which has restored at immense cost this and so many other temples in every part of the country. You cannot have beauty and the cleanliness next to holiness, you cannot even have antiquity, without paying for it, and the English have been willing to pay. That is why Malvern is still so fair and neat, and why if her Hydropathy should fail at last to attract a single sufferer, her Priory Church may continue to entreat the foot of the Pilgrim in good health. If the monastery, of which the Priory Gateway is a sole relic, was, as seems probable, really once the home of Langland, the author of "Piers Ploughman's Vision," he could visit no shrine more worthy the reverence of any lover of his kind, any friend of the poor.

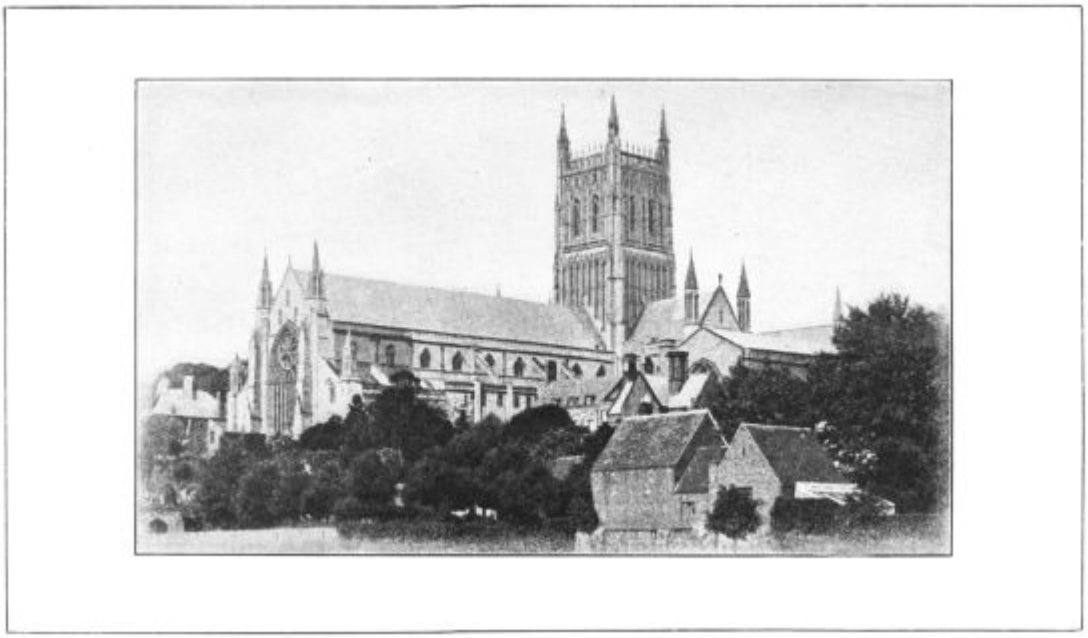
XII

SHREWSBURY BY WAY OF WORCESTER AND HEREFORD

WE made Worcester what amends we could for refusing to stop the night in her picturesque old inn, so powerfully smelling of stable, by going an afternoon from Malvern to see her fabric of the Royal Worcester ware which some people may think she is named for. Really, however, she was called Wygraster, Wyrcester Wearcester, Wureter, and Hooster, long before porcelain was heard of. In times quite prehistoric the Cornuvíí dwelt there in dug-outs, or huts, of "wottle-and-dab," the dab being probably the clay now used in the Royal Worcester ware. In a more advanced period, she was plundered and burned by the Danes, and had a mint of her own nearly a thousand years before we paid her our second visit. But this detail, of which, with many others, we were ignorant, could not keep us from going to the works, and spending a long, exhausting, and edifying afternoon amidst the potteries, ateliers and ovens. The worst of such things is you are so genuinely interested that you think you ought to be much more so, and you put on such an intensity of curiosity and express such a transport of gratitude for each new fact that you come away gasping. I for my part, was prostrated at the very outset by something that I dare say everybody else knows—namely, that to have a small teacup of china you must put into the oven a hulking bowl of clay, which will shrink in baking to the proper dimensions, and that the reduction through the loss of moisture must be calculated with mathematical precision. With difficulty I then followed our intelligent guide through every part of the wonderful establishment: from the places where the clays were being mixed and kneaded; where the forms were being turned and moulded; where the dried pieces were being painted and decorated in the colors which were to come to life in the furnaces wholly different colors from those laid on by the artists; from the delicate smoothing and polishing, to the final display by sample, in the pretty show-room where one might satisfy the most economical thankfulness by the purchase of a souvenir. The museum of the works, where the history of the local keramics is told in the gradual perfectioning of the product through

more than a hundred and fifty years, and where copies of its *chefs-d'œuvre* are assembled in dazzling variety, is most worthy to be seen; but I would counsel greater leisure than ours to make it the occasion of a second visit. By the time you reach it after going through the other departments, you feel like the huge earthen shape which has come out, after the different processes, a tiny demi-tasse. You are very finished, but you are desiccated to the last attenuation, and a touch would shiver you to atoms.

It could not have been after we visited the Royal Porcelain Works that we saw the noble Cathedral of Worcester; it must have been before, for otherwise there would not have been enough left of us for the joy in it of which my mind bears record still. The riches of the place can scarcely be intimated, much less catalogued, and perhaps it was fortunate for us that



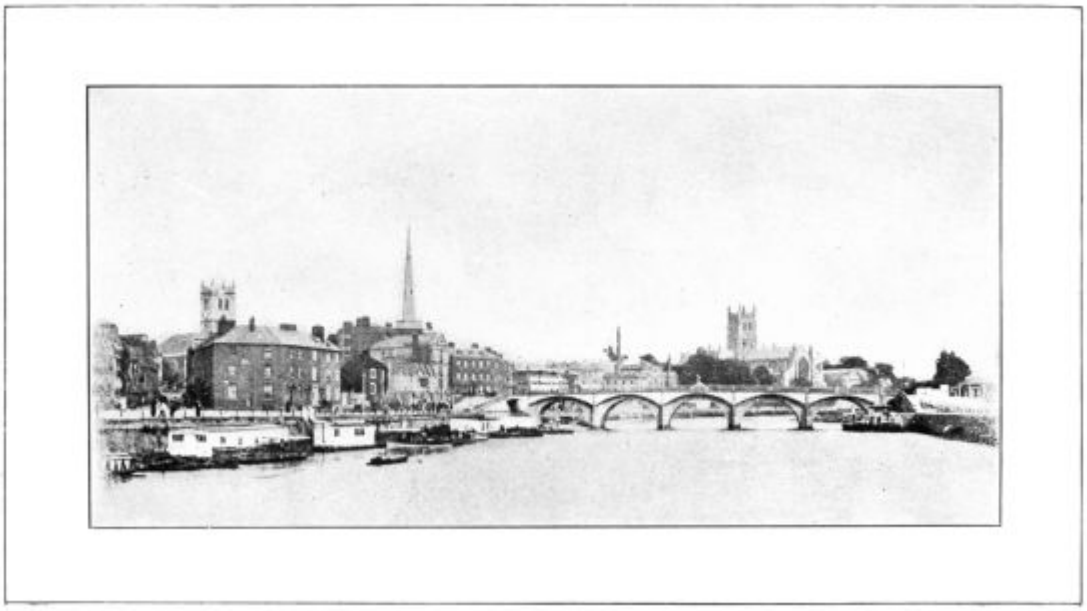
WORCESTER CATHEDRAL, FROM SOUTHWEST

the Norman crypt, with all its dim associations, was much abandoned to the steam-boilers which furnish the inspiration, or at least, the power, of the great organ. Though the verger, a man of up-to-date intelligence, was proud of those boilers and their bulk, we complained of them to each other, with the eager grudge of travellers; and I suppose we would rather have had their room given to monuments of Bishop Gauden, who wrote Charles I.'s *Eikon Basilike*, or of Mrs. Digby by the ever-divine Chantrey, or masterpieces of Roubillac, or effigies of King John and Prince Arthur, or tablets to the wife

of Isaac Walton, with epitaphs by the angler himself, such as Baedeker and the other guide-bookers say the cathedral overhead abounds in. We learned too late for emotion that Henry II. and his queen were crowned in the cathedral, and that the poor, bad John was buried there at his own request. "The organ is decorated in arabesque and has five manuals and sixty-two stops," yet we thought it might have got on with fewer boilers in the crypt. Not that we had time or thought for full pleasure in the rest of the cathedral. I remember indeed the beautiful roof of one long unbroken level; but what remains to me of the exquisite "Perp. Cloisters, entered from the S. aisle of the nave"? I will own to my shame that we failed even to see the marriage contract of William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway, in the diocesan registrar's office, just within the cathedral gateway. Did we so much know that it existed there? Who can say? We saw quite as little that portion of the skin of the Dane who was flayed alive for looting the cathedral, and is now represented by a remnant of his cuticle in the chapter-house.

My prevalent impression of the Worcester Cathedral is not so much one of beauty as one of interest, full, various, and important interest. Of course in our one poor afternoon we could not give the wonderful place more than an hour. We had for one thing to go and do some shopping, and the shops in Worcester are very fairly good. Then we tried for tea, but there seemed to be men drinking beer in the place; and though the proprietor hospitably drove them out, in honor of the lady of our party, yet we thought we would not have tea there, or indeed anywhere. We went rather for a rainy moment to a pretty public garden beside the Severn, where from a waterproof spread upon a stone seat we watched the flow of the river. It seemed a very damp river, but it must be remembered the weather was wet. For the rest, Worcester proved a city of trams, passing through rather narrow streets of tall modern houses, intersected by lanes of lesser and older houses, much more attractive. It was also a centre of torrential downpours, with refuges in doorways where one of us could wait while the other umbrellaed a wild way about in search of a personable public-house, and an eventual chop. Found, the public-house turned out brand-new, like a hotel in an American railroad centre, where in an upper chamber, dryer and warmer than the English wont, travelling-men sat eating, and the strangers were asked by a kind, plain girl if they would have tea with their chop. Did English people,

then, of the lower middle non-conformist class, have tea with their meats? It seemed probable, and in compliance we reverted to the American custom of fifty years ago. If the truth must be told it was not very good, personal tea, but was of the quick-lunch general brew which one drinks scalding hot from steaming nickel-plated cylinders in our country-stations, with the conductor calling “All aboard!” at the door.



WORCESTER, FROM THE RIVER

It is a shame to be noting these silly exceptions to the grand and beautiful life which must abound in Worcester, if one only had the key to it. There looked charming houses here and there in the quiet streets and places, but the present must keep itself locked against the average touristry to which the past is open. Afterwards we visited the famous city again and again in history, where the reader will find our welcome awaiting him, from Peter de Montford, who pillaged the town in 1263, and Owen Glendower in 1401; from Henry VII. who beheaded there after the battle of Bosworth Field many citizens holding for hunchback Richard; from Queen Elizabeth who came in 1574 and was received at the White Ladies; from Prince Rupert who captured it and Essex who recaptured and plundered it and spoiled the cathedral; and from the two wicked Kings Charles, father and son, who each deserved to lose the battle each lost at Worcester. If the reader comes and goes by Sidbury Gate, he may easily make his entrance

and exit by that approach, where the first Charles's friends upset the wagon-load of hay which kept his pursuers from overtaking and taking him in his flight from the battle-field above the city. The storied, or the fabled, hay is always there, if you do not know the place.

The August day we left Malvern, and stayed for a drive through Hereford on our way to Shrewsbury, was bright and hot, and Hereford was responsively sultry and dusty. Except for its beautiful cathedral, Hereford is not apparently interesting, though it may really be interesting. It certainly is historically interesting; and if one likes to find one's self in a place which was considerable in 584, and sent a bishop to the synod of St. Augustine seventeen years later, there is Hereford for the choosing. Otherwise it looks a dull, slovenly large market-town which has not been swept since the last market-day. It has, indeed, the merit of a fine old Tudor house between three intersecting streets and now devoted to a banking business, and I will not pretend that I did not enjoy, quite as much as I enjoyed the cathedral, the old almshouse which we visited somewhere on the length of a mighty long street. A longer, dustier, flatter and hotter street I have not known outside of Ferrara, where all the streets are like that. It must have been in default of other attractions that we were so strenuous about seeing the Coningsby Hospital for old soldiers and servants, but at any rate I am now glad we went. For one thing we should not have known what else to do till our train left for Shrewsbury, and for another it was really very nice to learn what old soldiership or old butlership could come to late in life in that England of snug retreats for so many sorts of superannuation. The kindly inmate who showed me about the place was hurrying himself into a red coat when we stopped at the outer door, and as he proved an old servant and not an old soldier, I thought he might have worn something of a cooler color, say Kendall-green, on such a day. But there was no other fault in him, and if I had been the nobleman who appointed him to that disoccupation after a life-long menial employment, I might well have thought twice before choosing some other domestic of my train. He led me about the thirsty garden, where the vegetables panted among their droughty flower-borders, and had me view not only the Norman archway of the old commandery of the Knights Templars, now spanning a space of pot herbs, but the ruins of the Black Friars' priory drooping in the heat. Something incongruous in it

all tormented the spirit, but how to have it otherwise probably the spirit could not have said. It was better in the cloistered approaches to the pensioners' quarters, cool and dim under the low ceiling, and I shall always be sorry that I pretended a hurry, and did not view the rooms of my guide. I thought I could do that, any time, in the insensate superstition of the postponing traveller, and now, how far I am from Hereford, recording these vain regrets in the top of a towering New York hotel, overlooking the Hudson!

Or is it rather the Wye? The Wye runs, or slowly, slowly creeps through Hereford, under a most beautiful bridge, which I do not know but you cross in going to the station. I had, or I ought to have had, long thoughts in that dreamy old town, where I would now so willingly pass all the rest of my worst enemy's life; for it was the market-town of my ancestors, and thither, I dare say, my Welsh-flannel manufacturing great-grandfather sent his goods, as to a bustling metropolis where they would bring the largest price. But at this distance of time, who knows? I hope at least they went by the river Wye in barges laden at his little Breconshire town, and floated either up or down the stream; I do not know which way the Wye runs from The Hay, and in this sort of purely literary reverie it does not matter. What really matters is to get these Welsh flannels into the hands of some mercer in Hereford, and then leave them and go again to the cathedral, which is so beautiful, and so full of bishops, now no longer living. Your foot knocks against their monuments at every step; but the great glory of the cathedral is in its mighty tower, massing itself to heaven from the midst, and looking best, I fancy, from the outside of the church. Only, there, when you have left your fly in the shade of the great chestnuts (I hope they are chestnuts), you will have to run across the blazing pavement if you wish to reach the cathedral alive in that fierce Hereford sun. Before I leave it for another flight to our fly, I wish to bear testimony to the exceptional intelligence of the verger showing us about, in whom I vainly sought a likeness to the verger who twenty years earlier had guided my steps among the tombs of those multitudinous bishops. At that tune I had lately read in an Ecclesiastical Directory of the United Kingdom that a newer canon of the cathedral was of my own name; and I asked the verger if he could show me his seat in the choir. He did so at once, and incidentally noted, "Many's the

’alf-crown I’ve ’ad from ’im, sir,” when, such is the honor one bears one’s name, I too gave him a half-crown at parting. Had I perhaps been meaning to give him sixpence?

We were sheltered from the sun at last when we started for Shrewsbury, in a train which began almost at once to run between wooded hills under a sky that constantly cleared, constantly clouded, through a country that had been expelled from Eden along with Adam and Eve. It was still very hot, on the outskirts of the afternoon, when we reached Shrewsbury, and drove to the Raven, which we called a bird of prey because it wanted certain shillings for two large, cool rooms, though we should be glad now to pay twice their sum. How haught the spirit grows when once it has tasted the comparative cheapness of English inns! We alleged Chester, we alleged Plymouth, we alleged Liverpool, in expostulation, but the Raven would only offer us two smaller and warmer rooms for fewer shillings, and so we drove to another hotel. We got two fair chambers there with loaded casements, for much less money, and we looked from our pretty windows down upon the green at the foot of St. Mary’s Church, and as far up its heaven-climbing tower as we could crane our necks to see. I can give no idea of our content in that proximity; it was as if we had the lovely and venerable edifice all to ourselves, and as we listened to the music in which it struck the hour and the next quarter of it, our hearts sang in unison with a holy and tasteful joy.

But it seemed as if, though a sultry afternoon at Hereford,

> “The day increased from heat to heat,”

in its decline at Shrewsbury. We made a long evening of it before we tried to sleep, and then our joy in the chimed quarters of St. Mary’s clock was still tasteful, but not so holy as it had been at first. The bells had miraculously transferred themselves to the interior of our rooms, which were transformed into deeply murmuring belfries; and we discovered that there were not four but twenty-four quarters in every hour. These were computed by one stroke for the first quarter, two for the next, four for the next, eight for the next, and so on until about a thousand strokes told the final quarter in the twenty-four. In the mean time the heat broke in a passion of rain. A thunder-storm came on, and having the whole night before it, and

being quite at leisure, it bellowed and flashed till daylight, when it retired from the scene and left it as hot as ever, and a great deal closer.

If the entire truth must be told, in that old border-town which, after an inarticulate Roman antiquity, had held back the Welsh from England for nearly a thousand years, and finally witnessed the triumph of the Red Rose over the White in the fight where Hotspur Harry fell, we had been allured by the delicious incongruity of seeing "The Belle of New York" in the most alien of all possible environments. We had never seen the piece in its native city; money could not there have overcome our instinct of its abominable vulgarity, but here in a strange land (if our English friends will let us call it so for the sake of the antithesis) we made it an act of patriotism to go. We bought two proud front seats, and found our way to them before a risen curtain, to realize too late that until its fall there was no retreat for us. The theatre at Shrewsbury is not large, under the best of circumstances, and that night it was smaller than ever. Such was the favor of "The Belle of New York" with that generous population, that every seat in the orchestra was taken, and the walls of the edifice pressed suffocatingly inwards. On the stage the heat was so concentrated that in the glare of the foot-lights the faces of the performers steamed with perspiration through the grease-paint of their faces, as they swayed and sang, and leaped and bounded in obedience to the dramatist and composer, and delivered our New York slang in a cockney convention of our local accent which seemed entirely to satisfy the preconceptions of Shrewsbury. Altogether, the piece enjoyed an acceptance with the audience which, in the welding heat, was so little less than stifling that the adventurous strangers, at the close of an act that lasted as long as a Greek trilogy, escaped into the street with what was left of their lives. I know that it is making an exorbitant demand upon the credulity of the reader to relate that upon their return to Shrewsbury a week later these strangers again went to see an American play in the same theatre, which seemed to have been greatly enlarged in the interval, and so deliciously lowered in temperature that in their balcony seats they all but shivered through a melodrama of New York life professing to have been written by Joseph Jefferson. There was an escape of the hero from prison in one scene, and in another a still narrower escape from drowning in the East River at the hands of perhaps the worst reprobate who ever came to a bad end on the

stage; and there was a set (I think it is called) of the Brooklyn Bridge, which though attenuated and almost spectralized, recalled the reality as measurably as the English Bobby in blue recalled the massive Irish-American guardians of our public security. The "Shadows of a Great City" did not convince us of our dear and now-lamented Jefferson's authorship; but it was not so unbearable as "The Belle of New York," for meteorological reasons, if not for others, and upon the whole it interested, it flattered the mind to the fond conjecture that here in this ancient, this beautiful town, the American drama, if finally neglected in its own land, might be welcomed to a prosperous and honored exile.

St. Mary's Church was so near at hand that it could hardly fail of repeated visits, and it merited a veneration which might have been more instructed but could not have been more sincere than ours. In every author who treats of it the riches of its stained glass is celebrated, and I will not dwell upon its beauties or even its quaint simplicities. The church is as old as Norman architecture can make it, and it invites with a hundred interesting facts, so that I hardly know how to justify the specific attraction which one piece of modern sculpture there had from me above all other things. The tomb of General Curston by Westonscott has not even the claim of being within the church, where so many memorable and immemorable dead are remembered. It is in the square basement of the tower, and the soldier's figure is on your right as you enter. He was perhaps not much known to history, being only an adjutant-general, who fell in battle with the Sikhs at Runneggar in 1848, but no one who looks upon his countenance in the living stone can forget it. His left hand rests at his side; his right lies on his heart holding his sword; his soldier's cloak opens, showing his medals. In the realistically treated face, with its long drooping mustache and whiskers, is a look of dreamy melancholy which, whatever the other qualities of the work, is a masterpiece of expression. Of a period when the commonplace asserted itself with a positive force almost universal in the arts, this simple monument is of classic beauty.

As quaint as any of the earliest inscriptions on the monuments of the church is the tablet in the outer wall of the tower to the bold eighteenth-century aëronaut who came to his death in an endeavored flight from its top

to the farther bank of the Severn. It appears that in this as in some other matters—

> "Not only we, the latest seed of time,
> That in the flying of a wheel cry down
> The past—"

have excelled or even failed. Nor is it probable that the bold youth who perished in 1759 was the first to try imperfect wings in the region where none have yet triumphed; and the faith of his epitapher is not less touching than that of the many who survive to our own day in the belief of antemortem aërostation.

"Let this small monument record the name
Of Cadmus, and to future time proclaim
How by an attempt to fly from this high spire
Across the Sabrine stream he did acquire
His fatal end. 'Twas not for want of skill,
Or courage to perform the task, he fell.
No, no, a faulty cord being drawn too tight,
Hurried his soul on high to take her flight."

The imagination which does not rest its hopes on faulty cords, but follows carefully, on the sure and firm-set earth, in the steps of fact and then flies forward in most inspired conjecture, has its abiding in the memory of the great Darwin, son of Shrewsbury town, and scholar of her famous school. If we cannot count him

"The first of these who know"

among such savans and philosophers as Jenner, Paley, Kennedy, and Butler, his name will carry to further times than any other the glory of that "faire free schoole," founded by Edward VI., of which even in the seventeenth century it could be written, "Itt hath fowr maisters, and their are sometimes six hundred schollers, and a hansome library thirunto belonging." The stainless Sir Philip Sidney, and the blood-stained Judge Jeffreys were both of its alumni, but it is the statue of Darwin to which the devotees of evolution will bend their steps in Shrewsbury. It was my fortune to find myself by chance in the house where he lived with his first teacher, the Unitarian minister at Shrewsbury, and to stand in the room where he began, very obliquely and remotely, the studies which changed the thoughts of the world. But the old man he became sits in bronze at a far remove from this in front of the museum of Roman antiquities.

As a museum it is not so amusing as you might expect of a collection containing the remains of Latin civilization from the Roman city of Uriconium, long hidden from fame under the name of Wroxeter, which lies, as my laconic Baedeker tells, "about 5 m. to the S. E." of Shrewsbury. But probably it is your want of archæology which disables your interest in the province of these remains, while you readily grapple with the fact that the

museum itself is part of the old Edward VI. foundation, and that Darwin, whose mild, wise face welcomes you up the way to the building, often went it "unwillingly to school" in that very place.

Another dear son of memory who may be associated with Shrewsbury was the poet Coleridge, vaguely and vagariously great, who in his literary nonage preached in the Unitarian chapel of the town. This chapel ("now used," my guide says, "by a Theistic congregation,") was afterwards partially destroyed by a mob which had the divinity of Christ so much at heart that it could not suffer a Socinian place of worship; but it was restored by the King's command at the public cost, as we ought to remember of that poor George III. whose name we cannot otherwise revere. It was restored in the good architectural taste of the time, and as you stand within it you might readily fancy yourself in some elderly fane of our own once Unitarian Boston.

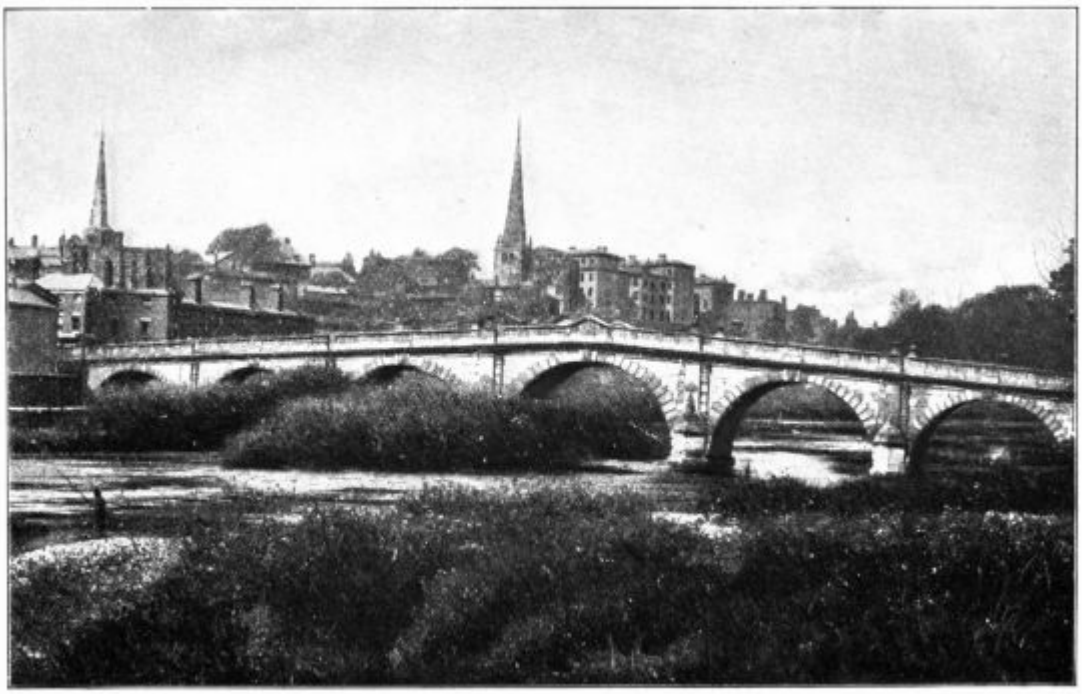
Darwin's mother was of that cult, which has enjoyed rather a lion's share of the social discountenance falling to all dissent in England, but the tale of his fellow-scholars in aftertimes and aforetimes at the school of Edward VIth, shines with so many Established bishops and divines, as to relieve Shrewsbury from any blight falling upon it for that cause. With these, and such statesmen as Halifax, such dramatists as Wycherley, such poets as Ambrose Phillips, such savans as Dr. Jonathan Scott, the orientalist, Dr. Edward Waring, the mathematician, Rev. C. H. Hartsborne, the antiquarian, the venerable foundation is surely safe in the regard of the most liturgical.

But Shrewsbury swarms with all sorts of high associations. Here David, the last of the old British Princes of Wales, was put to death by order of the English King, and here in the last battle between the Roses, the Welsh hope was finally broken in the defeat of the White Rose. Here Falstaff fought with Harry Hotspur "a long hour by the Shrewsbury clock"—probably the very clock in St. Mary's tower which kept me awake much longer; and here was born the second son of Henry IV., one of the princes whom their wicked uncle Richard slew in the Tower. Here, in one of his flights before his subjects, Charles I. stayed with the brief splendor of his court about him, and minted the plate of the loyal Shropshire gentry, till treachery overtook him (in the local guide-book), and the town fell to the Parliament; and here James II. paused a day when time was getting to be more than money to

him. Twice the good Queen Victoria visited the town, and once, long before, the Prince of Darkness himself came, in storm and night, and spoiled the clock of St. Alkmund, leaving a scratch from his claw on the fourth bell. The precise occasion of his visit is not recorded, nor is it told just why the effigy of Richard of York, the father of Edward IV., should be standing, "clad in complete steel," in front of the beautiful old Market Hall, and stooped in an attitude of such apparent discomfortableness that he is known to some of a light-minded generation as the "Stomach-ache Man."

The city is the home of those Shrewsbury cakes, famed in *The Ingoldsby Legends*, and once offered to distinguished visitors, who thought them "delicious," but if they were then no better than now, we can imagine how poor the living of the proudest was in olden times. Rather than the bakery which professes to be the original Pallin's, or even the Norman castle from which Henry IV. went out to beat Henry Percy and his Yorkish followers, the gentle reader will wish to see the quaint streets and places in which the timbered houses called Tudor abound beyond the like anywhere else in England. There are whole lengths and breadths of these, some stately and tall, and some so humble and low that you can put your hand on their eaves as you pass, but all so charming and so picturesque that you could wish every house in the town to be like them. Failing this, you must console yourself as best you can by visiting the most beautiful old Abbey Church in the world: how old it is I will not say, and how beautiful I cannot, but it fills the heart with reverence and delight. I will not pretend that the inside is as lovely as the outside: that could not be, and any one outlive the joy of it; but it is within and without adorable. You do not require a late afternoon light on the rich façade, but if you have it you are all the happier in its century-mellowed masonry and the old-lace softness of the Gothic window which opens over half its space. From the church you will fancy, inadequately enough, what the whole abbey must have been before it fell into ruin under the hand of Reform. But a relic of the monastic life remains which will repay the enthusiast for going across the way and putting his nose and eyes between the palings of the railroad freight-yard in which it stands, and lingering long upon the sight of it among the grime and dust of the place. It is the pulpit of the refectory where some young brother used to stand to

read to the other monks, while they sat at meat, and listened to his prayer and praise, if anything,



THE ENGLISH BRIDGE

and not to one another's talk. That youthful ghost now reads to a spectral brotherhood, not more dead now than then, to all the loveliness of life; and the porters come and go through their shadowy company, pushing their heavy trucks to and from the goods-vans, and from time to time the engines lift their strident voices above the monotonous silence of the reader's words; and all is very weird and sad.

What should have possessed us to drive beyond the Abbey Church to view "the quaint Dun Cow Inn," heaven knows; but that was what we did, and now I can testify that there is really an image of the Dun Cow standing over its door, and challenging the spectator for any associations he has with it. We had none, but I do not say it is not rich in associations for the better-informed. Even we can suppose Coleridge stopping there, and perhaps not being able to pay for the milk it yielded, and so staying on till the youthful Hazlitt came and ordered the meal—in the essay where he has so divinely rendered the consciousness of "the gentleman in the parlor" waiting for his supper. We must have it that he paid the poet's bill; otherwise we should

have seen him still pent and peering sadly from the window, with the image of the Dun Cow watching relentlessly overhead.

There are two bridges crossing the Severn at Shrewsbury: the English Bridge and the Welsh Bridge, by which the Briton and the Sassenach respectively went and came during the ages of border warfare before that last battle of the Roses. Now the bridges are used by travellers who wish to drink so deep of the Severn's beauty (in which the softly wooded shores are glassed as tenderly as a lover in his mistress' eyes), that they can never go away from Shrewsbury, but must remain glad captives to the witchery of her wandering up-and-down-hill streets, her Tudor houses, her beautiful churches, her enchanting remains of a past rich in insurpassable events and men. I say insurpassable to round my period; but there is no place in England that is not equally insurpassable in these things.

XIII

NORTHAMPTON AND THE WASHINGTON COUNTRY

GREAT BRINGTON is the name of the village neighborhood clustering about the church where, under the floor of the nave, the great-great-grandfather of George Washington lies buried. Little Brington is the village neighborhood, hardly separated from the other, where the Washington family dwelt in a house granted them by their cousin, Earl Spencer, when the events of the Civil War drove them from their ancestral place at Sulgrave. To reach the Bringtons from London you must first go to Northampton, where in his time the first Lawrence Washington was twice mayor. The necessity is not a hardship, for to see Northampton, ever so passingly, is a delight such as only English travel can offer. To drive the six miles from Northampton to the Bringtons is another necessity which is another delight, still richer if not greater. Be chosen by a 28th of September, veiled in a fog with sunny rifts in its veil, for your railroad run through a level pastoral scene where stemless blotches of trees shelter white blurs of sheep, and vague canal-boats rest cloudily on the unseen waterways, and you have conditions in which, if you are worthy, the hour of your journey will shrink to a few golden minutes. You will be meanwhile kept by the protecting mists from the manifold facts which in England are apt to pierce you with a thousand appeals and reproaches. The many much-storied places will be faded to wraiths of towers and gates and walls, and you will escape to your destination without that torment of regret for not having constantly stopped on the way from which nothing could otherwise deliver you.

If at Northampton the fog lifts, and the autumnal sun has all the rest of the day to itself, you arrive with unimpaired strength for what you have come to see. Yet with all your energy conserved on the way, you will not be fully equal to the demand upon you. Northampton did not fail to begin with the Britons, and though it was not a permanent Roman station, and lay dormant during the Saxon hierarchy, it revived sufficiently under Saxon rule in the eleventh century to be twice taken and once burnt by the Danish

invaders. It suffered under the Normans, but was walled and fortified in the Conqueror's reign, and began a new life with the inspiration of his oppressions. A picturesque incident of its civil history, which was early a record of resistance to the royal will, was Thomas à Becket's defiance of Henry II., when the King tried to reduce the proud churchman to the common obedience before the laws. The archbishop, followed by great crowds of the people, appeared as summoned, but when the Earl of Leicester bade him, in the old Norman form, hear the judgment rendered against him, he interrupted with the words, "Son and Earl, hear me first! I forbid you to judge me! I decline your tribunal, and refer my quarrel to the decision of the Pope." Then he retired, and shortly escaped to Flanders, but coming back to Canterbury, was murdered, as all men know, by four of the King's knights, at the altar in the cathedral.

Perhaps the feeling of the people was less for the prelate than against the prince, for the first Protestant heresies spread rapidly in Northampton, and the doctrines of Wickliffe had such acceptance that the mayor himself was accused of holding them, and of favoring the spread of Lollardy. In the two great Civil Wars, Northampton stood for the White Rose and then for the Parliament, against the two kings. In 1460, a great battle was fought under the city's walls; ten thousand of Henry's "tall Englishmen" were killed or drowned in the river Nene, and Henry himself was brought prisoner into the town. In 1642, the guns of the Puritan garrison "plaid for about two hours" on "the cavaleers and shot about twenty of them" when they attempted to assault the place, which became a rendezvous for the parliamentarians, and sent them frequent aid from its fifteen thousand in their attacks on the neighboring places holding for the King. In 1645, both parties met in force, a little northwest of the town, and Cromwell, who had joined Fairfax, won the battle of Naseby after Fairfax had lost it, and with an overwhelming victory ended the war against Charles.

If any Washingtons were in the fight, as some of so numerous a line might very well have been, it was on the King's side. They put their faith in princes while they remained in England; it wanted yet a hundred and thirty years, at the remoteness of Virginia, to school them to the final diffidence which they were not the first of the Americans to feel. The slow evolution of the race out of devoted subjects into devoted citizens was accomplished

in stuff other than that of the Puritan chief who soon after could "say this of Naseby,—that when I saw the enemy draw up and march in gallant order towards us, and we a company of poor ignorant men ... I could not, riding alone about my business, but smile out to God in praises, in assurance of victory, because God would by things that are not, bring to naught things that are. Of which I had great assurance, and God did it." Yet the faith in poor common men, once kindled in Washington, if not so mixed with piety as Cromwell's, outlasted that through parliamentary trials as severe as ever it was put to by poor uncommon men.

Non-conformity, civil as well as religious, which the Washingtons were no part of, was the note of Northampton from the first, and to the last it has been represented in Parliament by such bold dissentients as Bradlaugh and Mr. Labouchere. It is the great shoe-town of England, and apparently there is nothing like leather to inspire a manly resistance to the pretensions of authority. But the Washingtons of Northampton were never any part of the revolt against kingly assumptions. The Lawrence Washington who was twice Mayor of Northampton profited by Henry VIII.'s suppression of the monasteries to possess himself of Sulgrave Manor, where his descendants dwelt for a hundred years and more, until 1658, when their discomforts under the Commonwealth, and their failing fortunes, made them glad of the protection of their noble kindred the Spencers at Brington.

It is not clear how the house at Little Brington, which is known as the Washington house, was granted them, or how much it was loan or gift of the Spencers; but it does not greatly matter now. The Washingtons, who had shared the politics of their cousins, were rather passive royalists, but they suffered the adversities of the cause they had chosen, and they did not apparently enjoy the prosperity which the Restoration brought to such of their side as could extort recognition from the

THE WASHINGTON HOUSE AT LITTLE BRINGTON

second Charles, as thankless as the first Charles was faithless; and neither the Washingtons who staid in England, nor those who went to Virginia, had ever any profit from their fidelity to the Stuarts. They were gentlemen, who were successful in business when they turned to trade, but in the household records of their noble cousins at their seat of Althorp there is said to be proof of the frequent goodness of the Spencers to the needy Washingtons of Little Brington. If the Washingtons paid for the favor they enjoyed in the ways that poor relations do, it is not to the discredit of either line that a lady of their family should have been at one time housekeeper at Althorp. One fancies, quite gratuitously, that Lucy Washington was a woman of spirit who wished to earn the favor which her people had, whether less or more, from their kinsfolk. Two of the Washingtons elsewhere, who made fortunes, were knighted, but the direct ancestor of our Washington was a clergyman who suffered more than the common misfortunes of the Washingtons at Brington. He was falsely accused of drunkenness at a time when any charge was willingly heard against a royalist clergyman, and was ejected from his rich benefice as a scandalous minister. His character was afterwards

cleared, but he had thenceforth only a small living to the end, and probably was, like his kindred at Brington, befriended by the Spencers.

The Lawrence Washington who was Mayor of Northampton and the grantee of Sulgrave, was chosen first in 1532 and last in 1546. The place was then, as it continued to be for a hundred and thirty odd years, the mediæval town of which the visitor now sees only a few relics in here and there an ancient house. Happily most of the old churches escaped the fire that swept away the old dwellings in 1675, and left the modern Northampton to grow up from their ashes the somewhat American-looking town we now find it. The side streets are set with neat brick houses, prevailingly commonplace. One might fancy one's self, coming towards the Church of All Saints, in the business centre of some minor New England city, but with rather less of glare and noise, and held in a certain abeyance by the presence of the church. All Saints is not one of the churches which escaped the flames; and of the original structure only the Gothic tower is left; the rest, a somewhat vague little history of the city says, "is wholly modern." But modernity, like some other things, is relative, and a New England town might find a very satisfying antiquity in an edifice which at its latest dates back to Queen Anne, and at its earliest to Charles II. The King gave a thousand tons of timber from his forest of Whittlebury towards the rebuilding of the church, and for this munificence he has been immortalized by sculpture over the centre of a most beautiful and noble Ionic, or Christopher-Wrennish, portico, where he stands in the figure of a Roman centurion, with, naturally, a full-bottomed wig on. Few heroic statues are more amusing, and the spirit of the royal reprobate so travestied might be very probably supposed to share the spectator's enjoyment. Behind one end of the portico, which extends for eighty feet across the whole front of the church, were once the rooms in which many non-conformists of Northampton were tried for the offence of thinking for themselves in matters of religion, which were then so apt to become matters of politics.

The members of the Corporation were formerly the patrons of the living, and the mayor still has his seat in the church under the arms of the town, and doubtless that official had it in the older building before the fire,

THE BUSINESS CENTRE OF NORTHAMPTON

when the mayor was Lawrence Washington. In the wall is a tablet to the memory of a man who was born in the century when Lawrence was twice chosen chief magistrate of Northampton, and who died in the century when George Washington was twice chosen Chief Magistrate of the United States. John Bailes was a button-maker by trade, and if he links the memories of those far-parted Washingtons together, by force of longevity, it is with no merit of his, though it is recorded of him that "he had his hearing, Sight & Memory to ye last." I leave more mystical inquirers to trace a relationship between the actual civilizations of Northampton and the United States in the presence, beside the church, of a house of refection, liquid rather than solid, calling itself the Geisha Café. If ever the ghost of the Merry Monarch comes to haunt his Roman effigy in the full-bottomed wig, it may humorously linger a moment at the door of the genial resort.

It is mainly through her churches that Northampton has her hold on the American patriot who is also a person of taste, as one must try to be in going from one church to another. The reader who could give as many days to them as I could give minutes, would have a proportional reward, whether

from St. Peter's, unsurpassed for the effect of its rich Norman; or from St. Sepulchre, with the rotunda which marks it one of the four churches remaining in England out of all those built during the Crusades in memory of the Holy Sepulchre. There are other old churches, but perhaps not dating back with these to the ten and eleven hundreds. One, which I cannot now identify, bears tragical witness to the rigor of the times in the scars on the masonry about the height of a man, where certain royalists were stood beside the portal to be shot. The wonder is that the grief ever goes out of such things, but it does, and they who died, and they who did them to death, have long been friends in their children's children.

It is curious how everything becomes matter of æsthetic interest, if you give it time. We stood looking at the Queen's Cross, near Northampton, which rises not so very far from the field of Naseby, and with our eyes on the wasted beauty of the shrine, we two Americans begun by a common impulse to say verses from Macaulay's stalwart ballad of the battle. Our English companion, who was a cleric of high ritualistic type, listened unmoved by any conscience he might have had against the purport of the lines as we rolled them forth, and, for all we could see, he had the same quality of pleasure as ourselves in the adjuration to the Puritans to "bear up another minute" for the coming of "brave Oliver," and in the supposed narrator's abhorrence of "the man of blood," whom brave Oliver presently put to rout.

> But see, he turns, he flies! Shame on those cruel eyes
> That bore to look on torture and that dare not look on war.

If he had a feeling as to our feeling, it was amusement that after two centuries and a half there should be any feeling about either party in the strife, and doubtless he did not take us too seriously.

He sent us later on our way to Great Brington with the assurance that the rector of the church would be waiting us in it to show us the tomb of the Washington buried there. His courtesy was the merit of my friend the genealogist with whom I had exhausted the American origins in London, and who had now come with me into the country for the most important of them all. When we were well started on our drive, that divine September afternoon, we would gladly have had it twelve rather than six miles from

Northampton to Great Brington. The road was uncommonly open, or else it was lifted above the wonted level of English roads, and we could see over the tops of the hedges into the fields, instead of making the blindfold progress to which the wayfarer is usually condemned. It was not too late in the year or the day for a song-bird or so, and the wayside roses and hawthorns were so red with hips and haws that we gave them the praise of an American coloring for their foliage till we looked closer and found that the gayety was not of their leaves. Where the leaves felt the fall, they showed it in a sort of rheumatic stiffness, and a paling of their green to a sad gray, or a darkening of it to a yet sadder brown. But we did not notice this till we had turned from the highway, and were driving through Althorp Park. There was a model farm village before our turning, where some nobleman had experimented in making his tenants more comfortable than they could afford, in cottages too uniformly Tudoresque; but at differing distances, in various hollows and on various tops, there were more indigenous hamlets, huddling about the towers of their churches, and showing a red blur of tiles or a dun blur of walls, as we saw them alow or aloft. When we got well into the park there was only the undulation of the wooded surfaces, where wide oaks stood liberally about with an air of happy accident in their informal relation. I should like, for the sake of my romantic page, to put does under them; they were a very fit shelter for does; and I have read that does may sometimes be seen lightly flying from the visitors' approach through the glades of the park. It was my characteristically commonplace luck to see none, but I hope that in their absence the reader will make no objection to the black and white sheep which I did abundantly see feeding everywhere. It will be remembered, or not unwillingly learned, that sheep were once the ambition, the enthusiasm of the Spencers, who made them early an interest of the region, so that it was the most perverse of fates which kept their greatest flock down to 19,999, when they aimed at 20,000. Still, if they were black-nosed sheep, the lower figure might represent a value greater than 20,000 of the common white-nosed sort. A black nose gives a sheep the touch of character which the species too often lacks: a hardy air of almost goatlike effrontery, yet without the cold-eyed irony of the goat, which forbids the lover of wickedness the sympathy which the black-nosed sheep inspires. A black-nosed lamb affects one more like a bad little boy whose face has not been

washed that morning, or for several mornings, than anything else in nature; and it would not be easy to say which was more suggestive of racial innocence mixed with personal depravity. I am not able to say whether a black nose in a sheep adds to the merit of its mutton or its fleece, but I am sure that it adds a piquant charm to its appearance, and I do not know why we have not that variety of sheep in America. I dare say we have.

When presently we drove past Althorp house, standing at a dignified remove from our course, which was effectively the highway, I felt in its aspects the modernity which has always been characteristic of the family. It is of that agreeable period when the English architects were beginning to study for country houses the form of domestic classic which the Italian taught those willing to learn of them simplicity and grace at harmony with due state, and which is still the highest type of a noble mansion. The lady of the house more than two centuries back had been the Saccharissa of Suckling's verse, and her charm remained to my vague associations with the place, where she figured in the revels of happier times, and then in her beneficences to the distressed clergy after the Civil War, when the darker days came to those of the Spencer praying and fighting. There is no reason why she should not be related in these to the Washingtons, who needed if they did not experience her kindness, and if the reader wishes to strain a point and make her more the friend than mistress of that Lucy Washington who was sometime housekeeper at Althorp, I will not be the one to gainsay him. For all me, he may figure these ladies in the priceless library of Althorp: priceless then, but sold in our tunes to Mrs. Rylands at Manchester, for a million and a half, and there made a monument to her husband's memory. Many bolder things have been feigned than these ladies sitting together among the books, which would be the native air of the rhyme-worn Saccharissa, and discoursing with Mistress Lucy's kinsman, Lawrence Washington, lately Fellow of Brasenose College, and lecturer and proctor at Oxford, and now rector of Purleigh, whence he was to be wrongfully removed for drunkenness: all with the simultaneity so common in the romance of historical type. How they would thee and thou one another as cousins of the seventeenth-century sort I leave the archæological novelist to inquire, gladly making over to him all my right and title in the affair. If he wishes to lug in the arrest of King Charles by Cornet Joyce of the

Parliament forces, he can do it with no great violence, for it really happened hard by at Holmby House, whence the King was fond of coming to enjoy the gardens of Althorp. He can have Saccharissa and Mistress Lucy Washington, and his reverence Mr. Washington, looking down at the incident from a window of the library, and if he is the romanticist I take him for, he will easily have young Lawrence rapt in a vision of his great-great-grandson arresting the kingly power in America. The vision will have all the more fitness, in the reflections it suggests to the ancestor, from the fact, of which he will also be prescient, that both the Washingtons and Spencers, devoted and perhaps unreasoning royalists in their days, were destined to become more and more freed from their superstition, and to stand for greater freedom under different forms, as time went on. In his prophetic rapture, the Reverend Lawrence may have been puzzled to choose among his great-great-grandsons who was to fulfil it, for he was the father of a populous family counting seventeen in the first descent, and he could not have been blamed if he could not know George Washington by name, or identify him in his historical character.

It is this Lawrence Washington whose tablet one goes to revere in the church at Great Brington, where he lies entombed with the mother of his eight sons and nine daughters; and if one arrives at the sort of headland where the church stands on such a September afternoon as ours, and looks out from it over the lovely country undulating about its feet, one must try hard in one's memory or imagination to match it with a scene of equal beauty. Of like beauty there is none except in some other English scenes like the home of Washington's ancestors, and it is English in every feature and expression. The fields with their dividing hedges, the farmsteads snuggling in the hollows, the grouped or solitary trees, all softened in a sunny haze, and tented over with the milky-blue sky, form a landscape of which the immediate village, at the left of the headland, is a foreground,

THE CHURCH AT GREAT BRINGTON

Under the floor of the nave was buried the first Lawrence Washington, great-great-grandfather of George Washington

with the human interest without which no picture lives.

I suppose that if I had been given my choice whether to have one of these village houses unroofed, and its simple drama revealed to me, I should have poorly chosen that rather than had the wooden cover lifted from the church floor where it protects the mortuary tablet of Lawrence Washington and his wife from the passing tread. But the rector of the church at Great Brington could not have gratified me in my preference, whereas he could and did lift the lid from the tablet in the nave, and let us read the inscription, and see the armorial bearings, in which the stars and stripes of our flag slept, undreaming of future glory, in the chrysalis arrest of the centuries since they had been the arms of a race of Northamptonshire gentlemen. The rector was in fact waiting for us at the church door, hospitably mindful of the commendation of our Northampton clerical friend, and we saw the edifice to all the advantage that his thoughtful patience could lend us. He had at once some other guests, in the young man

and young woman who followed us in with their dog. They recalled themselves to the rector, who received them somewhat austerely, with his eyes hard upon their companion. “Did you mean to bring that animal with you?” he asked, and they pretended that the dog was an interloper, and the young man put him out in as much disgrace as he could bring himself to inflict. Probably there was an understanding between him and the dog; but the whole party took the rector’s reproof with a smiling humility and an unabated interest in the claims of the Washington tablet, and in fact the whole church, upon their attention. They somewhat distracted my own, which is at best an idle sort, easily wandering from Early English architecture to Later English character, and from perpendicular windows to people of any inclination. Yet, the church at Great Brington is most worthy to be studied in detail, for it is “notable even among the famous churches of Northamptonshire,” and it is the fitting last home of Washington’s ancestors.

I bring myself with some difficulty to own that the specific knowledge I have on this point, and several others in this vague narration, I owe to an agreeable sketch of “The Homes of the Washingtons” by Mr. John Leyland. But if I did not own it, some one would find me out, and it is best to confess my obligation together with my gratitude. I wish I had had the sketch with me at the time of my visit to Great Brington church, but I had not, and I lingered about in the church-yard, after we came out and the rector must leave us, under the spell of a quiet and in the keeping of associations unalloyed by information. For this reason I am unable to attribute its true significance to the old cross which stands apart from the church, and guides and guards the way to the place of graves beside it. I must own that at first glance it has somewhat the effect of an old-fashioned sign-post at an inn yard, and perhaps that were no bad symbol of the welcome the peaceful place holds for the life-weary wayfarers who lie down to their rest in it. Great Brington remains to me an impression of cottage streets,—doubtless provided with some shops. But when we had taken leave of the rector, and looked our last at the elegy-breathing church-yard, with its turf heaving in many a mouldering heap as if in decasyllabic quatrains, we drove away to see the Washington house in Little Brington.

When you come to it, or do not come to it, you find Little Brington nothing but a dwindling Great Brington, or a wider and more shopless dispersion of its cottages on one long street, which is really the highroad back to Northampton. Some bad little boys hung on to the rear of our carriage, and other little boys, quite as bad, I dare say, ran beside us, and invited our driver to "Cut be'oind, cut be'oind!" probably in the very accents, mellow and rounded, of our ancestral Washingtons. They all dropped away before we stopped at the gate of the very simple house where these Washingtons dwelt. It is a thatched stone house, of a Tudor touch in architecture, with rooms on each side of the front door and a tablet over that, lettered with the text, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord." Perhaps in other times it was of the dignity of a manor-house, but now it was inhabited by decent farmfolk, and very neatly kept. The farmwife who let us go up-stairs and down and all through it was a friendly soul, but apparently puzzled by our interest in it, and I fancied not many pilgrims worshipped at that shrine. It was rather ruder and humbler within than without; the flooring was rough, and the whitewashed walls of the little chambers were roughly plastered; neither these nor the living-rooms below had the beauty or interest of many colonial houses in New England. There was a little vegetable-gardened space behind the house, and a low stable, or some sort of shed, and on the comb of the roof an English true robin redbreast perched, darkly outlined against the clear September sky, and swelled his little red throat, and sang and sang. It was very pretty, and he sang much better than the big awkward thrush which we call a robin at home.

Our lovely day which had begun so dim, was waning in a sweet translucency, and we drove back to Northampton over gentle uplands through afternoon influences of a rich peacefulness. The road-side hedgerows now kept us from seeing much beyond them, but they were red, like those we passed in coming, with haws and wild rosepips, which we again took for a flush of American autumn in their leaves; but the trees were really of a sober yellow, with here and there, on a house wall, a flame of Japanese ivy or Virginia creeper. The way was dotted with shoe-hands, men and girls, going home early from the unprosperous shops which our driver said were running only half-time. But even on half-pay they earned

so much more than they could on the land that the farmers, desperate for help, could pay only a nominal rent. Much of the land was sign-boarded for sale, and this and the unusual number of wooden cottages gave us a very home feeling. In our illusion, we easily took for crows the rooks sailing over the fields.

THE END

FOOTNOTE:

[A] **BATH**.

Rules laid down by Richard Nash, Esq., M.C., put up by Authority in the Pump Room and observed at Bath Assemblies during his reign.

I.

"That a visit of ceremony at coming to Bath, and another going away, is all that is expected or desired by Ladies of Quality and Fashion—except Impertinents.

II.

"That Ladies coming to the Ball appoint a Time for their Footmens coming to wait on them Home, to prevent Disturbances and Inconveniences to Themselves and Others.

III.

"That Gentlemen of Fashion never appearing in a Morning before the Ladies in Gowns and Caps shew Breeding and Respect.

IV.

"That no Person take it ill that any one goes to another's Play or breakfast and not to theirs;—except Captious by Nature.

V.

"That no Gentleman give his Tickets for the Balls to any but Gentlewomen;—N. B. Unless he has none of his Acquaintance.

VI.

"That Gentlemen crowding before the Ladies at the Ball, shew ill Manners; and that none do so for the Future;—except such as respect nobody but themselves.

VII.

"That no Gentleman or Lady take it ill that another Dances before them;—except such as have no Pretence to dance at all.

VIII.

"That the Elder Ladies and Children be contented with a Second Bench at the Ball, as being past, or not come to Perfection.

IX.

"That the younger Ladies take notice how many Eyes observe them;—This don't extend to the Have-at-all's.

X.

"That all whisperers of Lies and Scandal be taken for their Authors.

XI.

"That all Repeaters of such Lies and Scandal be shun'd by all Company;—except such as have been guilty of the same Crime.

"*N. B.—Several Men of no Character, Old Women and Young Ones of Questioned Reputation, are great Authors of Lies in this place, being of the sect of LEVELLERS.*"

Date 1707.

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