

# THAMES-VALLEY VILLAGES



*Charles G. Harper*



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BISHAM CHURCH.

# THAMES VALLEY VILLAGES

BY  
CHARLES G. HARPER

VOL. II

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AND FROM DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR*



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# THAMES VALLEY VILLAGES

## CHAPTER I

SONNING—HURST, “ IN THE COUNTY OF WILTS ”  
—SHOTTESBROOKE—WARGRAVE

As Reading can by no means be styled a village, seeing that its population numbers over 72,000, the fact of its not being treated of in these pages will perhaps be excused. You cannot rusticate at Reading: the electric tramways, the great commercial premises, and the crowded state of its streets forbid; but Reading, taken frankly as a town and a manufacturing town at that, is not at all a place for censure. The Kennet, however, that flows through it, has here become a very different Kennet from that which sparkles in the Berkshire meads between Hungerford and Kintbury, and has a very dubious and deterrent look where it is received into the Thames.

The flat, open shores at Reading presently give place to the wooded banks approaching Sonning, where the fine trees of Holme Park are reflected in the waters of the lock—the lock that was tended for many years, until his death, about 1889, by a lock-keeper who also kept bees, made beehives,

and wrote poetry. Sonning, and its Thames-side "Parade," certainly invite to poetry.

To say there is no Thames-side village prettier, or in any way more delightful, than Sonning is vague praise and also in some ways understates its peculiar attractiveness, which, strange to say, seems to increase, rather than decrease, with the years. It might have been expected that a village but three miles from the great and increasing town of Reading would suffer many indignities from that proximity, and would be infested with such flagrant nuisances as wayside advertisement-boards and street-loafers, but these manifestations of the *zeitgeist* are, happily, entirely absent.

Let us, however, halt for a moment to give a testimonial of character to Reading itself, which is far above the average of great towns in these and many other matters. Loafers and street-boards are found there, without doubt—and can we find the modern town of its size where they are not?—but they do not obtrude; and, in short, Reading is, with all its bustle of business, a likeable place.

There are reasons for Sonning remaining unspoiled. They are not altogether sufficient reasons, for they obtain in other once delightful villages similarly situated, which have unhappily been ravaged by modern progress; but here they have by chance sufficed. They are found chiefly in the happy circumstances that Sonning lies three-quarters of a mile off the main-road—off that Bath road, oh! my brethren, that was once so delightful, with its memories of a bypast coaching-age; and is now

little better than a race-track for motor-cars, and, by reason of their steel-studded tyres, cursed with a bumpy surface full of pot-holes. Time was when the surface of the Bath road was perfection. Nowadays, no ingenuity of mortal road-surveyors can keep it in repair, for the suction of air caused by pneumatic tyres travelling at great speed tears out the binding material and leaves only loose grit and stones. The Bath road on a fine summer's day has become unendurable by reason of the dust raised in this manner. If you stand a distance away, in the fields, out of sight of the actual road, its course can yet be distinctly traced for a long way by the billows of dust, rising like smoke from it.

Happily, motor-cars do but rarely come into Sonning, although at the turning out of the high road a prominent advertisement of the Bull, the White Hart, or the French Horn—the three hostelries that Sonning can boast—invites them hither.

The other prominent reason for this village being allowed to remain quiet is found in the fact of Twyford, the nearest railway station, being two miles distant.

There are many branching streams of the Thames here, and the hamlet of Sonning Eye, on the Oxfordshire side, takes its name either from this abundance of water, or from the eyots, or islands, formed by these several channels, crossed by various bridges.

Sonning Bridge *par excellence* is a severely unornamented structure of red brick, obviously built by the very least imaginative of architects, in the eighteenth century. If it were new it would be

an offence, but there is now a mellowness of colour in that old red brick, embroidered richly as it is in green and gold by the lichens of nearly two centuries, that gives the old bridge a charm by no means inherent in its originator's design.

Trees, great, noble, upstanding woodland trees, lovingly enclasp Sonning village and form a background for its ancient cottages and fine old mansions, and against the dark green background of them you see on summer afternoons the blue smoke curling up lazily from rustic chimneys. In midst of this the embattled church-tower rises unobtrusively; and indeed the church is so hidden, although it is a large church, that strangers are generally directed to find it by way of the Bull Inn: a rambling old hostelry occupying two sides of a square, and covered in summer with a mantle of roses and creepers. And it must, by the way, not be forgotten that Sonning in general displays a very wealth of flowers for the delight of the stranger.

I would it were possible to be enthusiastic upon the church, but thorough "restoration," and a marvellously hideous monument to Thomas Rich, Alderman of Gloucester, 1613, and his son, Sir Thomas Rich, Bart., 1667, forbid. There are brasses on the floor of the nave, to Laurence Fyton, 1434, steward of the manor of Sonning, and to William Barber, 1549, bailiff of the same manor; with others.

Here, too, is a monument of Canon Pearson, vicar for over forty years, and reverently spoken of—or is it the monument that is revered?—by the caretaker. I have sought greatly to discover some-



W. S. HARPER

SONNING BRIDGE.



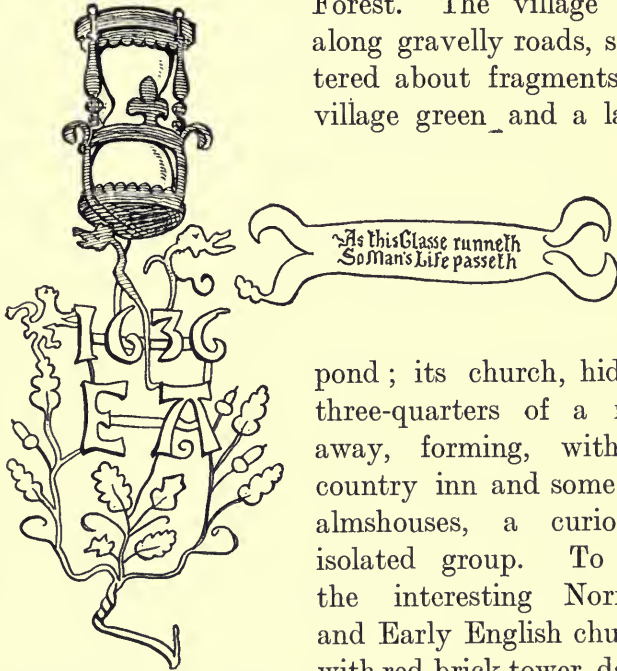


thing by which the Canon's career may be illustrated in these pages, but, upon my soul, the most notable things available are precisely that he held this excellent living for that long period, and that he sometimes preached before Queen Victoria. These things do not in themselves form a title to reverence.

Something of the distinct stateliness of Sonning is due to the fact that anciently the Bishops of Salisbury were owners of the manor, and before them the Bishops of the Saxon diocese of Dorchester. Their manor-house was in the time of Leland "a fair old house of stone by the Tamise ripe"; but of this desirable residence nothing remains. The Deanery, too, has disappeared, but the fine old stone and brick enclosing-walls of its grounds remain, and there a picturesque modern residence has been built. Those walls, of an immense thickness and solidity, are indeed a sight to see, for the saxifrage and many beautiful flowering plants growing in and upon them.

Sonning itself, being a place so delightful, invites those to whom locality has interest to explore into the country that lies in the rear of it. In a work styled *Thames Valley Villages* we may go very much where we please, and here the valley broadens out considerably, for it includes, and insensibly merges with, that of the river Loddon, which flows down quite a long way, even from the heights of northern Hampshire. The Loddon, the loveliest tributary of the Thames, flows into it by three mouths, from one mile to two miles and a half below Sonning, and its various loops and channels make the four-mile stretch of country in the rear a particu-

larly moist and water-logged district. Here, crossing the dusty Bath road at Twyford, which takes its name from the ancient double ford of the Loddon at this point, the secluded village of Hurst may be found. Its name of "Hurst," i.e. a woodland, indicates its situation in what was once the widespreading Windsor Forest. The village lies along gravelly roads, scattered about fragments of village green\_ and a large



HOUR-GLASS AND WROUGHT-IRON  
STAND, HURST.

pond ; its church, hidden three-quarters of a mile away, forming, with a country inn and some old almshouses, a curiously isolated group. To see the interesting Norman and Early English church, with red-brick tower, dated 1612, crowned with quaint cupola, is worth some

effort ; for it contains a very handsome chancel-screen, probably placed here *circa* 1500. The repainting of it in 1876, under the direction of J. D. Sedding, the architect who then restored the church, is, if indeed in accordance with the

traces of the original decoration then found, certainly more curious than beautiful; but it should be seen, if only to show that our ancestors were, after all, not a little barbaric in their schemes of decoration. The hour-glass, with beautiful wrought-iron bracket dated 1636, should be noticed. Behind it, on the wall, is painted "As this Glasse runneth, so Man's Life passeth." A queer memorial brass to Aelse Harison, representing the lady in a four-poster bed, is on the north wall. A large grey-and-white marble monument to others of the Harison family includes an epitaph on Philip Harison, who died in 1683. The sorrowing author of it ends ingeniously :

" A double dissolution there appears,  
He into dust dissolves ; she into tears."

Surely a mind capable of such ingenious imagery on such a subject cannot have been wholly downcast.

The old almshouses by the church were founded, as appears on a tablet over the entrance, by one William Barker :

This Hospitall for the  
Maintenance of eight poor persons,  
Each at 6*d.* pr diem for euer, was  
Erected and Founded in ye year 1664  
At the Sole Charge of  
WILLIAM BARKER  
of Hurst, in the County of  
Wilts, Esq.  
Who dyed ye 25th of March, 1685  
And lies buried in the South  
Chancell of this Parish.

Note you that, gentle reader, “the county of Wilts,” we being in the midst of Berkshire? A considerable tract of surrounding country is in fact (or was until comparatively recent years) a detached portion of Wiltshire, and was invariably shown so on old maps. Examples of such isolated portions of counties, and even of detached fragments of parishes, are by no means rare: Worcestershire in England and Cromartyshire in Scotland, forming the most notable examples; but the reasons for these things are obscure, and all attempts at explaining them amount to little more than the unsatisfying conclusion that they are thus because—well, because they are, you know! That is the net result of repeated discussions upon the subject in *Notes and Queries*, in which publication of wholly honorary and unpaid contributions the majority of noters, querists, and writers of replies have during the space of some sixty years past been engaged in chasing their own tails, like so many puppies. The process is amusing enough, but as you end where you began, the net result is no great catch.

Apart from legends and traditions, it would seem that the explanation of the Berkshire districts of Hurst, Twyford, Ruscombe, Whistley Green, and a portion of Wokingham having been accounted in Wiltshire, may be found in the fact, already remarked, that Sonning was a manor of the Bishops of Salisbury. The question appears to have been largely an ecclesiastical affair. The anomaly of a portion of Wiltshire being islanded in Berkshire was, however, ended by Acts of Parliament during

the reigns of William the Fourth and Queen Victoria, by which the area concerned was annexed to Berkshire.

Returning from Hurst to Twyford, expeditions to Ruscombe, St. Lawrence Waltham, and Shottesbrooke will amply repay the explorer in these wilds—for wilds they are in the matter of perplexing roads. They are good roads, in so far that they are level,



ST. LAWRENCE WALTHAM.

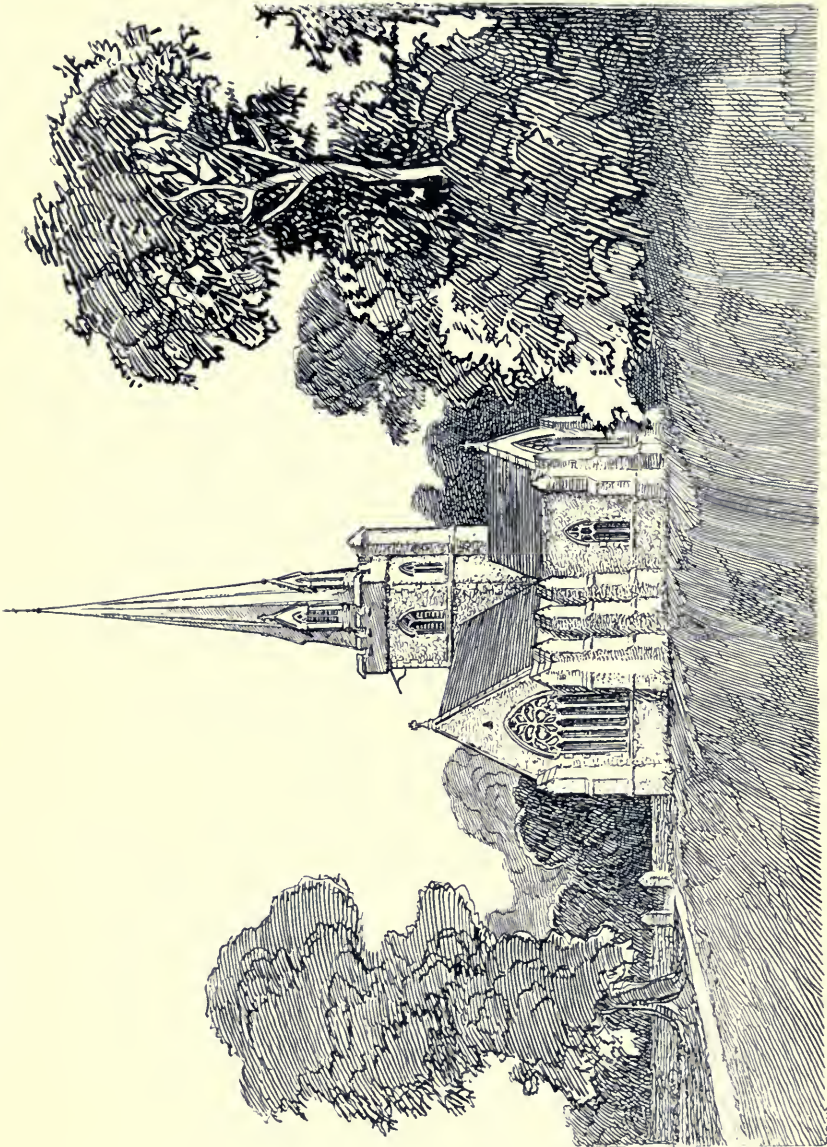
but they would seem to have come into existence on no plan; or, if plan there ever were, a malicious plan, intended to utterly confound and mislead the stranger. But this is no unpleasant district in which to wander awhile.

Ruscombe is notable as the place where William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, died, in 1718. Its church stands solitary in the meadows—a red-brick, eighteenth-century building, as ruddy as a typical beef-eating and port-drinking farmer of Georgian

days. The neighbouring St. Lawrence Waltham is entirely delightful. The fine church tower of St. Lawrence, the ancient brick and plaster and timbered Bell Inn, and the old village pound, with an aged elm at each corner of it, composing a rarely-beautiful picture.

The stone spire of Shottesbrooke church is seen, not far off, peering up from among the trees of Shottesbrooke Park, in which it is situated. When we see a stone church spire in Berkshire, where we do not commonly find ancient spires, we are apt to suspect at once a modern church, and our suspicions are generally well-founded ; but here is a remarkably fine Decorated building of the mid-fourteenth century (it was built 1337). It stands finely in a noble park for many years belonging to the Vansittart family, and has been well described as " a cathedral in miniature." Its origin appears by tradition to have been due to the unexpected recovery of Sir William Trussell, the then owner of the estate, who had been brought to the verge of death by a long-continued course of drunkenness. He built it by way of thankoffering, and as he would seem to have been intemperate in all he did, he not only built this very large and noble church, but founded a college for five priests. This establishment went the way of all such things, hundreds of years ago, and the great building, standing solitary in the park, except for the vicarage and the manor-house, now astonishes the stranger at its loneliness. He wonders where the village is, and may well continue to wonder, for village there is none.





SHOTTESBROOKE CHURCH.



A versifier in the Ingoldsby manner narrates the building of it by Trussell :

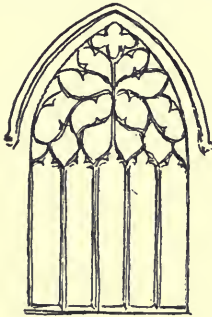
“ An oath he sware  
To his lady fair,  
‘ By the cross on my shield,  
A church I’ll build,  
And therefore the deuce a form  
Is so fit as a cruciform ;  
And the patron saint that I find the aptest  
Is that holiest water-saint—John the Baptist.’ ”

A legend of the building of the spire tells how the architect, completing it by fixing the weathercock, called for wine to drink a health to the King, and, drinking, fell to the ground and was dashed to pieces. The only sound he uttered, says the legend, was “ O ! O ! ” and that exclamation was the sole inscription carved upon his tomb, erected upon the spot where he fell. Many have been those pilgrims drawn to Shottesbrooke by this picturesque story, seeking that tomb. Tombstones of any kind are few in Shottesbrooke churchyard, and the only one that can possibly mark the architect’s grave is a coped stone on which an expectant and confiding person may indeed faintly trace “ O, O ” ; but as the stone is probably not so old as the fourteenth century, and as it is extremely likely that an expectant person will, if in any way possible, find that which he expects, it would not be well to declare for the genuineness of it. But it is at any rate a very old and cracked and moss-grown stone.

Of a bygone Vansittart, who filled this family living for forty-four years, we read some highly

eulogistic things upon a monument near by. Born 1779, he died 1847, "the faithful pastor of an attached flock. Meek, mild, benevolent. In domestic life tender, kind, considerate. In all relations revered, respected, beloved." One is tempted to repeat the unfortunate architect's exclamation, "O! O!"

The church, serving no village, and standing in a park close by the noble country seat of the Van-



EAST WINDOW,  
SHOTTESBROOKE.

sittarts, is for all practical purposes a manorial chapel. That it has long been used as such is very evident from the many tablets to Vansittarts which line its walls. The remains of the founder's tomb are seen in the north transept, in a long stretch of delicate arcading along the north wall, beautifully wrought in chalk.

A singular effigy to William Throckmorton, Doctor of Laws, "warden of this church," who died in 1535, is on the north side of the chancel. It is of diminutive size, and is what archæologists call an "interrupted effigy," showing only head and breast and feet, the middle being occupied by a brass with Latin inscription.

There are several brasses in the church: the finest of them, a fourteenth-century example in the chancel, very deeply and beautifully cut, representing two men; one with forked beard, a long gown and a sword; the other an ecclesiastic. They stand side by side, and are reputed to represent the founder

and his brother, but the inscription has been torn away, together with most of the canopy.

A brass in the north transept to Richard Gill, Sergeant of the "Backhouse"—i.e. the Bakehouse—to Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth, describes him as "Bailey of the Seaven Hundreds of Cookeham and Bray in the Forest Division." Near by is a brass to "Thomas Noke, who for his great Age and vertuous Lyfe was revered of all Men, and was commonly called Father Noke, created Esquire by King Henry the Eight. He was of Stature high and comly; and for his excellency in Artillery made Yeoman of the Crowne of England which had in his Lyfe three Wives, and by every of them some Fruit and Off-spring, and deceased the 21 of August 1567 in the Yeare of his Age 87, leaving behind him Julyan his last Wife, two of his Brethren, one Sister, one only Son, and two Daughters living."

Thomas Noke is represented with his three wives, while six daughters and four sons are grouped beneath.

Returning through Twyford to Sonning, the outlet of the Loddon,

"The Loddon slow, with verdant alders crowned,"

is found in that exquisite backwater, the Patrick Stream, where a picture of surpassing beauty is seen at every turn. By a long, winding course, fringed richly with rushes, and overhung with lovely trees, the Patrick Stream wanders through meadow lands and finally emerges into the Thames again, just below Shiplake Lock. By dint of making this

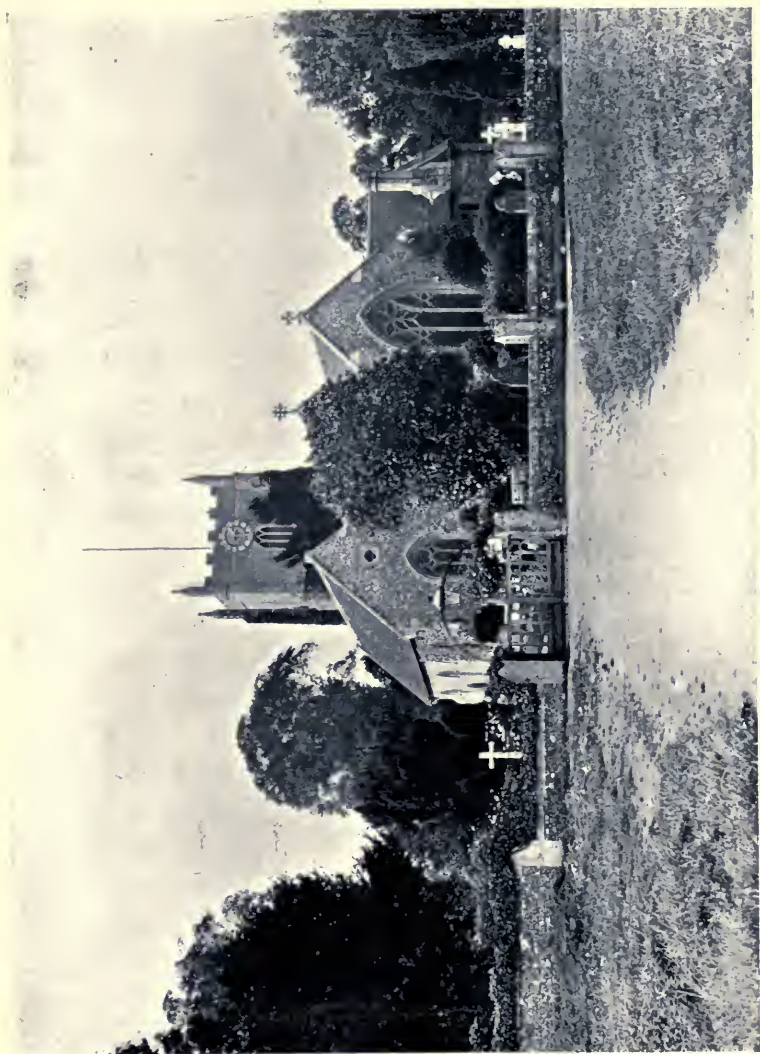


long but delightful *détour*, and thus avoiding Ship-lake Lock, it is possible to do the Thames Conservancy out of one of those many threepences for which it has so insatiable an appetite.

Shiplake, on the Oxfordshire bank, is the place where Tennyson was married, but the church has been largely rebuilt since then. The windows are mostly filled with ancient glass brought from the abbey of St. Bertin, at St. Omer. Shiplake Mill, once a picturesque feature, is now, at this time of writing, a squalid heap of ruins.

Wargrave, on the Berkshire side, is said to have once been a market-town, and it is now growing again so rapidly that a town it will soon be once more. Its houses crowd together on the banks, where the George and Dragon Inn stands, giving upon the slipway to the water: all looking out upon the spacious Oxfordshire meadows. The sign of the George and Dragon Inn—a double-sided one—painted by G. D. Leslie, R.A., and J. E. Hodgson, R.A., in 1874, shows St. George on one side, as we are accustomed to see him on the reverse of coins, engaged in slaying the dragon; and on the other, the monster duly slain, the saint is refreshing himself with a noble tankard of ale.

Wargrave church has been restored extensively, and its tower is of red brick, and not ancient; but it forms, for all that, a very charming picture. Here we may see a tablet to the memory of that remarkable prig, Thomas Day, the author of that egregious work for the manufacture of other prigs, *Sandford and Merton*. He was born about 1748, and died



WARGRAVE CHURCH.





1789. Of his good and highly moral life there can be no doubt; but moral philosophers are rarely *personæ gratae* in a naughty and frivolous world. We fight shy of them, and of all instructive and improving persons, and make light of their works; and if nowadays we read *Sandford and Merton* at all, it is for the purpose of extracting some satirical amusement from the pompous verbiage of the Reverend Mr. Barlow, and from the respective "wickedness" and goodness of Tommy and the exemplary Harry.

Among Thomas Day's peculiar views was that by a proper method of education (i.e. a method invented by himself) there was scarcely anything that could not be accomplished. He certainly began courageously, about the age of twenty-one, by choosing two girls, each about twelve years of age, whom he proposed to educate after his formula, and then to marry the most suitable of them. He, however, did not carry this plan so far as the marrying of either. It is not clear whom we should congratulate: the girls or their eccentric guardian, who at last met his death from the kick of a horse which resented the entirely novel philosophical principles on which he was training it.

In the churchyard is the grave of Madame Tussaud, of the famous waxworks, and here lies Sir Morell Mackenzie, the surgeon who attended the Emperor Frederick. He died in 1892. Near by is a quite new columbarium for containing the ashes of cremated persons.

A singular bequest left to Wargrave by one

Mrs. Sarah Hill is that by which, every year at Easter, the sum of £1 is to be equally divided, in new crown pieces, between two boys and two girls, who qualify for this reward by conduct that must needs meet with the approval of all. The five-shilling pieces are not forthcoming unless the candidates are known never to have been undutiful to their parents, never to swear, never to tell untruths, or steal, break windows, or do "any kind of mischief." The good lady would appear either to have been bent upon finding the Perfectly Good Child, or to have been a saturnine humorist, with a cynical disbelief in these annual distributions ever being made. But they *are* made ; and we can only suppose that the vicar and churchwardens allow themselves just a little charitable latitude in the annual judging. And, you know, after all, is it worth while being so monumentally good for the poor reward of five shillings a year? Consider how much delightful mischief you forgo.

Hennerton backwater, below Wargrave, is another of the delightful side-streams that are plentiful here, and is now, after a good deal of litigation, pronounced free. The wooded road between Wargrave and Henley skirts it, and is carried over a lovely valley in the grounds of Park Place by a very fine arch of forty-three feet span, built of gigantic rough stones.



UNDER THE WILLOWS : A BACKWATER NEAR WARGRAVE.



## CHAPTER II

HENLEY—THE BRIDGE AND ITS KEYSTONE-MASKS—  
REMEMHAM—HAMBLEDEN—MEDMENHAM ABBEY  
AND THE “HELL FIRE CLUB”—HURLEY—BISHAM

PASSING Marsh Lock, the town of Henley comes into view, heralded by its tall church tower, with four equal-sized battlemented turrets; a quite unmistakable church tower. The noble five-arched stone bridge here crossing the Thames, built in 1789, at a cost of £10,000, is one of the most completely satisfactory along the whole course of the river. The keystone-masks of the central arch show sculptured faces representing Isis and Thames. Isis appropriately faces up-river, and Thames looks down-stream. These conventionalised heads of a river-god and goddess are really admirable examples of the sculptor's art. They adorn the title-pages of the present volumes, which display Isis with a woman's head, and Father Thames, bearded, with little fishes peeping out of the matted hair, and bulrushes decoratively disposed about his temples. These masks were the work of that very accomplished lady, the Honourable Mrs. Anne Seymour Damer, who at the time when Henley bridge was a-building resided at Park Place. She was cousin to Horace Walpole, for whom she carved an eagle so exquisitely

that he wrote under it—enthusiastic cousin as he was—*Non Praxiteles sed Anna Damer me fecit*. One terrible thing, however, stamps the lady irrevocably as a gifted amateur: she gave her work to the bridge authorities. Most reprehensible! The recipients were duly grateful, as witness the Bridge Minutes. True, they do but acknowledge one mask: “May 6, 1785. Ordered that the thanks of the Commissioners be given to the Honourable Mrs. Damer for the very elegant head of the River Thames which she has cut and presented to them for the Keystone of the centre arch of the bridge.”

This conventional head of Father Thames is that made familiar by the eighteenth-century poets, who personified everything possible. It is that Father Thames who

“From his oozy bed  
 . . . advanced his rev'rend head;  
 His tresses dropped with dews, and o'er the stream  
 His shining horns diffused a golden gleam.”

Only, as we see, bulrushes here take the place of his “shining horns.” The head of Isis was a portrait of Miss Freeman of Fawley Court.

Henley is, of course, famed, above all else, for its Regatta, established as an annual event since 1839, following upon an Oxford and Cambridge boat-race here in 1837. It is now pre-eminently *the* function of the river season, whether we consider it from the point of view of sport or fashion. Here every June the best oarsmanship in the world is displayed over this course of one-and-a-quarter





ARCH CARRYING THE ROAD, PARK PLACE.



REMENHAM CHURCH.





miles : indisputably the best for anything up to that distance, for the regatta is now attended by the best oarsmen of the New World as well as of the Old. The regatta is, from a social and hospitable point of view, very much what the Derby is among horse-races ; and the house-boat parties and riverside house-parties for the Henley Week dispense much hospitality and champagne. There is yet another side to the regatta : it is, almost equally with Ascot and Goodwood, recognised as an opportunity for the display of fine dresses. The Oxfordshire bank is at such times the most exclusive, and to the Berkshire shores are principally relegated the pushing, struggling crowds of humbler sportsmen and sightseers. But here, where every point is legally open to all, except where private lawns reach down to the river, the real exclusiveness of Goodwood or Ascot is, of course, impossible. Henley town is at such times anything but exclusive, and is thronged to excess. In these later times of motor-cars it is also apt to be a great deal more dusty than ever it used to be. To see Henley in Regatta Week, and again Henley in any other week, affords an astonishing contrast ; for at all other times it is, as a town, among the dullest of the dull, and its broad High Street a synonym for emptiness.

I do not propose in this place to enlarge further upon Henley, but to mention Henley at all and not its famous old coaching-inn by the bridge, the Red Lion, has never yet been done ; and shall I be the first to make the omission ? No ! It is a famous old inn, and of enormous size. Every one

knows it as the hostelry where Shenstone the poet, about 1750, scratched with a diamond upon a window the celebrated stanza about "the warmest welcome at an inn," but that window-pane has long been lost; and it is really doubtful if the inscription was not rather at another Henley: i.e. Henley-in-Arden. I have fully discussed that question elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> and so will not repeat it in this place.

Mr. Ashby-Sterry is quite right in his description of the Red Lion, standing red-brickily by the bridge:

" 'Tis a finely-toned, picturesque, sunshiny place,  
 Recalling a dozen old stories;  
 With a rare British, good-natured, ruddy-hued face,  
 Suggesting old wines and old Tories."

Remenham, a mile or so along the Berkshire shore, is typically Berkshire, but with a church still looking starkly new, as the result of "thorough restoration" in 1870. Its semicircular apse, really ancient, does not look it. The tower is of the Henley type, though smaller. Henley church tower, in fact, seems to have set a local fashion in such, for that of Hambleden conforms to the same design. Regatta Island, with its effective temple, marks the old starting-point of the races.

Hambleden is on the Buckinghamshire side; a pretty village situated about one mile distant from the river along the lovely and retired valley of the Hamble. From it the widow of W. H. Smith, of the newspaper and library and bookstall business

<sup>1</sup> *The Old Inns of Old England*, vol. ii., pp. 299-303.



HENLEY-ON-THAMES.



of W. H. Smith & Son, and of Greenlands, near Henley, takes her title of Viscountess Hambleden. Liberal, Radical, and Separatist journals were never tired of satirically referring to W. H. Smith, when a member of a Unionist Government, as “Old Morality,” deriving that term from the stand he took in the House of Commons upon his “duty to Queen and country.” His idea of his duty in those respects was exactly that of an average responsible business man. He had no axe to grind, no job to perpetrate; and that being so, the nickname of “Old Morality” was in effect a great deal more honourable than those satirists ever suspected. They, indeed, conferred upon him a brevet of which any one might well be proud, and incidentally covered themselves with shame, as men to whom a sense of rightness and of duty towards one’s sovereign and one’s native land was a subject for mirth. But of course these quips and cranks derived from the party notoriously friends of every country save their own.

In the very much restored church of Hambleden, among various tombs, is one in the chancel to Henry, son of the second Lord Sandys, with a quaint inscription, owning some nobility of thought:

“ Nature cryeth on me so sore,  
 I cannot, Christ, be too fervent,  
 Sith he is gone, I have no more,  
 And yt, O God, I am content.  
 I believe in the Resurrection of Life  
 To see you again at the last day,  
 And now, farewell, Elizabeth my wife,  
 Teach mye children God to obey

But now let us rejoyce in heart  
 To trymphe never cease  
 Sith in this life wee only part  
 To joyce agen in heavenly peace.  
 Parted to God's mercy, 1540."

The elaborate oak screen under the tower, carved with Renaissance designs, is said to have once been part of Cardinal Wolsey's bedstead. It bears the arms of Christ Church and of Corpus Christi, Oxford; and those of Castile, with the rose badge of York.

At some little distance downstream is Medmenham Abbey. The building, that looks so entirely reverend and worshipful from the opposite shore, is really, in the existing buildings, little enough of the original Abbey that was founded towards the close of the twelfth century by one Hugh de Bolebec. It was never very much of a place, and seems to have been something of a dependency of Bisham Abbey. Just prior to its suppression, Henry the Eighth's commissioners reported that it had merely two monks, with no servants, and little property, but no debts; but, on the other hand, no goods worth more than £1 3s. 8d., "and the house wholly ruinous."

Nothing remains of whatever church there may have been, and the only ancient portions are some fragments of the Abbot's lodgings. The "ruined" tower, the cloisters, and much else are the work of those blasphemous "Franciscans" of the Hell Fire Club who, under the presidency of Francis Dashwood, Lord le Despencer, established themselves here about 1758. There were twelve of these reckless



REGATTA ISLAND.







“monks,” who, having built the “cloisters,” reared the now ivy-mantled tower, and painted their licentious motto, “Fay ce que voudras,” over one of the doors, sat down to a series of orgies and debaucheries whose excesses have been perhaps exaggerated by the mystery with which these “monks



MEDMENHAM.

of Medmenham” chose to veil their doings. Among them were Bubb Dodington, Lord Melcombe, Sir John Dashwood King, John Wilkes, the poet Churchill, and Sir William Stanhope. Paul Whitehead was “secretary” to this precious gang of debauchees.

Devil-worship was said to have been among the impious rites celebrated here; and one of the party seems to have played a particularly horrifying practical joke upon his fellows during the progress

of these celebrations. He procured an exceptionally large and hideous monkey and, dressing it in character, let it down the chimney into the room among his friends, who fled in terror, and were for long afterwards convinced that their patron had really come for them. This incident is said to have broken up the fraternity.

The explorer by Thames-side could, until quite recent years, do very much as he liked at Medmenham, and the more or less authentic ruins were open to him ; but now they are enclosed within the grounds of a private residence, and a hotel stands beside the ferry. The very small village at the back is to be noted for the highly picturesque grouping of some ancient gabled houses (restored of late) with the little church and a remarkable hill crested by an old red-brick and flint house that looks as though it owned, or ought to own, some romantic story. The hilltop is said to be encircled with the remains of a prehistoric encampment. It is with sorrow that here also one notes the builder's prejudicial activities. Directly in front of the church, and entirely blocking out the view of it, there has been built a recent red-brick villa, with the result that the effective composition illustrated here is almost wholly destroyed.

The lovely grass-lands over against Medmenham are glorious in June, before the hay-harvest. One may walk by them, beside the river, all the way to Hurley. On the left, or Buckinghamshire, bank, the ground rises into chalk-cliffs, surmounted by the great unoccupied house of Danesfield, staringly



MEDMENHAM ABBEY.



white, popularly said to contain as many windows as there are days in the year. This is the handiwork of Mr. R. W. Hudson, of "Hudson's Soap."

Hurley, to which we now come, is a historic spot. Here, by the waterside, was founded in 1087, by Geoffrey de Mandeville, the Benedictine Prior of Our Lady of Hurley, which remained until 1535, when, in common with other religious houses, it was suppressed by Henry the Eighth. To the Lovelace family came the lands and buildings of this establishment, and here, on the site of it, Sir Richard Lovelace built, with "money gotten with Francis Drake," a splendid mansion which he called Lady Place. His descendant, Richard, Lord Lovelace, was in 1688 one of the somewhat timorous nobles who met secretly to plot the deposition of James the Second. They had not the courage, these pusillanimous wretches, to take the field in arms, as Monmouth and his brave peasants had done, three years earlier, and must needs find cellars to grope in, and then invite over that cold, disliked Dutchman, William of Orange, to do for them what they dared not do for themselves. Macaulay, in his richly-picturesque language, refers to these meetings, but it will be observed that he calls those who met here "daring." They were anything but that.

"This mansion," he says, "built by his ancestors out of the spoils of Spanish galleons from the Indies, rose on the ruins of a house of our Lady in this beautiful valley, through which the Thames, not yet defiled by the precincts of a great capital, rolls under woods of beech, and round the gentle hills

of Berks. Beneath the stately saloon, adorned by Italian pencils, was a subterranean vault, in which the bones of ancient monks had sometimes been found. In this dark chamber some zealous and daring opponents of the Government held many midnight conferences during that anxious time when England was impatiently expecting the Protestant wind."

This Lady Place no longer exists, for the great house was demolished in 1836, and the house so-called is of modern build. But the old-time gardens remain, and the refectory; and here is the old circular pigeon-house, with the initials on it, "C.R.," and the date, 1642.

A curious story tells how one of the last occupants of Lady Place was a brother of Admiral Kempenfelt, and that he and the Admiral planted two thorn-trees in the garden, in which he took great pride. One day, returning home, he found that the tree planted by the Admiral had withered away, and he exclaimed: "I feel sure this is an omen that my brother is dead." That evening, August 29, 1782, he received news of the loss of the *Royal George*.

Hurley church is a long, low building, of nave without aisles, of Norman, or some say earlier, origin. "It was probably ravaged by the Danes towards the close of the ninth century," say the guide-books. This may have been so, but it could hardly have been worse ravaged by them than it was by those who "restored" it in 1852 "at a cost of £1,500," and incidentally also at the cost of all its real interest.

The village of Hurley straggles a long way back





THE BELL INN, HURLEY.





from the river, in one scattered, disjointed line of cottages, past the picturesque old Bell Inn, apparently of fifteenth-century date, heavily framed with stout oaken timbers.

Below Hurley, leaving behind the ancient red-brick piers of the old-world gardens of Lady Place, the river opens out to Marlow reach, with Bisham on the right hand, and the tall crocketed spire of Marlow church closing the distant view.

“ Bisham ” is said to have been originally “ Bustleham,” but the present form will be preferred by every one. Strangers call it “ Bish-am,” but for the natives and the people of Marlow the only way is by the elision of the letter h—“ Bis-am ”; and thus shall you, being duly informed of this shibboleth, infallibly detect the stranger in these parts.

Bisham village is quite invisible from the river, nor need we trouble to seek it, unless it be for climbing up into the lovely and precipitous Quarry Woods, in the rear. To those who knew Bisham when Fred Walker painted his delightful pictures, and among them, some studies of this village street, there comes, when they think of the Bisham that was and the Bisham that is, a fierce but impotent anger. The humble old red-brick cottages remain, it is true, and their gardens bloom as of yore, but what was once the sweet-smelling gravelly street is now a tarred abomination, smelling evilly, and wearing a squalid and disreputable look. This is the result of the coming of the motor-car, for Bisham is on the well-travelled road between High Wycombe, Great Marlow, Twyford, and Reading, and

the village has now the unwelcome choice of two evils: to be half-choked with billows of dust, or to coat its roads with tar compositions.

Of what was originally a Preceptory of the Knights Templars, and then an Augustine Priory, and finally a Benedictine Abbey, nothing is left but the Prior's lodgings, now the mansion of the Vansittart-Neales, called "the Abbey." The parish church stands finely by the waterside, encircled by the trees of the park, and there remains a monastic barn. Such are the few relics of the proud home of monks and priors, enriched during hundreds of years by the benefactions of the wicked, endeavouring by means of such gifts to atone sufficiently for their evil lives, and so escape the damnation that surely awaited them.

Such complete destruction is melancholy indeed, when we consider the great historic personages who were buried here: among them the great Nevill, "Warwick the Kingmaker," slain at last in the course of his tortuous ambitions, in the Battle of Barnet, fought on Easter Day, 1471, and laid at Bisham, hard by his own manor of Marlow.

When the Abbey was finally dissolved, it was granted by Henry the Eighth to Anne of Cleves, his divorced fourth wife, who exchanged it with the Hoby family for a property of theirs in Kent. Here the Princess Elizabeth was resident for three years, during the reign of her half-sister, Mary, really under surveillance; and to that period the greater part of the "Abbey," as we see it now, is to be referred.



BISHAM ABBEY.



"TOP O' THE TOWN," GREAT MARLOW.



Bisham Abbey is, of course, famed above all other things for the story of the wicked Lady Hoby, who so thrashed her son for spoiling his copy-books with blots that he died. A portrait of her, in the dress of a widow, is still in the house, and her ghost is yet said to haunt the place.<sup>1</sup> She was wife of Sir Thomas Hoby, Ambassador to France, who died in 1566, aged 36. The elaborate altar-tomb in Bisham church to him, and to his half-brother, Sir Philip, with effigies of the two knights, is worth seeing; and the rhymed epitaph written by her worth reading. The early death of the Ambassador, in Paris, was not without suspicion of poison. The sculptured figures of hawks at the feet of the brothers are "hobby"-hawks, a punning allusion to the family name.

Lady Hoby was a grief-stricken widow, and supplicated Heaven, rather quaintly, to "give me back my husband, Thomas," or that being beyond possibility, to "give me another like Thomas." She captured another, eight years later, when she married John, Lord Russell; but whether Heaven had thus given her one up to sample we are only left idly to conjecture. At any rate she outlived him too, by many years, and elected to be buried beside her Thomas. An elaborate monument to this fearsome lady discloses her in a wonderful coif, surmounted by a coronet. Before and behind her kneeling figure are the praying effigies of her children. It is recorded that she was particularly interested in mortuary observances, and that she

<sup>1</sup> More fully discussed in *Haunted Houses*, pp. 36-42.

even found it possible to be absorbed, as she lay dying, at the age of 81, in her own funeral rites ; corresponding with Sir William Dethick as to precisely the number of mourners and heralds that were her due.

A little monument to two children in Bisham church is the subject of a very old legend to the effect that Queen Elizabeth was their mother ! More scandal about Queen Elizabeth !

Bisham passed from the Hobys in 1768 to a family of Mills, who assumed the name ; but in 1780 it again changed hands and was sold to the Vansittarts, of whom Sir H. J. Vansittart-Neale is the present representative. The old belief in disaster befalling families who hold property taken from the Church has been curiously warranted here from time to time, in the untimely death of eldest sons or direct heirs, and here indeed, upon entering Bisham church, the stranger is startled by the white marble life-size effigy confronting him of a kneeling boy, in a Norfolk jacket-suit ; an inscription declaring it to represent George Kenneth Vansittart-Neale, who died in 1904, aged fourteen.

## CHAPTER III

### GREAT MARLOW—COOKHAM—CLIVEDEN AND ITS OWNERS—MAIDENHEAD

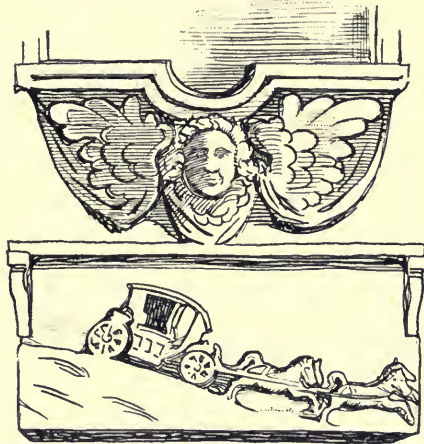
MARLOW town is well within sight from Bisham. It is very much more picturesque at a distance than it is found to be when arrived near at hand ; and the graceful stone spire of its church is found to be really a portion of a very clumsy would-be Gothic building erected in the Batty-Langley style, about 1835. A fine old Norman and later building was destroyed to make way for this ; and now the present church is in course of being replaced, in sections, by another, as the funds to that end come in. An interesting monument in the draughty lobby of the present building commemorates Sir Myles Hobart, of Harleyford, who, when Member of Parliament for Marlow, in 1628, distinguished himself by his sturdy opposition to the King's illegal demands ; and with his own hands, on a memorable occasion, locked the door of the House of Commons, to secure the debate on tonnage and poundage from interruption. For this he suffered three years' imprisonment.

The monument, shamefully "skied" on the wall of this lobby, was removed from the old church. Hobart met his death in 1652 by accident, the four



horses in his carriage running away down Holborn Hill, and upsetting it. A curious little sculpture on the lower part of the monument represents this happening, and shows one of the wheels broken. The monument is further interesting as having been erected by Parliament; the first to be voted of any of a now lengthy series.

In the vestry, leading out of this lobby, among



FROM THE MONUMENT TO SIR MYLES HOBART,  
GREAT MARLOW.

a number of old prints hung round the walls, is an old painting of a naked boy, with bow and arrow, his skin spotted all over, leopard-like, with brown spots. This represents the once-famous "Spotted Negro Boy," a supposed native of the Caribbean Islands, who formed a very attractive feature of Richardson's Show in the first decade of the nineteenth century. We shall probably not be far wrong



A THAMES REGATTA.



in suspecting Mr. William Richardson of a Barnum-like piece of showman humbug in putting this child forward as a "Negro Boy." The boy, one cannot help thinking, was sufficiently English, but was a freak, suffering from that dreadful skin disease, *ichthyosis serpentina*. He lies buried in the churchyard.

There are a few literary associations in Marlow town, and by journeying from the riverside and along the lengthy High Street, to where that curious building, the old Crown Hotel, stands, facing down the long thoroughfare, you may come presently to the houses that enshrine them. Turning here to the left you are in West Street, otherwise the Henley road, and passing the oddly named "Quoiting Square," there in the quaintly pretty old Albion House next door to the old Grammar School, lived Shelley in 1817. A tablet on the coping, like a tombstone, records the fact. He divided his time between writing the *Revolt of Islam*, and in visiting the then degraded, poverty-stricken lower orders of the town and talking nonsense to them. As no report of his conversations survives, we can only wonder if they were as bad as the turgid nonsense of that poem. Does any one nowadays ever read the *Revolt of Islam*, or know why Islam did it, or if, in so doing, it succeeded? In short, it will take a great deal of argument to convince the world that Shelley was not the Complete Prig of his age, and in truth the house is much more delightful and interesting for itself than for this association. In Shelley's time it was very

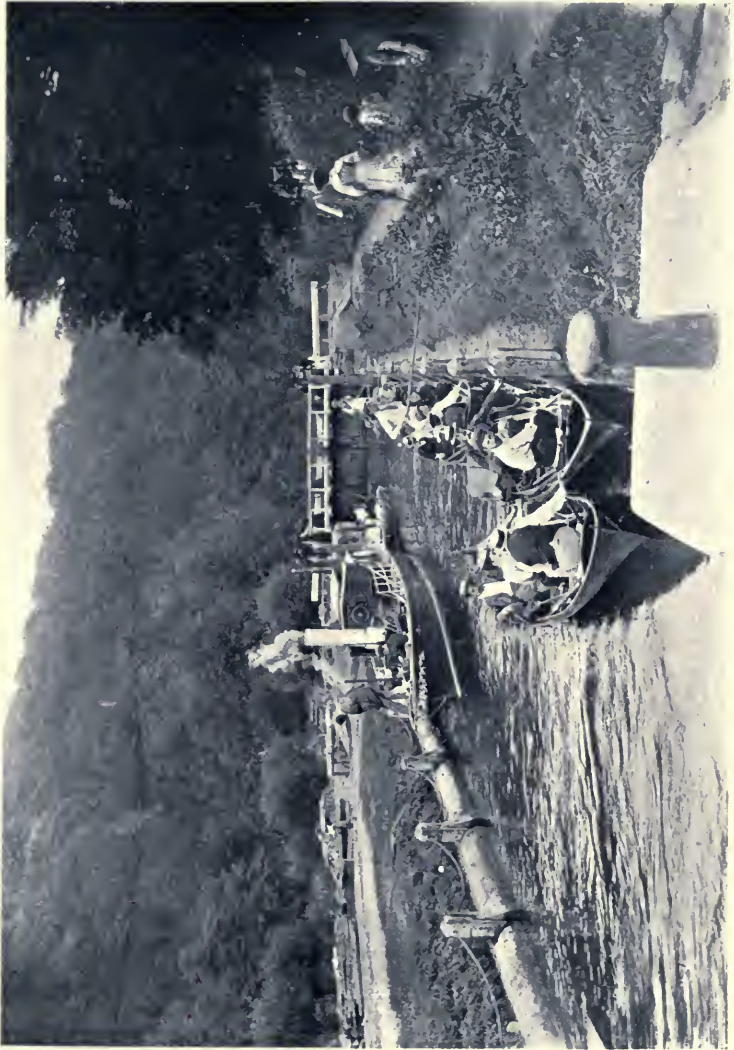
much larger than now, and comprised the two or three other small houses which have been divided from it.

At "Beechwood" lived Smedley, author of *Frank Fairleigh* and *Valentine Vox*, and on the Oxford road resided G. P. R. James, romantic novelist, whose romances were said, by the satirists of his methods, generally to commence with some such formula as—

"As the shades of evening were falling upon Deadman's Heath, three horsemen might have been observed," etc.

Marlow Weir is, to oarsmen not intimately acquainted with this stretch of the river, the most dangerous on the Thames, so it behoves all to give the weir-stream a wide berth in setting out again from Marlow Bridge; that suspension-bridge, built in 1831, which, like the neighbouring church, looks its best at a considerable distance. River-gossipers will never let die that old satirical query, "Who ate puppy-pie under Marlow Bridge?" the taunt being directed, according to tradition, against the barges of long ago, who, accustomed to raid the larder of a waterside hotel at Marlow, were punished admirably by the landlord, who, having drowned a litter of puppies, caused them to be baked in a large pie, and the pie to be placed where it could not fail to attract the attention of the raiders, who stole it, and consumed it with much satisfaction, under the bridge.

Two miles below Marlow, past Spade Oak ferry, is Bourne End, on the Buckinghamshire side; a



COOKHAM LOCK.





modern collection of villas clustered around a delightful backwater known as Abbotsbrook, and by the outlet of the river Wye—the “bourne” which ends here and gives rise to the place-name. It comes down from Wycombe, to which also it gives a name, and Loudwater.

Cookham now comes into view, on the Berkshire shore. Here the village is grouped around a village green; rather a sophisticated green in these days, and combed down and brushed up smartly since those times when Fred Walker began his career. Then the geese and ducks roamed about that open space, and in the unspoiled village; and old gaffers in smock-frocks and wonderful beaver-hats with naps on them as thick as Turkey carpets sat about on benches in front of old inns, and smoked extravagantly long churchwarden-pipes. The old gaffers have long since gone, and the Bel and the Dragon Inn has become a hotel, and Walker is dead and already an Old Master. You may see his grave in the churchyard, and read there how he died, aged thirty-five, in 1875. There is, in addition, a portrait-medallion within the church itself, which gives him a half-drunken, half-idiotic expression that one hopes did not really belong to him.

Behind the organ a curious mural monument to Sir Isaac Pocock, Bart., dated 1810, represents the baronet “suddenly called from this world to a better state, whilst on the Thames near his own house.” He is seen in a punt, being caught while falling by a personage intended to represent an angel, in tempestuous petticoats, while a puntsman

engaged in poling the craft looks on, in very natural surprise.

From Cookham, where the lock is set amid wooded scenery, the transition to Cliveden is easy.

Cliveden, Cliefden, Cliveden—you may suit individual taste and fancy in the manner of spelling—looks grandly from the Buckinghamshire heights down on to the Berkshire levels of Cookham and Ray Mead. Perhaps the most beautiful view of all is from Cookham Lock. Ray Mead, that was until twenty years ago just a mead—a beautiful stretch of grass-meadows—is now the name of a long line of villas with pretty frontages and gardens, but deplorable names—“Frou-Frou,” “Sans Souci,” and the like—and inhabited, often enough, as one might suppose by the Frou-frous of musical comedy and their admirers.

Cliveden, sometime “bower of wanton Shrewsbury and of love,” and now residence of the highly respectable and remarkably wealthy Mr. William Waldorf Astor, looks in lordly fashion upon such. With the proceeds of his New York rent-roll that Europeanised American in 1890 purchased the historic place from the first Duke of Westminster, and has resided here and at other of his English seats ever since. Those who are conversant with American newspapers are familiar with the scream every now and again raised against this and other examples of American money being taken and spent abroad. The spectacle of that bird of prey raging because of the dollars riven from it is amusing, but the situation may become internationally serious yet,



COOKHAM CHURCH.



BRAY CHURCH.



for when some great financial crisis arises in the United States and money is scarce, it is quite to be expected that the question of the absentee landlords will become acute, and talk of super-taxing and expropriation be heard. I believe this particular Astor is now a naturalised Englishman, and I don't suppose him to be the only one. Suppose, then, that the Government of the United States at some future time seized the property of such, how would the international situation shape ?

Cliveden, when it was thus sold, had not been long in the hands of the Grosvenor family ; having been, a generation earlier, the property of the Duke of Sutherland, for whom the present Italianate mansion was built by Sir Charles Barry in 1851, following upon a fire which had destroyed the older house, for the second time in the history of the place. The original fire was in 1795. In the mansion then destroyed the air of "Rule, Britannia," had first been played in 1740, as an incidental song in Thomson's masque of *Alfred*, the music composed by Dr. Arne.

Boulter's Lock, the water-approach to Maidenhead, is the busiest lock on the Thames, and now busier on Sundays than on any other day. How astonishingly times have changed on the river may be judged from an experience of the late Mr. Albert Ricardo, who died at the close of 1908, aged eighty-eight. He lived at Ray Mead all his long life, and was ever keen on boating. When he was a comparatively young man, he brought his skiff round to the lock one Sunday. His was the only boat there, and he was addressed in no measured terms

by a man who indignantly asked him if he knew what day it was, and telling him, in very plain language, his opinion of a person who used the river on Sunday. Since then a wave of High Churchism and irreligion (the two things are really the same) has submerged the observance of the Sabbath, and aforetime respectable persons play golf on the Lord's Day.

A quaint incident, one, doubtless, of many, comes to me here, in considering Boulter's Lock, out of the dim recesses of bygone reading.

Says Mr. G. D. Leslie, R.A., in his entertaining book, *Our River*: "I came through the lock once simultaneously with H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge. He was steering the boat he was in, and I am sorry to say I incurred his displeasure by accidentally touching his rudder with my punt's nose."

Oh dear!

He does not tell us what H.R.H. said on this historic occasion; but a knowledge of the Royal Duke's fiery temper and of his ready and picturesque way of expressing it leads the present writer to imagine that his remarks were of a nature likely to have been hurtful to the self-respect of the Royal Academician. But it is something—is it not?—to be able to record, thus delicately, by implication, that one has been vigorously cursed by a Royal Duke. Not to all of us has come such an honour!

And now we come to Maidenhead town, a town of 12,980 persons, and yet a place that was, not so very long ago, merely in the parishes of Cookham





COOKHAM WEIR.





and Bray. (It was created a separate civil parish only in 1894.) Its growth, originally due to its situation on that old coaching highway, the Bath road (which is here carried across the river by that fine stone structure, Maidenhead Bridge, built in 1772, to replace an ancient building of timber), has been further brought about by the modern vogue of the river, and by the convenience of a railway station close at hand.

“Maidenhead” is, according to some views, the “mydden hythe,” the “middle wharf” between Windsor and Marlow. Camden assures us that the name derived from “St. Ursula,” one of the eleven thousand virgins murdered at Cologne. But St. Ursula and the eleven thousand maiden martyrs, who are said to have been shot to death with arrows, A.D. 451, are as entirely mythical as Sarah Gamp’s “Mrs. Harris.”

But there is plenty choice in the origin of this place-name. There are those who plump for “maghdun-hythe,” the wharf under the great hill (of Cliveden). The place is found under quite another name in Domesday Book. There it is “Elenstone,” or “Ellington.” It is first styled “Maydehuth” in 1248; and it has been thought that the name is equivalent to “new wharf”; the wharf, or its successor, mentioned by Leland in 1538 as the “grete warfeage of tymbre and fierwood.”

We need not, perhaps, expend further space upon the town of Maidenhead, for it is almost entirely modern. Its fine stone bridge has already been mentioned, and another, and a very different, type

of bridge, a quarter of a mile below it, now demands attention.

Maidenhead Railway Bridge, completed in 1839, one of those greatly daring works for which the Great Western Railway's original engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was famous, is the astonishment of all who behold it. Crossing the river in two spans, each of 128 feet, the great elliptical brick arches are the largest brickwork arches in the world, and of such flatness that it seems scarcely possible they can sustain their own weight, even without the heavy burden of trains running across. Maidenhead Railway Bridge astonishes me infinitely more than the great bridge across the Forth, or any other engineering feats. Yet sixty years have passed, and the bridge not only stands as firmly as ever, but nowadays sustains the weight of trains and engines more than twice as heavy as those originally in vogue. Moreover, in the doubling of the line, found necessary in 1892, the confidence of the Company was shown by their building an exact replica of Brunel's existing bridge, side by side with it. Yet the original contractor had been so alarmed that he earnestly begged Brunel to allow him to relinquish the contract, and although the engineer proved to him, scientifically, that it must stand, he went in fear that when the wooden centreing was removed the arches would collapse. A great storm actually blew down the centreing before it was proposed to remove it, but the bridge stood, and has stood ever since, quite safely. It cost, in 1839, £37,000 to build.

## CHAPTER IV

### BRAY AND ITS FAMOUS VICAR—JESUS HOSPITAL

BEYOND this astonishing achievement comes the delightful village of Bray, whose name is thought to be a corruption of *Bibracte*, an obscure Roman station. Bray is scenically associated with the eight—or are they ten?—tall poplars that stand in a formal row, all of one size, and each equidistant from the other, and form a prominent feature in the view as you approach, upstream or down; and with the weird shapes of the eel-bucks that occupy a position by the Berkshire bank. Composing a pretty view with them comes the square, embattled church-tower, together with some feathery water-side trees—and always those stark sentinel poplars in the background. You see them from almost every quarter, a long way off; and even from the railway, as the Great Western trains sweep onwards, towards Maidenhead Bridge, they come rushing into sight, and you say—and you observe that the glances of other passengers say also—“There’s Bray!”

Bray is, of course traditionally, the home of that famous accommodating vicar who, reproached with his readiness to change his principles, replied :

“Not so ; my principle is unaltered : to live and die Vicar of Bray.”

Every one knows the rollicking song that sets forth, with a musical economy of some five notes, the determination of that notorious person, despite all changes and chances, to keep his comfortable living, but not every one knows the facts about him and that familiar ballad.

Fuller says : “ He had seen some martyrs burnt (two miles off) at Windsor, and found this fire too hot for his tender temper ” ; and further says, respecting his guiding principle in life—to remain Vicar of Bray—“ Such are many nowadays, who, though they cannot turn the wind, will turn their mills and set them so that wheresoever it bloweth, their grist shall certainly be grinded.”

The reputation of being that vicar has been flung upon Simon Aleyn, or Aley, which were, no doubt, the contemporary ways of trying to spell “ Allen,” who appears to have derived from a family settled at Stevenage, Hertfordshire, and, graduating at Oxford in 1539, to have been instituted to the living of Bray in 1551, upon the death of William Staverton, vicar before him. Two years later he became also vicar of Cookham. In 1559 he was made Canon of Windsor, and held all three offices until his death in June 1565.

If we inquire into the history of Church and State between 1551 and 1565, we shall not find that the period covered by those fifteen years was remarkable for so many great religious changes. The changes were great, indeed, but not numerous.



LYCHGATE, BRAY.





Edward the Sixth was living, and the Reformed Church established, when Aleyn first became vicar, who, when the young King died and the reactionary reign of Mary began, doubtless "became a Roman"; but there is no doubt that many others did the like at that time.

When Queen Mary died, in 1558, Aleyn naturally conformed to the Protestant religion, then re-established: and, as we see, died comparatively early in the reign of Elizabeth, while that religion was yet undisputed. There was thus, supposing him to have been originally instituted as a Protestant, only one violation of conscience necessary to his retaining his post: a small matter! As he could scarcely have been more than about twenty years of age when he graduated, it is seen at once that when he died, in 1565, he was comparatively young—some forty-six years of age. By his will, he directed that he should be buried in St. George's Chapel, Windsor; and as there is no reason to suppose that his wishes in that respect were wantonly disregarded, it follows that the small monumental brass, now without an inscription, here, in the church of Bray, cannot mark his resting-place. It has, indeed, been identified as to the memory of Thomas Little, his successor, who died so soon afterwards as 1567.

The injustice, therefore, done to Simon Aleyn by identifying him with the song, the "Vicar of Bray," is obvious; for there were very many men, born at an earlier date than he, and living to a much greater age, who certainly did change their official

beliefs, for professional purposes, several times, between 1534, when the Reformation was accomplished, and the reign of Elizabeth. There would have been more scope for such a tergiversating person in the reigns of Charles the Second, James the Second, William the Third, Queen Anne, and George the First—in all of which it would have been easily possible for a not very long-lived clergyman to flourish—than in Aley's time; and the ballad in its present form distinctly specifies that period, long after Aley was dead. But the ascription to Bray at all can clearly be proved a late one, for the original words, traced back to 1712, when one Edward Ward published a collection of miscellaneous works in prose and verse, make no mention of any particular place. The verses, eighteen in number, are there entitled, "The Religious Turncoat; or, the Trimming Parson." Among them we find a reference to the troubles under Charles the First, by which it appears that the trimmer's constitutional, as well as religious, opinions were moderated according to circumstances:

" I lov'd no King in Forty-one,  
 When Prelacy went down,  
 A cloak and band I then put on  
 And preached against the Crown.

When Charles returned into the land,  
 The English Crown's supporter,  
 I shifted off my cloak and band,  
 And then became a courtier.  
 When Royal James began his reign,  
 And Mass was used in common,

I shifted off my Faith again,  
And then became a Roman.

To teach my flock I never missed,  
Kings were by God appointed;  
And they are damned who dare resist  
Or touch the Lord's anointed."

The familiar refrain was, of course, added later :

" And this is law, I will maintain,  
Until my dying day, sir,  
That, whatsoever King shall reign,  
I'll be the Vicar of Bray, sir."

The air to which the song is set is equally old, but originally belonged to quite another set of verses, called "The Country Garden." It was, later, used with the words of a ballad known as "The Neglected Tar"; but it certainly appeared set to the words of "The Vicar of Bray" in 1778, when it was published in *The Vocal Magazine*.

Who, then, was he who first associated Bray with the song, and with what warrant? and by what evidence did Fuller advance his statement that Aleyn was the man? The question may well be asked, but no reply need be expected.

It may be worth while in this place to give another, and perhaps an even better, version of the famous ballad, which gives the Vicar a run from the time of Charles the Second to that of George the First; thirty years, at least :

" In good King Charles's golden days,  
When loyalty had no harm in't,  
A zealous High Churchman I was,  
And so I got preferment.

To teach my flock I never miss'd,  
Kings were by God appointed,  
And they are damned who dare resist,  
Or touch the Lord's anointed.

When Royal James obtained the throne,  
And Popery grew in fashion,  
The penal laws I hooted down,  
And read the Declaration.  
The Church of Rome I found would fit  
Full well my constitution,  
And I had been a Jesuit,  
But for the Revolution.

When William, our deliverer, came  
To heal the nation's grievance,  
Then I turned cat-in-pan again,  
And swore to him allegiance.  
Old principles I did revoke,  
Set conscience at a distance ;  
Passive resistance was a joke,  
A jest was non-resistance.

When glorious Anne became our Queen,  
The Church of England's glory,  
Another face of things was seen,  
And I became a Tory ;  
Occasional conformists' case—  
I damned such moderation,  
And thought the Church in danger was  
By such prevarication.

When George in pudding-time came o'er,  
And moderate men looked big, sir,  
My principles I changed once more,  
And so became a Whig, sir,  
And thus preferment I procured  
From our Faith's great Defender,  
And almost every day abjured  
The Pope and the Pretender.

The illustrious House of Hanover,  
And Protestant Succession,  
By these I lustily will swear,  
While they can keep possession,  
For in my faith and loyalty  
I never once will falter,  
But George my King shall ever be—  
Until the times do alter.”

Another vicar of Bray distinguished himself in rather a sorry fashion, according to legend, in the time of James the First. He was dining with his curate at the Greyhound, or, by another account, the Bear, at Maidenhead, when there burst in upon them a hungry sportsman, who expressed a wish to join them at table. The vicar agreed, but with a bad grace, but the curate made him welcome, and entertained him well in conversation. When the time came to pay, the vicar let it be seen that, so far as he was concerned, the stranger should settle for his share, but the curate declared he could permit no such thing, and paid the sportsman's score out of his own scanty pocket. Presently, as they stood taking the air at the window, other sportsmen came cantering along the street, and seeing the first, halted, and one, dismounting, dropped upon one knee, and uncovered. It was the King.

The vicar, too late, apologised, but the King, turning to him, said: “Have no fear. You shall always be vicar of Bray, but your curate I will set over you, and make him Canon of Windsor.”

One of the queerest and quaintest of entrances conducts to the church, beneath a picturesque old

timbered house: charming on both fronts, each greatly differing from the other. There are as many as eight brasses in the church, a fine Early English and Decorated building, somewhat over-scraped and renewed in restoration. An early seventeenth-century brass has some delightful lines:

“ When Oxford gave thee two degrees in Art,  
 And Love possessed thee, Master of my Heart,  
 Thy Colledge Fellowship thow leftst for mine,  
 And noight but death could seprate me frō thine.”

This is without a name, but has been identified as to the memory of Little, Aleyn's successor.

Not so delightful are the self-sufficing lines upon William Goddard, founder of the neighbouring almshouses. Let us hope that, although couched in the first person, he did not write them himself:

“ If what I was, thov seekst to knowe  
 Theis lynes my character shal showe,  
 These benefitts that God me lent  
 With thanks I tooke and freely spent.  
 I scorned what playnesse could not gett,  
 And next to treason hated debt.  
 I lovd not those that stird vp strife  
 Trve to my freinde, and to my wife.<sup>1</sup>  
 The latter here by me I have.  
 We had one Bed and have one grave.  
 My honesty was such that I  
 When death came, feared not to dye.”

In the churchyard lies John Payne Collier, the Shakespearean critic, who died in 1883. His funeral was the occasion of a curious mistake in *The Standard*,

<sup>1</sup> But that's of course, surely.





JESUS HOSPITAL, BRAY.





of September 21. The newspaper correspondent had written :

“ The remains of the late Mr. John Payne Collier were interred yesterday in Bray churchyard, near Maidenhead, in the presence of a large number of spectators.”

This became, at the hands of the sub-editor, who had never heard of Collier, “ The Bray Colliery Disaster. The remains of the late John Payne, collier,” etc.

Jesus Hospital, founded in the seventeenth century by William Goddard, of the City of London, fish-monger, and Joyce, his wife, for the housing and maintenance of forty poor persons, faces the road outside the village, on the way to Windsor. Fred Walker, in his most famous picture, *The Harbour of Refuge*, exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1872, took the beautiful courtyard of the Hospital for his subject, but those who are familiar with that lovely painting, now in the National Gallery, will feel a keen disappointment when they find here the original, for the artist added a noble group of statuary to the courtyard which does not, in fact, exist here, and has generally added details which make an already beautiful place still more lovely than it is.

The courtyard is, indeed, in summer a mass of beautiful homely flowers, and all the year round the noble frontage that looks upon the dusty high-road is inspiring. From an alcove over the entrance the statue of William Goddard, in cloak and ruff, looks down gravely upon wayfarers.

## CHAPTER V

OCKWELLS MANOR-HOUSE—DORNEY COURT—BOVENY  
—BURNHAM ABBEY

IN a remote situation, two miles from Bray Wick, and not to be found marked on many maps, is situated the ancient manor-house of Ockwells. The hills and dales on the way to it are of a Devonshire richness of wooded beauty. The manor was, in fact, originally that of "Ockholt," that is to say, "Oak Wood," and oaks are still plenteously represented. Ockholt, as it was then, was granted in 1267 to one Richard de Norreys, styled in the grant "cook" in the household of Eleanor of Provence, Queen of Henry the Third. In respect of his manor, Richard de Norreys paid forty shillings per annum, quit rent; but there is nothing to show what his house was like, the existing range of buildings dating from the time of John Norreys, first Usher of the Chamber to Henry the Sixth, Squire of the Body, Master of the Wardrobe, and otherwise a man of many important offices, eventually knighted for his services. He died in 1467. His grandson was that Sir Henry Norreys who was, with others, executed in 1536, on what appears to have been a false charge of unduly familiar relations with Anne Boleyn. His body rests in the Tower of London, where he



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THE HALL, OCKWELLS.



met his untimely end, but his head was claimed by his relatives, and buried in the private chapel of Ockwells. The chapel has long since disappeared. The son of this unfortunate man became Baron Norreys of Rycote, and the family thence rose to further honours and riches and left Ockwells for even finer seats. It then came into the hands of the Fettiplaces, and thence changed ownership many times, exactly as old Fuller says of other lands in this county: "The lands of Berkshire are skittish, and apt to cast their owners." The old mansion finally came down to the condition of a farmhouse, and so remained until some fifty years ago, when it was restored and made once more a residence. Since then it has again been carefully overhauled, and is now a wonderfully well-preserved example of a brick-and timber-framed manor-house of the fifteenth century. Oak framing enters largely into the construction, for this was pre-eminently a timber district; and massive doors, much panelling, and even window mullions in oak testify alike to the abundance of that building-material, and to its lasting qualities, far superior, strange though it may seem to say so, to stone. Even such exceptionally exposed woodwork as the highly enriched barge-boards to the gables is still in excellent preservation. With age they have taken on a lovely silver-grey tone, not unlike that of weathered stone itself. In the Great Hall the heraldic glass yet remains, almost perfect, its colours rich and jewel-like, with the oft-repeated Norreys motto, "Faythfully serve."

It is somewhat singular that another exception-

ally interesting old manor-house of like type with that of Ockwells should be found within three miles. This is the beautiful residence of Dorney Court, on the opposite side of the river, in Buckinghamshire. The village of Dorney lies in a very out-of-the-way situation, and in fact, although the distance from Ockwells is so inconsiderable, the route by which you get to it makes it appear more than twice that length. The readiest way is through Maidenhead, and over the bridge to Taplow railway station, and thence along the Bath road in the direction of London for over a mile, when a sign-post will be noticed directing to Dorney on the right hand.

The village is small and scattered, consisting of the Palmer Arms, some cottages and farmsteads; and the little parish church stands in an obscure byway, divided from Dorney Court only by a narrow lane leading nowhither. The church has ever been, and may still be considered, a mere appendage of the Court, as a manorial chapel. Its red-brick tower, apparently of early seventeenth-century date, is added to the west end of a quite humble building, the greatly altered survival of an early Norman structure, whose former existence may easily be deduced from the remains of a small, very plain window built up in the south wall of the chancel with later work in chalk. Entering by a brick archway in the south porch, you find yourself in one of those little rural churches of small pretensions which in their humble way capture the affections much more surely than do many buildings of more aspiring kind. It is a church merely of aisleless nave and chancel,





DORNEY CHURCH : THE MINSTREL-GALLERY.



with a chapel—the Garrard Chapel—thrown out on the north side. A great deal of remodelling appears to have taken place in the early part of the seventeenth century, for not only is there the western tower of that period, and the south porch, but the interior was evidently plastered and refitted with pews at the same time. A very quaint and charming western gallery in oak would seem to fix the exact date of these works, for it bears the inscription in fine, boldly cut letters and figures, “Henry Felo, 1634.” That date marked a new era at Dorney, for the Garrards, who had for some time past owned the Manor, ended with the death of Sir William Garrard in 1607. His monument and that of his wife and their fifteen children is in the north chapel, and is a strikingly good example of the taste of that period in monumental art, with kneeling effigies of Sir William and his wife facing one another, and the fifteen children beneath, in two rows—the boys on one side, the girls on the other. The mortality among this family would seem to have been very great, for about 1620 Sir James Palmer, afterwards Chancellor of the Garter, married Martha, the sole survivor and heiress, and thus brought Dorney into the Palmer family, in whose hands it still remains. The Palmers themselves were of Wingham, in Kent, and of Angmering and Parham, Sussex, and have numbered many distinguished and remarkable men. Tradition declares them to be of Danish or Viking origin, while a very curious and interesting old illuminated genealogy preserved at Dorney declares that the family name originated in the ancient days of pil-

grimage, when the original Palmer "went a-palmering." If that were indeed the case, the old heraldic coat of the house might be expected to exhibit an allusive scallop-shell. But we find no badge of the pilgrim's way-wending on their heraldic shield, which bears instead two fesses charged with three trefoils; a greyhound courant in chief. The crest is a demi-panther argent, generally represented "regardant" spotted azure, with fire issuant from mouth and ears. This terrific beast is shown holding a holly-branch. An odd, but scarcely convincing attempt to account for the greyhound declares it to be "in remembrance, perchance, of their pilgrimage, a dog, that faithful and familiar creature, being a pilgrim's usual companion."

A remarkably large and interesting sampler, worked probably about 1625, has recently come to Dorney under rather curious circumstances. It appears to have been sold so long ago that its very existence was unknown, and it only came to the knowledge of the present representative of the Palmers through a photographic reproduction published in an illustrated paper, illustrating the stock of a dealer in antiques. It was readily identified as an old family possession by reason of the many Palmer shields of arms worked into it. On inquiry being made, a disappointment was experienced. It was found that the sampler had been sold; but in the end the purchaser, seeing that its proper place was in its old home, with much good feeling resold it to Major Palmer.

This beautiful piece of needlework, done in col-

WORKED  
ABOUT  
1620.



THE  
PALMER  
SAMPLER





oured silks, has the unusual feature of presenting, as it were, a kind of Palmer portrait-gallery of that period. In the midst is a shield of the Palmer arms impaling those of Shurley of Isfield, Sussex. This identifies that particular Palmer as Sir Thomas, of Wingham, the second Baronet, who married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir John Shurley, and succeeded his grandfather in the title 1625. That baronetcy became extinct in 1838.

There are eight needlework portraits of men in this sampler, obviously Palmers, since each holds a shield of the family arms; and evidently portraits, because each one is clearly distinguished from the others in age, costume, and features, and the first is easily to be identified by the wounded right arm he bears in a sling. Among those other quaintly attired men, who yet are made to seem so very real to us, one notices a figure with a tilting-lance, another, in the lower range, holding a weapon probably intended to represent the axe carried by the honourable corps of gentlemen pensioners in attendance upon the Sovereign; while the last carries a bunch of keys, in allusion to some official position. The sampler appears to have been carried out of the Palmer family by the marriages in the eighteenth century of the two daughters and heiresses of a Sir Thomas Palmer with an Earl of Winchilsea and his brother.

But to revert to the figure with the wounded arm. This personage was Sir Henry Palmer, Knight, second of the famous triplet sons of Sir Edward Palmer, of the Angmering family, who were born in 1487, according to tradition, on three successive



Sundays. This remarkable parturition is still famous at Angmering, where the rustics readily point out the identical house, now divided into cottages, near the Decoy. It was this Henry who established the Wingham line that ascended from knighthood to a baronetcy and became extinct in 1838, having in the meanwhile thrown off a branch now represented at Dorney. Let us take the triplet brothers in their proper sequence. John, the eldest, who inherited Angmering, came to a bad end. He was much at the dangerous Court of Henry the Eighth, and was particularly intimate with that monarch, not only playing cards continually with him, but always winning. A careful courtier in those times did well to lose occasionally. It was not well to be always winning from the Eighth Henry, and that fierce Tudor did in fact hang him on some pretext.

Henry Palmer, the second brother, was a distinguished soldier, and Master of the Ordnance. He received a shot-wound in the arm at Guisnes, of which he eventually died, at Wingham, in 1559. The sampler clearly shows this wounded soldier, with his arm bound up, and supporting himself with a stick. The third brother, Thomas, died on Tower Hill, by the headsman's axe, as an adherent of the Lady Jane Grey. He suffered with the Duke of Northumberland and Sir John Gates, and chroniclers tell how the unhappy trio quarrelled to the last as to whose was the responsibility for the failure of that rising. But Palmer made the boldest exit of all, declaring with his last breath on the scaffold that he died a Protestant.



DORNEY COURT.



Sir James Palmer, Chancellor of the Garter, who married the heiress of Sir William Garrard, and thus founded the Palmer family of Dorney, was a younger son of the Wingham Palmers. He died in 1657, and was succeeded by his son, Sir Roger, created Earl of Castlemaine, who died 1705, without acknowledged children, and left the property to his nephew, Charles, from whom the present family are descended.

Dorney Court is a picturesque mansion, chiefly of the period of Henry the Seventh. It was once much larger, as appears from old drawings preserved in the house, in which it is shown as groups of buildings surrounding two large courts and one smaller. The construction is largely of oak framing filled with brick nogging, disposed sometimes in herring-bone fashion, and in other places in ordinary courses. There are no elaborate and beautiful verge-boards to the gables, such as those extremely fine examples seen at Ockwells, but, if a distinction may be drawn between the two houses, Dorney Court is especially attractive in the fine pictures it gives from almost every point of view. It forms a strikingly picturesque composition seen from the north-east, a grouping in which the great gable of the entrance-front and its two remarkable flaunting chimneys come well with the three equal-sized gables of the north front, the church-tower rising in its proper association in the background, emphasising the ancient manorial connection.

A good deal of work has recently been undertaken, in the direction of correcting the tasteless alterations made at some time in the eighteenth

century, when sashed windows here and there replaced the original leaded lights. The plan adopted has been that of acquiring such old oak timbering as could be picked up from houses demolished in neighbourhoods near and far, and of setting it up in the reconstructed doors and windows. If it may be permitted to speak of the interior, it can at any rate be well said that it does by no means belie the exterior view. The panelled, and raftered rooms are in thorough keeping, and the hall, neglected for generations, has been brought back to something of its ancient appearance. From those walls the panelling had disappeared, but it has now been replaced with some genuine old work of the same period, acquired by fortunate chance at Faversham in Kent, from an old mansion in course of demolition. The hall greatly resembles that of Ockwells; but whatever heraldic glass may have been here has long vanished, leaving no trace. Here, among the many family portraits, hangs a fine example of a helmet brought from the church, an unusually good piece of funeral armour, removed from the church to prevent its rusting away. The family portraits include some Lelys, Knellers, and Jamesons, and a number of early-eighteenth-century pastel portraits, many of them displaying a facial characteristic of the Palmers, constant through the successive generations: that of a somewhat unusually long nose.

It is one of the greatest charms of our long-settled English social order, that we have in this England of ours a not inconsiderable number of ancient homes that have been "home" to one



DORNEY COURT: THE GREAT HALL, SHOWING THE MODEL PINE-APPLE.  
*The seventeenth-century sampler hangs on the panelling.*





family throughout the changes and chances of centuries, and in Dorney Court we see such a house. Here, on the old woodwork, are painted the heraldic shields of the Palmers, with their greyhound courant conspicuous, and the devices of the families with whom they have intermarried.

An interesting incident in fruit-growing history belonging to Dorney Court is alluded to in the model on a gigantic scale of a pineapple, shown in the hall. It recalls the fact that the first pineapple grown in England was produced here in the reign of Charles the Second by the Dorney Court gardener. A panel-picture at Ham House, the seat of the Earl of Dysart, near Richmond, illustrates this first English-grown pineapple being presented to the King in the gardens of either Ham or Hampton Court, by Rose, the royal gardener. The rendering of the architecture in the picture makes it uncertain which of the two places is intended. It will be observed by the illustration that there has been a great improvement in the art of growing hot-house pineapples since that time, for it is a very small specimen that is being offered to the King.

Foremost among the thirty or more portraits at Dorney are the two large Lelys hanging in the hall, representing Roger Palmer, Baron Limerick, and Earl of Castlemaine, and his wife Barbara, the beautiful and notorious Barbara Villiers. They are half-lengths. She is curiously shown, holding what looks like the model of a church-steeple in her left hand. Lely intended it for a castle, and thus is seen to be guilty of painting an Anglo-French pun; "Castle-

*main.*” The beautiful Barbara is better known in history as “Barbara Villiers,” her maiden name, and by the title of Duchess of Cleveland. Born in 1641, she married Palmer in 1659. He was shortly afterwards raised to the peerage. There were no children of this marriage, for it was very shortly afterwards that Lady Castlemaine began that extraordinary career of vice which has made her name eminent among even the notorious beauties of Charles the Second’s scandalous Court. The first of her seven children was a daughter, Anne, born in May 1661, and at first acknowledged by Palmer, although Lady Castlemaine had undoubtedly been mistress of Charles the Second since May 1660. There are three portraits of Anne Palmer, or Anne Palmer Fitzroy, as she was afterwards known, at Dorney, the earliest of them exhibiting a romantic hilly landscape for background, with a beacon or fire-cresset along the winding road, such as were placed on the more obscure ways in those times for the guidance of travellers. She married in 1675 Thomas Lennard, Lord Dacre and Earl of Sussex.

Castlemaine, shortly after the birth of this putative daughter, became a convert to the Roman Catholic religion, and his wife, seizing upon this as a pretext, finally left him and lived openly as the King’s mistress. Several of her children were acknowledged by Charles, and two of them were created dukes, her second son, Henry Fitzroy, becoming Duke of Grafton, her third, George, Duke of Northumberland. She was, with an astounding display of cynical humour, in 1670 created Baroness Nonsuch, “in consideration



PRESENTATION TO CHARLES THE SECOND OF THE FIRST  
PINE-APPLE GROWN IN ENGLAND.

*From the painting at Ham House.*



of her own personal virtues," and Duchess of Cleveland; and as Duke of Cleveland her eldest son succeeded her. Thus, with Barbara, with Nell Gwynne, and others, Charles the Second abundantly recruited the ducal order and other ranks of the peerage; thus giving point to the Duke of Buckingham's joke. The King had been addressed at Court as the "father of his people."

"Of a good many of them," observed Buckingham behind his hand.

The Earl of Castlemaine lived to see a good many changes. It was not necessary in those times to live to a great age to witness many revolutions and counter-revolutions. He was committed to the Tower shortly after the accession of William the Third, and remained a prisoner there from February 1689 until February 10, 1690. He died in 1705.

A little to the north of Dorney, between it and the Bath road, are the remains of Burnham Abbey, a house for Benedictine nuns founded in 1265 by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and titular King of the Romans, brother of Edward the Third. There were an abbess and nine nuns when the establishment was surrendered to Henry the Eighth's Commissioners. The ruins are now amid the rickyards and agricultural setting of the Abbey Farm, and although the church has wholly disappeared, the remains of the chapter-house and the domestic buildings form an exquisite picture, untouched by any busyboding "tidying-up" activities. The seeker after the picturesque, who finds historical evidences destroyed by well-meaning "restorers"; the artist, who generally

discovers the artistic negligence of his foregrounds abolished in favour of neatly kept flower-beds and gravel paths and the feeling of ruin and decay thus utterly disregarded, will be rejoiced here, and will find the ruins still put to farming uses, just as Girtin and Turner and the other roaming artists of a hundred years ago were accustomed to find the castles and abbeys of their day. There is more pure æsthetic delight in such scenes as this, left in their natural decay and put to the uses to which they in the logical order of things descended, than in the same place swept and garnished to be made a show. The Lady Chapel and the refectory are stables, where the cart-horses shelter and form a picture so exactly like Morland's stable interiors that the place might well have been a model for him. Every detail is complete in the Morland way, even to the old stable-lantern hanging on a post. Much of the ruined buildings is of the Early English period, and the horses come and go through pointed doorways. Gracious trees richly surround and overhang the scene.





BURNHAM ABBEY.





## CHAPTER VI

CLEWER—WINDSOR—ETON AND ITS COLLEGIANS—  
DATCHET—LANGLEY AND THE KEDERMINSTERS

BETWEEN Dorney and Eton stretches an out-of-the-way corner of land devoted chiefly to potato-fields and allotments bordering the river. Here stands Boveney church, or "Buvveney," as it is locally styled, a small building so altered at different periods as to be quite without interest. The river glides past, between the alders, that dark, strong current the subject of allusion by Praed in his "School and Schoolfellows":

"Kind *Mater* smiles again to me,  
As bright as when we parted;  
I seem again the frank, the free,  
Stout-limbed and simple-hearted:  
Pursuing every idle dream,  
And shunning every warning;  
With no hard work but Boveney stream,  
No chill except Long Morning."

A circle of tall elms closely surrounding the church casts a perpetual shade upon the building; Windsor Castle looking down from the opposite shore in feudal majesty upon it and the humble activities of these level fields.

That majestic pile indeed overlooks some remark-

ably mean surroundings which on close acquaintance derogate strangely from its dignity. Thus, resuming the road on the Berkshire side, from Bray to Windsor, the long, straight, uninteresting miles lead directly to Clewer, a village of disreputable appearance, now, to all intents, a Windsor slum; and what was a rustic churchyard has become something more in the likeness of a cemetery. In the roads, strewn with rubbish and broken glass, dirty children play.

Besides an inscription to "ye vertuous Mrs. Lucie Hobson, 1657," who was, we learn, "a treu lover of a Godly and a Powerful ministry"—*i.e.* probably of a preacher who could bang the pulpit and punish the cushions—there is little of interest in Clewer church, with the one exception of a curious little brass plate, inscribed,

" He that liethe vnder this stone  
Shott with a hvndred men him selfe alone.  
This is trew that I doe saye  
The matche was shott in ovd felde at Bray.  
I will tell yov before yov go hence  
That his name was Martine Expençe."

Local history tells us nothing of this hero, who apparently did not really shoot himself, as the inscription states, but seems at some period to have won a particularly hard archery contest, which was ever after his title to fame in this locality.

From Clewer the pilgrim of the roads mounts into Windsor by way of grim and grimy slums, and therefore those who would come to Windsor had by far the better do so by water, from which the slums



AN ENGLISH FARMYARD : BURNHAM ABBEY FARM.





*G. Mason*

BOVENEY.





look picturesque. The view of Windsor, indeed, from the windings of the Thames (Windsor is the Saxon "Windlesora," the winding shore) is one of the half-dozen most supremely grand and beautiful views in England.

Of Windsor, in Berkshire, and Eton, in Bucks, joined by a bridge that here spans the Thames, I here propose to say little or nothing. To treat of them at all would, within the scope of this book, be inadequate, and to deal with them according to their importance would demand a separate volume. Moreover, to write of them with an airy assurance requires not a little expert local knowledge of the kind to be expected only of those who have made them places of long residence or study.

There was once a man who falsely claimed to have been educated at Eton, and was stumped first ball. They asked him if he knew the Cobbler. "Yes," he said, "I know the old fellow very well." Is it an unconscious invention of my very own, or did he further proceed to say that he had often helped the old fellow when he was in low water? At any rate, 'twill serve; and will doubtless divert those who know the "old fellow" in question, whom no one could aid under those circumstances, except perhaps the Clerk of the Weather and the lock-keepers above and below, who, between them, might serve him sufficiently well. Not to further mystify readers overseas, who know not Eton, let it at once be said that the "Cobbler" is an island; and that the famous person who claimed to have known him must be placed in association with the pretended

traveller who knew the Dardanelles intimately, had dined with them often, and had found them jolly good fellows.

Eton has for centuries been *the* public school of all others, where the sons of landed and of moneyed men have been educated into the belief that they and theirs stand for England, whereas, if it were not for the great optimistic, cheerfully hard-working middle-class folk, who found businesses, and employ the lower orders on the one hand, while on the other they payrents to the landowing and governing classes, there would not be any England for them to misgovern, you know.

Eton is now so crowded with the sons of wealthy foreigners and German and other Jews, learning to be Englishmen (if that be in any way possible), that it is now something of a distinction not to have been educated there, nor to have learned the "Eton slouch," nor the charming Eton belief that the *alumni* brought up under "her Henry's holy shade" are thus fitted by Heaven and opportunity, working in unison, to rule the nation. It is a belief somewhat rudely treated in this, our day, when the world is no longer necessarily the oyster of the eldest sons of peers and landowners. And in these times, when it is said that Eton boys funk one another and fights under the wall are more or less "low," it is no longer possible that Etonians shall have the leadership in future stricken fields—leadership in finance, possibly, seeing how Semitic this once purely English foundation is becoming; but in leadership when the giving and receiving of hard knocks is toward; no!



THE KEDERMINSTER PEW : INTERIOR.



I would, however, this were the worst that is said of Eton College in these degenerate times. That it is not, *The Eton College Chronicle* itself bears witness. Attention is there called to a custom of "ragging" shops, now become prevalent among the young gentlemen. This, we learn, is carried to such an extent that they will pocket articles found lying about and walk off with them, "for fun." One of the most "humorous" of these incidents was the disappearance of cricket balls to the value of nearly £1. The assistants at the shop where this mysterious disappearance occurred had to make good the loss; so it will readily be perceived how completely humorous the incident must have been from the point of view of those who had to replace the goods. Were these practices prevalent in such low-class educational establishments as Board Schools, a worse term than "ragging," it may be suspected, would be given them.

Two miles in the rear of Datchet is Langley, a small and very scattered village which, although unimportant in itself, has a station on the Great Western Railway. The full name of it, rarely used, is Langley Marish, which is variously said to mean "Marshy Langley," "Langley Mary's," from the dedication of the church to the Virgin Mary, or to derive from the Manor having been held for a short period in the reign of Edward the First by one Christiana de Mariscis.

Few would give a second glance to the humble little church, with its red-brick tower of typically seventeenth-century type, and with other portions

of the exterior quite horribly stuccoed; but to pass it by would be to miss a great deal, for it contains a most curious family pew and parish library. This library, originally containing between 500 and 600 volumes, was given by Sir John Kedermister, or Kederminster, under his will of 1631, to "the town" of Langley Marish. The worthy knight was also builder of one of the two groups of almshouses for four inmates, who were appointed joint custodians of the books. An ancient deed, reciting the gift, says: "The said Sir John Kedermister prepared a convenient place for a library, adjoining to the west end of the said chapel, and intended to furnish the same with books of divinity, as well for the perpetual benefit of the vicar and curate of the parish of Langley as for all other ministers and preachers of God's Word that would resort thither to make use of the books therein."

The Kederminsters first settled at Langley in the middle of the sixteenth century, when one John Kederminster, who appears to have been a kinsman of Richard Kydermyenster, Abbot of Winchcombe, became ranger of the then royal park of Langley and "master of the games" to Henry the Eighth. He died at the comparatively early age of thirty-eight, in 1558, leaving two sons and three daughters. His son Edmund was father of the John Kederminster who founded the library and initiated other works here. He also was ranger of Langley Park, and was knighted by James the First in 1609, who also conferred upon him the Manor of Langley.

This was a short-lived family, and Sir John died





THE KEDERMINSTER PEW : EXTERIOR.





in 1634, a deeply pious but much stricken man, who had lived to see his children, except one daughter, predecease him, and his hopes thus disappointed of the Kederminster name being continued.

As lord of the manor of Langley, and a knight, Sir John Kederminster obviously felt it behoved him to establish himself in considerable state, in the church as well as at his mansion. He therefore secured a faculty granting him the right to construct an "Ile or Chappell"; otherwise, as we may see to this day, a private family pew, in the south aisle, and a parish library to the west of it.

This family pew is perhaps the most curious remaining in England, alike for its construction and for the instructive light it throws upon the lofty social heights from which a lord of a manor looked upon lesser mortals. We have royal pews in St. George's Chapel at Windsor and elsewhere; but their exclusiveness is not greater than this of the Kederminsters, which is singularly like that of the latticed casements familiar to all who have visited Cairo and other Oriental towns. Yet it is obvious that there was a vein of humility running through Sir John Kederminster's apparent arrogance; though a rather thin vein, perhaps. Thus he wrote, for the stone closing the family vault under his pew: "A true Man to God, his King, and Friends, prayeth all future Ages to suffer these obscure Memorials of his Wife, Children and Kindred to remain in this Place undisturbed."

The pew remains in its original condition, looking into the church from the south aisle through very

closely-latticed wooden screen-work, elaborately painted, and crested with an open-work finial bearing the arms of the Kederminsters and their connections. The worshippers within were quite invisible to the congregation, but could themselves see and hear everything. Within the pew, the wall-decoration, in Renaissance designs, includes many panels painted with the all-seeing eye of God, with the words "Deus videt" inscribed on the pupil. This scheme of decoration is continued over the ceiling.

A passage leads out of this singular pew to the library, on the western side. This is an entirely charming square room, constructed in what was formerly the west porch. It is lined throughout with bookcases with closed cupboard doors, all richly painted in characteristic Jacobean Renaissance cartouche and strapwork designs, with the exception of those next the ceiling, which are landscapes of Windsor and its neighbourhood. The inner side of one of the cupboard doors has a portrait of the pious donor: the corresponding door once displayed a likeness of his wife, but it has been obliterated. An elaborate fireplace has a fine overmantel with large central cartouche, *semée* with the Kederminster arms: two chevronels between three bezants, marshalled with those of their allied families. The original Jacobean table still stands in the centre of the room, with the old tall-backed chairs, too decrepit now for use.

Kederminster strictly enjoined the most careful precautions for the due care of the books, of which an old catalogue dated 1638, engrossed on vellum,



THE KEDERMINSTER LIBRARY.



and framed, still hangs on the wall. One, at least, of his four bedesmen (who are now women) was to be present when they were in use :

“ The said four poor persons should have a key of the said library, which they should for ever keep locked up in the iron chest under all their four keys, unless when any minister or preacher of God’s Word, or other known person, should desire to use the said library, or to study, or to make use of any books in the same, and then the said four poor people, or one of them at the least, should from time to time—unless the heirs of Sir John Kedermister, being then and there present, should otherwise direct—attend within the door of the said library, and not depart from thence during all the time that any person should remain therein, and should all that while keep the key of the said door fastened with a chain unto one of their girdles, and should also take special care that no books be lent or purloined out of the said library, but that every book be duly placed in their room, and that the room should be kept clean ; and that if at any time any money or reward be given to the said poor people for their attendance in the library as aforesaid, the same should be to the only use of such of those poor people as should at that time then and there attend.”

Clearly, this care has not been always exercised, for the books are now reduced to some three hundred, and those that are left have suffered greatly from damp and rough handling. The books are chiefly cumbrous tomes, heavy in more than one sense, and mostly works on seventeenth-century religious controversies.

Although this library has for long past been either forgotten or regarded merely as a curiosity, there was once a time when the books in it were well used, as would appear from the notes made on the endpapers of a Hebrew and Latin Bible, printed at the office of Christopher Plantin, in Antwerp, 1584. It was one J. C. Werndly, vicar of Wraysbury from 1690 to 1724, who made these notes, and he seems to have been indeed a diligent reader. Thus he wrote :

170½ Jan. the 17. I began again the Reading of this Hebrew Bible (w<sup>h</sup> is the sixth time of reading it) may the Spirit of Holiness help me and graciously Enable me to peruse it again to the Glory of God, and to the sanctification of my sinful and imortal soul. Amen, Lord Jesus, Amen.

The last record of his reading appears thus :

1701. xxxiii. 8<sup>bre</sup> the 3rd. I finished the  $\psi$ alms again by the mercy of my Sav<sup>r</sup>.

The numerals for " thirty-three " appear to indicate his thirty-third reading.

The almshouses on the north side of the churchyard, their front facing the sun, are pleasant with old-fashioned gardens. They were built by Henry Seymour, who in 1669 purchased the Kederminster estates from the son of Sir John Kederminster's daughter and heiress, who had married Sir John Parsons, sometime Lord Mayor of London. Thus, in less than forty years the Kederminster hopes faded away and the property passed into the hands of strangers.





THE ALMSHOUSES, LANGLEY.



## CHAPTER VII

DATCHET—RUNNYMEDE—WRAYSBURY—HORTON AND  
ITS MILTON ASSOCIATIONS—STAINES MOOR —  
STANWELL—LALEHAM AND MATTHEW ARNOLD—  
LITTLETON — CHERTSEY — WEYBRIDGE — SHEP-  
PERTON.

By Datchet meads and the continuously flat shores of Runnymede, the river runs somewhat tamely, after the scenic climax of Windsor. The Datchet of Shakespearean fame it is, of course, hopeless to find. There is nothing Shakespearean in the prettily rebuilt village with suburban villas and railway level-crossing; and the ditch that used to be identified with that into which Falstaff was flung, "glowing hot, like a horseshoe, hissing hot," has been covered over. At Old Windsor, the site of Edward the Confessor's original palace, the little churchyard contains the tomb of Perdita Robinson, one of George the Fourth's fair and foolish friends; and down by the riverside stands the old rustic inn, the Bells of Ouseley, whose sign puzzles ninety-nine of every hundred who behold it. Writers of books upon the Thames either carefully avoid doing more than mentioning the sign, or else frankly add that they do not understand what it means, or where

Ouseley is—and small blame to them, for there is *not* any place so-called. What is meant is “Oseney,” the vanished abbey of that name outside Oxford, whose bells were of a peculiar fame in that day.

Runnymede is, of course, an exceptionally interesting stretch of meadow-land, for it was here, “*in prato quod vocatur Runnymede inter Windelsorum et Stanes*,” that at last the barons brought King John to book, and it was on what is now called “Magna Charta Island,” on the Bucks side, that the King signed the Great Charter, June 15, 1215.

There are many disputed etymologies of “Runnymede,” including “running-mead,” a scene of horse-races; and “rune-mead,” the meadow of council; but the name doubtless really derived from “rhine” a Saxon word that did duty for anything from a great river to a ditch. Compare the river Rhine and the dykes or drains of Sedgemoor, still known as “rhines.”<sup>1</sup> The meadows on either side of the Thames here have always been low-lying, water-logged, and full of rills.

The army of the Barons had encamped, five days before the signing of this great palladium of liberty, on one side of the river, and the numerically smaller supporters of the King on the other, the island being selected as neutral ground.

The island is occupied by a modern picturesque cottage in a Gothic convention, standing amid trim lawns and weeping willows, near the camp-shedded shore, its gracefulness entirely out of key with those rude times. A little cottage contains a large stone

<sup>1</sup> The battle of Sedgemoor was fought beside the Bussex Rhine.



BACKWATER NEAR WRAYSBURY.



with an inscription bidding it to be remembered that here that epoch-making document was executed, and further, that George Simon Harcourt, Esq., lord of the manor, erected this building in memory of the great event. It is an excellent example of a small modern person seeking to wring a modicum of recognition out of great historic personages and events.

Adjoining this famous isle is Ankerwyke, where are some few remains, in the form of shapeless walls, of a Benedictine nunnery, founded late in the twelfth century; and behind that is a village with the very Saxon name of Wyrardisbury: long centuries ago pronounced "Wraysbury," and now spelled so. We hear nothing of the Saxon landowner, Wyrard, who gave his name to the place, but Domesday Book tells us that one Robert Gernon held the manor after the Conquest. "Gernon," in the Norman-French of that age, meant "Whisker," a name which would seem to have displeased Robert's eldest son, for he assumed that of Montfitchet, from an Essex manor of which he became possessed.

The river Colne flows in many channels here, crossed by substantial and not unpicturesque white-painted timber bridges, with here and there a secluded mill. Wraysbury church, restored out of all interest, stands in a situation where few strangers would find it, unless they were very determined in the quest, through a farmyard; and having found it, you wonder why you took the trouble incidental to the doing so. But that is just the inquisitive explorer's fortune, and he must by no means allow himself, by drawing blank here and there, to be dis-



suaded from seeking out other byways. But stay! there is some interest at Wraysbury. Outside the church is the many-tableted vault of a branch of



BRASS TO AN ETON SCHOLAR,  
WRAYSBURY.

the Harcourt family, and among the names here you shall read that of Philip, "youngest brother of Simon, Viscount Harcourt, sometime Lord High Chancellor of Great Britian" (*sic*). Thus, you perceive, that although not the rose, Philip found some satisfaction in kinship with it, and doubtless lived and died happily in the glow of glory radiating from that ennobled elder brother.

There are brasses lurking unsuspected under the carpeting of this unpromising church; notably a very small and curious example on the south side of the chancel, protected beneath a square of carpet about the size of a pocket-handkerchief. It represents a boy in the costume worn by Eton scholars in the sixteenth century. The inscription runs:

Here lyeth John Stonor, the sone of Water Stonor squyer, that departed this worlde ye 29 day of August in ye yeare of our Lorde 1512.

This Walter Stonor—or “Water” as the inscription has it—squire of Wraysbury, was afterwards Lieutenant of the Tower of London, and was knighted in 1545. He died in 1550.

Horton, beyond Wraysbury, and even more secluded, is at once a charming and an interesting place: a village made up of old mansions and old cottages, all scattered widely amid large grounds and pretty gardens. The church, too, is fine, chiefly of Norman and Early English work, with a tower built in chequers of flint and stone; a fine timber fifteenth-century north porch, and an exceptionally good and lavishly-enriched Norman doorway.

Horton has a literary as well as a picturesque and an architectural interest, for it is closely associated with Milton, who resided here as a young man. Milton's father had retired in his seventieth year, with a not inconsiderable fortune, derived from his business as a scrivener; that is to say, the profession of a public notary, to which was added the making of contracts and the negotiation of loans. He had left the cares and the money-making at Bread Street for the quiet joys of a country life, and had settled at Horton, a place perhaps even then not more remote from the world than now.

Hither, on leaving Christ's College, Cambridge, came his son, John, rather a disappointing son at this period, a son who had disregarded the dearest wish of his parents' hearts, that he should enter the Church; and proposed, instead, to lead the intellectual life of study and meditation. We may quite easily suspect that this would seem, to the hard-

headed man of business, used to placing money out to usury, and to naturally look in every direction for an increase, for some tangible result of pains taken and capital expended, a singularly barren prospect. It might even have appeared to him the ideal of a lazy, feckless disposition. But the ex-scrivener and his wife hid their disappointment as best they could, and suffered their son to take his own course. They were, after all, wealthy enough for him to do without a lucrative profession.

Therefore, for a period of nearly six years—from July 1632 to April 1638, to be exact—the poet lived with his parents and his books at Horton, occupying the time from his twenty-fourth to his thirtieth year with study and music.

Here he composed the companion-poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, a portion of a masque entitled *Arcades*, the complete masque of *Comus*, and *Lycidas*, a long, sweetly-sorrowing poem to the memory of a friend and fellow-colleger at Cambridge, one Edward King, who had lost his life by shipwreck in August 1637, on crossing to Ireland. In April 1637 his mother died. We may still see on the floor of the chancel in Horton church the plain blue stone slab simply inscribed: "Here lyeth the body of Sara Milton, the wife of John Milton, who died the 3rd of April 1637."

In 1638 Milton left Horton, accompanied by a man-servant, for a long term of continental travel, and Horton ceased to be further associated with him. It would be vain to seek, nowadays, for the Milton home here, for the house at Horton, where



HORTON CHURCH.



his parents and himself and his younger brother Christopher lived, was demolished in 1798.

The town of Staines, supposed to be the site of the Roman station of *Ad Pontes*, and to derive its present name from its position on the Roman road to the west—that is to say on the stones, or the stone-paved road—stands at the meeting of Middlesex and Bucks. It is also the western limit of the Metropolitan Police District, and a stone standing in a riverside meadow above the bridge, known as “London Stone,” properly and officially “the City Stone,” until modern times marked the limits of the City of London’s river jurisdiction. Staines was also a place of importance in the coaching age, for it stood upon the greatly travelled Exeter road. To-day it is, in spite of those varied claims to notice, an uninteresting place.

The neighbourhood of Staines is one of many waters. They divide Middlesex and Bucks in the many branches and confluent channels of the Colne, and they permeate those widespreading levels westward of what was once Hounslow Heath known broadly as Staines Moor. This watery landscape, now so beautiful, was once, doubtless, a very dreary waste. All moors and heaths carry with them, in their very name, the stigma of dreariness, just as when Goldsmith wrote. The name of a heath could only be associated with footpads and highwaymen, and to style a scene in a play “Crackskull Common” seemed a natural and appropriate touch. This ill association of commons long ago became a thing of the past, but we still couple the title of a “moor” with undesirable places, generally of an extreme

sterility and associated in the mind's eye with inclement weather of the worst type. The sun never shines on moors, except perhaps so fiercely as to shrivel you up. On moors no winds blow but tempests, probably from the north or east, and the only rains known there are cold deluges. A moor is, in short, by force of a time-honoured tradition not yet quite outworn, a place good to keep away from; or, being by ill-luck upon it, to be left behind at the earliest possible moment.

Whatever Staines Moor may once have been, it no longer resembles those inimical wilds. It is, in fact, a corner of Middlesex endued with much beauty of a quiet, pastoral kind. In midst of it and its pleasant grasslands and fine trees with brooks and glancing waters everywhere, and here and there a water-mill, is Stanwell. At Stanwell the many noble elms of these parts are more closely grouped together and grow to a greater nobility, and at the very outskirts of the village is a finely-wooded park—that of Stanwell Place. The especially fine water-bearing quality of those surroundings is notable in the scenery of that park, and has led of late years to the building of an immense reservoir, now controlled by the Water Board. It is unfortunate that it should have been thought necessary to form this reservoir on a higher level than that of the surrounding country, and thus to hide it behind a huge embankment like that of a railway, for the artificial lake so constructed is rather much of an eyesore. It might, if built upon the level, have proved an additional beauty in the landscape.



Stanwell is situated in the Hundred of Spelthorne, an ancient Anglo-Saxon division of Middlesex. It is still a Petty Sessional division, but no man knows where the ancient thorn-tree stood that marked the meeting-place of our remote forefathers—that “Spele-Thorn,” or Speech Thorn, where the open-air folk-moot was held.

It is a pleasant village, with a very large church, whose tall, shingled spire rises amid luxuriant elms. Near by is a seventeenth-century schoolhouse with a tablet inscribed :

This House and this Free Schoole were founded at the charge of the Right Honourable Thomas, Lord Kynvett, Baron of Escricke, and the Lady Elizabeth his wife. Endowed with a perpetuall revennew of Twenty Pound Land. By the year. 1624.

A stately monument in the singular taste of that time to Knyvett and his lady is found in the church. Against black marble columns are drawn back stony curtains, disclosing the worthy couple kneeling and facing one another across a prayer-desk, with the steadfast glare of two strange cats on a debatable roof-top. At the same time, although the taste is not that in favour to-day, the workmanship is very fine. It is the work of the famous sculptor, Nicholas Stone, who, it is recorded, received £215 for it.

In the churchyard is a very elaborate tomb, all scroll, boldly-flung volutes, and cherubs gazing stolidly into infinity, recording the extraordinarily many virtues of a person whose name one promptly forgets. It is melancholy to reflect that only in the

centuries that are past was it possible to write such epitaphs, and that such supermen in goodness no longer exist. Or is it not rather that we have in our times a better sense of proportion in these mortuary praises ?

The manor of Stanwell was granted to the then Sir Thomas Kynvett by James the First, in 1608. It had been a Crown property since 1543, when Henry the Eighth took it, in his autocratic way, from the owner, Lord Windsor. The story is told by Dugdale, who relates how the King sent a message to Lord Windsor that he would dine with him at Stanwell. A magnificent entertainment was accordingly prepared, and the King was fully honoured. We may therefore perhaps imagine the disgust and alarm with which His Majesty's host heard him declare that he liked the place so well that he was determined to have it ; though not, he graciously added, without a beneficial exchange.

Lord Windsor made answer that he hoped His Highness was not in earnest, since Stanwell had been the seat of his ancestors for many generations. The King, with a stern countenance, replied that it *must* be ; commanding him, on his allegiance, to repair to the Attorney-General and settle the business without delay. When he presently did so, the Attorney-General showed him a conveyance already prepared, of Bordesley Abbey in Worcestershire, in exchange for Stanwell, with all its lands and appurtenances.

“ Being constrained,” concludes Dugdale, “ through dread of the King's displeasure, to accept

of the exchange, he conveyed this manor to His Majesty, being commanded to quit Stanwell immediately, though he had laid in his Christmas provision for keeping his wonted hospitality there, saying that they should not find it *bare Stanwell*." But the deed of exchange, still in existence in the Record Office, is dated nearly three months later, March 14, 1543.

Two and three-quarter miles below the now commonplace town of Staines, and past Penton Hook lock, the village of Laleham stands beside the river, on the Middlesex side, in a secluded district, avoided alike by railways and by main roads. Laleham—in Domesday Book "*Leleham*"—has altered little for centuries past, and although quite recently the park of Osmanthorpe, by the riverside, has been cut up and built upon, the building speculation does not appear to have been very successful.

The old church, barbarously interfered with, as most Thames Valley churches within some twenty miles of London were, in the eighteenth century, has suffered only in respect of its tower, rebuilt in monumentally heavy style, in red brick; and a dense growth of ivy now kindly mantles it, from ground to coping. It is a picturesque church, with queer little dormer windows in the roof, and the interior shows it to be much more ancient than the casual passer-by would suppose; heavy Norman pillars and capitals with billet mouldings proving it to date from some period in the twelfth century. It was, in fact, the mother-church of the district, and Staines and Ashford were mere chapelries to it, and so they

remained, in ecclesiastical government, until the middle of the nineteenth century.

There is little in the way of interesting monuments in the church, except that of George Perrott, which is perhaps mildly amusing. He died 1780, "Honourable Baron of H.M. Court of Exchequer." By his decease, we learn, "the Revenue lost a most able Assessor of its legal rights." The coat-of-arms of this able personage shows three pears, in the old heraldic punning way, for "Perrott," but the joke was not pressed to its conclusion, for they are shown as quite sound pears.

Laleham is notable for its literary associations, for here lived Dr. Arnold for some years, before he became headmaster of Rugby; and here was born, in 1822, Matthew Arnold, who, dying in 1888, lies buried in the churchyard. Here, too, is the tomb of Field-Marshal George Charles Bingham, third Earl of Lucan, who also died in 1888. He was in command of the Heavy Brigade in the Crimea. It was entirely due to the personal animosities of the Earls of Lucan and Cardigan, and of Captain Nolan, that the mistake leading to the sacrifice of the Light Brigade at Balaclava was made.

The quiet of Laleham was sadly disturbed some years ago, when there descended upon the village that extraordinary person—a curious compound of mystic and humbug, who called himself "Father Ignatius." With some seven or eight of his "monks," he established himself at Priory Cottage. Here they so outraged the feelings of the neighbourhood with their fantastic proceedings in the back-garden, in which



LALEHAM CHURCH.



MATTHEW ARNOLD'S GRAVE, LALEHAM.



they had established a "Mount of Olives," and other blasphemous mockeries, that the place was on the verge of riot, and the aid of a strong force of police had to be secured to restore order.

Another charming village, more charming and even much more secluded than Laleham, is Littleton, not quite two miles distant, across these flat fields of Middlesex. It is well named "little," for it consists of only a little church, a fine park and manor-house beside a pretty stream, and some scattered rustic houses. Nothing in the way of a village street, or shop, or inn, is to be discovered, and the place is delightfully retired amid well-wooded byways, all roads to anywhere avoiding it by some two miles. The Early English church has been provided with an Early Georgian red-brick tower, of a peculiarly monstrous type, and in skeleton, roofless form. The interior of the church is so plentifully hung with old regimental colours that it looks almost like a garrison chapel. There are twenty-four in all, chiefly old colours of the Grenadier Guards, and were placed here in 1855 by their commandant, General Wood, who had served in the Peninsular War, and afterwards resided at the adjoining Littleton Park.

A tiny window, little, if at all, larger than a pocket-handkerchief, is filled with stained glass, representing a fallen, or sleeping, shepherd, with a lion looking upon a dead sheep and the rest of the flock running away. An inscription says: "This panel was designed by Sir John Millais, R.A., and presented to Littleton church by Effie, Lady Millais, 1898."



Returning from this *détour*, Chertsey—Anglo-Saxon “Cearta’s ey,” or island—next claims our attention. It is a town, and a dull one, duller now that suburban London has influenced it. Of the great Abbey—one of the greatest in the land—that once stood here, nothing is left except a few moss-grown stones and bases of pillars, situated in the garden of a villa that occupies part of the site. Excavations of the ground in years gone by disclosed the size and disposition of the Abbey church and the monastery buildings, and a few relics were then found, including some remarkably fine encaustic tiles, now to be seen in the Architectural Museum at Westminster. That is all Fate and Time have left. It is an extraordinarily complete disappearance. Stukeley, a diligent antiquary, writing in 1752, was himself astonished at it :

“So total a dissolution I scarcely ever saw. Of that noble and splendid pile, which took up four acres of ground, and looked like a town, nothing remains. Human bones of abbots, monks, and great personages, who were buried in great numbers in the church, were spread thick all over the garden, so that one might pick up handfulls of bits of bone at a time everywhere among the garden-stuff.”

A fragment of precinct-wall is left, and the “Abbey Mill of to-day is the direct descendant of that which occupied the same site in the old times, while the cut originally made by the monks to feed it still flows from near Penton Hook to the Thames again, near by, under the old name of the “Abbey River.”

Weybridge, two miles below Chertsey, is a place



LITTLETON CHURCH.

S. HARPER



of which it is difficult to write with enthusiasm in pages devoted to villages. It is no longer a village, and yet not a town ; and is, indeed, like most of the places to which we shall henceforward come, a suburban district.

What constitutes such ? The answer is that it largely depends upon the distance from London. Here we are some twenty miles from town, and by reason of that fact, and all it means, the suburban residences are expensive and imposing, and stand, many of them, in their own somewhat extensive grounds. Thus, the original village and village green, to which these developments of modern times have been added, remain not altogether spoiled, and come as a pleasant surprise to that explorer who first makes acquaintance with Weybridge from the direction of the railway station, from which a typically conventional straight suburban road leads, lengthily and formally. On the village green stands a memorial column to a former Duchess of York, who died in 1820, at Oatlands Park, near by, and has another monument in the church. The column is intrinsically much more interesting for itself than as a monument to a duchess whom every one has long since forgotten, for it is nothing less than the original pillar set up at Seven Dials in London, about 1694, and thrown down in 1773. It remained, neglected and in fragments, in a builder's yard, until it was purchased for its present use, and removed hither in 1822. Another memorial of that forgotten duchess is found in Weybridge church, a great modern building, built in 1848, and enlarged in 1864, with an additional

south aisle. It stands on the site of an older church, is remarkable rather for size than excellence, and contains some really terrible stained glass. The sculptured memorial to the Duchess is by Chantry, but it is not a very good example of his work. She is represented kneeling, with her coronet flung behind. This, and other memorials removed from the older building, are all huddled together in the tower. Among them is a truly dreadful brass, representing three skeletons—among the very worst products of a diseased imagination to be found in the length and breadth of the land. It ought to be destroyed; and it really seems as though some one had entertained the idea, for the head of one of the figures has disappeared.

The river winds extravagantly at Weybridge, where it receives the waters of the river Wey and the Bourne, and is full of islands and backwaters. Some way downstream, and on the Middlesex shore, is little Shepperton, one of the most secluded places imaginable, consisting of a church, a neighbouring inn—the King's Head—and some old-fashioned country residences. It forms a pretty scene. In the churchyard there will be found a stone with some verses, to

Margaret Love Peacock, Born 1823, Died 1826, one of the children of Thomas Love Peacock who lived many years at Lower Halliford, and died there, 1866.



INTERIOR, LITTLETON CHURCH.





## CHAPTER VIII

COWAY STAKES—WALTON-ON-THAMES—THE RIVER  
AND THE WATER COMPANIES—SUNBURY—TED-  
DINGTON—TWICKENHAM.

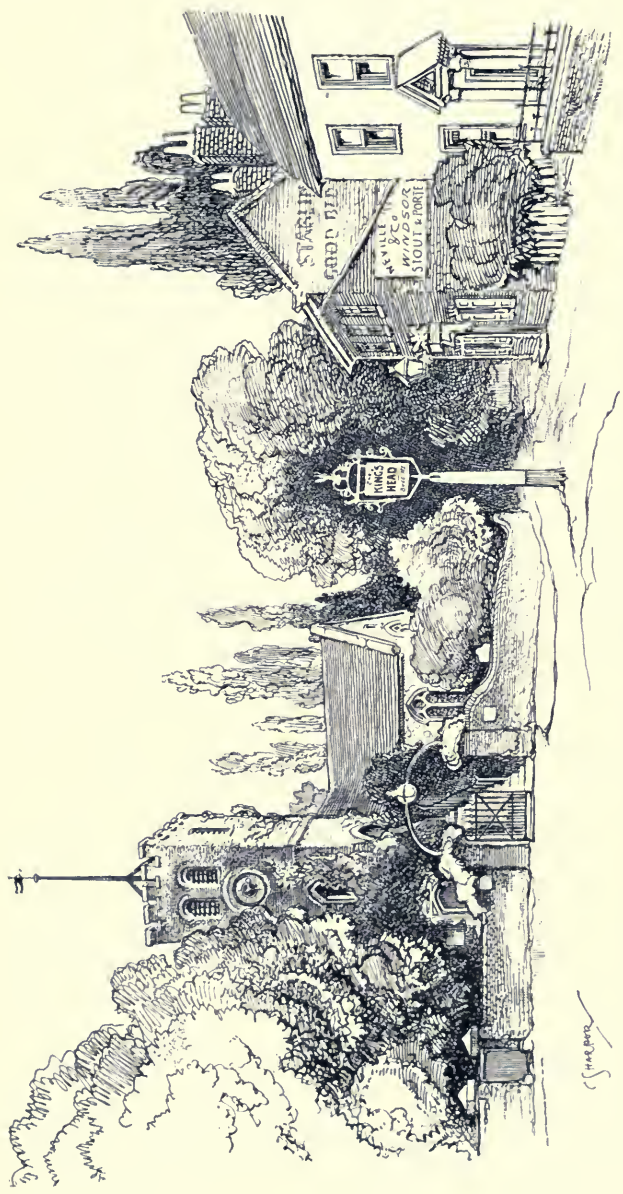
THERE are some very pleasant places on this Middlesex side of the river : Shepperton Green and Lower Halliford notable among them ; Lower Halliford fringing the river bank most picturesquely and rustically. Between this and Walton is the place known as “Cowey, or Coway, Stakes,” traditionally the spot where Julius Cæsar in 54 B.C. crossed the Thames, in his second invasion of Britain. Cæsar himself, in his *Commentaries*, writing, as was his manner, in the first person, says : “Cæsar being aware of their plans, led his army to the Thames, to the boundary of the Catuvellauni. The river was passable on foot only at one place, and that with difficulty. When he arrived there he observed a large force of the enemy drawn up on the opposite bank. The bank also was defended with sharpened stakes fixed outwards, and similar stakes were placed under water and concealed by the river. Having learnt these particulars from the captives and deserters, Cæsar sent forward the cavalry, and immediately ordered the legions to follow. But the soldiers went at such a pace and in such a rush, though only

their heads were above water, that the enemy could not withstand the charge of the legions and cavalry, and they left the bank and took to flight."

Many of these ancient stakes have been found, during the centuries that have passed—the last of them about 1838—and they have been for many years the theme of long antiquarian discussions. Formed of young oak trees, "as large as a man's thigh," each about six feet in length, and shod with iron, their long existence under water had made them almost as hard as that iron, and as black as ebony.

It was Camden, writing early in the seventeenth century, who first identified Coway Stakes as the scene of Cæsar's crossing, for Bede, writing in the eighth century and describing the stakes in the river, mentions no place. They were said by Bede to be shod with lead and to be "fixed immovably in the bed of the river." Camden was quite certain that here he had found the famous passage by Cæsar's legionaries, and expressed himself positively: "It is impossible I should be mistaken in the place."

But later investigators are found to be more than a little inclined to dispute Camden's conclusions; and it is certain that whatever may now be the possibilities of fording the Thames hereabouts, between Walton and Halliford or Shepperton, and however deep the river may now be elsewhere, this could not, as Camden supposes, have been the only possible ford. In Cæsar's time—it is a truism, of course, to say it—there were no locks or weirs, and the Thames, instead of being what it is now, really to a great degree canalised, flowed in a broader,



SHEPPERTON.

1844



shallower flood along most of its course, spreading out here and there into wide-stretching marshes, through which, however difficult the crossing, the actual depth of water would tend to be small. But in any case, arguments for or against Coway Stakes must needs be urged with diffidence, for the windings of the Thames must necessarily have changed much in two thousand years.

There are not now any of the stakes remaining here, but the disposition of them in the bed of the river has been fully put upon record. They were situated where the stream makes a very pronounced bend to the south, a quarter of a mile above Walton Bridge, and were placed in a diagonal position across it, not lining the banks, as might have been expected. But whether this disposition of them was original, or due to one of the many changes of direction the river has undergone, it would be impossible to say. It seems certain that in the level lands between Chertsey, Weybridge, and Walton the present course of the Thames is not identical with that anciently traced, and that the river has cut out for itself between Shepperton and Walton a way considerably to the north. There still exists a lake, very long and very narrow, in the grounds of Oatlands Park, between Weybridge and Walton, which is reputed to be a part of the olden course of the Thames. It has been pointed out, as a proof of these changes, that there are in this neighbourhood several instances of detached portions of parishes, situated, contrary from expectation, on opposite sides of the river. Thus Chertsey and Walton, both in Surrey, own respectively

fourteen and eight acres in Middlesex. Laleham, in Middlesex, possesses twenty-two acres in Surrey, and Shepperton twenty-one acres. Eighteen of these more particularly concern this discussion, since they are part of the ancient grazing-ground of Coway Sale. The name "Coway" has been assumed by some, having reference to the ford, or supposed ford, at Coway Stakes, to be a corruption of "causeway," while others find in it, according to the spelling they adopt, Cowey = Cow Island, or Coway = Cow Way. The supporters of the last-named form are those who refuse to recognise this place as the true site of Cæsar's crossing. They point out—ignoring the diagonal course of a ford at this point, heading down river, instead of straight across—that the placing of the stakes more resembled the remains of an ancient weir or wooden bridge than the defences described by Cæsar, and say, further, that their being shod with lead or iron is a proof that they formed part of some deliberately constructed work and not a hastily thrown up defence. The position of the stakes, four feet apart and in a double row, with a passage of nine feet between, has given rise to an ingenious speculation that they formed an aid to fording the river, both for passengers and cattle, instead of being designed as an obstruction. This, then, according to that view, was the Cow Way, principally devoted to the convenience of the cattle belonging to Shepperton, to go and return between that place and the detached grazing-grounds of Coway Sale on the Surrey side of the river.

But that there has been fighting hereabouts is





GRAVE OF THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK'S DAUGHTER, SHEPPERTON.





evident enough in the name of a portion of the grounds of Shepperton Manor House, known from time immemorial as "War Close." At the time when Coway Stakes were driven into the bed of the river, to form a safe passage for the cows, or in the futile hope of withstanding the advance of the masterful Romans, the river must have spread like some broad lagoon over the surrounding meadows, and



BRADSHAW'S HOUSE, WALTON-ON-THAMES.

would have been much more shallow than now. Walton Bridge, in its great length, much of it devoted to crossing those low-lying meadows, gives point to this contention.

The village of Walton-on-Thames is at the end of its tether as a village, and the only interesting things in it are its church, and what is known as the "Old Manor House." Dark yews form a fine setting to the old church, whose tower of flint and rubble, with repairs effected in brick, survives untouched by

the restorer of recent years. The interior, although greatly suburbanised, discloses some as yet unspoiled Transitional-Norman portions. Here, in the stonework near the pulpit, is cut the famous non-committal verse ascribed to Queen Elizabeth, on the sacramental bread-and-wine :

Christ was the worde and spake it ;  
He took the bread and brake it ;  
And what the Worde doth make it,  
That I believe and take it.

Here is preserved a scold's, or gossip's, bridle, otherwise "the branks," an old English instrument of punishment and repression for a scolding or gossiping woman. On it is, or was, the inscription,

Chester presents Walton with a bridle  
To curb women's tongues that talk too idle.

The instrument is now so rusted that it is difficult, if not impossible, to trace the words. The date of it, and who this Chester was, are not known ; but legend has long told that he was a gentleman who lost a valuable estate in the neighbourhood through the malevolence and irresponsibility of a lying woman.

The bridle, originally of bright steel, was made to pass over the head, and round it, and is provided with a flat piece of metal, two inches in length and one in breadth, for insertion in the mouth, the effect being to press the tongue down and to prevent speech. It is duly provided with hinges and a padlock.

For many years it hung by a chain in the vestry, and thus became injured and rusted ; but in 1884 it was enclosed in an oaken, glass-fronted cabinet ; so its further preservation is assured.



BRASS TO JOHN SELWYN.

On a board suspended against the chancel wall are four small brasses of the Selwyn family, showing John Selwyn and his wife Susan, and their eleven children. He was keeper of the royal park of Oatlands, and died in 1587. On one of them, Selwyn himself, is

represented mounted on a stag and in the act of plunging a hunting-knife through the animal's neck. This traditionally represents an actual occurrence. It seems that when Queen Elizabeth was once hunting at Oatlands, a stag stood at bay and made as if to attack her; whereupon Selwyn jumped from his horse on to the stag's back, and killed it in the manner shown.

Several elaborate monuments are to be seen here, including that of Richard Boyle, Viscount Shannon, who died in 1740. The life-size statues of himself and his wife are by Roubiliac.

The "Old Manor House" has of late years been rescued from its former condition of slum tenements. It stands off some bylanes, where there is a good deal of poor cottage property, and was long subdivided into small dwellings. A long, low building of timber, lath, and plaster, it dates back to the time of Henry the Eighth, and was then probably the residence of the keeper, or ranger, of Oatlands Park; and perhaps the residence one time of that John Selwyn of whose notable deed mention has just been made. In after-years it was associated with Ashley Park, and in Cromwell's time was occupied by Bradshaw, President of the Council, and one of the signatories of Charles the First's death-warrant. If one were to credit the old rustic legends and tales of wonder, this would be a historic spot indeed; for the old Surrey peasantry firmly believed that Bradshaw not only lived here, and was a party to the King's execution, but that he executed him with his own hands, on the premises, and buried him under the flooring. English



WALTON-ON-THAMES CHURCH.









HALLIFORD.



WATERSPLASH NEAR HALLIFORD.

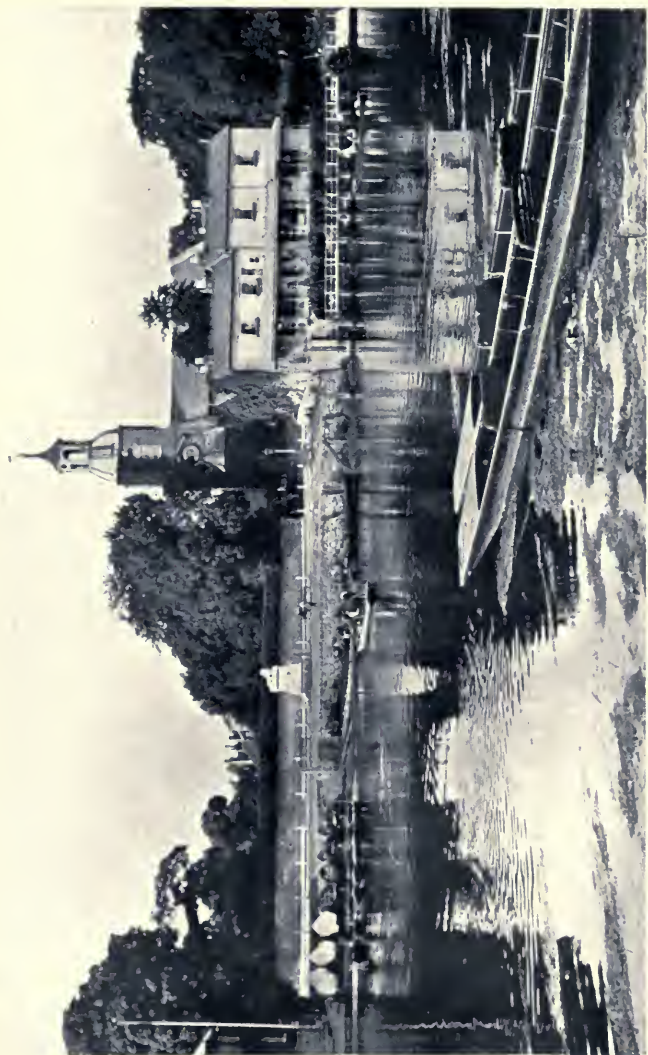


history, it will be perceived, written from the rustic point of view, should be entertaining

Leaving Walton behind, the Thames Valley is seen to have become the prey of those many water companies which some few years since were all merged into the Metropolitan Water Board. Between them and the spread of London, the once beautiful scenery of the reaches of the Thames has in long stretches been completely spoiled. Not sheer necessity, only bestial stupidity, has caused this truly lamentable condition of affairs. With the immense modern growth of the metropolis, it is specially desirable that the beauty of the river at its gates should have been jealously safeguarded, but it has been given over to those true spoilers, the waterworks engineer and the speculative builder; and the interesting and beautiful old-world villages and forgotten corners that survive do but increase the regret felt for those others that have been wantonly extinguished. The Surrey side of the river between Walton and Molesey has been made monotonously formal with the embankments of great reservoirs; and it is only when Molesey Lock is reached that their depressing society is shaken off. On the Middlesex side, that part of Sunbury where the bizarre semi-Byzantine modern church of the place stands is the only unspoiled spot until Hampton Court comes in sight, and between the two we have perhaps the very worst exhibition of those outrages of which the water companies have been guilty. There, on either side of the road, a long, unlovely line of engine-houses and pumping-stations stretches; but hideous though

it may be from the road, it is worse when seen from the river. There is always an entirely gratuitous ugliness in a water company's engine-houses, and these examples are not by any means exceptions ; being built in a kind of yellow-white brick, with a long series of chimneys and water-towers that have already been proved insufficiently tall and have each in consequence been lengthened with what look like exaggerated twin stove-pipes. It is a distressing and unlovely paradox that the buildings and precincts of waterworks are invariably dry and husky, gritty and coaly places, and these bring no variation to that rule. The roads are blackened with coal-dust, the chimneys belch black smoke, and the poor little strips of grounds that run beside the river, with lawns, and some few anæmic trees, seem parched up. The Thames Ditton and Surbiton front of the river is in the same manner defiled with engine-houses and intakes, with coal-wharves and filter-beds, and with nearly half a mile of ugly retaining-wall. The especial pity of all these things is that they were not at all necessary where they are. They would have been just as efficient if placed in some position out of sight, away from the river bank, and could so have been placed, with a small expenditure for additional piping, instead of being the eyesore they are.

The village of Thames Ditton still keeps its rustic church, with curious old font, and the Swan by the waterside stands very much as it did when Theodore Hook wrote enthusiastic verses about it ; but Surbiton, and Kingston, Hampton Court, Teddington, and Twickenham—what shall we make of these,



SUNBURY.



now that electric tramways have girded them about with steel? Only by the actual riverside is Nature left very much to herself, and there, where the water roars over the weir of Teddington, you do find the river unspoiled. But it is only necessary to walk a few steps back from the river, into Teddington village that was, and is, alas! no longer—for a sadness to take possession of you. There you see not only a suburbanised village, but even perceive the original suburbanisation (an ugly word for an ugly process) of about 1870 to be now down upon its luck, in the spectacle of the villas of that date offered numerous to be let, with few takers. What is the reason of this? you ask. Electric tramways. They are the reason. Also, if you do but explore farther inland, you shall find more reasons, in the discovery that Teddington is now quite a busy town, and therefore offers no longer that charm of comparative seclusion it possessed when those villas of the seventies were built.

But there are yet other reasons, chief among them the very bulky and imposing one of the modern parish church of St. Alban, which rises like some great braggart bully, and utterly dwarfs the poor old parish church opposite, now degraded to the condition of a mortuary chapel, or the like, and doubtless to be demolished so soon as ever public opinion is found to be in an indifferent mood. It is not a beautiful old church, being indeed an Early Georgian affair of red brick, but it is representative of a period, and, with the Peg Woffington almshouses near by, is all that remains of old Teddington.



The neighbourhood of the great new church, built handsomely in stone, in a Frenchified variant of that First Pointed style we are accustomed to name "Early English," is sufficient to frighten away any would-be resident, for it is as large as many a cathedral, and will be larger yet, when foolish people are found to subscribe toward the completion of its tower. If all this stood for religion instead of merely for religiosity—a very different thing—there would be nothing to say; but when we perceive the clergy, all over the country, striving for funds towards heaping up of stone and brick and mortar, all intended towards the end of aggrandising their own discredited order, and of again bringing about the imprisonment of men's consciences, we can only imagine that the devil laughs and the Saviour grieves. Meanwhile, the great unfinished building dominates the place, and its long unbroken roof helps to spoil the view up-river, nearly two miles away.

If we may call Teddington a town, then, by comparison, Twickenham, adjoining it, is a metropolis. All this Middlesex side of the river is, in fact, spoiled, but the river itself, and the lawns and parks fringing it, are, happily, little affected, and none, wandering along the towing-paths, would suspect the existence of those great populations on the other side of quite a narrow belt of trees. The only inkling of them is when the wind sets from the streets and brings the strains of a piano-organ, the cries of the hawkers, or the squeaking of tramcar-wheels against curves, yelling like damned souls in torment.



A BUSY DAY, MOLESEY LOCK.



The older part of Twickenham centres about the church, one of those pagan eighteenth-century boxes of red and yellow and grey brick that are so familiar along these outer fringes of London. The old church sank into ruin in 1713, but the tower of it remains.

In the churchwardens' accounts of some two hundred years ago we gain some diverting glimpses of an older Twickenham. Thus, in 1698, we find, "Item: Paid old Tomlins for fetching home the church-gates, being thrown into ye Thames in ye night by drunkards, 2s. 6d. "; and "Item: To Mr. Guisbey, for curing Doll Bannister's nose, 3s."

The old and slummy lanes that here lead down to the waterside are bordered with houses that date back to the time of those entries.

In the church is a monument to Pope, with an epitaph written by himself, "For one who would not be buried in Westminster Abbey": the last scornful effort of his bitter spirit. The stone in the floor that marks his actual resting-place is covered over, and many therefore seek his grave in vain. I have, in fact, myself thus vainly sought it; questing in the first instance among the tombs in the churchyard, to the puzzlement of a group of working-men engaged upon a job there.

"What you looking for, gov'nor?" asked one.

"I want to find Pope's grave."

"Don't know the name," said he. "'Ere, Bill"—raising his voice to one of his mates a little way off—"d'ye know where a bloke named Pope is berried?"

O! horror.

An epitaph upon Kitty Clive, the actress, who died in 1758, may be seen here, among those to other notabilities.

From the crowded streets of Twickenham let us escape by means of Twickenham Ferry. Crossing the river at this point, Twickenham is seen at its best ; for here the gardens of the three or four great mansions that yet remain entirely mask the ravages of late years. But even so, those who have known the scene from of old cannot look upon it altogether without regrets for the noble cedars of the estate known as "Mount Lebanon," among the very finest—perhaps *the* very finest—in the land, wantonly cut down some few years since.



TEDDINGTON WEIR.





## CHAPTER IX

### PETERSHAM

THE most complete oasis in all these developments is Petersham, on the Surrey side: Petersham, and Ham, and Ham Common. There railways come not, nor tramways. At Petersham are few but old houses and the time-honoured mansions of the great of bygone centuries, inhabited nowadays by the small and futile. So, at any rate, I gather them to be from the sweeping remark made to me some years ago by an man whom I discovered leaning meditatively over a fence, contemplating the view across Petersham meadows.

“ Purty place, ain’t it ? ” said he.

“ It is indeed,” said I.

“ Ah ! ” he resumed, “ boy and man, I’ve lived here forty year. I remember the time when the people as lived here *was* people. Now there’s nobody here worth a damn.”

The Duke of Buccleuch lived near by in those halcyon times.

Pleasant hearing, this, for a new-comer who had just taken over a long lease in this region of souls so worthless. This shocking old cynic was—— But

no matter; suffice it that he was one who ought to have put it differently.

Yet there are some of the elect, the salt of the earth, who pleasantly savour the lump. Indeed, I live at Petersham myself.

But even here there are woeful changes, Instead of the three inns that formerly graced the village, there are now but two: the Petersham Arms went about fifteen years ago, and now there are but the Dysart Arms and the Fox and Duck. If you want further variety, you must resort to the Fox and Goose, at Ham, or the New Inn, Ham Common. Besides this grievous thing, the landscape is seared by an undesirable novelty, in the shape of a new, very red, red-brick church, which partakes in equal parts of the likeness of a pumping-station and a crematorium. Woodman, spare those trees that grow around it, and Nature, kindly mother, do thou add yet more to their height and size, that we may not, in our going forth and our return, have it, and all it means, constantly before eyes and mind. It has, in addition, lately been furnished with bells, of sorts, that commence early in the morning and wake one untimeously from sleep, often with an air associated with the words of that pagan hymn, "A few more years shall roll." Pagan, I say, because it tells us that when those few years shall have rolled

. . . we shall be with those that rest  
Asleep within the tomb.

It is a godless teaching. We shall *not* be asleep



TWICKENHAM CHURCH.



PETERSHAM POST-OFFICE.



within the tomb. Our poor bodies, yes, but they are not us. In any case, it is not a pleasant reminder, several times a day, that we shall soon be dead. Church-bells, whatever the legal aspect of the case, are in fact licensed nuisances, established without consulting those who have to hear them, and continually rung without any necessity, in spite of indignant protests.

In this rustic spot we have two churches, two inns, one general shop, a decreasing population, and a general post-office which will hold, all at once, if they are not very big people, and if they stand close together, quite six persons. Exactly what it is like, let this illustration show. It will be seen at once, and without any difficulty whatever, that it is a very humble relation indeed of the General Post-Office in St. Martin's-le-Grand.

There are some curious survivals at Petersham, the more curious because they survive at these late times in such comparatively close proximity to London. Adjoining the Fox and Duck Inn—one of the two aforesaid—is a little wooden building that looks like nothing else than an outhouse for gardening tools. It is really an old village lock-up for petty misdemeanants, such as may often be seen in remote rural places. Behind it is another old institution, equally disused, although it is not so very long since a strayed donkey was placed there. It is the village pound for lost and wandering cattle found upon the road and placed in the pound—impounded—until a claimant appears and pays a shilling to the beadle for release. The present

condition of the pound is such that no animal placed in it could well be kept there, for the fence is decayed, and all attempts at maintaining the old institution appear to have been given up. A magnificent crop of nettles and thistles now grows within, and would make it an ideal place for any donkey that might chance to be impounded: donkeys being reputedly fonder of them than of any other kind of food.

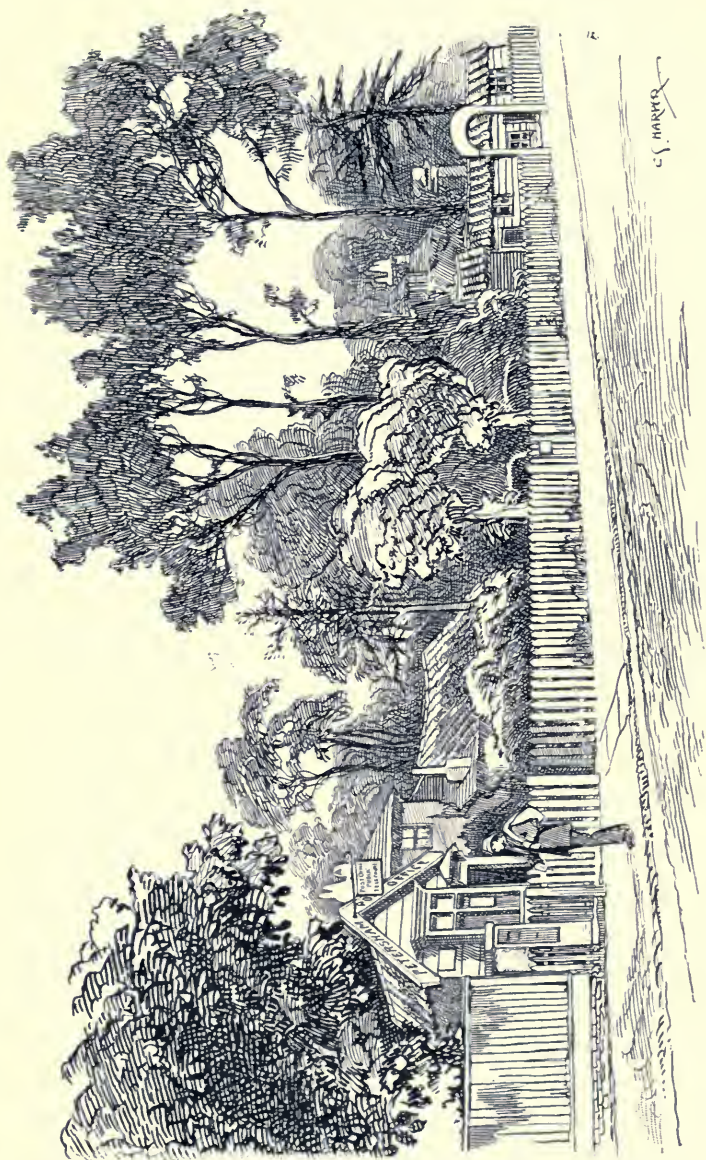
“Why does a donkey prefer thistles to corn or grass?  
Because he’s an ass.”

Close by this quaint corner the two old curiously gabled Dutch-looking cottages pictured here are seen. The space between them is now merely a yard occupied by the Richmond Corporation for storing carts and road-making materials, but these were once the lodge-gates to the entrance of Petersham Park, in the old times when it was a private estate containing old Petersham Lodge, the mansion of my Lord Harrington, that peer to whom the poet Thomson, of “*The Seasons*,” alluded in his lines on the view from Richmond Hill:

“There let the feasted eye unwearied stray;  
Luxurious, there, rove through the pendant woods  
That nodding hang o’er Harrington’s retreat.”

The view in these pages shows a glimpse of those pendant woods, still flourishing up along the ridge of Richmond Park, but it is now the better part of a hundred years since the Commissioners of Woods and Forests purchased that peer’s old estate, demolished the mansion, and added the land as a





PETERSHAM POST-OFFICE.





very beautiful annexe to Richmond Park. The cottages, with their little gardens, are charming, and would be even more so were they red bricks of which they are built, instead of common yellow stock brick.

I have just now remarked that there are at Petersham those who are numbered of the elect. But it must sadly be admitted that not all in the borough of Richmond, in which we have the doubtful honour of being included, are of the opinion that Petersham is inhabited by the children of light and grace. Indeed, the following remarks of a deleterious and poisonous character, lately brought to my notice, convince me that there exists among some misguided folk up yonder an idea that this most delightful of surviving villages within a short distance of London is inhabited wholly, or at least largely, by the mentally afflicted. This desolating and alarming belief was brought home to me by a friend, who hired a conveyance at Richmond station, to be brought down to our idyllic village.

“Where to, sir?” asked the flyman.

“Petersham.”

“Ah!” exclaimed the driver—this was entirely uncalled-for, you know—“you mean balmy Petersham.”

“Yes,” rejoined the unsuspecting stranger, “the air there *is* good, I suppose.”

“I don’t mean the hair,” he was astonished to be told, “but the people what lives there. Don’t you know that they’re all balmy on the crumpet—what you call ‘off it’?”

My poor friend looked a little astonished at this. I am afraid he is not intimately acquainted with the language of the streets.

“ Oh ! *you* know ! ” continued the man, noticing this air of bewilderment : “ they’re dotty, that’s what they are.”

“ You mean *non compos mentis*,” rejoined my friend at last, comprehending what was meant, and heroically and waggishly endeavouring to get a bit of his own back, and in turn to mystify this derogatory licensed hackney-driver.

The man, convinced that he had happened upon a “ sanguinary German,” said : “ Yus, I suppose that’s what you call it in your country,” and mounted his box, and in silence drove down to this asylum for the “ balmy.”

It should be said that we in Petersham, who live quietly and engage in delightful pursuits—such as writing books, flower-growing, and criticising our neighbours—do by no means endorse this opinion of our surroundings. As we are of the elect, so also are we exceptionally sane, even among the level-headed. But there is a reason to be found in most things, even in the remarks above quoted. That reason is sought and discovered in the fact that our village is unique : the only place within its easy radius from London in which the surroundings are unspoiled, the air pure, and the means of communication with the great neighbouring roaring world primitive and not readily at command. The nearest railway station is a mile and a quarter away, and such services of omnibuses as have run between



PETERSHAM: THE "FOX AND DUCK," OLD LOCK-UP AND VILLAGE POUND.

C. HARPER



Kingston and Richmond, through Petersham, have ever been fugitive and evanescent, and have generally run at intervals of not less than twenty minutes. The peculiar humour or the peculiar tragedy—according to point of view—of these omnibus services is that in fine weather every one wants to walk, and in rain all want to ride ; so that in the first case the omnibuses are empty, and in the second cannot cope with the sudden and unlooked-for demand, and one has perforce to walk home and get wet through, or alternatively to wait until the rain ceases.

And during the last remarkable summers there have been occasions when it has rained in torrents, without ceasing, for four days !

My pen, entered upon the woes of the would-be passenger by omnibus, has run away with me, and I must at once disclaim the dawning conclusion that the alleged “ balminess ” of Petersham is due to rain and the lack of conveyances other than the comparatively expensive flies. Those are not the reasons. Petersham, being entirely rural, even though surrounded by great populations, and yet being near London, it is found by the medical profession to be a convenient district for recommending to patients to whom, for a variety of reasons, it would be inconvenient to go remotely into the provinces. Here, then, qualified somewhat of late years by fleeting irruptions of motor-cars, and by brake-loads of mischievous and bell-ringing children who are brought down from London in summer for school-treats in Petersham Park, invalids may hope to obtain a happy recovery, even though the air,

instead of being sharp and bracing, is steamy and languorous. Thus the expression "balmy Petersham," whether used in the literate sense, or in the regular way of slang, if duly analysed, is found to be essentially a proud title to consideration, instead of a term of reproach. The neighbouring village of Ham is a co-partner in these things, perhaps even in a greater degree, for it is equally distant from a railway station, and fringes a wide common whose remotest corners are at all times extremely secluded.

I spoke just now of mischievous and bell-ringing children, but there are others not intentionally mischievous, who are yet, perhaps, apt to be a little wearing to the nerves of quiet folk who live within gardens behind tall wooden fences overhung by flowering shrubs, such as lilac and syringa. These are a great temptation in their flowering season to all kinds of persons who ought to be able to enjoy the sight of them without tearing off branches; but the Goth and the Vandal we have always with us on Bank Holidays and fine Sundays and Saturday afternoons. We expect them, and our expectations are commonly realised. But sorrow's crown of sorrow is reached when, hearing a crash of boards, you rush out and find a dismayed child standing among the ruins of a part of your fence, and explaining that she "didn't mean it, and was only reaching up to pick a bit of syringa for nyture study." And to this the modern attempt to inculcate the study and the love of Nature brings us!

Before reluctantly I leave Petersham, let something be said as to its name. And, firstly, let it be





PETERSHAM, FROM THE MIDDLESEX SHORE.

CSMORR



duly borne in mind that we who reside here are perhaps a little concerned that the place-name shall be properly pronounced. Petersham, we like to think, is the real thing, with no sham about it at all. Hence the particularity with which "Peters-ham" is enunciated by the nice in these things; even as the villagers of Bisham, near Marlow, say "Bis-ham," or (the tongue being ever at odds with the letter H) "Bis-sam."

Petersham obtained its name as long ago as those dim Saxon times when the great mitred Abbey of Chertsey was founded and dedicated to St. Peter. In charters of those times the land here is noted as the property of that Abbey, and the place is called "Patriceham" and "Patricesham." In the Cartulary of Merton Abbey, in 1266, it becomes "Petrichesham." It thus would appear fairly conclusive that the name originated with the land becoming the property of St. Peter's Abbey at Chertsey, and in no other way. But none of those who delve deeply into the origins of place-names is ever satisfied with things as they are; and it would now appear that an effort has been made to derive "Petersham" from a supposititious early Saxon landowner, a certain—or as we find no real documentary or other evidence of his existence here, it would be better to say an uncertain—"Beadric," whose "ham" it is thus assumed to have been. This is a heroic attempt to argue from the old original name of the town we now call "Bury St. Edmunds," which was in its beginning "Beadric's-worth." Although the Saxon name of "Beadric" was not uncommon, it is surely

something of an effort to drag this East Anglian example out of Suffolk arbitrarily to fit a place in Surrey; even though, in the course of the same argument, in citing the well-known parallel derivation of "Battersea" from the land there having anciently been the property of the Abbey of St. Peter at Westminster, it is found that in the original charter of A.D. 693 the place-name is spelled "Batricesege." This becomes, in a charter of 1067, "Batriceseie" or "Patriceseia."

One somewhat speculative blocked-up lancet window of the Early English period is the remotest thing that remains to Petersham old church; which is, for the rest, chiefly of George the First's time. It is, of course, dedicated to St. Peter. Nowhere do we find the slightest real trace of the ancient cell of Chertsey Abbey which is supposed to have existed here, on the Abbey lands. The curious mass of brickwork along the footpath leading out of River Lane and between the gardens of Church Nursery and the filter-beds of the Richmond waterworks, is commonly said to have been a portion of those ancient ecclesiastical buildings, but no one has ever discovered the slightest hint of church or monastic architecture about that problematical fragment, nor has its purpose been hinted at. The footpath rises sharply between somewhat high walls, and is indeed carried over an arch. The old village folk long knew the spot as "Cockcrow Hill"; but during the last two years, in course of the works undertaken for the neighbouring filter-beds, the brickwork has been patched and the pitch of the



THE OLD LODGES OF PETERSHAM PARK.





lane leading over the arch lowered ; so, doubtless, the name of "Cockcrow Hill" will become among the things forgot. If a theory may be entertained where no facts are available, this building was probably a bridge across some long-vanished or diverted stream which at one time flowed from the high ground of what is now Richmond Park, across these level meadows, and so into the Thames.

But if there be indeed no architectural features in this brickwork, there is an almost monastic air of seclusion about the rather grim and very picturesque old seventeenth-century gazebo that stands beside this self-same lane. There is some speculative interest in it, for no one can certainly declare to what this old four-square two-storeyed building of red brick, with the queer peaked roof, belonged. The presumption is that it was at one time a gazebo, or garden-pavilion, attached to the walled garden of Rutland Lodge, adjoining, an early seventeenth-century mansion, the oldest house in Petersham. Presumably, when it was built, its upper windows, some of them long since blocked, had a clear look-out across the unenclosed meadows to the river. The meadows are still there, but a fenced-in garden and an orchard now intervene, and by some unexplainable changes, the building, although at the angle of the walled garden of Rutland Lodge, has no communication with it, and is in fact included within the grounds of Church Nursery and the garden of the modern house called since 1907 "Rosebank," presumably for the usual contradictory reasons that roses have ever been conspicuously absent from that garden,



and that the site is a dead level. Much patching and altering has been done at times to the old gazebo, and attempts have been made to convert it into a cottage. Hence the added fireplaces and the chimney, not requisite in a garden summer-house, but indispensable for living in. Otherwise, the lot of the old building has been the common and almost invariable fate of such—neglect, and a surrender to spiders. The cult of the gazebo came in originally with the Renaissance from Italy, and as it was not an indigenous, so it was neither a hardy growth in this land of ours, where the sunshine is never oppressively hot for the house, and chills all too often are the portion of the garden-dweller. Thus the numerous, and often highly picturesque, gazebos and pavilions to be found attached to old English gardens are most often seen to be deserted and in the last stages of disrepair. The gallant fight against climatic conditions has had to be abandoned.

Another hopeless fight against overpoweringly adverse conditions ended here in 1907, when the famous Star and Garter Hotel on Richmond Hill was closed. We who make Petersham our home know well that the "Star and Garter" is closed, if only for the reason that, it being situated in the parish, the loss to the local rates incidental to the closing meant a sudden rise of ninepence in the pound. We are thus hoping, without in the least expecting it, that some greatly daring person or corporation will be good enough to take and open it again. This increased demand, added to the hungry re-assessments recently made, and to the other increases



RIVER LANE, PETERSHAM.



caused by the extravagant proceedings of the Richmond Corporation, which would appear to carry on the business of the town on behalf of the tradesmen instead of the residents, is rendering the neighbourhood an increasingly costly one to live in. Every one would now seem to share the fallacious belief that to live in Richmond one must necessarily be rich. True, one will presently need to be if things continue on the lines of recent developments.

Meanwhile, will no one take the poor old "Star and Garter"? It really seems as if no one would, for at least two unsuccessful attempts have been made to dispose of it at auction. The property was stated by the auctioneer to have cost £140,000. He described it in a phrase which sounds like a quotation, as "a far-famed hostelry, a palace of pleasure on a hill of delight." He also declared the view from it to be "the finest prospect in England, perhaps in the world." But he was not prepared, it seems, to assure the purchaser of a much finer prospect still: that of a dividend from the purchase, and so the result was a bid of only £20,000. The second attempted sale resulted in no bid being made at all.

The "Star and Garter" was ever noted for its high charges, framed to match its lofty situation and the exalted station of many of the guests who of old patronised it. Louis Philippe, King of the French, and Queen Amélie resided there for months at a time, and were frequently visited by Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort. The unhappy Napoleon the Third, the ill-starred Emperor Maxi-

milian of Mexico, the equally ill-fated Prince Imperial, and other crowned, or prospectively crowned, heads were the merest every-day frequenters; but the "Star and Garter" long since discovered that there were not enough crowned heads to go round. Nor did the enterprising Christopher Crean, sometime cook to the old Duke of York, who took it and reopened it after an old-time disastrous interval of five years, in 1809, find that he could secure constant relays of visitors to pay him, as some were stated to have done, half a guinea for the mere privilege of looking out from the windows upon the beauties of the Thames Valley.

It would seem, in conclusion, that the coming of motor-cars has finally rendered the huge "Star and Garter" impossible. Time was when the drive to Richmond was a delightful and leisurely affair, occupying in the coming and the going a considerable part of the day. Motor-cars and taxicabs have rendered it a matter of minutes only, and those who used to lunch or dine at Richmond now do the like, just as luxuriously, and almost as quickly by modern methods of travel, at Brighton, Hastings, or Eastbourne.

I have written much elsewhere of Petersham, in a little book called *Rural Nooks round London*, and so will now leave the subject for the last Thames-side nooks that can by any means claim to preserve to this day any relics of their old village life. The first of these is Isleworth, in Middlesex.

## CHAPTER X

### ISLEWORTH—BRENTFORD AND CÆSAR'S CROSSING OF THE THAMES

ISLEWORTH, an ancient and almost forgotten village overlooking the Thames, is not by any manner of means to be confounded with the station of that name, or with the better-known outlying portion of the parish known as Old Isleworth. The reason of this popular ignorance of Isleworth is easily to be found in the pronounced bend of the river by which it stands, the great roads in the neighbourhood going approximately direct, and leaving Isleworth in a very rarely travelled nook, not often penetrated, except by those who have some especial reason for calling at Isleworth itself. It is thus a singularly old-world place, and, strangely enough, it is more often seen from afar, from the towing-path on the Surrey side, than at hand.

The village, however little known it may be to-day, was sufficiently well known to the compilers of Domesday Book, in whose pages it appears in the grotesque spelling, "Ghistelworde." Afterwards it is found written Yhistleworth, Istelworth, Ysselsworth, and at last, before the present formula was found for it, "Thistleworth." A vast deal of con-

tention has raged around the meaning of the place-name, and with such an orthographic choice you could give it almost any meaning you chose; but there can be little question but that it comes from two words, the Celtic *uisc* for water, and the Saxon *worth* for village. It is, indeed, distinctly a water-village, for not only does the Thames flow by it, but here the Crane, rising near Northolt, and coming down through Cranford, falls into the Thames, near by a little nameless brook that rises on Norwood Green. It is indeed the confluence of the Crane and the Thames that contributes so largely to the picturesqueness, the somewhat squalid waterside picturesqueness, of Isleworth; for the outlet of the smaller into the larger river is closed by little dock-gates, and the space thus shut in is presided over by the huge, and in themselves unbeautiful, flour mills of Messrs. Samuel Kidd & Sons. There is, however, always a something attractive about flour-mills, let the builders of them build never so prosaically; and here, where the little stream comes sliding out beneath the massive buildings, and where the road passes over the little dock, the sight of the barges coming up, each laden with their thousand or so quarters of wheat for the mills, is found generally interesting, especially to boys sent about some urgent business; the more immediate and pressing the errand, the more attractive the mills; which have their historical interest to the well-read in local story, for they are the successors, on this same spot, of the ancient water-mills of the Abbey of Sion.

Most of the houses at Isleworth are old brick





ISLEWORTH.



structures, with heavily sashed windows, and the humbler houses and cottages are very much out of repair. There is a look of the passive mood and of the past tense about the place, and you expect (and probably would find if you inquired) holes in the stockings of every other inhabitant, patches on their posteriors, and mere apologies for soles on their footgear; while shocking bad hats are the only wear. The artist who knows what's what will already have perceived that Isleworth is a place likely to have pictorial qualities, and in his supposition he will be quite correct. It would certainly have captivated Whistler. Imagine the parish church on the river-bank, at the end of this rather feckless street of houses; imagine a very large old inn, the London Apprentice, almost dabbling in the water, and then conceive two large islands, or eyots, or aits, as they may with equal correctitude be called, off-shore, dividing the stream of Thames in two. They are extremely interesting eyots, for they grow to this day abundance of osiers, whose periodical harvesting, for the making of baskets, is a by no means negligible local industry. Lately I walked through Isleworth on the day before Christmas, and there, stepping down between two rows of little tenements forming Tolson's Almshouses, and looking down upon the river from the railed wall at the farther end, could be seen lying six or eight great barges that had come, not from foreign climes, but from the creeks and ports of the Essex and the Kentish coasts, from the Swale, the Medway, the Blackwater, or the Crouch. Each and all of them had at their mastheads a

bundle of holly fastened to a spar, in honour of the coming Day. Beyond them rose the ivy-clad tower of the church, and an occasional pallid gleam of sunshine broke upon the river. It was a pretty and a touching scene.

A great deal of very unreliable and really unveracious "history" has been written about the inn, the London Apprentice, said to have been a favourite haunt of highwaymen, among whom our ubiquitous old friend, Dick Turpin, of course figures; but we may disregard such tales. It was once, however, a favourite resort for water-parties from London.

The tower of the church is a really beautiful and sturdy pinnacled stone Gothic building, but the body of the church was rebuilt in 1705, from designs left, so it is said, by Sir Christopher Wren; and it is, within and without, typical of the style then prevalent: that well-known type of exterior of red brick, pierced with tall, factory-like windows, and an interior modelled after a "classic" type, with galleries, and painted and gilded more like a place of amusement than a place of worship.

A few much-worn brasses remain from an older building, notably one to Margaret Dely, a Sister of Sion during the brief revival of the Abbey under Queen Mary.

But the most interesting monument is one of ornate design, in marble, placed in the west entrance lobby, under the tower. This is partly to the memory of Mrs. Ann Tolson, and partly to Dr. Caleb Cotesworth, and narrates, in the course of a very long epitaph, a



THE DOCK AT ISLEWORTH.



THE "LONDON APPRENTICE," ISLEWORTH.



romantic story. Ann Tolson was the donor of the group of almshouses already mentioned, for six poor men and an equal number of poor women. She married, as the epitaph very minutely tells us, firstly Henry Sisson and then one John Tolson. When he died "she was reduced to Narrow and Confined Circumstances, and supported herself by keeping School for the Education of Young Ladies, for which She was well Qualified by a Natural Ingenuity. A strict and Regular Education, and mild and gentle Disposition. By the loss of Sight She became unfit for her Employment, and a proper object to receive that Charity, She was Sollicitous to Distribute." In the midst of these misfortunes, Dr. Caleb Cotsworth, a connection of hers by marriage, died. As the epitaph, with meticulous particularity goes on to report, he "had By a long and Successful practice at London" amassed a fortune of "One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds and upwards." A part he distributed by his will among relatives, "and the residue, One Hundred and Twenty Thousand Pounds and upwards he gave to his Wife.

They both died on the 2nd May, 1741

BUT SHE SURVIVED,

and Dying Intestate, her Personal Estate became Distributable among her three next Of Kin, one of whom was the above Ann Tolson. With a sense of this Signal Deliverance and unexpected Change from a State of Want, to Riches and Affluence, She forthwith appointed the Sum of Five Thousand Pounds to the establishment of Almshouses for Six



men and six women," and then the giddy old thing went and married a third time, although over eighty years of age, one Joseph Dash, merchant, of London. She died, aged 89, in 1750; and this monument, for which she had left £500, for the narration of her interesting story, was soon afterwards duly placed here.

Opposite the monument of this lady is that of Sir Orlando Gee, a factotum of Algernon, Duke of Northumberland and Registrar of the Admiralty, who died in 1705. It is a very fine marble monument, with a half-length portrait effigy of Sir Orlando himself, in the costume and the elaborate wig of his period. He is represented in the act of reading some document unspecified.

The Middlesex shore, when once past Sion Park, now grows thickly cumbered with buildings, and the view of the Surrey side from Middlesex is distinctly preferable to that of Middlesex from Surrey. For on the opposite shore stretch the long reaches of Kew Gardens, whose beauties no one, I suppose, has ever yet exhausted; the grounds are so extensive and their contents so varied, so rich and rare.

But, after all, I see, the extent of Kew Gardens is not so great, measured by acreage instead of their riches. I detest mere facts, and love impressions; but here is a fact, for once in a way books of reference give the size of Kew Gardens as some 350 acres only.

The Director and his colleagues in botany and arboriculture look across to the factory chimneys of Brentford with dismay, and write alarming things

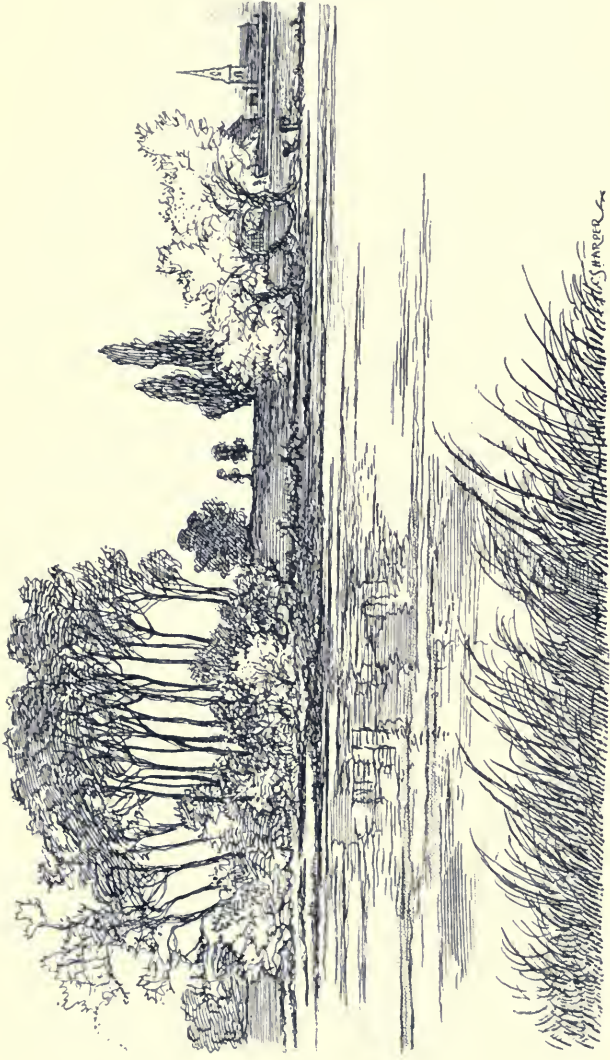
in annual reports about the effects of the noxious fumes from those chimneys upon the trees and plants of the gardens, so Brentford, we may take it, is a menace, and since the Brentford Gas Company is a highly prosperous and expanding business, and is certainly in the front rank as a fume-producer, the menace we may further suppose to be increasing. The end of these things no man can foresee, but the passing away of Kew Gardens would be a thing too grievous to contemplate.

Brentford, it is true, cannot by any means be styled a village, and it owns indeed the dignity of the county town of Middlesex. Thus it would find no place in these pages, were it not that Brentford sets up as the rival of Coway Stakes near Walton, for the honour of being that historic spot where Julius Cæsar crossed the Thames. It is only of recent years that this claim has been put forward, and until then Coway Stakes scarcely knew a competitor. But at different times during dredging operations in the bed of the river, and in the course of building new wharves and other waterside structures, great numbers of ancient oak stakes have been discovered, extending with intervals, from about four hundred yards below Isleworth ferry down to the upper extremity of Brentford eyot. Near Isleworth ferry they were found in 1881, in a threefold line, interlaced with wattles and boughs, and continue, generally in a single line, at intervals, under the river banks, with advanced rows in the bed of the river, past the places where the river Brent falls into the Thames in two branches. The stakes, that

have been numerous extracted in these last thirty years, are in fairly good preservation, and measure in general fifteen inches in circumference.

The criticism, of course, arises here, How could the Britons at such necessarily short notice have executed so extensive a work to impede the passage of the Romans, who came swiftly up from Kent and who could not have been confidently expected at any one point? The stakes extend for about two miles and appear to have been thoroughly and methodically arranged. The wattling, too, is evidence of care and deliberation. Doubts must arise. They may have been already long in existence before Cæsar came, and have been intended for defence against rival tribes; or again, they may not really be so ancient as supposed; and their object merely for the protection of the banks from being eroded by the current.

The name, Brentford, refers of course to a ford across the Brent near its confluence with the Thames, which is broad and deep here; but there was also, doubtless, a ford across the Thames, at this place, for the present depth of the river has been produced in modern times by the industrious dredging works of the Thames Conservancy. But still at low tide between Brentford ferry and Kew bridge the river has normally only three feet depth of water, and in summer sometimes much less. Children can at such times often be seen wading far out into the bed of the stream. There must evidently have been a ford across the Thames here in ancient days, as well as across the Brent, and we know from later historic



“OLD ENGLAND.”

J. HARPER



events that undoubtedly took place here that this junction of rivers was always an important point.

Thus much may be said in support of the modern contention that it was here Cæsar crossed on his way to Verulam, and it may be conceded to those who hold this view that the delta formed by the two outlets of the Brent is curiously named "Old England." It will be found so called on large Ordnance maps, and by that name it has been known from time immemorial. Much significance may be found in that title in such a place as this. Nothing is known as to the origin of it. It has just come down to us from the old, dim ages of oral tradition, and is now fixed by printed maps. The significance of the name is, however, strangely supported by that of a spot far indeed removed from it, but (if we accept the theory that Brentford is really the scene of Cæsar's crossing) most intimately correlated in history. This second name has also been handed down in like manner out of the misty past. We need not wonder at it. Tradition was everywhere strong in times before the people could read, but their memory has become gradually atrophied since they have become literate, and the wisdom and the legends of our forefathers are fading away. Fortunately, the art of printing, which, in conjunction with the widespread ability to read, has destroyed much oral tradition, has at the same time fixed and perpetuated many floating legends and memories.

This fellow traditional name is "Old England's Hsle," the title given by many generations of rustics to a hillock on the summit of Bridge Hill, beside

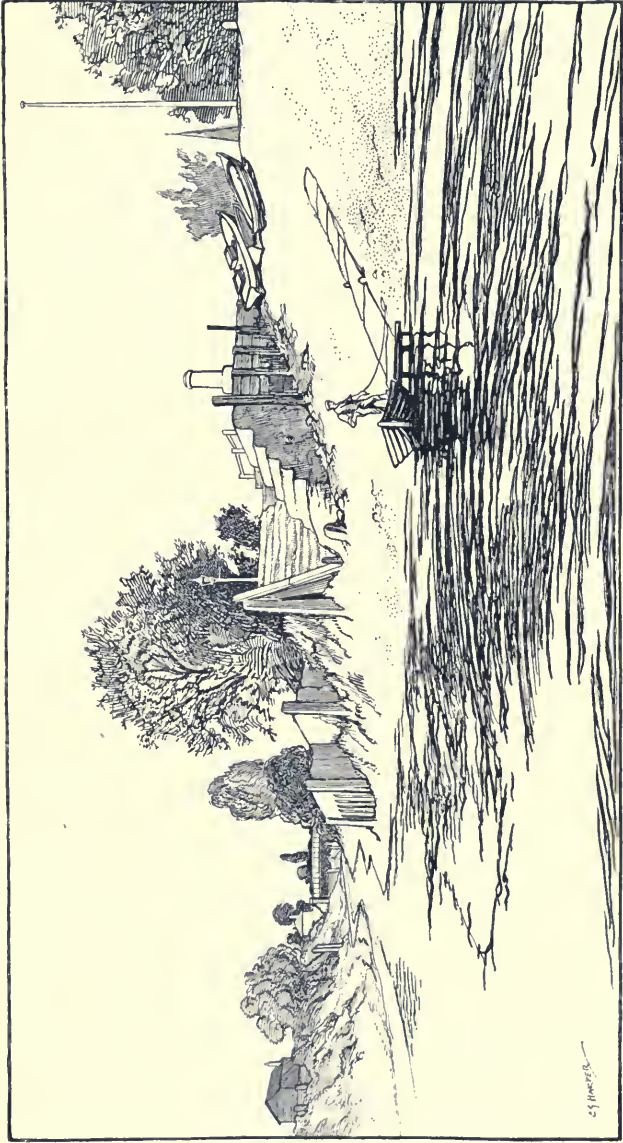


the Dover road between Canterbury and Dover, and adjoining Barham Downs, where Cæsar fought with and defeated the Britons, July 23, 54 B.C. It is a hillock with a crater-like hollow in the crest, and was one of the forts in which the Britons long held out. Cæsar himself, in his *Commentaries*, describes these forts and the storming of them by his soldiers; and the rustics of the neighbourhood have fixed upon this particular spot, and say in effect "This is Old England's Hole, and here a last stand for freedom was made by your British forefathers."

"Old England," on the banks of Brent and Thames, is partly included within Syon Park and in part extends over the squalid canal outlet and the sidings, docks, and warehouses the Great Western Railway has established here; but the name more particularly attaches to the meadow just within the park. It forms from the Surrey shore a charming picture not at all injured by those commercial activities of docks and railways adjoining: perhaps even gaining by contrast. There the earthy banks of the Thames, in general hereabouts steep and some ten or twelve feet high, are lower and shelve gradually; and in the meadows a noble group of bushy poplars stands behind a few willows that look upon the stream. There are trees, too, in the background, and the spire of the modern church of St Paul, Brentford, forms a not unpleasing feature on the right.

Brentford Ferry, down below "Old England," commands an extensive view down river, towards Kew Bridge and along the northern channel of the Thames, divided here into two channels by the long





“OLD ENGLAND” : MOUTH OF THE BRENT, AND BRENTFORD FERRY.



and narrow Brentford Eyot, thickly grown with grass and underwood, and planted with noble trees. It is acutely pointed out by Mr. Montagu Sharpe that the boundary-line dividing the counties of Middlesex and Surrey is not at this point made to follow the stream midway, as customary elsewhere, but is traced along the northern channel ; and he sees in this fact a hint that the original course of the river was along that branch, and assumes that the main stream is of later origin ; that the river at some time later than the era of the Romans made this new way for itself.

On the steep bank above Brentford Ferry there was placed in May 1909 a sturdy granite pillar with inscriptions setting forth the historical character of the spot. The events known to have taken place at Brentford, and the crossing here by Cæsar, now boldly assumed, form a very remarkable list, as this copy of those inscriptions will sufficiently show :

54 B.C.

At this ancient fortified ford the British tribesmen under Cassivellaunus bravely opposed Julius Cæsar on his march to Verulamium.

A.D. 780-1

Near by, Offa, King of Mercia, with his Queen, the bishops, and principal officers, held a Council of the Church.

A.D. 1016

Here Edmund Ironside, King of England, drove Cnut and his defeated Danes across the Thames.

A.D. 1642

Close by was fought the Battle of Brentford, between the forces of King Charles I. and the Parliament.

A.D. 1909

To commemorate these historical events this stone was erected by the Brentford Council.

This memorial has certainly been placed in a most prominent position, and challenges the attention of the passer-by along the footpath past Kew Gardens, on the opposite shore. As you approach by the ferry-boat, the crazy old stone and brick stairs leading steeply up, beside the broad and easy incline of the shingly ferry-slip, look most imposing, and group well with their surroundings.

Where the old original ford across the Brent was situated no man knows, but perhaps near to its junction with the Thames, at a spot where the waters from the greater tidal river rendered the ford impassable except at the ebb. That was the awkward situation of Old Brentford, and one not for very long to be endured by travellers along the great West of England road that runs through this place. Thus it gave way at a very early period to a new ford, somewhat higher up the Brent; and around it in the course of time rose the town of New Brentford, whose being and name in this manner derived directly from the needs of travellers for a ford passable at all hours. The ford was replaced by a bridge in 1280, and that by later stone bridges, or patchings and enlargements of the original. The present representative of them is a quite recent and commodious iron affair, built over the stone arch: very much more convenient for the traffic, but not at all romantic. New Brentford church stands near by;

that of Old Brentford is a good quarter of a mile along the road, back towards London, but there is nothing old or interesting about it, seeing that it was entirely rebuilt a few years ago.

The Brent, as it flows through the town, is not easily to be distinguished amid the several canal cuts, where the close-packed barges lie, but it may with some patience be traced at the western end of the broad and retired road called "The Butts," an ancient name significant of a bygone Brentford, very different from the present aspect of the place. "The Butts" is a broad open space, rather than a road, and the houses, old and new, in it are of a superior residential character that would astonish those—and they are far the greater number—who know Brentford only by passing through its narrow and squalid and tramway-infested main street. "The Butts" would appear to have been an ancient practice-ground in archery.

The Brent appears at the extremity, down below a very steep bank, and barges lie in it, on the hither side of a sluice. It goes thenceforward in a pronounced curve, to fall into the docks, and passes by the backs of old houses and some still surviving gardens, with the church-tower of St. Leonard's, New Brentford, peering over old red roofs and clustered gables.

In an old-world town such as this there are many charming village-like corners and strange survivals, when once you have left the main arteries of traffic. Brentford is, of course, a byword for its narrow, congested, squalid High Street, down which the

gasworks send a quarter-of-a-mile of stink to greet the inquiring stranger; but it is a very long High Street, and the gasmaking is in Old Brentford; and at the westward end, New Brentford, you are far removed from those noisome activities and among the barges instead. It is largely a bargee population at this end; and the bargee himself, the cut of his beard (when he has one it is generally of the chin-tuft fashion affected by the Pharaohs, as seen by the ancient statues in the British Museum), the style of his clothes, and his manner of living his semi-amphibious life are all interesting. It would need a volume to do justice to the history, the quaintnesses, and the anomalies of Brentford, which, although the "county town" of Middlesex, and thus invested with a greater if more nebulous dignity than London—merely the capital of the Empire—is not even a corporate town. If I wanted to justify myself for including it in a book on villages, I should feel inclined to advance this fact, and to add that, although the traditional "two Kings of Brentford," with only one throne between them, are famous in legend, no one ever heard of a Mayor of Brentford, either in legend or in fact. When it is added that Old Brentford owns all the new things, such as the gasworks, the brewery, and the waterworks, and that the old houses are mostly in New Brentford, the thing is resolved into an engaging and piquant absurdity. It is to be explained, of course, in the fact of Old Brentford being so old that it has had to be renewed.

The very names of Brentford's streets tell a tale of

eld. It is only in these immemorially ancient places that such names as "Town Meadow," "The Butts," "The Hollows" "Old Spring Gardens," "New Spring Gardens," "The Ham," "Ferry Lane," or "Half Acre" are met with. They are names that tell of a dead and gone Brentford little suspected by the most of those who pass by. No unpleasing place this waterside town when the "Town Meadow," that is now a slummy close, was really a piece of



FERRY LANE, BRENTFORD.

common land green with grass and doubtless giving pleasantly upon the river. And when Old and New Spring Gardens first acquired their name, perhaps about the age when Herrick wrote his charming poems, or that era when Pepys gossiped, they were no doubt idyllic spots where the springs gushed forth amid shady bowers. To-day they are old-world alleys, with houses declining upon a decrepit age that invites the attention of improving hands. There was an ancient congeries of crooked alleys and



small cottage property near the corner of Half Acre known as "Troy Town." It stood hard by where the District Council offices are now placed, but tall hoardings facing the road now disclose the fact that Troy Town is in process of being abolished. The name is curious, but not unique. It is found frequently in England, and seems generally to occur as the name of an old suburb of a much older town; some place of picnicking and merry-making, where there were arbours, and above all, a maze, either cut in the turf or planted in the form of a hedge, like that most glorious of mazes at Hampton Court. Such were the original "Troy Towns"; and whatever once were the clustered alleys in Brentford that were called by that name, certainly they have carried out to the full, and to the last, the mazy, uncharted idea.

But this old suburb of Old Brentford must at an early date have been swallowed up in the growth of New Brentford and at a remote time have lost everything of its original character except its old traditional name. Names, we know, survive when all else has vanished or been utterly changed.

Ferry Lane is one of Brentford's many quaint corners. There is an old inn there, the "Waterman's Arms," and a stately old mansion, "Ferry House." And there is a curious old malthouse, too, which, in the artistic way, simply makes the fortune of Ferry Lane, so piquant are the outlines of its roofs and its two ventilating shafts, like young lighthouses. Buildings of such simple, yet such picturesque lines do not come into existence nowadays.

And so to leave Brentford, with much of its story untold. To tell it were a long business that would lose the sense of proportion which to some degree, let us hope, distinguishes these volumes. So nothing shall be said of those two mysterious "Kings of Brentford" who shared, according to tradition, the throne; nothing, that is, but to note that a brilliant idea has of late occurred to antiquaries, puzzled beyond measure by these indefinite kings. It is now conceived that the legend originally was of the two kings *at* Brentford, and that so far from sharing one throne happily together, they were Edmund Ironside, the Saxon king, and Canute the invading Dane (or Cnut, as it seems we are expected to style him now), who was severely defeated here by Edmund, and driven out of Brentford across the river.

## CHAPTER XI

STRAND-ON-THE-GREEN—KEW—CHISWICK—  
MORTLAKE—BARNES

THERE is a waterside walk from Brentford to Kew Bridge, commanding a full view of that new and solid, perhaps also stolid, structure of stone, opened May 20, 1903. The old bridge was a more satisfactory affair to the eye, although its roadway was steep, rising sharply as it did from either end to an apex over the middle arch. The arches, boldly and beautifully semicircular, were delightful to look upon, not like the flattened-out segmental spans of the new bridge, which have a heavy and ungraceful appearance, looking for all the world as though they had settled heavily in the making upon their haunches and would presently fall, flop, into the river.

Things change, after all, but slowly here. Much has gone of late years, but much is still left. Here, for example, stands a riverside inn the "Oxford and Cambridge," with a delightful little lawn, exquisitely green, behind a low wall that gives upon the towing-path. It has a very rural look, amid urban surroundings, and at the rear you may yet see a range of old maltings, with cowled ventilators upon their old richly-red tiled roofs, in every way resembling their fellows far down in Kent. But they

are to be let or sold, and for long past the side of them giving upon the road has served the purpose of an advertising station; so the end of these things is at hand.

Kew—called on some old maps “Cue”—across the bridge into Surrey, stands grouped around its green, as of old; the curious church, which is half Byzantine and half of the Queen Anne method, presenting an outline so remarkably suggestive of an early type of locomotive engine that one would scarce be surprised to find some day that it had steamed off.

Kew Green is charming, but there is a dirty little slum down by the riverside, with labyrinthine alleys and corners where children make dust- and mud-pies and women in aprons stand at doorways with arms akimbo and gossip. Here is a street of modern cottages with an odd old name: “Westerly Ware.”

I do not think Kew can be condemned as being go-ahead and ultra-modern. Time was, somewhere about 1880, when a tramway was laid along the Kew Gardens road from the foot of Kew Bridge into Richmond. It was regarded when new as a very rash and deplorable and innovating thing, and the tinkle of its horse-bells was anything but pleasing to the ears of the wealthy residents of the mostly peculiarly ostentatious villas on the way. But “circumstances alter cases,” as the old adage tritely tells us, and now that few provincial towns of any size are without their electric tramways, this little single-line horsed tramway is come to be regarded almost

in the nature of a genuine antique. You take your seat upon one of the little cars and wait and wait, and still wait. It is very pleasant and drowsy in summer to wait until the next tram down has left the way clear at one of the occasional sidings, but if you are in a hurry, it is quicker to walk. I do not think any one really wants electric tramways into Richmond, though, no doubt, they will come.

When they do, there will be introduced an altogether undesirable element of hurry into a road that at present veritably exhales leisure. There is a certain æsthetic pleasure in lingering along this road, for although the architecture of those villas is perhaps not the last word in art, their gardens are beautiful and are easily to be seen. Would that Kew Gardens were so readily visible. But the churlish Government department that formerly had the management of the gardens built a high and ugly brick wall the whole length of the road, so only the tree-tops are visible over it, even to travellers on tramcar roofs; and no one has yet had the public spirit to demolish the useless thing and to substitute an iron railing in place of it. One opening, indeed, was made, about 1874, when a charming red-brick building by Eden Nesfield was erected, just inside the grounds, and the peep it gives into Paradise, so to speak, only makes one the more inclined to ask why any of the wall should be allowed to remain.

Strand-on-the-Green is the name of the picturesque waterside row of houses of many shapes and sizes that extends along the Middlesex foreshore from Kew Bridge towards Chiswick. It is a kind of home-



STRAND-ON-THE-GREEN.





grown Venice, and sometimes, when the Thames is in flood, its feet are dabbled in the water, and ingenious ways with planks and clay are resorted to for the keeping of the river out of ground floors. But since the Thames has become more and more curbed and regulated, these occasions have grown and are still growing fewer. I do not know where is the "Green" of Strand-on-the-Green, and the "strand" itself that stretches down to the river at low tide from the brick-and-asphalted walk in front of the village, or hamlet—by whichever name we are rightly to entitle the place—is mostly mud, where the rankly-growing grass ceases. Old boats and barges that long since grew beyond any more patching and mending, and were not worth even breaking up, have been left here to lie about, half in mud and half in water, grass growing in them.

And an island lies in mid-stream; an island on which, for many years past, men may have been observed wheeling barrows to and fro and engaged in other apparently aimless activities that certainly during the last thirty years have had no beginning and no end. It is a picturesque island, with flourishing trees, and it looks a most desirable Robinson Crusoe kind of a place, especially when viewed from the trains, that just here cross the river on an ugly lattice-girder bridge. A timber gantry projects from one side, and things are done with old boilers and launches. Repairs are occasionally made to the banks of this island, and they have at last resulted in making it a very solid and substantial place, faced upstream and down and round about with bags of

concrete ; so that no conceivable Thames flood that ever was, or can be, could possibly wash it away.

There is half a mile of Strand-on-the-Green. It is a fairly complete and representative community, comprising in its one row of houses those of an almost stately residential class, including Zoffany House, where the painter of that name lived and died at last in 1810 ; some lesser houses, a number of cottages housing a waterside population, three inns, the " Bull's Head," the " City Barge," and the " Bell and Crown " ; and some shops of an obscure kind, such as one might expect to see only in remote villages. A highly-sketchable old malthouse or two and a row of almshouses complete the picture. As to the almshouses, they are going on for the completion of their second century, as a tablet on them declares :

Two of these Houses built by R. Thomas Child, one by M. Soloman Williams, and one by William Abbott, Carpenter, at his own Charge for ye use of ye Poor of Chiswick for Ever, A.D. 1724.

Also the Port of London Authority has an office overlooking the river, and a firm of motor-boat builders has established works here, amid the ancient barges—a curious modern touch.

Strand-on-the-Green is a hamlet of Chiswick, long a delightful retreat of the Dukes of Devonshire, whose stately mansion of Chiswick House in its surrounding park dignified the old village. But when a suburban population grew up around the neighbourhood of that lordly dwelling-house the owners left



STRAND-ON-THE-GREEN : VIEW UP-RIVER.



it. There is an antipathy between dukes and democracy comparable only to oil and water. Even the neighbourhood of a highly-respectable (and highly-rented) suburb renders the air enervating to ducal lungs, even though the ducal purse be inordinately enriched by the ground-rents of it. It seems that when a man becomes a duke the sight of other men's chimney-pots grows unendurable; unless indeed they be the chimney-pots of another duke; and so he is fain to seclude himself in the middle of his biggest park, in the most solitary part of the country he can find. The higher his rank in the peerage, the more cubic feet of air he requires.

What I should like to see—but what no one ever will see—would be a duke graciously continuing to reside in the midst of the suburb that has grown up around him, and to which he owes a good part of his living, and being quite nice to his neighbours. Not only patronising and charitable to the poor, but just as human and accessible as middle-class snobbery would allow him to be.

It cannot be said that the local developments have been at all swift, or more than very moderately successful. For example, as you proceed from Strand-on-the-Green to Chiswick, you come first of all to Grove Park, where there is a railway station of that name which, together with an ornate public-house and a few shops and houses, wears a look as though left in the long ago to be called for, and apparently not wanted. I have known Grove Park for forty years, and it is just the same now as then. "The last place made" was the description of it

long ago given me by a railway official there, pleased to see a human being ; and although many places have come into existence since then, it still wears that ultimate look.

In the long ago, when I went to school in the Chiswick high road at Turnham Green, at a boarding-school that occupied an old mansion called " Belmont House," we fronted almost directly opposite Duke's Avenue, which still remained at that date just an avenue of trees, with never a house along the whole length of it, until you came to the noble wrought-iron gates leading into the awful ducal sanctities themselves. One might freely roam along the delightful avenue, but the great iron gates were, it seemed, always jealously shut ; and even had they not been, one's vague ideas of a something terrible in unknown ducal shape would have prevented trespass. I have seen not a few dukes since then, and haven't been in the least frightened, strange to say.

Nowadays the needs or the greed, I know not which, of their successive Graces have caused the land along either side of Duke's Avenue to be let for building upon ; and although, as already remarked, the trees remain, and are indeed finer than of yore, numerous very nice villas may be found there ; a little dank perhaps in autumn and in wet weather generally, when those trees hold much moisture in suspense, but still, quite desirable villas.

The wonderfully fine old wrought-iron gates were really much finer in the artistic way than one

ever suspected, as a schoolboy, and they were flanked by rusticated stone piers surmounted by sphinxes. Exactly what they were like you may see any day in London, for they were removed in recent years to Piccadilly, there to ornament the entrance to the Duke's town house, and to render the exterior of that hideous building, if it might be, a thoughtless hideous. They have had their adventures, having originally formed the chief entrance to Heathfield House, Turnham Green, inhabited about the middle of the eighteenth century by Viscount Dunkerron. A Duke of Devonshire acquired them in 1837.

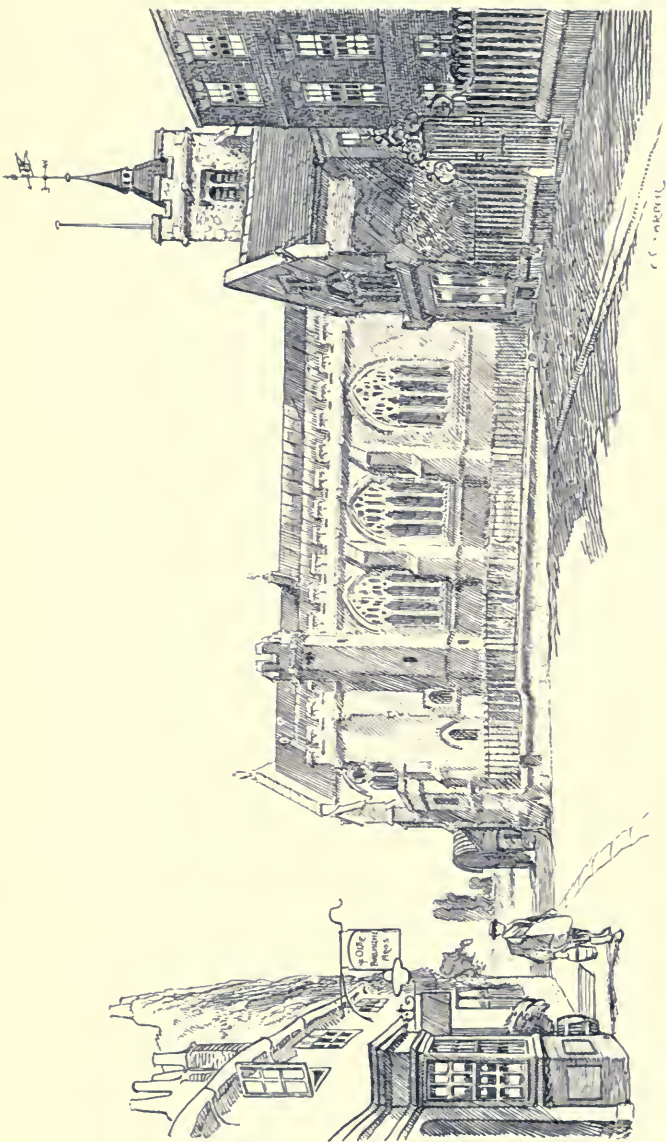
There were very frequent grand spreads and entertainments of various gorgeous kinds at Chiswick House in the distant days when one went to school at Turnham Green. His late Majesty Edward the Seventh, of blessed memory, occasionally, as Prince of Wales, had Chiswick House in summer-time between 1866 and 1879. He was not perhaps so universally popular then; for those were the days when Sir Charles Dilke was posing as a red-hot Radical, and furious persons of that kidney talked of republics and all that kind of nonsense. But at anyrate, rank and fashion were to be observed flocking to the princely garden-parties here; and very stunning the carriages and the horses, the harness and the liveries looked; and very beautiful, it seemed, the ladies with their sunshades and dainty toilettes. Those were days long before any one could have predicted the present motor-car era, and no one could ever have imagined that the



daughters of those daintily attired ones would be content to drive along amid dust and stinks, and to tie up their countenances with wrappings that sometimes look like fly-papers, and at others like dishcloths. And those, too, were the days not only before electric tramways, but also before even horsed trams, along the Chiswick high road; and Turnham Green (the worthy proprietor of our school called it "Chiswick," because it looked better) was a quite rustic place, and the distance of five miles to home in London seemed to one person at least a very far cry.

These be tales of eld, and now Turnham Green is, to all intents and purposes, London, and shops have long been built where the school stood, and that dark high road—upon whose infrequent pedestrians, certain schoolboys, packed off to bed all too early, and not in the least tired, were used to expend all the available soap and other handy missiles, from lofty windows—has become a highway even more than a thought too brilliantly lit at night.

What remains of the park and gardens around Chiswick House now looks sorry enough. The place came into the hands of the Dukes of Devonshire in 1753, when William Cavendish, the fourth duke, who had married the daughter and heiress of the third and last Earl of Burlington, succeeded on that nobleman's death. It was this Earl of Burlington who had created the glories of Chiswick. A princely patron of the arts, especially those of architecture and sculpture, he had brought home with him from his travels in Italy a taste for the



CHISWICK CHURCH.



grand exotic manner in the building of mansions and the planning of gardens ; and built the house here in 1729, after the Palladian model. It has been somewhat altered since, but the general idea remains, and sufficiently proves that the grand manner, learned abroad under summer skies, is not the comfortable manner as evolved by the necessities of a less ardent clime. English architects have been slow to unlearn the classic fallacy, but the home-grown architecture wins in the end, not from any appreciation of the artistic merits or demerits of the many methods, but on the score of sheer comfort or discomfort in living.

The gardens of Chiswick House abounded in formal walks and long vistas, with conventional “ ruins ” and groups of antique statuary, but most of these are now gone

Chiswick House, deserted by its owners, became a lunatic asylum, and stands at last more than a little forlorn, with new streets and roads everywhere around its grounds, and a newer suburb with the projected name of “ Burlington ” arising by piecemeal, instead of being created *ad hoc*, as the intention originally was. Burlington is an excellent name ; substantial people, with good bank balances should surely reside at such. It radiates respectability ; no one could be ashamed of it. I can easily imagine confiding tradesfolk giving unlimited credit to residents at Burlington ; but it has not yet come into being, and the vast wilderness-like expanse of Duke’s Meadows, projecting far southward, like a great cape between two bends of the river, remains

a tussocky place of desolation, looking over to Mortlake.

In Burlington Lane, which is an old name, is a new length of villas, "The Crescent," its name so misspelled, and kept so with the valiance of ignorance, uncorrected, for at least five years past.

What remains of the old village of Chiswick lies considerably to the east of all these developments, and beside the river. There, past Hogarth House, where that famous painter lived and worked—now a museum and showplace at sixpence a head, in memory of him—stands old Chiswick church. Restorations and additions have left really very little of the original building, but it wears a very plausible appearance of age. The weather-vane exhibits a figure of St. Nicholas, to whom the church is dedicated, standing in a boat and holding a staff surmounted by a cross.

A strange inscription may be seen on the church-yard wall, at the east end. It seems to tell of a time when Chiswick was a village in every rustic circumstance :

This wall was made at ye charges of  
 Ye right honourable and Truly pious  
 Lorde Francis Russell, Earle of Bedford,  
 out of true zeale and care for ye keeping of this church yarde and  
 ye wardrobe of godds saints whose  
 bodies lay theirin buried from violating by swine and other  
 prophanation so witnesseth  
 William Walker V. A.D. 1623.

Rebuilt 1831. Refaced 1884.

No one appears to know who was William Walker

the Fifth, and history is equally silent on the subject of the others of that dynasty.

The neighbourhood is now one of remarkably striking contrasts. By the church stands the "Burlington Arms," an old inn claiming a remote origin, early in the fifteenth century, and with obvious honesty, for the ancient oaken timbers remain to bear witness to the fact. It is a quite humble, but cosy, little inn, astonishingly dwarfed by a great towering fortress-like brewery at the back; as though Beer had withdrawn itself into a final stronghold, there to defend itself to the last vat. Opposite the inn and this Bung Castle stands a stately red-brick mansion of early in the eighteenth century, with fine wrought-iron garden-gates. Up the street are other fine old mansions, mingled with squalid streets; and round by the riverside is Chiswick Mall, with other noble houses of the olden times. Osiers are cut even to this day on Chiswick Eyot, the reedy island opposite.

Such are the contrasts of Chiswick, one of the last outposts of rural things in these parts. To find the last we must travel on through the Mall and on to the more sophisticated Mall of Hammersmith; thence proceeding across the bridge and along the Hammersmith Bridge Road to Barnes. That is the very last village. Near by is Mortlake. No one has ever satisfactorily explained that place-name, nor attempted to define the *mortuus lacus*—the dead, or stagnant lake—that would seem to have originated it. Nowadays it is rather to a dead level of commonplace that Mortlake is descending, in the surrounding

jerry-building activities. All that is left of the old church is the tower, apparently restored in the time of Henry the Eighth, for a tablet on the western face is inscribed "Vivat R.H. 8, 1543."

To speak of Barnes in these days of suburban expansion as a "village" may at the first mention appear to be unduly stretching a point, but although Suburbia spreads for miles in every direction, and although Barnes is completely enfolded by modern developments, the ancient village is still where it used to be. It is true that a frequent service of motor-omnibuses does by no means tend to the preservation of the old-time rural amenities of Barnes, nor do those who remember the Barnes of thirty or forty years ago welcome the sudden irruption of modern shops and flats opposite the old parish church; but very much of old Barnes is left embedded within these twentieth-century innovations; and while Barnes Common remains, it is not likely that the place will decline to the common characterless condition of an ordinary suburb. Of the original Barnes—the "Berne" of Domesday Book—the place owned by the canons of St. Paul's, before the Reformation, nothing, of course, is left; and we may but dimly picture that rural riverside manor, then considered remote from London, with its great *spicaria*, or barns (the barns that were so much larger, or more numerous, than the usual type that they gave the place its name); but there is a half squalid, half quaint appearance in the narrow, winding streets and lanes that hints, not obscurely, of the eighteenth or even of the seventeenth century. The



church, too, although an examination of the interior proves it to have been, in common with most other once rural churches round London, swept almost



TOMB OF EDWARD ROSE, BARNES.

entirely bare of ancient features, is picturesquely placed, and its sixteenth-century red-brick tower, partly clothed with ivy, looks venerable. There is little of interest within the church, beyond the some-

what curiously-worded epitaph to a former parson, which deserves the tribute of quotation :

Merentissimo Conjugi  
Coniux Moerentissima.

To the best of husbands John Squier the  
Late Faithfull Rector of This Parish ; the only  
Soñ to That most strenuous Propvgnator of Pietie  
and loyaltie (both by Preaching and Suffering) John  
Squier, sometime Vicar of St. Leonards, Shoreditch near  
London : Grace Lynch (who bare vnto him one only  
Daughter) Consecrated This (such as it is) small  
Monvment of Theyr mvtvall Affection.  
He was invested in This Care An : 1660 Sept : 2,  
He was deusted of all Care An : 1662, Jan. 9,  
Aged 42 yeares.

The really most sentimentally interesting thing here is something that might well be overlooked by ninety-nine of every hundred whose curiosity prompts them to enter the churchyard ; and it is probably so overlooked. This is the not at all striking tomb of one Edward Rose, citizen of London, who died in 1653, and lies buried in the churchyard, against the south wall of the church, by the great yew tree. He left £20 for the purchase of an acre of land, from the rent of which he ordained that his grave should be maintained in decent order, and bequeathed “ £5 for making a frame or partition of wood ” where he had appointed his burying-place ; and further ordered three rose-trees, or more, to be planted there. The bequests were to the minister, churchwardens, and overseers for the time being, so long as they should cause the wooden partition to be kept in repair and

the rose-trees preserved or others planted in their places from time to time, as they should decay.

Thus it is that, duly honouring his sentimental fancy, rose-trees are to this day to be seen here, enclosed within a low wooden railing.

## CHAPTER XII

### PUTNEY—FULHAM BRIDGE—FULHAM

THE way from Barnes into Putney is now, when once you have passed the Common, wholly cut up into a suburb of streets originally mean, and at last, by contact with the stern squalors of life in a striving quarter of London town, become little removed above the level of slums. But Barnes Common remains something considerable in the way of an asset, and through it still runs the Beverley Brook along the last mile or two of its nine-miles course from Cheam to its outlet into the Thames at Barnes Elms. I should say it would be a sorry business attempting to fish nowadays in the Beverley Brook; but regrets on that score are the sheerest futilities, and it should rather be a matter for congratulation that the brook has not been piped, and so altogether hidden from the eye of day. One, to be sure, regrets many things within this sphere of change; notably the very considerable slices the London and South-Western Railway has been allowed to appropriate from the very middle of the Common, not only for the purpose of running the line through it, which, it might possibly be argued, was a geographical necessity, but also for the building of its Barnes

station there, which was nothing less than a sublime piece of impudence. What is left of Barnes Common is particularly beautiful in the way of trowsled gorse and some pretty clumps of silver-birches. On a byroad leading off it into Putney—a route called Mill Hill road—is something very much in the nature of a surprise in these parts, nothing less than an old toll-house ; a queer little building picturesquely overhung by bushy poplars. Its unexpected presence here (it must be now the nearest survival of its kind to London) hints that the days when Putney was really a village are not, after all, so long gone by.

Presently we come into Putney, and to the tramway terminus hard by the bridge and under the shadow of the church-tower, whose great sundial warns all and sundry that “ Time and Tide Wait for no Man.” Is it a result of laying to heart this maxim, truism, self-evident proposition, or whatever else you choose to call it, that the tramway-cars and the motor-omnibuses hustle so impatiently round the corners of the bridge ?

Those two church-towers, that stand so prominently here on either side of the river and seem to bear one another close company, although divided, as a matter of fact by a quarter of a mile, with the broad river running between, belong to the churches of Putney and Fulham, both now to be regarded as parts of London.

Putney Church, standing with its churchyard actually on the river bank, was almost wholly rebuilt about 1856, the exterior disclosing walls built of what was once white brick, reduced now to a subdued

neutral tint. The old tower is left, and some few small and late and much-battered brasses, now preserved on the walls of a little north-eastern chancel chapel, which is a survival from an earlier building, and has a fine, though small, vaulted ceiling.

The usual absurd legends that seek to explain place-names to the ignorant and the credulous are, of course, not lacking here. The names of Putney and Fulham, and their situation directly opposite one another, on the Surrey and the Middlesex sides of the river, both so prominently marked by their church-towers, seem to the popular mind to need some story. The writer on places becomes tired in course of time at meeting those familiar rival "sisters" of legend, who are always found, in these strictly unveracious tales, to have been the competitive builders of the two churches occasionally found in one churchyard, of the twin towers possessed by some few parish churches, and indeed of most buildings which, for no very immediately apparent reason, have been duplicated within sight of one another.

Here, therefore, we learn of two strange sisters of gigantic stature who, in the conveniently vague period of "once upon a time," lived on these opposite banks of the Thames. One is almost ashamed to repeat the stupid tale of their having agreed to build the towers of the respective churches, and having only one hammer between them, being accustomed to throw it across from one to the other when required. When the sister on the Fulham side needed the hammer, she asked the other to throw it over "full home." When it was returned, it was





THE OLD TOLL-HOUSE, BARNES COMMON.





flung with a will, in response to the request "put nigh!" The flinging back and forth with every stone bedded must have been very wearing, and the shouting terrific. At last the hammer got broken, and had it not been for the help of a blacksmith up-river, who promptly mended it, the building must have ceased. Of course you guess where this kindly craftsman lived. Where else than at the place ever after called, in memory of him, "Hammersmith"?

The expansion of Putney from the likeness to a country village which it wore until quite recent times well within the memory of many who do not yet call themselves old, dates from the completion of the new and commonplace bridge that spans the river here in five flattened arches, and is seven hundred feet in length, and cost over £240,000. Handbooks and guides of various sorts will tell those who know nothing about it that the old wooden bridge which this replaced in 1886 was "ugly and inconvenient." The inconvenience we may readily enough grant, but no artist who ever knew old Putney Bridge will agree to its having been ugly. Indeed, so picturesque was it, in its maze of timbering, that every one who knew it, and at the same time owned the artistic sense, bitterly regretted its clearing away to give place to the present commonplace, though convenient, stone structure. Old Putney Bridge was the first to span the river between Fulham and Putney, and was originally projected in 1671. The proposal to build a bridge here was in the first stage discussed in Parliament, and there met with such opposition and ridicule that the scheme failed and was not revived

until 1722, finally meeting with the approval of the House and receiving the Royal sanction in the early part of 1726. It is well worth while, after that space of time, to recover some of the discussion in 1671 respecting the providing of a bridge in place of the immemorially old ferry. It was not only honest ridicule, but also a good deal of the fear and jealousy felt by "vested interests," that at first prevented a bridge being built here. And what person, or what corporate body, think you, was threatened so seriously by a bridge between Putney and Fulham? The owner of the ferry? the local watermen? my Lord Bishop of London, whose palace was and still is, on yonder bank? None of these were in such near prospect of being overwhelmed; but it would appear that the great, ancient, and prosperous City of London, more than five miles downstream, was in that perilous state, on the mere threatening of a bridge at Putney. It was a Mr. Jones, representative of the City of London in that honourable House, who caught the Speaker's eye and thus held forth, in mingled appeal, warning, and denunciation:

"It is impossible to contemplate without feelings of the most afflictive nature the probable success of the Bill now before the House. I am sensible that I can hardly do justice by any words of mine to the apprehensions which not only I myself personally feel upon the vital question, but to those which are felt by every individual in the kingdom who has given this very important subject the smallest share of his consideration. I am free to say, Sir, and I say it with the greater freedom, because I know that

the erection of a bridge over the river Thames at Putney will not only injure the great and important city which I have the honour to represent, not only jeopardise it, not only destroy its correspondence and commerce, but actually annihilate it altogether."

It might be thought that this ludicrous extravagance of language would have aroused derisive laughter; but no, the House appears to have taken him seriously, for, "Hear, hears" are reported at this stage. Apparently fortified by them, he continued in the same strain:

"I repeat, in all possible seriousness, that it will question the very existence of the metropolis; and I have no hesitation in declaring that, next to pulling down the whole borough of Southwark, nothing can destroy more certainly than building this proposed bridge at Putney. (Hear, hear.) Allow me, Sir, to ask, and I do so with the more confidence because the answer is evident and clear, How will London be supplied with fuel, with grain, or with hay if this bridge is built? All the correspondences westward will be at one blow destroyed. I repeat this fact boldly, because, as I said before, it is incontrovertible. As a member of this honourable House, I should not venture to speak thus authoritatively unless I had the best possible ground to go upon, and I state, without the least fear of contradiction, that the water at Putney is shallow at ebb, and assuming, as I do, that the correspondences of London require free passage at all times, and knowing, as I do, that if a bridge be built there not even the common wherries will be able to pass the river at low water, I do say

that I think the Bill one which only tends to promote a wild and silly scheme, likely to advantage a few speculators, but highly unreasonable and unjust in its character and provisions ; because independently of the ruin of the City of London, which I consider inevitable in the event of its success, it will effect an entire change in the position and affairs of the watermen—a change which I have no hesitation in saying will most seriously affect the interests of His Majesty's Government, and not only the interests of the Government, but those of the nation at large."

Mr. Jones was followed by a member arguing with almost equal extravagance and vehemence in favour of the proposed bridge. It appeared to him that, if built, it "could not fail to be of the greatest utility and convenience to the whole British nation."

Then presently arose Sir William Thompson, who considered this project "romantic and visionary." He added, "If a bridge be built at Putney, London Bridge may as well be pulled down. (Hear, hear!) Yes, Sir, I repeat it—because this bridge, which seems to be a favourite scheme of some honourable gentleman whom I have in my eye—if this bridge be permitted, the rents necessary to the maintenance of London Bridge will be annihilated ; and therefore, as I said before, the bridge itself must eventually be annihilated also. But, Sir, this is not all. I speak affectionately of the City of London, and I hope I shall never be forgetful of its interests ('Hear, hear,' from Mr. Jones); but I take up the question on much more liberal principles, and assume a higher ground, and I will maintain it. Sir, Lon-

don is circumscribed—I mean the City of London. There are walls, gates, and boundaries, the which no man can increase or extend ; those limits were set by the wisdom of our ancestors, and God forbid they should be altered. But, Sir, though these landmarks can never be removed—I say, *never*, for I have no hesitation in stating that when the walls of London shall no longer be visible and Ludgate is demolished, England itself shall be as nothing ; yet it is in the power of speculative theorists to delude the minds of the people with visionary projects of increasing the skirts of the City so that it may even join Westminster. When that is the case, Sir, the skirts will be too big for our habits ; the head will grow too big for the body, and the members will get too weak to support the constitution. But what of this ? say honourable gentlemen ; what have we to do to consider the policy of increasing the town while we are only debating a question about Putney Bridge ? To which I answer, Look at the effects *generally* of the important step you are about to sanction : ask me to define those effects *particularly*, and I will descend to the minutiae of the mischief you appear prone to commit. Sir, I, like my honourable friend the Member for the City of London, have taken opinions of scientific men, and I declare it to be their positive conviction, and mine, that if the fatal bridge (I can find no other suitable word) be built, not only will quicksands and shelves be created throughout the whole course of the river, but the western barges will be laid up high and dry at Teddington, while not a ship belonging to us will ever

get nearer London than Woolwich. Thus, not only your own markets, but your Custom House, will be nullified ; and not only the whole mercantile navy of the country be absolutely destroyed, but several west-country bargemen actually thrown out of employ. I declare to God, Sir, that I have no feeling on the subject but that of devotion to my country, and I shall most decidedly oppose the Bill in all its stages."

All this reads sufficiently absurdly nowadays, but it is surpassed in curious interest by the remarks added by a Mr. Boscawen, who, after declaring that, before he had come down to the House he could not understand what possible reason there could be for building a bridge at Putney, went on to say that "now he had heard the reasons of honourable gentlemen, he was equally at a loss to account for them."

And then, with concentrated satire, he proceeded : "If there were any advantage derivable from a bridge at Putney, perhaps some gentleman would find that a bridge at Westminster would be a convenience."

It should be remembered here that the first bridge at Westminster was not opened until 1750. Until that date there was not any bridge between London Bridge and Putney. Hence the true inwardness of the sarcasm in Mr. Boscawen's remarks already quoted, and of those now about to be set forth.

Thus he continued : "Other honourable gentlemen might dream that a bridge from the end of Fleet Market into the fields on the opposite side of the water would be a fine speculation ; or who knew



but at last it might be proposed to arch over the river altogether and build a couple more bridges ; one from the Palace at Somerset House into the Surrey marshes, and another from the front of Guildhall into Southwark (great laughter). Perhaps some honourable gentlemen who are interested in such matters would get up in their places and propose that one or two of these bridges should be built of iron. (Shouts of laughter.) For his part, if this Bill passed, he would move for leave to bring in half a dozen more Bills for building bridges at Chelsea, and at Hammersmith, and at Marble Hall Stairs, and at Brentford, and at fifty other places besides."

Bridges at all those places have long since been built, and, of course, many of them in iron ; so the foolishness of one generation becomes the sober commonplace fact of the next.

The bridge thus hotly debated and rejected and at last permitted to be built, was eventually begun in 1729. It was wholly a commercial speculation. The Company interested in it had at the beginning to satisfy the claims of the Duchess Dowager of Marlborough, Lady of the Manor of Wimbledon, and of the Bishop of London, Lord of the Manor of Fulham, for the extinction of their respective rights in the ancient ferry. The Duchess received £364 10s., and the Bishop the meagre amount of £23. The three tenants of the ferry, however, received altogether as much as £8,000 ; and at the same time the Bridge Act provided for £62 per annum to be paid by the Company, in perpetuity, to the churchwardens of Putney and Fulham ; to be divided between the

watermen, their widows and children, for the loss of the Sunday ferry.

On November 27, 1729, the bridge was fully opened. The cost was remarkably small. Including Parliamentary expenses and the amounts paid to persons interested in the ferry, it totalled only £23,084 14s. 1*d.* The old building, narrow, and patched, and crazy-looking, but strong enough to have stood for many more long years, remained to the last in all essentials the bridge of 1729. It had twenty-nine openings, and at the top of the cutwaters of every pier a sanctuary for foot-passengers to step into when wheeled traffic occupied the narrow road. The modest sum of one halfpenny freed the pedestrian, except on Sunday, when the discouragement to gadding about on the Sabbath was a doubled toll. In 1880 the Metropolitan Board of Works purchased the bridge for £58,000, and on June 26 of the same year it was declared free of toll. The last chapter of its long story was concluded on May 29, 1886, when, upon the opening of the new bridge, it was closed.

Putney Bridge is found sometimes referred to as "Fulham" Bridge, but those references are few, and there has never been any general disposition to style it other than the name it bears by common usage. Yet it is as much Fulham Bridge as Putney. The present costly structure, built at such great expense in 1886, is already of insufficient width for conveniently carrying the great press of traffic that now uses it, especially since electric tramways have been laid across. The cynical indifference



MONUMENT TO VISCOUNT MORDAUNT, FULHAM CHURCH.



to the comfort and even the safety of other users of the road often displayed by public bodies and by the engineers who lay tram-rails, is shown markedly here, where the London County Council's lines run for a considerable distance within two feet of the kerb. It is already so evident that the width of the bridge is insufficient that the ordinary observer would not be surprised to find the necessary widening works soon begun.

Fulham Church was rebuilt in 1881, and only the ancient tower of the former building remains. It is in the Perpendicular style of architecture, of a quite common type, and greatly resembles in general style that of Putney Church, at the other end of the bridge; but is on a much larger scale. It contains a peal of ten bells, of which the Fulham people used to be very proud, but an inordinate fondness for ringing them in crashing peals has destroyed any liking; and, in any case, Fulham of to-day, as a part of London, has lost that sense of individuality which used to take a proud interest in local possessions.

The interior of the church, which has weathered so greatly in the few years of its existence that it resembles an ancient building, is rich in monuments, but at one time possessed many more. The oldest is a lozenge-shaped Flemish brass dated 1529 to one Margaret Svanders, with a curious head-and-shoulders representation of the lady herself; but the oddest of all the memorials here is that to John, Viscount Mordaunt, including a statue of that nobleman, rather larger than life-size, in white

marble. It has now been banished to the tower, from the prominent position it formerly occupied in the south aisle, and is not a little startling, seen suddenly and unexpectedly in a half light. The weird-looking figure is like that of a lunatic policeman standing on a dining-room table in his socks, and pretending to direct the traffic, with a sheet wound partly round his nakedness, and something like a rolling-pin in his hand.

It stands on a raised slab of polished black marble, with a black background throwing it into further relief. This extraordinary effigy was sculptured by Bird, author of the original statue of Queen Anne in front of St. Paul's Cathedral, of which an exact replica by Richard Belt now occupies the same spot.

The mad-policeman idea is due, of course, to the sculptor having chosen to represent that distinguished nobleman as a Roman, with a truncheon, which he is seen to be wielding with a mock-heroic gesture. The truncheon typifies the official position he held as Constable of Windsor Castle.

Lord Mordaunt was a younger son of the first Earl of Peterborough. Born in 1627, he was active among the younger Royalists, and figured at last in the restoration of Charles the Second, who created him Viscount Aviland, a title which seems to have been somewhat thrust into the background. He died of a fever in 1675, and appears to have led an active and an honourable life, which ought to have excused him from this posthumous grotesquery. The whole monument is indeed a prominent example

of the fantastic taste of its period, and is set about with marble pedestals bearing epitaph and family genealogy, and sculptured gauntlets and coronets.

A number of very distinguished personages lie in the great churchyard. Prominent among the later monuments, as you enter along Church Row and past the Powell almshouses, is that of the fifth and last Viscount Ranelagh and Baron Jones, who died November 13, 1885, in his seventy-third year. There are still very many who well recollect the distinguished-looking figure of Lord Ranelagh: a tall, slim, bearded man, with his hair brushed in front of his ears in an old-world style, a silk hat rakishly poised at an angle, a tightly buttoned frock-coat, in which always appeared a scarlet geranium, throughout the year, and light-tinted trousers. He gave the general impression of one who had seen life in circles where it is lived rapidly; and to this his broken nose, which he had acquired in thrashing a coal-heaver who had been rude to him in the street, picturesquely contributed. He looked in some degree like a survival from the fast-living age of the Regency, although, as a matter of fact, he was born only when that riotous period was nearly over. The very title "Ranelagh" has something of a reckless, derring-do sound. He was one of the early Volunteers, and raised the Second (South) Middlesex corps, of which he remained colonel until his death. The military funeral given him by his men would have been of a much more imposing, and even national, character, befitting the important part he took in the Volunteer movement, had it



not been that a general election was in progress at the time. At such times the military and auxiliary forces are by old statutes not allowed to assemble. The theory is the old one of possible armed interference with the free choice of electors.

Numerous monuments to long-dead and forgotten Bishops of London are found here. A group of them, eight in number, chiefly of the eighteenth century, is found to the east of the church. They are a grim and forbidding company. Amid them is found the meagre headstone and concise inscription to a humorist of considerable renown: "Theodore Edward Hook, died 24th August, 1841, in the 53rd year of his age." Efforts to provide a better monument have failed to secure support. Perhaps it is thought by those who withhold their subscriptions that the reading his books is the best memorial an author can be given.

Immediately to the west of the church extend the grounds of Fulham Palace, which run for some distance alongside the river, where a strip has been modernised and provided with an embankment wall, and opened to the public as the "Bishop's Park"; Fulham Palace and its wide-spreading lands forming the "country seat" of the Bishops of London, whose "town house" is in St. James's Square. The Bishops of London have held their manor of Fulham continuously for about nine centuries, and are said in this respect to be the oldest landed proprietors in England. Here they have generally maintained a considerable degree of state and secluded dignity, hidden among the luxuriant



THE TOWER, FULHAM CHURCH.



trees and enclosed within the dark embrace of a sullen moat, which to this day encircles their demesne, as it probably has done since the time when a body of invading Danes wintered here in A.D. 880-1. This much-overgrown moat is a mile round, and, together with the surrounding ancient muddy conditions which were remarkable enough to have given Fulham its original name of the "foul home," or miry settlement, must have proved a very thorough discouragement to visitors, both welcome and unwelcome.

Fulham Palace does not look palatial, and its parts are very dissimilar. The two principal fronts of the roughly quadrangular mass of buildings face east and west. That to the east was built by Bishop Howley in 1815, and has the appearance of the usual modest country mansion of that period; while the west front, which is the oldest part of the Palace, and dates from 1502-1522, when the then dilapidated older buildings were cleared away, is equally typical of the less pretentious country-houses of the age. It was Bishop Fitzjames who rebuilt this side, and his approach gateway and the tower by which the Palace is generally entered, remain very much the same as he left them. A modest, reverend dignity of old red brick, patterned, after the olden way, with lozenges of black, pervades this courtyard, upon which the simply framed windows still look, unaltered. The sculptured stone arms under the clock upon the tower are those of Bishop Juxon, more than a century later than the date of these buildings, and have no connection

with the position given them here in modern times.

The Great Hall is immediately to the left of this entrance. It is in many ways the most important apartment in Fulham Palace. Here, while it was yet a new building, the ferocious Roman Catholic Bishop Bonner sometimes sat to examine heretics, while on other occasions they would appear to have been questioned in the old chapel, a structure that seems to have been situated in the eastern, rebuilt, portion of the groups of offices. The boldness of those sturdy men, many of whom became martyrs and confessors for righteousness' sake, reads amazingly. They were brought here in custody to the enemy's own precincts, and questioned for their lives, with preliminary tastes, in the shape of burning on the hands, of greater torments to come if their answers were deemed unsatisfactory. Yet we do not find that they often faltered. On September 10, 1557, there were brought before Bonner, in his private chapel here, Ralph Allerton and three other religious suspects. To one of these Bonner propounded the singular question, "Did he know where he was?" The answer came swiftly, "In an idol's temple." This was bold indeed, but awfully injudicious, according to modern ideas. But expediency and time-serving were cast aside then, and men were earnest though they died for it. I do not know what happened to the person who made that bitter repartee, but I suspect he suffered for it.

In the Great Hall occasionally used by Bonner in his examination of those who were not of his way



THE FITZJAMES COURTYARD, FULHAM PALACE.





of thinking in religious matters, Thomas Tomkins had his hand burned over the flame of a candle. He perished at Smithfield in February 1555.

This hall, after various changes, was converted into a domestic chapel by Bishop Howley, who had demolished the old chapel in the course of his rebuilding works. And so it remained until Bishop Tait had completed his modern chapel, in 1867; when it became again the Hall, and the marble flooring in black and white squares, with which it was paved, was replaced by oak.

Among the several changes that followed upon Bishop Howley's rebuilding of a portion of the Palace was that by which the old dining-parlour was converted into a kitchen. In the time when Beilby Porteous was Bishop of London, 1787-1809, there hung over the mantelpiece an object that aroused the curiosity of all the Bishop's visitors; not because they did not know what it was—for it was nothing more than a whetstone, a sufficiently common object outside the dining-room of a Bishop—but because they could not understand its being here. And when the Bishop further mystified his guests by telling them it had been given to him on one of his journeys as a prize for being an accomplished liar, they gave up wondering, and waited for the story obviously belonging to it.

The particular journey on which he accomplished these supposed prodigious feats of lying and prize-winning took him to Coggeshall, in Essex, which appears at that time to have rejoiced in the possession of a "Liars' Club." The tale is well told in the

old *New Quarterly Magazine*: "There is a story that Bishop Porteous once stopped in this town to change horses, and, observing a great crowd in the streets, put his head out of the window to inquire the cause. A townsman standing near by replied that it was the day upon which they gave the whetstone to the biggest liar. Shocked at such depravity, the good Bishop proceeded to the scene of the competition, and lectured the crowd upon the enormity of the sin, concluding his discourse with the emphatic words: 'I never told a lie in my life,' whereupon the chief umpire exchanged a few words with his fellows, and, approaching the carriage, said: 'My Lord, we unanimously adjudge you the prize,' and forthwith the highly objectionable whetstone was thrust in at the carriage window."

This inimical article in course of time disappeared from these walls, later Bishops being less appreciative of the peculiar humour of the situation, or perhaps feeling themselves to be unworthy of the exceptional honour; for, after all, if Bishop Porteous "never told a lie in his life," surely he must have ranked with the only other personage reputed to have been naturally truthful, George Washington. But it is to be remarked that we have these statements from suspect sources—from the personages themselves. The Bishop said he had never done such a thing, and Washington as a boy declared he "could not." Now, it has been declared on eminent authority which no one will care to dispute that "all men are liars," and it would seem, therefore, that these two were superhuman. They were not, on

account of that alleged natural truthfulness, one whit the better than their fellow-men, for there is more joy in one sinner that sees the error of his ways and repents than in a hundred just men.

On the north side of the old courtyard are the rooms especially associated, according to tradition, with Bonner, whose ghost is said to haunt the corridors and the apartment still known as his bedroom. This part of the Palace is appropriately dark, and the passages narrow. These rooms are now occupied by the servants, as also are those on two other sides of the quadrangle, generally known as Bishop Laud's rooms. Until a few years ago—and perhaps even yet—the servants were wakened in the morning by a man known as the “knocker-up,” who went round the courtyard with a long wand, and tapped sharply with it at the upper windows.

In these days of pageants, the picturesque wooded grounds of Fulham Palace have witnessed some striking reconstructions of the brave and the terrible days of old. There was, for example, the Church Pageant, in which numbers of participants enjoyed themselves immensely as in a long bout of private theatricals, all in aid of some deserving charity. The charity did not, it would appear, benefit after all, for those doings resulted in a deficit, and a Military Pageant was held the following year to make up the loss. What was done to abolish the loss that probably resulted from this is not within my knowledge.

The Bishops of London, or the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, are now making some profit by

letting or selling land for building upon, around the outskirts of the park. If any kind friend can help an overburdened Bishop who cannot without difficulty make two ends meet, let him remember the occupant of Fulham Palace. His bitter cry has appeared in the newspapers, so that there can be no breach of delicacy in mentioning the subject here.

Not the least of his burdens is the large sum it is necessary to disburse before he can finally style himself "London." Thus, the Reverend Winnington Ingram, when installed Bishop of London, found his accession to the Episcopal Bench and his coming to Fulham Palace a little expensive. Other newly made Bishops had ever found the like, but they had never before taken the public into their confidence, nor raised a howl of despair at the fees customarily payable by new-made Right Reverend Father in God. But this is an age of publicity, in which very few unexplored or secret corners survive; and Dr. Ingram is essentially at one with an epoch which has produced General Booth and the Reverend Wilson Carlile. We should, however, be grateful for this, for by favour of it we learn some curious ecclesiastical details that beset those unhappy enough to have obtained high preferment in the Church.

Thus, on filling up a vacancy on the Bench of Bishops, the first step, it seems, is that taken by the Crown Office, which confers upon Dean and Chapter the Sovereign's *cong e d' lire*, or leave to elect; not, be it said, the leave to elect whom they



THE GREAT HALL, FULHAM PALACE.





please, but permission to elect whomsoever it shall please the Sovereign (or the Prime Minister at the head of the Government at the time in power) to select, in place of the right reverend prelate recently gathered to Abraham's bosom. The warrant for this humorous "leave" to elect is paid for by the Bishop who is presently elected. It costs £10, and is but the first of a series of complicated costs that come out of his pocket, and in the end total £423 19s. 2d.

The initial warrant is followed by a certificate, costing £16 10s., and that by letters patent, costing another £30, with 2s. for the "docquet."

So far, your Bishop is only partly made. He is "elected by Dean and Chapter." Thereupon, through the Crown Office, the assent of the Sovereign to the choice himself has made through his Prime Minister, is graciously signified, and the original costs are reimposed, plus 10s. The chapter-clerk of the Bishop's own cathedral then requests fees totalling £21 6s. 8d.

A technical form of procedure, known as "restitution of temporalities," has then to be enacted, not without its attendant fees, which include £10 for a warrant, £31 10s. 6d. for a certificate, £30 for letters patent, and 2s. for another "docquet."

Next comes the Home Office, clamouring for Exchequer fees: £7 13s. 6d. for the original *congé d'élire*, and the like for letters recommendatory, Royal assent, and restitution of temporalities. The oath of homage costs £6 6s. 6d.

The new Bishop has then to reckon with the



Board of Green Cloth, with its homage fees to the Earl Marshal and the heralds, totalling £15 0s. 2*d.*

Your Bishop is not yet, however, out of the wood of expenditure. When he takes his seat in the House of Lords the Lord Great Chamberlain's Office wants £5—and gets it. When he is enthroned the precentor pockets £10 10s., and the chapter-clerk £9 14s. 8*d.*, the bell-ringers of the Cathedral ring a merry peal—fee £10 10s. The choir then chorify at a further expense of £6 17s. 4*d.*

Have we now done? Not at all. The clerk of the Crown Office is tipped half a guinea, plus two guineas for “petty expenses”; and takes £14 when the Bishop takes his place among his brethren in the House of Lords.

When all these various officers of Church and State are busily picking the new Bishop's pockets, in advance of their being filled, as an Irishman might say, the Archbishop himself is not behind-hand. His turn comes when the archiepiscopal fees for confirmation are demanded; and they are heavy, costing in all £68 4s. 10*d.* These imposts are made up of the following items: Secretary, with Archbishop's fiat for confirmation, £17 10s., Vicar-General, £31 0s. 10*d.*, fees at church where confirmation is made, £10 5s., and to Deputy Registrar, for mandate of induction, £9 9s. To the Bishop's own secretaries a sum of £36 5s. is then payable. The Bishop may then, surveying these devastations, at last consider himself elected, and in every way complete.

Let us hope that although the spreading tentacles

of London town have enfolded Fulham and abolished its old market-gardens and numerous stately mansions in favour of commonplace streets, the evident episcopal wish to be rid of Fulham Palace will not lead to it being alienated. It remains one of the very few things that connect this now populous suburb with the village that many still remember; and the romantic-looking moat, often threatened to be filled up, is a relic of remote antiquity it would be vandalism to destroy. "No one," as Sir Arthur Blomfield remarked in 1856, "could say that the Bishops of London had constructed that defence. We may well hesitate to believe that any prelate, however rich and powerful, would have in any age undertaken to dig round his house a moat of such extent that, if intended as a means of defence, it would require a very large force to render it effective; still less can we believe that it was ever dug with any other object than that of defence." The Danes constructed it, and the bishops found it here when they came. It is fed by a sluice communicating with the river, and was until recent times a stagnant, malodorous place, owing to the sluice being rarely raised, the ditch cleansed, or the water changed. On the rare occasions when the mud was cleared away, the cost varied from £100 to £150, owing to the great accumulation of it. Those were the times when lilies grew in the moat. The Fulham people called them "Bishops' wigs." In 1886 the then Bishop of London received a communication from the Fulham Vestry, requiring him to fill up the evil-smelling moat, or to cleanse it. He had it cleaned

out, and it looks no less a place of romance than before. It is too greatly overgrown with trees and brushwood to make a picture for illustration, but while it lasts, with the woodland park it encloses, Fulham will still keep some vestige of its olden condition of a Thames-side village.

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