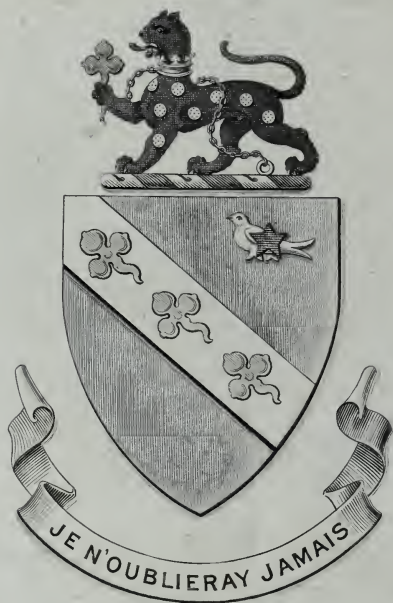


THE  
QUANTOCKS AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS

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W. L. NICHOLS





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THE QUANTOCKS  
AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS.

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# THE QUANTOCKS AND SURROUNDINGS.



Scale, one inch to a Mile.

THE  
QUANTOCKS  
AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS.

BY THE LATE

REV. WILLIAM LUKE NICHOLS, M.A., F.S.A.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

Dodington, Holford, and St. Audries.

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*SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED, WITH MAP  
AND ELEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS.*

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LONDON:  
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, AND COMPANY,  
*Limited,*  
St. Dunstan's House,  
FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1891.



TO

*SIR ALEXANDER ACLAND HOOD, Bart.,*

**Of St. Audries,**

THE NEW EDITION OF THIS WORK IS DEDICATED BY HIS

FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

*A. F. NICHOLS.*

How bless'd, delicious scene! the eye that greets  
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;  
The unwearied sweep of wood thy cliffs that scales;  
The never-ending waters of thy vales.

*Descriptive Sketches—Wordsworth.*

## NOTICE.

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The Historic Paper on the Quantocks, by my late brother, issued only for private circulation, has been long out of print. It was his intention to reprint the little work, with Illustrations, adding also an account of the Dodington Tragedy, but that intention was frustrated by the repeated spasmodic attacks to which he was subject some time before his death ; he left, however, a carefully revised account of the terrible but romantic circumstances connected with it, of which many garbled versions are current.

I regard it as a fraternal obligation to fulfil my brother's wishes by the re-publication of the original Paper with the additions mentioned.

Dodington, Holford, and St. Audries are so inseparably connected with the Quantocks, that it was deemed expedient to add a chapter to the original work, giving an account of those interesting features of the locality.

My friend, Mr. Peach, has kindly assisted me in the editing and revision of the work and in passing it through the press.

A. F. NICHOLS.

**L**ondon,  
September, 1891.





*Of this work, on Large Paper, Two Hundred  
copies only are printed.*

*The number of this copy is  $\frac{1}{2}$ .*

*R. S. M. Peck*



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*Woodbury Company.*

THE AUTHOR IN HIS STUDY.



## THE QUANTOCKS AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS.

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HAVING resided for some time on the borders of the Quantock-hills, I have been requested to give my impressions of the scenery of the district, and especially to note any reminiscences I may have met with of the two great Poets, whose genius has thrown an additional charm over the locality, and made it for ever classic ground.

The mountain range of the Quantocks, the Oberland of Somersetshire, rises above the wide plain of Bridgwater and the fair valley, or Dean<sup>1</sup> as it is called, of Taunton, and runs for nearly sixteen miles in a direction from south-east to north-west between the Bristol Channel and the latter town, and attains its greatest elevation at Wilsneck, an eminence rising between the two rival heights of Cothelstone and Dousborough.

The chief characteristic of Quantock scenery I venture to designate as CHEERFUL BEAUTY. Unlike the savage grandeur of the Scottish mountains, or the wild and bleak

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<sup>1</sup> This is a parcel of ground round about Taunton very pleasant and populous, containing many parishes, and so fruitful, to use their own phrase, with the *zun* and *zoil*, that it needs no manuring at all. The peasantry therein are as rude as rich, and so highly conceited of their own country, that they conceive it a disparagement to be born in any other place.—*Grose's Provincial Glossary*. For an account of the Manor of Taunton-Dean see Savage's History of Taunton, p. 46. *Editor*.

uplands of Northern England, its breezy summits rise in gentle and graceful undulations, and sink into woody combes of the most romantic beauty, thickly clothed, many of them with scrub oak, and each with its own little stream winding through it ; its slopes fringed with gorse and ferns of luxuriant growth, or purple with heather, and abounding everywhere with the pretty little shrub *vac-cinium myrtillus*, or whortleberry, the fruit of which, locally known by the name of "whorts" becomes from its sale during the season a source of considerable profit to the surrounding villages. The prevalence of the yew and the holly may also be noted ; the former is found singly in the woods and hedgerows, or in the churchyards, of which few are without one or more specimens, often of majestic growth and venerable age. The holly is still more abundant, and the fine undergrowth of this tree, like those in the grove at Alfoxden, so much admired by Wordsworth, forms quite a speciality of these woods. Nor must the charm which the colour of the soil imparts be forgotten ;—that rich red sandstone which always gives such a warm tone to the landscape, and so much luxuriance to the foliage. Those numerous combes, however, in the sheltered hollows of which may be found some of the rarest of our native plants, form the most marked feature of the district ; and lying, as they generally do, at right angles to the sea-shore, break the outline of the mountain range into "Heads," as they are locally termed, and these eminences, seen from the Bristol

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix, note i.

<sup>2</sup> Note ii.

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Channel, gave rise in days of yore to the Keltic name of The Quantocks, *i.e.*, the water-headlands.

Around the brows of these hills wind beautiful walks that extend for miles through oak woods, once the favourite haunt of the poets and their friends ; such are the valley of the Seven Wells, Cockercombe, Hunter's Dell, and other points of similar interest. They have since been rendered more accessible by the formation of drives that open out the most charming scenes of woodland beauty. Southey, in one of his letters, affirms that "Devonshire falls very flat after the North of Somerset, which is truly a magnificent country." Few strangers, however, who travel along the public road at the base of these hills would anticipate the countless beauties that lie hidden in the recesses of their "dingles and bosky dells," nor the splendid prospects which their heights command. Certainly, as far as my own experience extends, I never met with so much fine mountain scenery that could be enjoyed with so trifling an amount of climbing, nor a district in which so many spots impressive from their solitude and seclusion could be so easily reached, an advantage to be appreciated, it may be, by persons somewhat advanced in years, more than by the droves of good people infected by the modern vulgar mania for climbing the snowy peaks of enormous mountains, with, as it would seem, no intelligible object except that of coming down again, and apart from any of those scientific researches which justify and ennoble so great an expenditure of time and toil. To such hunters after the sublime I

cannot commend this part of Somersetshire, nor invite their steps to wander—

On seaward Quantock's heathy hills,  
Where quiet sounds from hidden rills  
Float here and there like things astray.<sup>1</sup>

Our Quantock scenery, with its gentle features, and a beauty more of expression than of form, would be to them "as is a picture to a blind man's eye;" or might affect them much as a pastoral symphony of Beethoven might affect the crowd that is rushing from a "monster concert" at Exeter Hall.

This exaggerated passion for lofty mountains, so much in vogue of late years, appears to have been unknown to classical antiquity, and the greatest poets and painters would seem to have drawn but little of their inspiration from its influence. Beauty of scenery is in truth independent of mere altitude and expanse, and grandeur is not necessarily connected with magnitude. To persons who are susceptible of the true enjoyment of external nature, and can watch with an intelligent eye the constant changes of shade and colour in landscape, and note the delicate harmonies and manifold transformations in sea, and sky, and cloud, which succeed each other in such infinite variety;—to them, the wild heathy moorlands, the softly rounded heights, and the deep-sunk combs of the Quantocks will, however inferior in scale, be found, in their way,

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, *Poems*, vol. i., p. 180.

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scarcely less impressive than the passes of the Alps or the mountains of Switzerland. For after all, it is upon the mind which the spectator brings along with him that his acquisitions of pleasure or profit must depend:—

———— we receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone doth Nature live.<sup>1</sup>

Other points of interest remain to be noticed. The mountain heights not only afford views of great extent and grandeur, but are many of them crowned with ancient encampments. Of these perhaps the most considerable in size and most commanding in position is Dousborough, a corruption of How's-borough, *i.e.*, the hill-fort. A long green path of elastic turf leads up for about a mile in nearly a straight line from the gate of my residence, Woodlands, to the camp on the summit. This has been sometimes ascribed to the Romans, but, as appears to me, is evidently a fortress of Belgic-British construction, and is of great size and strength. In form it is nearly oval, but accommodated to the shape of the hill. Its enclosure, partially overgrown with heather and dwarf-oak coppice, contains an area of more than ten acres. A deep fosse and a lofty agger surround it, and the ramparts are pierced by three entrances. On its western declivity may be traced a raised road, or causey, leading to the British trackway, that, running to the ancient ford at Combwitch, skirts the entrenched post at Cannington Park Hill, keeps along a

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge: Poems vol. i., p. 237.

valley to the south of Nether Stowey, ascends Quantock, passing between Dousborough and Wilsneck, and then descends to the vale of Crowcombe ; next it mounts the Brendon Hills, and stretches far away over the wilds of Exmoor to the mining districts of Cornwall. On the highest point of Dousborough, where stands the flag-staff, a heap of loose masonry marks the sight of a *specula*, or watch tower, and beside it are two or three circular pits, which formerly held the beacon fires. These were in correspondence with a chain of other forts of ante-Roman origin on the long ridge of the Mendips and on the opposite Brendon Hills, protecting the Belgic frontiers, communicating with both Channels, and ready on the appearance of danger to convey onwards the telegraphic fire-signals, like the flame from Mount Ida that leapt from height to height to announce to Argos the news of the fall of Troy.

That the Romans, after their subjugation of this part of Britannia Prima, may have occasionally occupied as *castra aestiva* the military post constructed long before their day, is not improbable. No Roman road, however, comes within ten miles of the fort, although a few coins of the Lower Empire have been found at the village of Kilton and elsewhere in the vicinity. An oval-shaped barrow within the *enceinte*, with a trench round it, which appears to have been formally opened, is sometimes pointed out as the *Prætorium*, but more probably marks the grave of some Belgic chieftain,—the oldest form of sepulture and the

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most durable. There is also at no great distance another sepulchral monument in the hollow below the northern slope of the encampment, on the left of the greensward path leading up to the summit. This is a cairn or heap of loose stones, surrounded by a shallow trench ; and on the hill just above Woodlands, is one of those circular pits so common on the Wiltshire Downs, which Stukely calls, oddly enough, "inverted barrows." This excavation marks the site of an outpost to the fort above, from which it was visible ; it commands the road at the foot of the hill, and was probably roofed over in a bee hive shape to form a shelter for the guard. Many tumuli and but few Roman remains are found scattered over the Quantocks, Other ancient beacons may be traced on Wilsneck, Cothelstone, Morncombe, and elsewhere.

It was the judicious advice of a distinguished antiquary—the late Sir Richard Colt Hoare, "to avoid above all things the common error of looking for Roman stations on high mountains ; but on the contrary to examine those gentle eminences in the plains, having an open circuit of country around them. This latter quality seems peculiarly to have been considered by the Romans, as we may collect from their historians ; and for this reason, the Britons seldom ventured to attack the enemy in the open, but depended more on surprising them unawares. Hence the Romans fixed on situations for their camps where they could perceive at a distance the Britons descending from their strongholds in the mountains." The Roman generals, although

they never failed, even on halting for a single night, to throw up entrenchments round their camp, yet relied less upon mountain-heights and huge ramparts than upon the disciplined bravery of their legions and their own superior military tactics. Their camps, although occasionally found intermingled with older British fortifications, were generally smaller, of a square form with four gates, and placed on some gentle eminence with water near at hand. Nor have the Danes a greater claim than the Romans to the construction of these grand military works that are sometimes called by their name. Their camps were mostly small and hastily thrown up to serve the purpose of some sudden piratical landing. In the neighbourhood of Watchet and Porlock, near the coast, are several small entrenchments which may with great probability be assigned to this people; while others, of dimensions equally small, consisting of merely a single agger and a fosse, may be found constructed on the hill-sides, or at the head of some little valley, commanding its approach from the sea, and placed so as to defend the interior of the country from these marauding descents. Such are "Trendle Ring," on the slope of Quantock, above Bicknoller, and another diminutive earthwork, of which I know not the name, on a little rocky promontory a mile further to the west towards Stogumber.

It is not improbable that the whole of this wild outlying district of the Quantocks, so far removed from the great line of Roman traffic, remained for a considerable time a



woody fastness of the Belgic-Britons. An interesting discovery, which has been lately made on the Fairfield Estate,<sup>1</sup> goes far to confirm the supposition of their occupancy. It consists of a great variety of objects in bronze, amounting, together with fragments, to nearly 150 pieces. There are portions of swords and their sheaths; daggers and knives; spear heads of the leaf shape and of the barbed type; more than a score of Celts, of sections square or oval; palstaves; gouges; a disc of molten metal; a number of jets from the necks of moulds, &c. These articles were formerly exhibited at the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries, at Somerset House, and are now arranged in the library at St. Audries.

The view from the summit of DOUSBOROUGH is of great extent and variety. Immediately beneath the spectator, on the north, stretching away towards the Bristol Channel, lies a level tract of woodland, interspersed with meadows, and orchards, and farmsteads, from which shoots up the spire of the fine old Priory Church of Stoke-Courcey, and near it stand the moated walls of its Norman Castle. Hard by is visible the ancient mansion of Fairfield, half hidden in its trees. Across the Channel is seen the Coast of Wales, and the horizon beyond is fringed by the mountains of Glamorgan, Brecknock, and Monmouthshire. The broad expanse of the "Severn-sea," yellow as the Tiber, occupies the middle distance, with the bold, rocky islet of the Steep Holms rising abruptly from its bosom,—an out-lying mass severed from the mountain limestone of the Mendips, and

<sup>1</sup> Formerly part of the Chandos Estate; now the property of Sir A. A. Hood, Bart., of St. Audries.

not without a little history of its own; for here the survivors of the pirate Danes, after the repulse of their attempted landing at Watchet (A.D. 915), found a brief refuge, and "sat on the island," as the "Saxon Chronicle" expresses it, foodless and forlorn, till most of them died of hunger. Gildas, the oldest British historian, is said to have retired to this secluded spot to write his book of lamentations, called a *Treatise de excidio Britanniae*; and here, after the battle of Hastings, Girtha, the mother of Harold, with some of the noble ladies of her court, found a temporary asylum. The island, which has been lately fortified with all the appliances of modern warfare, lies in the very highway of Channel traffic, for here the "Severn-sea" becomes free and open to the Atlantic, and anyone of yonder vessels, whose white sails add so much animation and interest to the view, might, it is said, make from hence in a fair wind, without a tack, the harbour of New York. The sister islet, the Flat Holmes, is less visible from hence, except at night, when, as Coleridge describes it,—

Dark reddening from the channelled isle,  
Twinkles the watch-fire, like a sullen star.

Turning towards the east, the long range of the Mendips appears beyond the sandy flats that mark the position of the ancient estuary, Uxella, now reduced, by their accumulations, to form the mouth of the river Parret. On the highest point of the range is a beacon, once perhaps the most important watch-tower in the county, being equally visible from the north and south sides of Mendip. At one

point, the long outline is obscured by a faint cloud of smoke which hangs over the busy town and port of Bridgewater, with its factories and foundries; and at another, a sharp fracture indicates the position of the grand ravine of Cheddar. More in advance towards the spectator, the low-lying ridge of Polden, with a Roman road running along it, stretches away towards Sedgmoor; and standing apart, islanded by its circling marshes, and hidden now and then by their mists, rises St. Michael's famous tower, recalling the lines of a fine descriptive poet :—

“ How hath it vanished in a hasty spleen,  
The Tor of Glastonbury ! ”

Still further south, Alfred's tower looks out from the woods of Stourhead; and on a very clear day are visible the double peaks of Montacute. On the west the prospect is limited by high and heathery moorlands, (the haunt of the black game,) except where a depression admits a glimpse of the Brendon hills, and the fine bold headland of Minehead; and at times the peak of Dunkery, the monarch of western mountains, may be distinguished. Immediately below, to the left of the woods of Alfoxden, and looking across two parallel coombs of great beauty, lies the little valley of Kilve, and beyond its gap the glittering sea.

The view from COTHELSTONE BEACON has been so well described in the Proceedings of the Somerset Archæological Society by the late Mr. Warre, that it would be difficult to add much to the clever sketch he has left us; and WILSNECK, although of somewhat greater altitude, has

little additional interest, and much in common with the neighbouring height. Neither elevation, however, affords a prospect so fascinating as that from Dousborough, although both command a wider expanse of view over the central part of the county, embracing a large portion of that fair valley known far and wide as Taunton Dean ; a goodly landscape, recalling to the recollection of the lover of our elder poets the fervid encomium of Drayton in his *Poly-olbion* ;

“ What eare so empty is, that hath not heard the sound  
Of Taunton's fruitfull Deane ? not matcht by any ground ; . . .  
Where sea-ward Quantock stands——.”

Having accomplished the ascent of Wilsneck, the climber (and, if a botanist, he may chance on its higher slopes to light on a specimen of the rare stag's-horn moss), finds himself on the loftiest point of Quantock. As his eye ranges over the fertile campaign below, he will see innumerable meadows and cornfields, farms, and rural dwellings ; and, rising frequent from the valley, or nestling here and there in the woody openings of the hills, the battlements of some of those unrivalled ‘Perpendicular’ Towers for which Somersetshire over all other parts of England reigns supreme. Nor will the survey prove less suggestive to the historian or the antiquary. Within ken are the sites of a score of battle-fields ; the mediæval castle and the moated grange lend their associations ; nor are wanting old historic mansions, and

“—— ghostly halls of grey renown,  
“ With woodland honours graced ——.”

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On the south, the heights of Blagdon form a rampart to the vale of Taunton, and at their extremity throw out a bold projecting spur, crowned by the strong British encampment of Castle Neroche. Turning away from this fair scene towards the west, we have at our feet the romantic village of Crowcombe, and, on the opposite slope of the valley, Combe-Florey, a name now well known from its connection with the witty Canon of St. Paul's,<sup>1</sup> whose playful sallies, never spiced by malice, were always *sine felle joci*. His glebe is described, in the memoir of his life, as truly a "valley of flowers,"—"a lovely little spot where nature and art combined to realise the Happy Valley." The long line of the Brendon hills extends in front of our station, on an outlying point of which is conspicuous Willett Tower, a modern erection; and behind it are the Elworthy barrows, a large Belgic-British earthwork left half finished. It has formed a subject of fruitless conjecture with antiquaries, why these warlike fortifications were discontinued, and for so many centuries,

"— pendent opera interrupta, minaeque  
Murorum ingentes—,"

Yet one other distinction of the Quantocks remains to be noticed, which they possess in common with the hill country south of the Bristol Channel, including the heights of Exmoor and a portion of North Devon; and that is, the fact that this district is now the last home in South Britain of the wild red-deer, and that here alone still survive some relics of the grand old stag-hunting establishments whose

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<sup>1</sup> Sydney Smith.

sport and hospitalities are associated with the bye-gone history of the county of Somerset. Here may still sometimes be seen the broad-antlered stag or the graceful hind, hotly pursued by a gallant train of horsemen, while the echoes of the Quantocks are roused by the shouts of the gay cavalcade and the voices of the hounds swelling and dying away over the autumn woods, till their deepened note is followed by the wild bugle-call that proclaims "the mort o' the deer."

Into this charming country there came, between seventy and eighty years ago, two men, destined to exercise by their genius and their writings an influence upon the minds of their generation more profound than any others of their contemporaries. "Perhaps," says a recent critic, "no two such men have met anywhere on English ground during this century." It was the period when the stir and turmoil which disturbed men's minds at the outset of the first French Revolution had given place to comparative calm and repose, and the political fever of the nation was subsiding, that Coleridge, the younger of the two, "retired," as he himself informs us, "to a cottage in Somersetshire at the foot of Quantock, to devote himself to poetry and to the study of ethics and psychology, and the foundations of religion and morals."<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, his senior by more

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<sup>1</sup> The following letter was addressed by Mr. Nichols to the Rev. J. R. Vernon, Rector of St. Audries, himself the author of an interesting work on the same locality, published in the *Leisure Hour* in 1838. *Ed.*





THE WOODLANDS.

WOODBURY COMPANY.



than two years, was attracted to the same neighbourhood by mental sympathy with his brother philosopher and poet, and by a wish to enjoy the society of a man by whose marvellous conversation he had been so much impressed. He loved to describe Coleridge's talk as "like a majestic river, the sound or sight of whose course you caught at intervals; which was sometimes concealed by forests, sometimes lost in sand; then came flashing out broad and distinct; and even when it took a turn which your eye could not follow, yet you always felt and knew that there was a connection in its parts, and that it was the same river." Those persons who have listened to the discourse of "the old man

WOODLANDS,

HOLFORD, June 11, 1888.

My dear Sir,

Pray forgive my delay in replying to your note, I am only just returned from London, and found a long arrear of bills and household matters.

I wished to illustrate my own booklet with some pictorial embellishments, connected with the two poets. After enquiry and personal inspection of the Stowey residence of Coleridge, and the scene of the brief *Marazion* of Wordsworth at Alfoxden, I found that the former had been so much changed from the pretty low-roofed thatched cottage of the past, by the addition of an upper storey; the re-casing of the walls and addition of an extra wing, that the bard himself would fail to recognise his former domicile. The small country house of Alfoxden has been replaced by a mansion, and merely one or two smaller rooms within would recall it to Wordsworth if he could re-visit it. The Waterfall alone still "flows on for ever," and the Combe has been intruded on by modern cottages, and the only contemporary one removed.

*Marazion*

eloquent," in his after years, will recognize the accuracy of this description.<sup>1</sup> Yet no two men could be more unlike than the poets who now met beside the Quantocks. Coleridge, a student and recluse from his boyhood, of immense erudition, a *heluo librorum*; all his life a valetudinarian who scarcely knew what health was—ever planning mighty works—*multa et pulcra minans*—yet so irresolute and infirm of purpose as never to realize his

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The only perfect existing residence of Coleridge is at Clevedon, where he brought his bride, and spent, perhaps, the happiest days of his married life.

Soon after my Quantock book appeared, I received a letter from a perfect stranger, Mr. Buxton Forman (now the President of the Browning Society, and editor of the fine edition of the works of England's greatest lyric poet, Shelley, in six octavo volumes), requesting on behalf of himself and a few friends to purchase or obtain the loan of the book, and calling my attention to an article in a public print taken almost wholly from the volume which they requested the gift of, or loan, or purchase.

But I am almost afraid to look on the long epistle I have troubled you with, and can only regret being unable to offer you a more satisfactory response to your query.

Faithfully yours,

W. L. N.

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<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, on his side, speaking in his *Biographia Literaria*, of his residence at Stowey, and the blessing he then acquired in the society of Wordsworth, whom he could look up to with equal reverence as a poet, a philosopher or a man, adds "his conversation extended to almost all subjects, except physics and politics; with the latter he never troubled himself."—*Editor*.

aspirations—the very *Hamlet* of literature ;—Wordsworth, on the other hand—as robust in body as one of the peasants of his native Cumberland, of indomitable purpose, keeping his way right onward when made the scorn of fools till he became the glory of his age—was no reader of books, except of the great book of nature, and his “study” was on the Quantock downs. It was his creed that

One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man ;  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

Over “these green hills,” observes the same critic, “the two young poets wandered for hours together rapt in fervid talk, Coleridge no doubt the chief speaker, Wordsworth not the less suggestive. Never before, or since, have these downs heard such high converse.” At that period, Benedict de Spinoza was the master spirit whose spirit held temporary sway over the mind of Coleridge ; and doubtless the somewhat mystical, but ennobling propositions of the famous 5th book of his *Ethics*, which exercised so profound an influence over the greatest minds of Germany, would form a frequent subject of discussion and possess no small attraction for both poets. But not alone philosophy, poetry would naturally become their theme. Both were disgusted with the inane and artificial versification which then passed under its name, and with the false canons of criticism and formal rules upon which it was based. English poetry was indeed at that period at its lowest ebb, repre-

sented mainly by the glitter and false taste of Darwin and the turgid twaddle of Hayley. Burns, it is true, had been lately in full song, but his wood notes wild were little known in the south; and Cowper, the herald of a better day, was timid, and only half emancipated from the prevailing system. It was at this period that the poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge burst upon the literary world like a new revelation. In after years, the elder poet thus recalled their memorable rambles in those days of promise:—

Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved  
 Unchecked, or loitered mid their sylvan combs,  
 Thou in bewitching words, with happy art,  
 Didst chaunt the vision of that Antient man,  
 The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes  
 Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;  
 And I, associate with such labour, steeped  
 In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,  
 Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found,  
 After the perils of his moonlight ride,  
 Near the loud waterfall; or her who sate  
 In misery near the miserable thorn.

*The Prelude*, Book xiv.

The result of these musings on the Quantocks was the publication in the following year (1798) of the famous *Lyrical Ballads*, a volume which so startled the critics of that day from their propriety. In anticipation of its reception, Wordsworth, the chief contributor, prefixed to the second edition the motto, afterwards withdrawn, "*quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum*," and added an explanatory Preface of considerable length. *The Antient Mariner*,

and the *Christabel*, planned during a walk along the Quantock Hills towards Watchet, time has stamped as, "after their kind, unsurpassed by any creation of the poet's own generation, or perhaps of any generation of England's poetry." The *Christabel* excited the warm admiration of Sir Walter Scott, who frankly acknowledged his own considerable obligations to the poetry of Coleridge, and particularly admired his management of the supernatural. "Why," enquires Sir Walter, "is the Harp of Quantock silent?" and, in the notes to one of his romances, having occasion to refer to the popular superstition which formerly existed, that evil spirits could not enter an inhabited house unless invited, or even dragged over the threshold, he adds the remark, that "the most picturesque use of this popular belief occurs in Coleridge's beautiful, and tantalizing fragment of *Christabel*." Has not our own imaginative poet cause to fear that future ages will desire to summon him from his place of rest, as Milton longed

To call him up, who left half-told  
The story of Cambuscan bold?

"The verses I refer to," continues Sir Walter, "are when Christabel conducts into her father's castle a mysterious and malevolent being, under the disguise of a distressed female stranger:—

They crossed the moat, and Christabel  
Took the key that fitted well;  
A little door she opened straight,  
All in the middle of the gate;  
The gate that was ironed within and without,

Where an army in battle array had marched out.  
 The lady sank, belike through pain,  
 And Christabel with might and main  
 Lifted her up, a weary weight,  
 Over the threshold of the gate :  
 Then the lady rose again,  
 And moved as she were not in pain.  
 So, free from danger, free from fear,  
 They crossed the court : right glad they were."

On another occasion, speaking of "the singularly irregular structure of the stanzas, and the liberty it allowed the author to adapt the sound to the sense" which he found in *Christabel*, he adds the graceful remark, "it is to Mr. Coleridge that I am bound to make the acknowledgement due from the pupil to his master."<sup>1</sup> Even Lord Byron owned the charm of what he called "that wild, and singularly original and beautiful poem;" and to the *Christabel* we are indebted for the opening lines of one of his now nearly forgotten tales in verse, *The Siege of Corinth*. Indeed, few persons of sensibility can resist the marvellous skill with which the poet of Stowey gives "a local habitation and a name" to the wild fictions of old romantic superstition. The mysterious Geraldine, with her witch-like beauty, uttering her spell over the sleeping Christabel, chills the blood with creeping horror; and the wonderful art with which so many minute touches of quaint and picturesque description are thrown in, adds immensely to the magical effect. The mode of narrative, too, by question

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<sup>1</sup> Int. to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, p. 24.

and answer, then so novel and original, imparts spirit and liveliness to the story, and the moonlit forest ; the moated castle and its massive gate ; the angry moan of the old mastiff ; the echoing hall, and the sudden flash of the embers on its hearth, revealing only the serpent-eye of the stranger lady ; the carven chamber, and its fresh-trimmed silver lamp,

Left swinging to and fro,—

combine, one and all, to lay an irresistible hold upon the imagination of the reader.

The year 1797, which gave birth to two such works of genius as this poem and *The Antient Mariner*, may well be called the *annus mirabilis* of the poet ! It was probably the happiest year of his life ; he had not yet lost the springing hopes of youth, and keenly felt, no doubt, the exhilarating consciousness of his own great powers. “ His poetic prime,” observes his learned daughter, in her Notes on her Father’s life, “ commenced with the *Ode to the Departing Year*, composed at the end of December, 1796.” The year following, the five-and-twentieth of his life [during which, and in 1798, he resided in his cottage at Nether Stowey], produced *The Ancient Mariner*, *Love*, and *The Dark Ladie*, the first part of *Christabel*, *Kubla Khan*, the tragedy of the *Remorse*, *France*, and *This Lime Tree Bower*. *Fears in Solitude*, *The Nightingale*, and *The Wanderings of Cain*, were written in 1798. *Frost at Midnight*, *The Picture*, the *Lines to the Rev. G. Coleridge*, and those *To W. Wordsworth*, are all of the same Nether

Stowey period. "It was in June, 1797," continues the poet's daughter, "that my Father began to be intimate with Mr. Wordsworth, and this doubtless gave an impulse to his mind. The poems which succeed are distinguished from those of my father's Stowey life by a less buoyant spirit." With these last I am not concerned in the present paper, which is confined to the period of the poet's residence in this part of Somersetshire. Of the above poems *Kubla Khan*, a dream within a dream, was composed, as the author himself tells us, in a lonely farmhouse between Porlock and Lynton. The *Lines to his Brother* contain a touching biographical retrospect; and the noble verses addressed to Wordsworth record his own feelings on hearing the grand poem of *The Prelude* read by its author. The tragedy of *The Remorse* was written at the suggestion of Sheridan, and some years afterwards represented at Drury Lane, at the request of Lord Byron, and with great success. In the little artistically-perfect gem, entitled *Love*, with which as a poem of the affections, there is nothing antient or modern that, in its way, can bear a moment's comparison, one knows not which most to admire,—its picturesque description,—its apt locality, and the sculpture-like precision of its handling,—its captivating melancholy, or its exquisite blending of the spiritual and the sensuous.

Most of the poems by Wordsworth contained in the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (a little volume now of extreme rarity), were produced at Alfoxden, a mansion about three miles from Nether Stowey, the residence of his



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brother poet, and are descriptive of Quantock scenery, or founded on incidents that occurred in the neighbourhood. The picturesque little domain of Alfoxden has naturally acquired some celebrity from the circumstance that the Poet of the Excursion resided there for awhile in his noble poverty. An interesting memorial, now nearly effaced by time, of the Poet's sojourn at Alfoxden, used to be visible—the letters W. W., deeply incised on one of the row of trees on the hill above the house. I have met on the neighbouring downs pilgrims from across the Atlantic on their way to visit the shrine of the Poet, and have been amused by the minute acquaintance they seemed to have acquired at their home in the Dominion of Canada with the names of some of our retired villages merely from their occurrence in the verses of their favourite author, or from the transient honour conferred upon them by his residence.

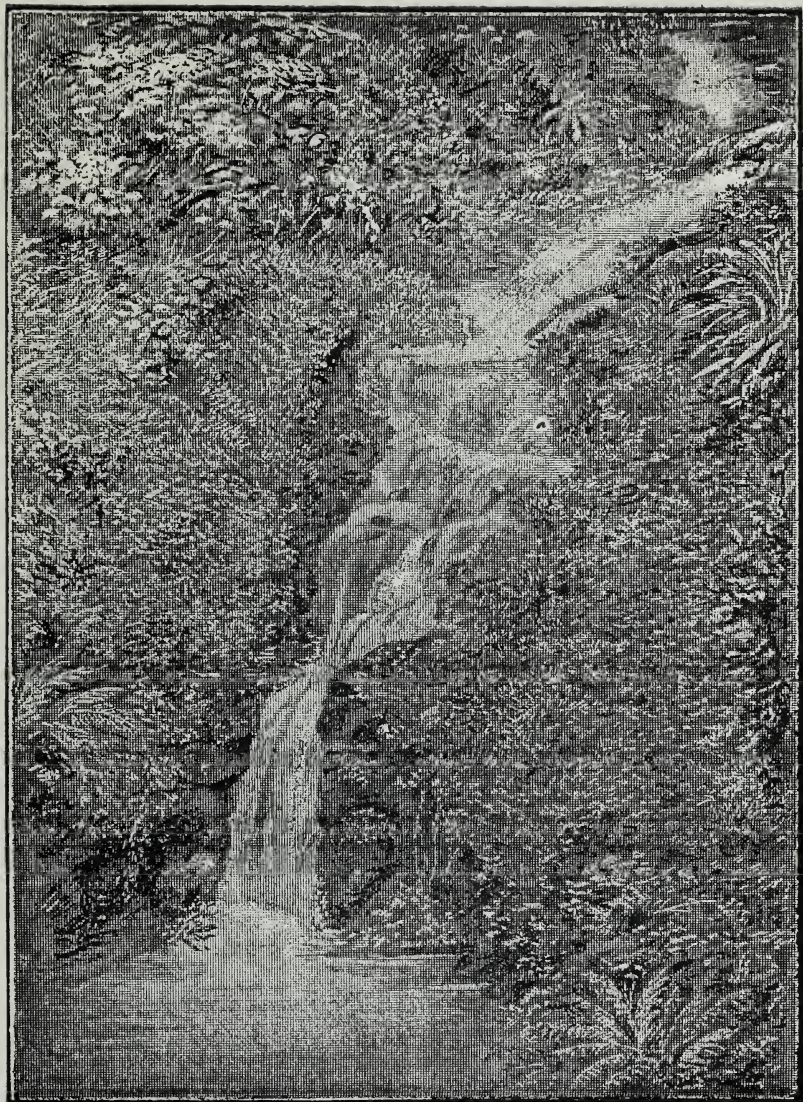
Miss Wordsworth, his accomplished sister, thus describes the attractions of the place, as seen on their first arrival. “There is everything here ; the sea ; woods wild as fancy ever painted ; and William and I, in a wander by ourselves, found out a sequestered waferfall in a dell formed by steep hills covered by full-grown timber trees. The woods are as fine as those at Lowther, and the country more romantic ; it has the character of the less grand parts of the lakes. From the end of the house we have a fine view of the sea, over a woody country, and exactly opposite the window where I now sit is an immense wood, whose round top has

the appearance of a mighty dome. A quarter of a mile from the house is the waterfall of which I spoke."

It was by the side of this fall that Wordsworth composed one of his sweetest lyrics—the *Lines in Early Spring* :—

I heard a thousand blended notes  
While in a grove I sit reclined,  
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts  
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

In reading a description which he afterwards wrote of this little combe, one doubts whether his verse or his prose be the most beautiful: "It was," he says, "a chosen resort of mine. The brook fell down a sloping rock, considerable for that country, and across the pool below had fallen an ash-tree from which rose perpendicularly boughs in search of the light, intercepted by the deep shade above. The boughs bore leaves of green that for want of sunshine had faded into almost lily-white; and from the under side of this natural sylvan bridge depended long and beautiful tresses of ivy, which waved gently in the breeze that might be called the breath of the waterfall." This dell, once locally known as "The Mare's Pool," but now consecrated to all time as "Wordsworth's Glen," was a favourite trysting-place of the two poets and their friends. Coleridge has described it in the graceful verses he addressed to his old school-fellow Charles Lamb, who, with his clever sister, then on a visit to the cottage of the Poet at Stowey, were out on the downs enjoying the breezes of Quantock, while their host, disabled during the whole time of their stay by



THE WATERFALL.



an accident, was left to his solitary musings in the lime-tree bower in his orchard. He thus follows in imagination the route of his visitors in their charming ramble :

—————they meanwhile,  
 On springy heath, along hill top edge,  
 Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,  
 To that still roaring dell of which I told,  
*The roaring dell, o'er wooded, narrow, deep,  
 And only speckled by the mid-day sun ;  
 Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock  
 Flings arching like a bridge ; that branchless ash,  
 Unsunned and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves  
 Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,  
 Fanned by the waterfall !*

\* \* \* \* \*

—————Now my friends emerge,  
 Beneath the wide, wide Heaven— and view again  
 The many-steepled track magnificent  
 Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,  
 With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up  
 The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two isles  
 Of purple shadow ! Yes ! they wander on  
 In gladness all ; but thou, methinks, most glad,  
 My gentle hearted Charles ! for thou hast pined  
 And hungered after Nature many a year,  
 In the great city pent, winning thy way  
 With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain  
 And strange calamity ! Ah ! slowly sink  
 Behind the western ridge, thou glorious sun !  
 Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,  
 Ye purple heath-flowers ; richlier burn, ye clouds !  
 Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves !  
 And kindle thou blue ocean !

Every reader of taste must be delighted with this grand

and nobly sustained piece of local descriptive poetry ; and persons to whom the scene is familiar will recognise in the latter portion of it the view from Woodlands Down.

Coleridge, who drew his inspiration far less than his brother poet from external nature, has not failed however to weave into his verses several notices of the neighbourhood of his beloved "Nether-Stowey, — *clarum et venerabile nomen!*" He thus describes a homeward descent from Dousborough :—

Through weeds and thorns and matted underwood  
 I force my way ; now climb and now descend  
 O'er rocks, or bare or mossy, with wild foot  
 Crushing the purple whorts. . . . .  
 Homeward I wend my way, and so recalled  
 I find myself upon the brow and pause  
 Startled ! and after lonely sojourning  
 This burst of prospect,—here the shadowing main  
 Dim tinted, there the mighty majesty  
 Of that huge amphitheatre of rich  
 And elmy fields. . . . .  
 And now, beloved Stowey, I behold  
 Thy church-tower, and methinks the four huge elms  
 Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend ;  
 And close beside them, hidden from my view,  
 Is my own lonely cottage, where my babe  
 And my babe's mother dwell in peace !

Any notice of the sojourn of Coleridge at Stowey would be very imperfect without some reference to the friend to whom he here alludes. This was Mr. T. Poole,<sup>1</sup> who appears to have been one of the most kind-hearted and

<sup>1</sup> Note iii.



COLERIDGE'S COTTAGE, NETHERSTOWEY.





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liberal of men, ever ready to assist humble merit ; and though it would seem that he had not himself enjoyed the benefit of a learned education, yet he must have been a person of considerable mental culture, and fully capable of appreciating the genius of the poet of whom he was the generous patron. He must indeed have been no common man to have been the "dear friend" of Coleridge and Wordsworth. At the suggestion of this estimable person, who was desirous of securing his gifted friend as a neighbour, Coleridge, with his wife and child, and Charles Lloyd,<sup>1</sup> afterwards the translator of Alfieri, removed to a small house at Nether Stowey, hard by the residence of good Mr. Poole ; and like the poet Cowper at Olney, to obtain greater facility of intercourse, made a communication from his cottage-orchard into the garden of his friend. In this orchard was the "lime-tree bower," the "prison" of the disabled poet. Here too his friend Cottle describes a pretty garden-scene during a visit he paid to him at Stowey ; "the orchard laden with fruit, the tripod table in the arbour, with its simple meal, surmounted by a brown jug of the true Taunton ale." "There must have been witchery in our fare," he exclaims, "and the very birds seemed to participate in our felicity. As we sat in our sylvan hall (T. Poole, C. Lloyd, S. T. Coleridge, and myself), Mrs. Coleridge approached with her fine Hartley ; we all smiled, but the father's eye beamed transcendent joy." At the

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<sup>1</sup> Note iv.

table of this kind neighbour, the poet had the advantage of meeting a number of persons then, or afterwards, of celebrity in literature and science. Seldom, in so retired a village as Stowey, have there been gathered together so many persons of intellectual eminence ;—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Charles Lamb, George Burnet, Davy (afterwards Sir Humphrey),<sup>1</sup> Dr. Beddoes, Basil Montague, De Quincey, and a young man of great promise, too early lost, the younger Wedgwood ;— the reputed inventor of photography, and a most generous patron of the two Quantock poets. All these persons occasionally sat around the hospitable board of the Mæcenas of Stowey.

At this distance of time few personal anecdotes can be gleaned of the poet's daily life at Stowey. That he was fond of watching the progress of a water-wheel and mill which Mr. Poole was erecting, and that the poetic philosopher by his abstruse views of mechanical science sometimes sadly puzzled the skilful engineer who was constructing the work ; that, like many others who are not poets, he often sat up late, and that he sometimes got up afterwards when a bright idea occurred to his mind, is the little that is recorded.

It was during one of these solitary watchings beside his cottage-hearth at Stowey, that he wrote those fine verses, so full of beauty and pathos, entitled *Frost at Midnight*.

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<sup>1</sup> Note v.

The frost performs its secret ministry,  
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry  
Came loud—and hark, again ! loud as before.  
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,  
Have left me to that solitude which suits  
Abstruser musings : save that at my side  
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.  
'Tis calm, indeed ! so calm that it disturbs  
And vexes meditation with its strange  
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,  
This populous village ! Sea, hill, and wood,  
With all the numberless goings on of life,  
Inaudible as dreams ! the thin blue flame  
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not ;  
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,  
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.  
Methinks its motion in this hush of nature  
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live.

This fancy leads his thoughts back to his childhood, “and his sweet birthplace, and the old church tower,” and its bells, and his school-days, and the wished-for advent of the “stranger,” prefigured by the fluttering film upon the bars. Then he addresses his sleeping babe, and contrasts his own melancholy boyhood, in the great city, “pent mid cloisters dim,” with what he hopes will be the future life of his child; and, with singular accuracy of prediction, foreshadows the actual locality destined to be the abode in after years of the little unconscious Hartley, “cradled by his side:”

But thou, my babe ! shalt wander like a breeze  
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
Of antient mountain, and beneath the clouds,

Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores  
 And mountain crags———

“Vates”—(prophet and bard)—“*sic ore effatus amico est!*”  
 The inhabitants of that “populous village” at the time when the poet wrote these lines are now doubtless, all, or nearly all, plunged in a deeper slumber than that which he so impressively described. One of them, the last survivor of those who had enjoyed any personal acquaintance with the poet, died, some three or four years ago, in extreme old age. He was accustomed, with harmless vanity, to claim some small share in the production of *The Antient Mariner*, from the fact that he had made, or mended the poet’s pens,<sup>1</sup> who gratefully conferred upon him the title of his “Pennefactor.”

The elder poet, Wordsworth, has connected his verses far more with his own residence and neighbourhood. He himself describes his sojourn at Alfoxden “as a very pleasant and productive time of his life ;” and indeed he has peopled its groves with the creations of his fancy, and hung a thought on every thorn. The romantic glen already described was the scene of his famous ballad, *The Idiot Boy*, a poem which, together with that entitled *We are Seven*, was a special favourite with Charles James Fox. The latter poem is an exquisite production ; but in the great statesman’s admiration for the other ballad, I am, I confess, unable to share. One stanza, however, of rare

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<sup>1</sup> Note vi.

beauty occurs in it :—

By this, the stars were almost gone,  
 The moon was setting on the hill,  
 So pale you scarcely looked at her :  
*The little birds began to stir,*  
*Though yet their tongues were still.*

In truth Wordsworth, like his great prototype Milton, and his contemporary Schiller, failed when he attempted the humorous, of which he had little or no perception. In Cowper's ballad of *John Gilpin* we find genuine humour. In this ballad of Wordsworth's, which he threw in the face of the shallow critics of his day, as a kind of wanton affront to their prejudices, humour is entirely wanting. The ballad was founded on an anecdote related to him by his friend Thomas Poole, and was composed, he tells us, in the grove at Alfoxden almost extempore. "I mention this," he adds, "in gratitude to those happy moments, for in truth I never wrote anything with so much glee." *The Last of the Flock* was also written here, and the incident on which it was founded took place in the street of the village of Holford. The affecting ballad of *Simon Lee* was suggested by a homely occurrence near the entrance gate of Alfoxden, where the poor man's cottage, now pulled down, stood "near the water-fall, upon the village common." He was an old huntsman, a retainer of the estate :—

—————but no one now  
 Dwelt in the Hall of Ivor ;  
 Men, dogs, and horses, all were dead ;  
 He was the sole survivor.

The scene of the charming poem *Ruth* is laid by the bank of Tone and on the highlands of Somersetshire, where the sound of the wanderer's flute

At evening in his homeward walk  
The Quantock woodman hears.

*Expostulation and Reply* was composed in front of the house at Alfoxden. *The Thorn* has vanished from the hillside of the Quantock, but still lives in the poet's description. Of a number of minor poems written here, a list will be given in the appendix.

The meeting of our two poets with Thelwall in the glen at Alfoxden has been already noticed. Thelwall was a man of considerable mental powers, but had by his intemperate politics made himself obnoxious to the Government of the day, and became the subject of the satire of Canning in a witty parody of Milton which appeared in the pages of the *Anti-Jacobin*;—"Thelwall, and ye that lecture as ye go." He was now, however, quietly engaged in the cultivation of a farm near Nether Stowey, but his visit to Coleridge gave occasion for the employment of a spy to watch the proceedings of the three supposed conspirators. Coleridge,<sup>1</sup> the spy pronounced to be comparatively harmless, but Wordsworth, who seldom spoke, was a dark and dangerous personage. From the misrepresentations of this man probably, and in spite of the regrets of his friend

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Sandford, in her interesting life of Mr. Poole, throws much light on the proceedings.





ALFOXDEN—RESIDENCE OF THE POET WORDSWORTH.



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Poole. and the indignant protestations of Coleridge—"the hills, and the woods, and the streams, and the sea, and the shores will break forth into reproaches against us, if we do not strain every nerve to keep their poet amongst them"—the ignorant agent who was employed to let the mansion at Alfoxden refused to continue the lease, and—the poet was driven from his paradise!

More than forty years afterwards, and in the plenitude of his fame,<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth once more revisited his old abode. "We visited," he writes in 1841, "all my old haunts in and about Alfoxden and Nether Stowey. These were farewell visits for life, and of course not a little interesting." He was accompanied by his wife and daughter and a few chosen friends; but one friend, alas! was wanting to share his interest in each well-known scene. That adoring sister,<sup>2</sup> who had been for so many years the companion of his walks and the partaker of his thoughts, and to whose manifold excellencies and graces he has paid so many affectionate tributes in his poems, was absent—lying, a melancholy wreck in body and mind, at his home in Westmoreland. As the old man stood once more in his favourite glen, and listened to the waterfall, might not his own delicious lines have come to his mind, and with a new significance?

No check, nor stay, this streamlet fears;  
How merrily it goes!

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<sup>1</sup> Note vij.

<sup>2</sup> Note viii.

'Twill murmur on a thousand years,  
And flow as now it flows :

And here on this delightful day,  
I cannot choose but think  
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay  
Beside this fountain's brink.

My eyes are dim with childish tears,  
My heart is idly stirred,  
For the same sound is in my ears  
Which in those days I heard.

Thus fares it still in our decay ;  
And yet the wiser mind  
Mourns less for what age takes away  
Than what it leaves behind."

Here I must pause. I have not undertaken to write the biography of the two poets, but my humbler task has been to bring together a few scattered reminiscences of their residence in the Quantock district.

To the extended influence of the writings of the younger poet, I ought to mention one testimony recently afforded by a royal personage, who, during his brief sojourn amongst us, won golden opinions from the people of this country. One of the earliest visits paid after his arrival in London by the Emperor of Brazil, was to the grave of Coleridge in the old churchyard at Highgate.

He might there muse upon the genius, the virtues, and the frailties of one of England's noblest poets and profound-

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est thinkers, and read there the poet's own pathetic epitaph,  
in which, " he being dead, yet speaketh : "

Stop, Christian passer-by ! Stop, Child of God !  
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod  
A Poet lies, or that which once seemed he ;  
Oh lift a thought in prayer for S. T. C.  
That he who many a year with toil of breath  
Found death in life, may here find life in death !  
Mercy for praise ; to be forgiven for fame,  
He asked, and hoped through Christ. Do thou the same.





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A QUANTOCK TRAGEDY.

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## A Quantock Tragedy.

**A**BOUT a mile from Nether Stowey, a pleasant Somersetshire village, or townlet, nestling under the eastern slope of the Quantock Hills, a gentle ascent leads to an eminence called Dodington Common, formerly a wild and lonely spot, but of late years for the most part enclosed, and now crowned with a cluster of neat-looking cottages. It commands one of the most extensive views in the county, but was itself long disfigured by an 'uncanny' object, properly known and named on the ordnance map as 'Walford's Gibbet,'<sup>1</sup> a memento of the melancholy fate of one who on this spot suffered the penalty of that divine decree, which ordains that "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

It was sometime in the year 1797, that three persons were ascending this hill, two of them bearing names, since become illustrious in the annals of English literature, the third, from his high character and useful life, a local celebrity,<sup>2</sup> but better known beyond his native district from the fact of his friendship with his two companions. These men were WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, and THOMAS POOLE, of Nether-Stowey.

Naturally enough their conversation turned upon the fate of the unfortunate being suggested by the place, with whom, and his belongings, it chanced that Mr. Poole had been par-

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<sup>1</sup> The road now passes close to the site. Formerly the only road ran through the valley below.

<sup>2</sup> Since more widely known through Mrs. Sandford's admirable work, "Tom Poole and his Friends,"

ticularly acquainted. So deeply interesting did the two poets consider his narrative, that they requested him to draw up the story in writing. This manuscript is now before me. Its composition led to a counter-request made by Mr. Poole that Wordsworth, to whose residence at Alfoxden they were most likely proceeding, would make the story the subject of a poem. That poem, hitherto (it is believed) unknown,<sup>1</sup> lies also beside the writer of this paper; it is in the neat autograph of Miss Wordsworth, the poet's accomplished sister, with the exception of two poems in the poet's autograph, and occurs in a MS. volume among a number of her brother's early poems, written for the most part during his residence at Alfoxden, and presented by the poet to his friend Mr. Poole, in whose hand-writing it is labelled, "Wordsworth's MSS." By the kind permission of a neighbouring clergyman and friend who inherits the papers of Mr. Poole, I was indulged with the inspection of this MS. book, and I instantly detected, among a number of the well-known pieces contained in the first edition of the 'Lyrical Ballads,' a poem perfectly new to me; it bears neither title nor epigraph, some of the lines are unfinished, and the whole poem show signs of perfunctory labour and haste. Mr. Poole's memoir is intolerably prolix and full of obsolete details; but the main facts of the story, as a romance of humble life, are deeply

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<sup>1</sup> It is right to mention that after this was written, Mr. Nichols became the purchaser of the MSS. and that they are now in possession of the poet's family. They have been seen by two friends of the Editor, who has not thought it desirable to publish the particular poem referred to.



interesting, although the poem itself is more suited to the sombre muse of nature's sternest painter, Crabbe, than the cheerful poet of Rydal Mount. A short sketch of Walford's career drawn for the most part from Mr. Poole's narrative, will not, it is hoped, be deemed out of place in these pages.

JOHN WALFORD was born at Over-Stowey, about the year 1765. His father, an honest and industrious man, was what is locally called a *collier*, i.e., a maker of charcoal from wood ; and by his labour, and by keeping a few horses on the hills, on the backs of which he carried to the neighbouring markets the coal he made, he had gained a comfortable provision for his own and his wife's old age. The son was brought up to his father's occupation, and was, from his remarkable good temper and generosity, an universal favourite with his comrades and neighbours, but he possessed ardent feelings and strong passions. He had a fine countenance and a stalwart frame, and so great was his bodily strength, that he was wont to boast that he could strike as smart a blow with his fist as a smith with his sledge. His whole expression of feature and a figure singularly compact and well-proportioned, bespoke intelligence and capability, whatever was required of him. Unhappily he could neither read nor write.

An affection had grown up between him and one Ann Rice, (the Agnes of Wordsworth's poem,) the daughter of a miller ; a fine well-educated, good girl, and naturally clever. As they intended to marry, she had lived for some time with his step-mother, a malicious and vindictive woman, who for some reason or other opposed the match and unfortunately induced

him to postpone it. Meantime he pursued his usual occupation in the woods. To exercise this, it was necessary that he should live day and night and most commonly alone in the solitary woods that clothe the sides of the deep combs on the eastern slope of the Quantock Hills around Nether Stowey. When in the woods, having brought with him a week's provision of homely food, he lived in a little cabin built with poles and turf in the form of a cone; and in this hovel he slept on straw, if sleep it could be called, for it was seldom that his work permitted him to lie down for more than an hour or two at a time, or to take off his clothes, often soaked with snow and rain, and frozen stiff to his back. His drink was water from the brook. On Saturday nights he returned home, and had better food, and on Sundays he constantly appeared remarkably neat and clean at his parish church. It was at rare intervals that any wanderer passed his lonely cabin. On one or two occasions, however, it chanced that a young girl from the village came that way for the purpose ostensibly of picking wood, but with the real object of seeking out Walford. She was a poor stupid creature, almost an idiot, slovenly in dress and ordinary in person, yet possessing a considerable degree of natural craftiness. Unfortunately an intercourse took place between them, which resulted in the birth of a child. He subsequently declared that he had never sought her nor invited her company, but that she had always sought him, and that she was doomed to be his ruin. He was however taken into custody by the parish officers, who demanded that he should either marry the woman or give

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security for the maintenance of the infant. They did not really wish him to marry her, knowing what a fearful sacrifice it would prove ; but Walford had a high spirit, and from pique probably at his step-mother's opposition to his match with Ann Rice, did not care to ask any money-favour of her. No security was given, and on the 18th of June, 1789, he was married to the woman. They lived together for some few weeks in apparent tranquillity ; but it was only in appearance, and the poor creature his wife, was wont at night, when he was expected home to his cottage, ( for since his marriage, he had worked chiefly as a husbandman,) to linger about the houses of the neighbours in the manner graphically described in the poem of Wordsworth. There is good reason for surmising, that, finding his situation with such a mate intolerable, his intention was to quit the country and leave her ; the unhappy man could not however, even with this inducement, make up his mind at once to leave his native hills, and a dire opportunity occurring on the night of the 5th of the following July, *he murdered his wife.*

The fearful deed occurred in this wise. He returned from his work on the Saturday evening, but, finding that his wife had not yet come home, went and sat down with a neighbouring family who lived under the same roof, the house being divided into two distinct dwellings. Here he ate his supper with the utmost tranquillity. After waiting a couple of hours, and finding that his wife did not return, he wished them a good night, and went into his own part of the house. Soon after, his wife returned home, and he exclaimed, ' what, art come,

Jenny?' after which, they were seen sitting peaceably together, the moon shining brightly upon them, for it was now at the full. In a short time their door was observed to be fast, and their neighbours thought they had retired to rest. It chanced however that two young girls were left up in the adjoining cottage, awaiting the return of a sister who was expected home; and at half-past twelve o'clock, they were startled by the sound of a footstep, or something like it, which, to use their own expression, 'went *pitt patt* under the window,' as if the person who walked was bare-footed. They did not know why, but there was *something in this sound which made them shudder*; and being much frightened, they flew upstairs to bed. They were right; it was the stealthy step of the murderer returning from the deed of blood; he had taken off his shoes that he might not be heard.

It appeared that, on his wife's return home, Walford proposed to her to go to the Castle of Comfort, a small public house in the parish of Dodington, about a mile from their dwelling, to drink some cider. She had been wishing for cider, which he mentioned to his neighbours the night before, and added in her presence, and with apparent tenderness, 'she shall have as much as she can drink.' He gave her a shilling from his scanty wages, (six shillings weekly,) to purchase this cider; but, she being averse to go out alone so late at night, he at last agreed to go with her. On their way, according to his own account, which is very probable, some altercation arose; and being disgusted with his wretched companion, and maddened by the thought of the happiness which he had lost, he

struck her down with a blow of his fist and laid her dead at his feet. He then made an attempt to drag the body to the mouth of a deep mine-shaft hard by, the ivied ruins of which overlook the picturesque little church and graveyard of Dodington; but finding this not an easy task, he took away the shilling he had given her to buy cider, and inadvertently put it into his own pocket. He then left the body lying by the roadside and made his way across the common home-wards.

Here is a deep valley, leading down to which is a lane, long, narrow, and dark with aspen boughs which over-arch it; along the bottom of this combe runs a brook fringed with coppice and shadowed with tall trees. The place is called Bincombe. It is one of those tranquil spots which from its seclusion would seem to be out of the reach of the angry passions of the world and secure from its wickedness. Here still stands the murderer's cottage. To Walford the peaceful scene would wear an aspect of gloom and horror, pressing the sense of guilt closer to his heart. Crossing the brook, he had to ascend a pathway up the slope of the opposite hill to reach his dwelling; and at the end of this path he took off his shoes in order not to be heard; for, to gain his own door, it was necessary to pass under his neighbour's window, and it was his ghastly step which the two girls heard disturbing the midnight silence. He then took off his blood-stained clothes, threw himself across his bed till the morning broke, and remained still in his chamber during the rest of that awful night waiting the event. It was now Sunday morning.

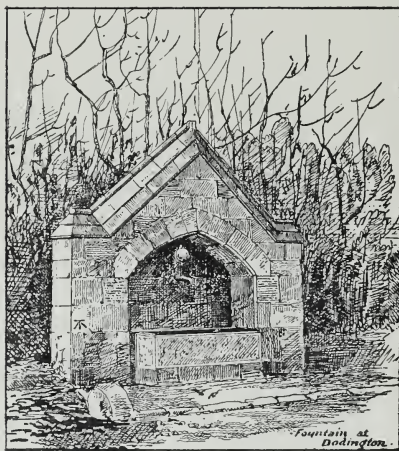
Between six and seven o'clock the body was discovered. People flew to his house calling out to him that his wife was murdered. In about ten minutes he came down dressed in his Sunday clothes. Being prevailed on to go where the body lay, he exclaimed, 'he wished he had never seen his wife, or that he had left the country;' and then, on his return to his own house, the incident of the *shilling* occurred just as Wordsworth has described it. He afterwards confessed the deed, but declared that it was committed without the least premeditation. His trial took place at the ensuing assizes, and on the 20th of the following August he was executed on the very spot where he had committed the murder. Just before he gave the fatal signal, an affecting incident occurred; he enquired if his once affianced bride, Ann Rice, were there. 'Is Ann Rice here?' was echoed through the vast concourse of people gathered from every part of the country that covered the common. Some said that she had been seen behind the brow of the hill. She was sought for and dragged up pale and trembling and almost lifeless, the sympathising crowd everywhere making way for her; she knelt on the straw in the cart beside him, and they talked together, or rather he talked to her, for nearly ten minutes; no one heard what passed, nor did she ever mention it to anyone. She was removed, and after wiping away the tears that for the first time rolled down his cheeks, he exclaimed, 'I am now ready!' The usual prayers were then read; he joined in the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed with an audible voice. He then stood up and addressed the people with a loud, firm, unbroken voice,

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in the following words : " I am guilty of the crime that I am going to die for, but I did it without foreintending it, and I hope God and the world have forgiven me."

All were amazed, afraid to breathe. It was a silence to be felt. The hum of that vast multitude was so hushed that *even the twittering of the birds in the neighbouring woods was distinctly audible*. He opened his hand, the handkerchief fell ; and he died instantaneously and without a struggle ; a shivering sound arose, produced by the spectators drawing their breath forcibly through their teeth at the moment. A dead silence succeeded for some ten minutes, when the people began slowly to disperse, discussing in whispered tones the sad fate of him, for whom probably not a single human being present went away without a feeling of pity.

Time has obliterated " Walford's Gibbet," which too long marred one of nature's fairest scenes ; but the pathetic story of " poor Jack Walford " still lingers in the memory of a few of the elder folk among the Quantock peasantry, and sometimes forms the subject of village gossip round the winter hearth. A recently erected fountain pours forth its useful waters hard-by the spot, a welcome refreshment to the weary traveller and a kindly boon from their landlord to the neighbouring cottagers upon Dodington Common.





## Dodington.

The hall and the church lie at the foot of a steep hill, about four hundred yards to the north of the Bridgwater road, and from that point are entirely hidden from view.<sup>1</sup>

The notable feature of this little parish is the Beech Grove. Here can be seen some of the very finest trees in the country, and as they grow in a certain regularity they present the spectacle of a very stately avenue. In one of these trees, and one only, the rooks build in large numbers. The ivy covered ruins that rise to the east of the avenue are all that remain of the mining works which at the beginning of this century, were undertaken with great zeal.

The view from the grove is very grand. To the south and south west lie woods<sup>2</sup> of fine larch, beech, and oak coppice which cover the slopes of Dousborough from head to foot, showing in springtime every imaginable shade of green, from the sombre hues of the older plantation to the light green of the young larch. The wood furthest to the west, under which the main road passes in the direction of Holford, is known as Shervage Wood, and the dip in the road at the mouth of a combe down which the rills from Dousborough rush in winter, is known as "No

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<sup>1</sup> Note ix. Page 101.

<sup>2</sup> "A splendid wood massed on the mountain side."

Man's Land." The *Duke's Plantation*, covers the north side of the hill, close up to the *Castle of Comfort*,<sup>1</sup> and recalls the memory of the Duke of Buckingham<sup>2</sup> who was once a considerable land owner here, and is patron of Dodington. The new plantation, called "Sir Alick's Plantation" is further to the east, adjoining the road that ascends the hill, and takes its name from Sir Alexander Acland Hood.

To the north there is a distant view of the country sloping away to the Bristol Channel, and to the east on a clear day Glastonbury Tor can easily be distinguished. There are many deep and sheltered lanes round Dodington whose hedges are covered, even in winter time, with a profuse wealth of green ferns. The thick holly bushes which flourish here along the banks give the lanes a particularly green aspect throughout the year. The drainage of the lower slopes of the Quantocks, which culminate in the highest point at Dousborough, finds its way through Dodington and along the lanes. In winter time and on the occasion of a sudden thaw the roads are quickly inundated. According to some the first syllable of the name *Dodington* is said to indicate, etymologically, *water*. Be this as it may, there is abundance of good and clear water which trickles in streams down the sides of the lanes, and

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<sup>1</sup> A very neat and, of course, *comfortable* summer residence for families.

<sup>2</sup> Inherited by Earl Temple after the death of Lord Melcombe, under an early settlement made by a former proprietor, John Sydenham, who, in 1663, married Hester, daughter of Sir Peter Temple, an ancestor of the Earl.

keeps them cool and green. Old men say, with every show of reason, that the deep mining shafts which intersect the bowels of the earth have somewhat altered and deranged the flow of water.

The flora of the place is particularly rich (see paper by Rev. W. Tuckwell, p. 178, vol. 18, of Proceedings of Somerset Archæological Society). *Inter alia*, he says, "The footpath from the *Castle of Comfort*, (which is of course in Dodington parish,) to Over Stowey, above all in the lane from the Bell Inn to Aisholt, the hedge banks and the wide grass margins of the road are scarcely surpassed in beauty by the mosaic of a Swiss meadow or an Alpine slope."

For the *Geology* of the parish see *Feboult's West Somerset*, p. 74. The mines at Dodington were worked as recently as 1820.

### THE CHURCH.

Every *visible* feature belongs to either the 15th, 16th, or 17th centuries. Oldest in west window of tower, about 1420, of Ham Hill Stone in three unusually narrow lights with heavy mullions, and rather crowded tracery in the head. The masks of a king and a lady in the headdress of Henry IV.'s reign decorate the hood moulding. This is the best feature in the church. Tower generally above the ground stage is of 16th or 17th century date, meagre in style and rude in execution, with circular headed belfry windows of plain design. It is covered with rough-cast, the groins of

the local red stone forming a strong contrast to the white plastering.

The porch may be dated from the beginning of the 16th century. It has the original curved and moulded roof, principals and purlins. The wooden shields at the intersections, carved with a cross, appear to be modern.

The nave roof is of similar character and date. That of the chancel is modern. In the porch are the Dodington Arms, and an interesting holy water stoup, in form and size of a small font. This is set on the stone bench in the angle of the west wall of the porch with nave wall, the angle being scooped out to form a rough arched canopy to the basin. In plan it takes three sides of an octagon, except in the bowl, where the figure is complete at the top owing to the cutting away of the angle of the two walls. The upright sides of the bowl are carved with square quatrefoils, having a four-leaved flower in the centre. The stoup stands 2 ft. 2 in. from the top of the bench, and is of the hard grey stone of the locality. This feature and the nave door are of similar date to the porch, as are also the nave windows; whether the chancel be of earlier date is uncertain, its walls being covered with rough cast. The east window is a poor modern erection. The south chapel was the burial place of the Dodington family, and belonged to the adjacent manor house, the garden of which abuts upon the churchyard, being separated by a high wall. (The church and the hall communicate by a small postern). It was built,

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according to a date in the east wall, in the 17th century, and is a poor piece of work. The roof is an imitation of the earlier porch roof.

The stem and the base of the churchyard cross remain, though the former is not of its original height, and has lost the cross at the top. The shaft is octagonal in the upper part and square below, and is set diagonally on a square block, having the angles shaped into slopes of a flowing outline. This block rests on a sub-base of irregular shape, which stands on rudely shaped stone steps, all of which, except the top one, are now beneath the ground. The sub-base and steps from their odd shape may have belonged to an earlier cross. The shaft and base appear to belong to the latter part of the 15th century, and are executed in the red stone of the neighbourhood.<sup>1</sup> The yew tree in the churchyard is of considerable antiquity.

The church is dedicated to *All Saints*, and the patron is Sir A. A. Hood, Bart.

The date of the institution of the first incumbent of Dodington was November 18, 1473; for nearly 200 years the patronage was in the hands of the Dodington family. The population of the parish is about 100, and there is accommodation for 130 people within the church. There are three stained glass windows, one at the east end of the chancel, in the upper part of which are the original stained glass representation of the heads of Our Saviour and the Virgin Mary, another at the east side of the Dodington or

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<sup>1</sup> See Pooley's Crosses of Somersetshire.

south chapel, and a third small one on the north side of the chancel. The arch between the chancel and the side chapel is well constructed. There are no mural tablets now on the walls.

There are four bells. High up in the north side of the tower on an oval tablet there is a date 1772, indicating probably some kind of decoration. The chancel was restored by Sir Peregrine Acland, Bart., the encaustic tiles and decoration being given by Prebendary Osborn, the predecessor of the present incumbent, the Rev. W. Greswell.

The parish register which begins in the year 1538, has this curious entry, "Feb. 25th, 1770, was buried James Protherow a (Welshman), as he was travelling from Carnarvon too Westminster, in London, his parish, being eaten up by lice through the inhumanity of the parish officer, through which he came; all possible kindness being shown him in this parish, but he lived in it but a few days and died a most miserable spectacle as ever was seen, aged 67."

### THE MANOR HOUSE OR HALL.

The Manor house adjacent was built in the fifteenth century. It has been and remains a very interesting building, but was grievously pulled about and gutted in that period of darkness and vandalism,—the beginning of the present century. It stands on a terrace which is ascended by a double flight of steps. Over the front door



SCREEN AND MINSTREL'S GALLERY.



FIREPLACE.

DODINGTON HALL.





is the figure of a head of a giant eating a child. A passage, the left side of which is formed of hewn oak, leads into the baronial hall which still retains its open oak roof, carried on principals, resting on corbel heads, on the ends of which angels are carved; the intermediates are connected by most peculiar tie beams, all apparently cut from one wavy tree, these support massive purlins, on which rest the rafters, which are kept in place by windbraces, the lower tiers being of a quatrefoil design, the centre simply arched and the upper angular; each bay is finished with a band of square quatrefoils, carrying shields and a battlemented cresting. The screen which supports the minstrel's gallery is of solid oak with bold chamfers, stopped at the bottom. The original rude chimney piece was split in two, and was replaced by one taken from the old saloon, now converted into bedrooms, and is of the date 1581.

The caryatides are grotesques: from the heads of the figures spring the scrolls of the Ionic order, whilst the lower part are shaped like the feet of a lion. Round the necks of these hybrids, hung by cords, are imitation jewels. The coat of arms above the frieze, enclosed in an oblong panel, are those of Dodington, quartered with the Trivetts of Durborough, the Sydenhams of Combe Sydenham, the Warres of Hestericombe and the Wyndhams of Orchard Wyndham, having the suggestive and unique motto—"Support thy Patrymonie," and it would be well if some notable and youthful inheritors of county demesnes also had this motto and acted up to it.

*Caryat'ides*

The few remaining portions of the hall are a testimony to the former importance of a building, which is now unfortunately lost to the county.







MOLFORD CHURCH.

## Holford.

The little village of Holford<sup>1</sup>, one of the most picturesque spots in the West, is situated at the point of a spur of the Quantocks called Hareknaps, which divides the two exquisitely wooded valleys, known as Hodder's Combe or Adder's Combe and Butterfly Combe.<sup>1</sup>

The Hill-ford, as the name suggests, takes you across the twin stream from the combes which make a miniature "waters meet" as they unite in their rapid course over the "Poet's Waterfall," and by many a water slide, and tumbling cascade on their way to "Kilve's delightful shore," grooving the red sandstone into the deep ravine familiar to many an artist as Holford Glen. The glen, by far the deepest in Quantock's side, is famous alike for its lofty trees, towering towards the sunlight, its gigantic trusses of fern courting its shade and its deep dark pools, where many a hunted red deer turns to bay. On the east side of the glen lies Alfoxden Park, with its "dome" of oaks facing the house in which the poet Wordsworth for a time dwelt. Anyone who ever walked through those splendid oak woods, with their undergrowth of holly, the warmest walk in winter, the coolest in the summer; anyone who has listened to the waters of that glen, murmuring accompaniment to the ceaseless song of birds, sought shelter from the sun in its

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Note x. Page 104.

cool silent shades, or climbed up its ferny banks till it brings you upon the velvet sward that leads anon to the poet's path beneath "the beeches" which fringe the southern side of the park as it touches the open hill with its ever changing coat of purple, yellow or russet-brown, can well imagine how the poet here found inspiration for so much of the pastoral beauty which breathes through all his poems. Passing out of Alfoxden wood over the green stream, just below the "poet's waterfall," a winding path leads up the opposite bank and takes you into the road to the village, thence through the quiet little churchyard of Holford, with its tiny church, its saddle-back tower, and its ancient village cross. Along this path and by the road 'neath Woodlands' hill the two poets must have always passed on their way to Stowey.<sup>1</sup>

The church, a comparatively modern building, is on the site of an early English church. The tower is mean and incomplete, but an idea is entertained of rebuilding the tower as a memorial to the poet Wordsworth. Designs for this tower modelled on the type of one of the best Somersetshire towers, have been prepared by Mr. Philip Johnston, architect. The drawings, which include some proposed alteration to the church, were printed in *The Builder*, April 11th, 1891.

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<sup>1</sup> The village of Stowey once possessed a thriving silk factory, the site of the water wheels, the spinning sheds and dye-house, now covered with ivy, may still be seen.



ST. AUDRIES, LOOKING SOUTH.

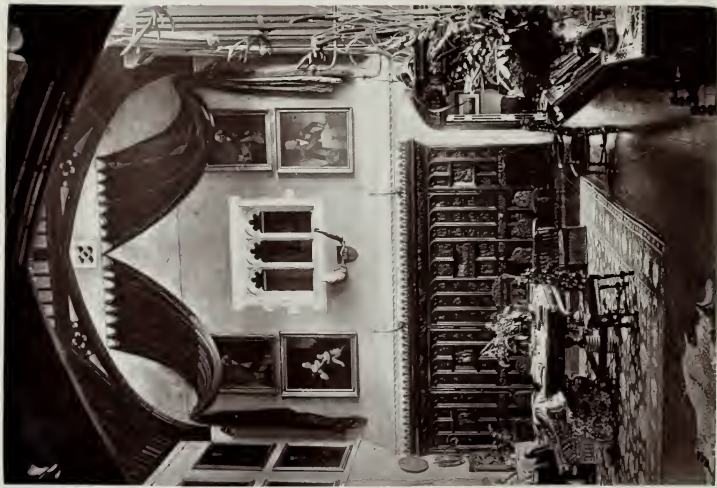
SEAT OF SIR ALEXANDER ACLAND HOOD, BARONET.

*Woodbury Company.*









GREAT HALL, EAST.



GREAT HALL, WEST.

ST. AUDRIES.

## St. Audries.

The Manor and the patronage of the living of St. Audries<sup>1</sup> were purchased by Sir Peregrine Acland, of Fairfield, in 1836, and are now in the possession of his daughter and her husband, Sir Alexander and Lady Acland Hood.

The present house is an addition to and incorporated with the old Manor house,<sup>2</sup> the style of architecture being Tudor. It is situated in the midst of lovely scenery, surrounded by woods,<sup>3</sup> in a park extending from the Quantocks, clothed with heather gorse and fern, to the fertile meadows near the sea, which is within a mile, and just outside is Fire Beacon Hill, more than 1000 feet above the sea, and able to communicate with the Beacons on Dunkery and Dousborough. In the park herds of red and fallow deer roam.

The principal front is S.W., entered through a tower, which has an octagonal *newel* staircase at one angle, and

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<sup>1</sup> Note xi. Page 105.

<sup>2</sup> Previous to its renovation by Sir Peregrine Acland, it appears to have retained few of its ancient and interesting features. It was a plain two-storied building, having a central facade, and two square projecting side wings. The old hall had been converted into a low hall, with sitting rooms above, and over these attics, in which were found the remains of an old black oak roof, with beautiful mouldings of the Decorated period, too much damaged to admit of restoration.

<sup>3</sup> "Woods are reckoned as indispensable to the furnishing of a country house as carpets and pictures," says Sir Herbert Maxwell, and Sir A. A. Hood fully recognizes the fact.

a central oriel window of three stages reaching to the tower's top. Over the doorway is inscribed

“ Except the Lord build the house,  
They labour in vain who build it.”

Through the tower the hall is entered, which stands partly on the site of the original hall, and is 52 ft. by 26 ft. by 40 ft. high, having an open oak roof of the Decorated style of architecture, and a minstrel's gallery. In the windows are some of the emblazoned arms of the possessors of the Fairfield estate from the time of Henry III. In the centre of the N. E. side of the hall is a hooded chimney piece, on each side of which are arches supported on marble columns, behind which runs a corridor the whole length of the hall. On the walls are portraits of the Vernai, Palmer, Wroths, and Aclands, ancestors of Lady Acland Hood; also of the celebrated Admirals, Lords Hood and Bridport, and Sir Samuel Hood, with a Russian flag taken by Sir Samuel Hood in the Baltic, and a French flag taken near the harbour of Brest by Capt. Hood, Sir Alexander Acland Hood's grandfather. There are also orders, medals, and swords of honour given for distinguished services, old armour and weapons, the horns of red deer and trophies of the chase.

In some of the rooms are oil and water colour pictures by Turner, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Honthorst, Elzheiner, &c. Etruscan vases and bronzes, alabaster slabs from Nineveh, Etruscan and Pompeian ornaments and glasses, bronze

celts, palstaves, spear heads, &c., found in draining on the Fairfield estates, and pronounced by the authorities at the British Museum to be pre-Roman—ichthyosauri, &c., &c., mammoths' teeth and tusks found on the beach.

In the Library are many interesting and most valuable books and manuscripts, which have been all examined by government officials, and carefully described in a Blue Book, under the head of "Sir Alexander Acland Hood's Manuscripts."

1. A Wickliffe's Bible, vellum, presented as an heirloom by the Countess of Derby to "her nighest relation, Mrs. Palmer, of Fairfield."
2. *Modus Tenendi Parliamentum*, a Fifteenth Century Manuscript, beautifully illuminated, large folio, vellum.
3. *Petrus Londinensis de Reparatione Lapsus*, a Manuscript of the Thirteenth Century, a work executed before 1214. The Initials and Letters are floriated and colored with consummate skill.
4. French Chronicle of Nicholas Tryvet. Translated into English. A large folio in vellum, about 1420. "Wrote to Dame Mary the daughter of Kynge Edward, son of Harry."
5. Accounts of the Churchwardens of Stoke Courcy from the beginning of the 18th Henry vii. to 38 Henry viii.
6. An answer to Bishop of Ross on the Title of the

Queen of Scots to the Crown of England, folio, Sixteenth Century.

7. A Briefe Abstract of the Question of Precedency between England and Spayne, folio, Seventeenth Century.
8. A report of the Lord Ambassador's Entertainment in Spaine, folio, Seventeenth Century.
9. Sir Francis Bacon's Speech in the Lower House of Parliament, 5 Jacobi, folio, Seventeenth Century.
10. Account of the family of Wroth, beginning with the writer's great grandfather, Sir Thomas Wroth, Groom of the Stole to Edward VI.

In the Library also is a collection of Etruscan vases, bronze coins, and coins from 650 B.C. to Christian era ; an alabaster slab from Nineveh ; Etruscan and Pompeian glass and ornaments, and a Scarabæus ring, pronounced by the highest authorities at Cairo and the British Museum to be of the time of Moses ; bronze armour and cinerary urns.





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CHURCH AND RECTORY OF ST. AUDRIES.





## THE CHURCH.

The Church is situated above, and about ten minutes from, the house, and was built by Sir Peregrine Acland and Sir Alexander Acland Hood in 1856 on the site of the old Church, which was, in fact, so much dilapidated that it could not be restored; it was consecrated on Oct. 17th, St. Etheldred's day. Mr. Norton was the architect. It was built of red sandstone from the neighbouring Sampford Brett quarries—the arches and ashlar used in the interior being of Doulting stone. There is a crypt under the whole church, the walls of which are prevented from coming in contact with the surrounding earth by an area and retaining wall, so that the fabric stands as it were on an island, cut off from the dampness which would have arisen from the high hills around and overhanging it. In this crypt is a rude Saxon or Norman font, a stone coffin, and part of a tabular monument bearing the following inscription—“*Hic jacit dom G. Malet qui obit. pmo die Decembri M,CCCC,III.*” The church is in the early Decorated style of architecture; in the tower is a groined baptistery, with a window by Hardman, emblematic of baptism; the font is of warm tinted Babbicombe marble, supported on eight pillars of Cornish Serpentine, and stands on a base of Plymouth block marble. The columns which support the arches dividing the aisles from the nave are monoliths of Babbicombe marble, rich in grain, and alternately warm in

colour and grey. The foliated corbels were carved by Farmer ; the roof and open seats are of solid oak, much of which was grown on the Fairfield estate ; the east window of the chancel, by O'Connor, represents the Crucifixion, and was given by Sir Peregrine Acland and Lady Acland Hood, in remembrance of Lady Acland. In the east gable of the south aisle is a window by Kemp, in memory of the St. Albyn family. In the churchyard are the remains of the old Cross.

St. Audries is, obviously, short for St. Etheldreda, the virgin twice-married Saxon Queen, after whom Ely Cathedral is also named. The church, after nine o'clock matins, is open throughout the day, and is one of the objects of attraction to the many tourists who visit the neighbourhood.

The surroundings are beautiful, and the whole scene seems to be one that invites contemplation—

But first, and chiefest, with thee bring  
Him that yon soars on golden wing,  
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,  
The cherub Contemplation.


### THE RECTORY.

The Rectory is a renovation of the old one, little of which now remains. The situation, 300 feet above the sea, is very picturesque, backed up by the Quantock hills and woods, in which the wild red deer sometimes stray ; in front are the church and schools, and the ground dips down through the well-timbered park to the sea, across which the Welsh coast and mountains are to be seen on clear days.

## APPENDIX.

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### NOTE 1. PAGE 2.

UR hills are not without special interest for the geologist. A question which I proposed to a scientific friend, who was my guest here last summer, "Are the Quantocks part of the *Old red sandstone* formation?" has led to an interesting paper on the subject, from which I extract the concluding summary. I gather from it, that no absolute decision can be arrived at from such roadside sections as alone are accessible. It would seem that a mightier power than the hammer of the geologist is needed, and that unless some potent wizard arise, like "the wondrous Michael Scott," who spake

the words

That cleft the Eildon hills in three,<sup>1</sup>

the interior structure of the axis of the Quantocks will remain a secret of the past.

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<sup>1</sup> Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, ii., 13, 7.

“ Suffice it to say, that there are two theories respecting those beds which intervene between the *Silurian* and *Carboniferous* formations. On the one hand, the late Professor Jukes, correlating them with certain Irish beds with which he was more familiar, and viewing them especially from a physical point of view, pronounced them to be identical with the *Carboniferous slates* of Cork, which attain in some places a thickness of 2,000 feet. Thus, according to his view, they ought stratigraphically to be placed between the top of the *Old red* and the base of the *Coal measures*. On the other hand, Mr. Etheridge, Palæontologist of H. M. Geological Survey of England, viewing them purely from an English point of view, and laying more stress upon their Palæontological contents, affirms that they are one great and well-defined system called *Devonian*, divisible into three groups, lower, middle, and upper, each of these divisions characterised by a distinct marine fauna, and possibly equal in time and position to the *Old red*. In other words, Mr. Jukes would do away with the term “*Devonian*” altogether as indicating an independent geological system, whereas Mr. Etheridge would preserve it as a useful nomenclature for a group of rocks especially developed in Devonshire. The general body of geologists incline, I think, to uphold the latter view. It is, then, this group of beds to which the Quantocks belong.

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Those who support Mr. Etheridge's view would call them *Devonian*; those who agree with Professor Jukes would consider them *Old red sandstone*. If fossil evidence is to have any weight in deciding the question, (and I know not what else, in the absence of direct superposition, can supply its place), then certainly this evidence clearly tends to corroborate the view that the Quantocks are an easterly continuation of the *Devonian* beds. All will, however, agree that they come in the order of stratification between the *Silurian* on the one hand, and the *Carboniferous* formations on the other. There is much yet to be learnt of the geology of these hills. Let all who are interested in the subject narrowly watch every section likely to throw any light upon the beds which constitute the base or nucleus of the range."

Since the above was written Mr. W. A. E. Ussher, of the Geological Survey, in a paper contributed to the proceedings of the Somerset Archæological and Natural History Society for the year 1889, new series, vol. xv., page 21, states that the chocolate, lilac, and grey grits interstratified with slates forming the northern part of the Quantock hills, belong to the Hangman Grit series, thus forming the upper division of the Lower Devonian beds,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Devonian Fossils from the Sandstones on the N.E. of the Quantocks*, by Rev. H. H. Winwood, M.A., F.G.S., read before the *Bath Field Club*, 11 Dec., 1872.

## NOTE II. PAGE 2.

The Flora of the Quantocks does not yield in interest to their geological structure. Indeed it is everywhere so unusually rich as to win the envy and delight of strangers. So, remarks an accomplished botanist, by whose kind permission I am allowed to enrich these notes with an extract or two from a very pleasant and instructive paper of his on the flora of our hills. "It includes," he says, "almost every English genus manifest in the common turnpike roads which skirt the downs, but revealed in full perfection to those only who penetrate the interior of the range. In the sheltered lanes of the less wooded combes, in the road from Kilve to Parson's Farm, the footpath from the Castle of Comfort to Over-Stowey, above all in the lane from the Bell Inn to Aisholt, the hedge-banks and the wide grass margins of the road are scarcely surpassed in beauty by the mosaic of a Swiss meadow or an Alpine slope. Four different regions should be visited—the hill tops, the bogs, the coppices, and the slopes toward the sea. Heath, furze, bracken, and whortleberries are the four tetrarchs of the hill-tops. The heaths are three—the heather, the cross-leaved heath, and the bottle heath, the last exhibiting rarely a white variety. From beneath their shelter peep the eye-bright, the spring potentil, the heath bed-straw, and the creeping St. John's wort; amidst them springs the

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uncommon bristly bent-grass ; everywhere the green paths which wind amongst them are carpeted with the moenchia and the little breakstone, and bordered by the red and yellow sheep's sorrel, and the pale yellow mouse-ear. On many of the prickly furze beds grows the wiry leafless dodder ; every ditch is filled with masses of lemon-scented oreopteris, and every patch of stones is hidden by the pink blossoms of the mountain stone-crop. At 800 feet above the sea we meet with mat grass and the cross-leaved heath. Higher still, we find the slender deer's hair, first cousin to the isolepis of our greenhouse, and highest of all grow, for those who know their haunt, two species of the staghorn club moss.

“ The bogs are very numerous. They form the summits of the combes, and some of them descend the hill until they join a deep-cue stream. All are covered with the turquoise bloom of the forget-me-not, the glossy peltate leaves of the marsh pennywort, and choked with the little water blinks. They all include the liver-wort, with its umbrella-shaped fructification, sphagnum, marshwort and pearlwort ; and on their margins grow the ivy-leaved hare-bell, the lesser spearwort, the lousewort, and the bog pimpernel. In a few of them are found the oblong pond weed and the marsh St. John's wort ; in two combes grows, alone of its genus, the round leaved sun-dew.”

“Of the coppices, Cockercombe and Seven Wells are the best known, but their large trees check the growth of flowers, and the botanist will find more to please him in Butterfly Combe and Holford Glen, which are smaller and less frequented. Here in early spring masses of the white wild hyacinth rise amid last year’s dead leaves; here grow the cow-wheat wood rush, golden rod, sheep’s scabious, wood pimpernel, wild raspberry, sanicle, and twayblade. The helleborine is found in Crowcombe; in Tetton woods the rare pink lily of the valley; in Cothelstone the adder’s tongue and mountain speedwell; in Ashley Combe the lypteris; in Aisholt wood the white fox glove, white herb Robert, and white prunella; while under the famous hollies of Alfoxden, sacred to the memory of *Peter Bell* and *We are Seven*, grow the graceful millet grass and a rare variety of the bramble.

“On the St. Audries’ slope the changed soil and the influence of the sea give birth to several new plants. The autumn gentian, the tufted centaury, the round-headed garlic, and the sea starwort are abundant near the cliffs; the perfoliate yellow-wort is common; fluellen grows in the stubbles, the lady’s tresses near the lime kiln, the sea pimpernel between the stones, the arrow-grass and hard-grass just above the sea, to which we descend between banks covered, as no



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other banks are covered, by the magnificent large flowered tutsan.

“A few rare plants remain. The Cornish moneywort abounds in a small combe near Quantock’s Head; the rare white stone-crop at Over-Stowey; the white climbing corydalis is found close to Mr. Esdaile’s lodge; the lady’s mantle, goldilocks, and bistort in Aisholt meadows; the stinking groundsell hard by the remains of Coleridge’s lime-tree-bower, near which I have found the purple bloom-rape; and Wilson’s film-fern, one of the rarest of British ferns, is established in the Poets’ Glen.”<sup>1</sup>

I am indebted to another friend,<sup>2</sup> also distinguished as a botanist, and a member of the *Bath Field Club*, for the following notes of a single morning’s walk in the neighbourhood of Woodlands. He tells me that he met with *Sibthorpia Europea* (a very rare plant out of Cornwall); *Drosera Anglica*; *Anagallis tenella*; *Lastrea Oreopteris*; *Hypericum elodes*; and the *Wahlenbergia hederacea*, a most graceful little plant, which grows all up the sides of the stream in Hayman’s Combe. A subsequent more extended walk was not so productive of flowers. “In that respect,” he adds, “I give the palm to the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Flora of the Quantocks*, a paper read before the Somersetshire A. and N. H. Society, Sept. 12th, 1872. By the Rev. W. Tuckwell.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Canon Ellacombe, Rector of Bitton.

neighbourhood of Woodlands, which deserves more accurate search than I could give it. The most interesting plant I found in my walk was the Burnet rose, the parent of the Scotch rose of our gardens. I had found it in Wales before, but did not know it was a Somersetshire plant." So far my botanical friend. There is a parasitical plant, which I, who am no botanist, sometimes find growing on the fern in my walks on the down, and which interests me, because it is one of several species of plants which Paley, in his Natural Theology, mentions as worthy of a particular notice, either from some singular mechanism, or by some peculiar provision, or by both. This one I refer to is the *Cuscuta Europæa*. "The seed opens," says Paley, "and puts forth a *little spiral body*, which does NOT seek the earth to take root, but *climbs* in a spiral direction, from right to left, up other plants, from which by means of vessels it draws its nourishment. The "little spiral body" proceeding from the seed is to be compared with the fibres which seeds send out in ordinary cases, and the comparison ought to regard both the form of the threads and the direction. They are straight; this is spiral. They shoot downwards; this points upwards. *In the rule, and in the exception, we equally perceive design.*"

I should have added to this short list the Wild Madder (*rubia peregrina*) a rare plant, but very abundant in the hedges

near Blue Anchor: I also found it in the hedges near Stogumber. On a later visit to Mr. Nichols (April 18, 1888), I had the pleasure of recording for him a valuable addition to the natural history of the Quantocks. About half-way up the hills opposite his house I put up one of the rarest of English birds, the Golden Oriole; he got up from the heather and gorse so close to me that I had a full view of his dark wings and golden back; he dropped into a hollow, and though I tried for some time I could not get a second view of him. It is a bird so well marked, that it is not possible to confuse it with any other British bird, but to make sure I went the following day to the South Kensington Museum and saw the good specimen there.

The lovers of Wordsworth will be interested to learn that in one of our Combes, at least, may be found his own *Osmunda Regalis* :—

that tall fern  
So stately, of the queen *Osmunda* named;  
Plant lovelier in its own retired abode  
On Grasmere beach, than Naiad by the side  
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Nere,  
Sole-sitting by the shore of old romance."<sup>1</sup>

NOTE III. PAGE 26.

The biography of *Thomas Poole*, of Nether Stowey, might

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<sup>1</sup> Poems; vol. i., p. 353.

form an instructive chapter in that delightful book, the *Self Help* of Mr. Smiles.

Of humble parentage, he received only the rudiments of education common to youths in his station of life, and in due course was apprenticed to his father,<sup>1</sup> a tanner, in his native village. His natural good sense and force of character soon led him to conclude, that to succeed in life, it would be requisite to add to his provincial training the more scientific knowledge of his calling which London alone could afford. He accordingly placed himself as a workman in the yard of one Mr. Purkis, the most eminent tanner of the time. During this period, it so chanced one day that his master, observing the youth busily absorbed in reading, found on enquiry that a volume of Tasso in the original Italian was the subject of his study. This led to notice and advancement in his employer's service, and his own high character and commanding talents did the rest.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This, no doubt, was the generally accepted story, and Mr. Nichols relates it as he himself had heard it, and believed it. Mr. Poole's relations with Mr. Purkis long before the period of the incident alleged had been of the most intimate nature; and the fact negatives the statement that it was in his yard Mr. Poole worked in the manner described. There would seem, indeed, to be some doubt whether the incident in Poole's career ever occurred at all. Mrs. Sandford entertains a doubt about it, and we refer to that lady's own account of the "enterprise" which appears to embody all that is known in the family traditions.—Life of Thomas Poole, vol. 1.—Pages 80, 81, 82, 83, 84. *Editor.*

Such, in brief, was the early history of a man, who not only became by his own exertions one of the leading characters in his native place and its neighbourhood, but was honoured with the intimate friendship of many persons among his contemporaries of the highest distinction in literature and science, as well as in political life. It is a remarkable circumstance, however, that among so many persons of note who are recorded as the associates of the two poets and their friendly host, not a single clerical name occurs. Such, indeed, was at that time the low state of general education and learning, especially in districts remote from metropolitan influence, that few probably of the rural clergy of his neighbourhood would not have felt themselves more in place amidst the sports of the mountain and the field than in the brilliant society that met at the house of Thomas Poole. The more worthy of record does the fact appear, that the kindly influence of one man, not himself a member of a learned profession, should have been so successful in throwing a gleam of culture and refinement over a little retired Somersetshire town, and in doing much to substitute honest talk and gentle manners for the vulgar gossip and petty squabbles of a country parish.

Wordsworth says of his friend Poole, "During my residence at Alfoxden I used to see much of him, and had frequent occasions to admire the course of his daily life, especially his

conduct to his labourers and poor neighbours. Their wishes he carefully encouraged, and weighed their faults in the scales of charity. After his death, was found in his escritoire, a lock of grey hair carefully preserved, with a notice that it had been cut from the head of his faithful shepherd, who had served him for a length of years. He was much beloved by distinguished persons—Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Southey, Sir H. Davy, and many others, and in his own neighbourhood was highly valued.”

A masculine intellect, matured by diligent reading and foreign travel, enabled Poole to afford valuable assistance, in statistics and matters of local administration, to the government of the period; and he had so mastered the political philosophy of Turgot, Adam Smith, and other advanced thinkers, as to suggest the adoption of free trade at a time when it had few or no supporters among the politicians of the day.

De Quincey, the *English Opium Eater*, in one of his marvellous Essays, has given a graphic account of his visit to Coleridge, at Nether Stowey,<sup>1</sup> who was at the time the guest of Mr. Poole, from which I extract the following description of his worthy

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<sup>1</sup> The house in which Poole lived is now transformed into an “All Sorts” shop. On recently enquiring of the occupant what he knew of the house, he stated that he never heard even the name of Mr. Poole. *Editor.*

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host : " I found him a stout, plain-looking farmer, leading a bachelor life in a rustic, old-fashioned house ; the house, however, upon further acquaintance, proving to be amply furnished with modern luxuries, and especially with a good library, superbly mounted in all departments bearing at all upon political philosophy ; and the farmer turning out a polished and liberal Englishman, who had travelled extensively, and had so entirely dedicated himself to the service of his humble fellow-countrymen—the hewers of wood and drawers of water in this Southern part of Somersetshire—that for many miles round he was the general arbiter of their disputes ; the guide and counsellor of their difficulties ; besides being appointed executor and guardian to his children by every third man who died in or about the town of Nether Stowey." Coleridge himself, however, was not quite so easily to be met with, his movements being always very uncertain. Nominally a guest of Mr. Poole, he chanced at the time of De Quincey's arrival to be absent at Enmore, on a visit to his neighbour, Lord Egmont, a kind friend and warm admirer of the poet. For the amusing account of his subsequent discovery at Bridgwater by De Quincey I must refer to the pages of that writer. See *Autobiographical Sketches* by T. De Quincey, pp. 144-5. A curious sketch of De Quincey himself, under the pseudonym

of *Papaverius*, may be found in Mr. T. Hill Burton's entertaining little volume, *The Book Hunter*. For the other particulars contained in this notice of the life of Thomas Poole, I am indebted partly to local information, and partly to the Life of Sir Humphry Davy by Dr. Paris, which contains a number of letters written by Mr. Poole. I have also gleaned a few facts from a very meritorious little book, *A Brief Memoir of William Baker, F.G.S.*, Secretary of the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society, by John Bowen. Mr. Poole died on the 8th of Sept., 1837, aged 72 years, and his remains were interred in the Churchyard of his native parish, Nether Stowey.

## NOTE IV. PAGE 27.

Of the other names I have mentioned as associates of the Quantock poets, CHARLES LLOYD, the son of a wealthy Birmingham banker, and himself a minor poet, deserves a niche in our gallery of Stowey residents. His abode there in the cottage of Coleridge, who describes him as "a young man of great genius," gave occasion to some beautiful lines addressed *To a Young Friend*, on his *purposing to domesticate with the Author*. Composed in 1796. At Stowey, Lloyd wrote a dramatic poem of considerable merit, *The Duke*



*d'Ormond*, and published in conjunction with Coleridge and Charles Lamb, a volume of *Sonnets and Other Poems*: Bristol, 1797, 12mo. To this little book, now very scarce, Coleridge prefixed the following motto, invented for the nonce, I imagine, by himself, and expressive of his own feelings towards his associate friends: *Duplex nobis vinculum, et amicitiae et similibus junctarumque Camænarum; quod utinam neque mors solvat, neque temporis longinquitas*. Here Lloyd also published *The Tragedies of Vittorio Alfieri, translated from the Italian*: 3 vols., 12mo. He also wrote several novels. Serjeant (afterwards Judge) Talfourd, in his Life of Charles Lamb, remarks of his writings: "In power of discriminating and distinguishing, carried to a pitch almost of painfulness, Lloyd has scarcely been equalled; and his poems, though rugged in point of versification, will be found by those who read them with the calm attention they require, replete with critical and moral suggestions of the highest value." He was afterwards a neighbour of Wordsworth, at the beautiful hamlet of Brathay, near Ambleside, and died at Versailles, in 1839, in his 64th year. In January, 1797, he paid a brief visit in London to Charles Lamb, who was then suffering under a strange and melancholy domestic calamity. I insert the first two stanzas from an affecting poem in which Lamb expressed his gratitude to his "Unexpected Visitor:"

“ Alone, obscure, without a friend,  
A cheerless, solitary thing,  
Why seeks my Lloyd the stranger out ?  
What offering can the stranger bring

Of social scenes, homebred delights,  
That him in aught compensate may  
For Stowey’s pleasant winter nights,  
For loves and friendship far away ? ”

CHARLES LAMB, the most original and amiable of humourists, paid, I think, but a single visit to Stowey. I have already referred to Coleridge’s verses on the occasion of his old friend and schoolfellow’s presence at his cottage home. Lamb himself thus expresses his own kindly reminiscences of his visit in a letter written shortly after his return home.

“ I am scarcely yet so reconciled to the loss of you, or so subsided into my wonted uniformity of feeling as to sit calmly down to think of you and write to you. But I reason myself into the belief that those few and pleasant holidays, shall not have been spent in vain. I feel improvement in the recollection of many a casual conversation. The names of Tom Poole, of Wordsworth and his good sister, with thine and Sara’s, are become familiar in my mouth as household words. You will oblige me by sending my great coat, which I left behind in the oblivious

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state the mind is thrown into at parting. Is it not ridiculous that I sometimes envy that great coat lingering so cunningly behind—send it to me by a Stowey waggon, if there be such a thing. But above all *that Inscription!* [a poem of Wordsworth.] It will recall to me all your voices, and with them, many a remembered kindness to one who could and can repay you all only by the silence of a grateful heart.”<sup>1</sup>

In another letter to Coleridge he says, “Your company was a cordial. When I can abstract myself from the things present I can enjoy the remembrance of it with a freshness of relish; but it more constantly operates to an unfavourable comparison with the uninteresting converse I partake in.” He goes on to lament, that, of all the great names of literature his neighbours were profoundly ignorant, and then proceeds, “They talk a language I understand not,—I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them. I can only converse with you by letter, and with the dead in their books.”<sup>2</sup>

SOUTHEY was only an occasional visitor,—coming up now and then from Burton, near Christchurch, or from Bristol. On one occasion, in a letter to a friend (20th August, 1799), he says :

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<sup>1</sup> Works i., 106.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 167.

“I write to you from Stowey, and at the same table with Coleridge. . . . I have been some days wholly immersed in conversation. In one point of view Coleridge and I are bad companions for each other. Without being talkative, I am conversational, and the hours slip away, and the ink dries upon the pen in my hand.”<sup>1</sup>

Southey, like Wordsworth, at the close of his life (in 1836), paid a farewell visit to the haunts of his youth. In one of his letters to his daughter he has recorded his visits to Stowey, to Fairfield, Dunster, Killerton, and other places in the West of England.<sup>2</sup>

I may be forgiven for bestowing a passing notice on one other and lesser name, referred to in the foregoing pages as a casual associate of our two poets,—that of JOHN THELWALL. He was decidedly the best lecturer on elocution I ever listened to, and had an intimate acquaintance with the choicest English authors. More than thirty years ago, I attended his course at the Royal Institution, Bath; he had lectured on Milton, and his subject for the morrow was, the Burial Service. On reaching the lecture room next morning I found the doors closed. Mr. Thelwall was dead. He expired suddenly in the preceding night.

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<sup>1</sup> Selections from the letters of R. Southey, i. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Letters iv., 476,

## NOTE V. PAGE 28.

One great name still remains to complete the Stowey circle—a band of men of whom it is not too much to say that they were moulding English thought and speech into a higher and newer expression of freedom and intelligence. SIR HUMPHREY DAVY was, for thirty years and more, the intimate friend and frequent guest of Thomas Poole, who watched his career from obscurity to distinction with kindly interest. He too, at the close of his days, came here, the wreck of his former self, to revisit the scenes of his youth, and, as he fondly expressed it, “to wander about his dear old walks of Quantock and Alfoxden.” Accordingly he took up his abode, during the greater part of the last winter he ever spent in England, in “the comfortable and hospitable house” of his early friend. “On his arrival, ‘Here I am,’ he said, ‘the ruin of what I was.’ But nevertheless,” continues Mr. Poole, “the same activity and ardour of mind continued, though directed to different objects. He employed himself three hours in the morning on his *Salmonia*, which he was then writing. He would then take a short walk, which he accomplished with difficulty, or ride; and after dinner I used to read to him some amusing book. We were particularly interested by Southey’s *Life of Nelson*. ‘It would give Southey great pleasure,’ he said, ‘if he knew how much his narrative

affected us.' In his *Salmonia*, he styled it, 'an immortal monument raised by genius to valor.' From Rome in February, 1829, he sent his last letter to his old friend. 'I am here,' he writes, 'wearing away the winter—a ruin amongst ruins.'” He died at Geneva on the 29th of May, in the same year.

To attempt any enumeration of the great scientific discoveries of this illustrious philosopher falls not within the scope of my paper. It is in his literary capacity chiefly that he has conferred honour upon this part of Western Somersetshire, and especially upon Nether Stowey—half town, half village—nestling under the slope of those Quantock Hills, the beautiful scenery of which retained for him such a life-long charm. Here he wrote his *Salmonia*. Here after his marriage he contemplated the purchase of an estate. It was here, in his earlier days, that Coleridge said of him, that “if he were not the greatest natural philosopher of the nineteenth century, he would have been its greatest poet.” To persons who are acquainted with his sublime quatrains, entitled *Spinosism*, this will scarcely seem exaggerated praise. That the writer who thus records, in a letter to a friend, the feeling of his own intimate communion with nature, was essentially a poet, who can doubt?

“To-day for the first time I have had a distinct sympathy with nature. I was going on the top of a rock to leeward. The wind was high and everything in motion. The branches of an oak tree were waving and murmuring in the breeze. Yellow clouds, deepened by grey at the base, were rapidly floating over the western hills, the whole sky was in motion, the yellow stream below was agitated by the breeze. Everything was alive, and myself part of the series of visible impressions. I should have felt pain in tearing a leaf from one of the trees.” This radiant dream, so exquisitely delineated, is akin to the mood of mind which Wordsworth describes as his own, when as a boy, he says, he “felt a sense of pain” in seeing his own merciless devastation in the hazel grove while engaged in nutting, and bade his companion

————— with gentle hand

Touch, for there is a spirit in the woods.

Several of Davy’s early minor poems, suggested by the cliffs and downs of his native Cornwall, appeared in the *Bristol Anthology* (a work now extremely scarce) in 1799. Some of his later verses are of such rare beauty and so little known, that every reader of taste will thank me for the perusal of the two brief extracts that my space will allow me to insert; the first is part of a poem descriptive of Italian scenery:

Never shall I forget the happy hours  
We passed in Eboli's enchanting bowers,  
Midst palms, and orange groves, and new-born flowers.  
Far in the west Salerno's villas spread,  
Lucana's mountains rose above our head ;  
No single cloud obscured the summer sky,  
And yet the wind was turbulent and high  
And full it blew upon the Tyrrhene sea,  
That rose sublime in billowy majesty,—  
Its waves arose, but not in stormy hue,  
For pure as heaven was their ethereal blue,  
Save where they beat the shore in crested pride,  
White as the snow upon the glacier's side.  
Though loud their murmuring 'midst the mountain trees,  
Yet tuneful Philomel, as if to prove  
More loud as well as sweet the voice of love,  
Poured from the caruba her thrilling song,  
The music of a minstrel wild and strong ;  
And gentle turtle-doves, in thicket nigh,  
Heaved, scarcely audible, the broken sigh ;  
The gale was from a zephyr's softest wing,  
The air was that which summer steals from spring ;  
Life seemed in every moving thing to be—  
The blades of maize, the blossom on the tree ;  
The cones that rattled on the giant pine  
Seemed stirred by impulse of a power divine.<sup>1</sup>

This charming description of Eboli is not overdrawn.  
Outside the town, just opposite the little Locanda, formerly a

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<sup>1</sup> *Fragmentary Remains of Sir Humphrey Davy, Bart.* ; edited by John Davy, M.D., F.R.S., p. 205.



Franciscan Convent, in which some years ago I passed several pleasant days, there stood a gigantic umbrella-pine, the only one near, of any size. This I named *Davy's Pine*.

The preceding couplets were composed in the height of his scientific fame, and in the enjoyment of health and happiness. The affecting fragment which follows was written at Ravenna, in failing strength and spirits, not long before the close of his brilliant career. It expresses the feelings of a solitary wanderer, and is not without a reference to his want of domestic happiness :—

Oh ! could'st thou be with me, daughter of heaven,  
Urania ! I have now no other love :  
For time hath withered all the beauteous flowers  
That once adorned my youthful coronet :  
With thee, I may e'en still in vernal times  
Look upon nature with poet's eye,  
Nursing those lofty thoughts that in the mind  
Spontaneous rise, blending their sacred powers  
With images from mountain and from flood.

Sir Humphrey's last employment, concluded at the very moment of the invasion of his fatal illness, was the composition of the suggestive little volume, *Consolations in Travel, or the last Days of a Philosopher*. The author evidently shews his attachment to the not improbable belief that our intellectual essence is destined hereafter to enjoy a higher and better state of planetary existence, drinking

intellectual light from a purer source and approaching nearer to the Divine mind. In the letter from Rome, already referred to, he says of this work : " It contains the essence of my philosophical opinions and some of my poetical reveries. It is, like the *Salmonia*, the amusement of my sickness ; but *paulo majora canamus*. I sometimes think of the lines of Waller, and seem to feel their truth :—

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
Lets in new lights from chinks that time has made."

One of the latest acts, at a time when he had lost the power of writing, was to dictate the following dedication of his book :

To  
Thomas Poole, Esq.,  
Of Nether Stowey,  
In remembrance of  
Thirty years of continued and faithful friendship.

#### NOTE VI. PAGE 30.

Since my paper was written, I have learnt that there existed another claimant for the office of ' Pennefactor ;' and, by the courtesy of a lady, the daughter of the Poet's friend, I have been allowed to read several playful letters from Coleridge to her father, one of which I subjoin :—

Octob. 7, 1799.

Stowey.

Most exquisite Pennefactor !

I will speak dirt and daggers of the wretch who shall deny thee to be the most heaven-inspired, munificent Penmaker that these latter Times, these superficial, weak, and evirtuate ages, have produced to redeem themselves from ignominy ! And may he, great Calamist ! who shall vilipend or derogate from thy pen-making merits, do *penance*, and suffer *penitential penalty*, *penn'd* up in some *penurious peninsula* of *penal* fire, *pensive* and *pendulous*, *pending* a huge slice of eternity ! Were I to write till *Pentecost*, filling whole *Pentateuchs*, my grateful expressions would still remain merely a *Penumbra* of my Debt and Gratitude.

Thine,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

To Mr. W——,

This *pentagonal* letter  
comes *pencil'd* as well as  
*penn'd*.

Your messenger neither came or  
returns *penniless*.

I often drive past that thatched cottage by the road side at the entrance of the long street of Nether Stowey, where, more than seventy years ago, the above note was written, and the wish has sometimes occurred to me, that it were possible to rescue it from its present use, a village ale-house,—(the Coleridge Cottage Inn). Are there no admirers of Coleridge who would be willing to assist in appropriating to some purpose connected with education—a Free Library, or a village reading room,—the house and orchard of the Poet, where he spent those three marvellous years which formed

the prime and manhood of his poetical life, and where were conceived the splendid dreams of *The Mariner* and the *Christabel*?

NOTE VII. PAGE 33.

It is curious and interesting to contrast the different estimate formed of Wordsworth at the two periods of his visits to Alfoxden. Driven from the place in early manhood, by ignorant prejudice and misrepresentation, as a suspected 'conspirator,' the grand old bard after more than forty years' absence, returned to his former abode, as the Poet Laureate of England, with the enthusiastic plaudits of the University of Oxford and the cheers of the House of Commons ringing in his ears. "The latent love of his poetry," observes one of his ablest and most discriminative critics,<sup>1</sup> "cherished here and there in secret places among the wise and good, had caught and spread into a general admiration." Coleridge had already, in his philosophical and beautiful criticism of the *Lyrical Ballads* in his *Biographia Literaria*, established to the conviction of more reflective minds, the fact, that, in spite of his peculiar poetic theory, in itself only partially tenable, Wordsworth was a true and

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<sup>1</sup> Notes from Books, by Henry Taylor, author of *Philip Van Artevelde*, &c., p. 181.

a great Poet; but one of the earliest popular recognitions of the poet's great merits came from the pen of Professor Wilson in *Blackwood's Magazine* (August, 1822).

“We believe that Wordsworth's genius has had a greater influence on the spirit of poetry in Britain than was ever before exercised by any individual mind. He was the first man who in poetry knew the real province of language, and suffered it not to veil the meanings of the spirit. In all these things and in many more, Wordsworth is indisputably the most ORIGINAL POET OF THE AGE; and it is impossible, in the very nature of things, that he can be eclipsed. From his golden urn other orbs may draw light; but still it will be said of him—

—Then shone the firmament  
With living sapphires. HESPERUS WHO LED  
THE STARRY HOST SHONE BRIGHTEST.”

This admirable criticism was soon followed by many other similar tributes, till the homage to the poet's genius, so long denied, swelled into a burst of admiration, which found an echo in the Senate itself. The following eloquent eulogy I copy from the newspaper report of the speech of Sir T. N. Talfourd in the House of Commons on the 18th of May, 1837.

“Let me suppose an author of true, original genius, disgusted with the inane phraseology which had taken the place of poetry, and devoting himself from youth to its service, disdaining the superficial graces which attract the careless, and unskilled in the moving accidents of fortune,—not sailing in the tempest of the passions, but in the serenity which lies above them; whose works shall be scoffed at by fools—whose name made a byeword—yet who shall persevere in his high and holy cause, gradually impressing thoughtful minds with the perception of truths made visible in the severest forms of beauty, until he shall gradually create the taste by which he shall be appreciated—influence one or the other of the master-spirits of his age—be felt pervading every part of the national literature—softening, raising, and enriching it; and, when at last he shall find his confidence in his own aspirations justified, and the name which was the scorn, admitted to be the glory of his age, he shall look forward to the close of his earthly career, as the event that shall lend the last consecration to his fame, and deprive his children of the harvest he was just beginning to reap. As soon as his copyright becomes valuable it is gone. This is no imaginery case; I refer to one who ‘in this setting part of time,’ has opened a vein of sentiment and thought unknown before—who has supplied

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the noblest antidote to the freezing effects of the scientific spirit of the age—who while he has dictated that poetry which is the essence of the greatest things, has cast a glory round the lowliest conditions of humanity, and traced out the subtle links by which they are connected with the highest—of one, whose name will now find an echo, not only in the heart of the secluded student, but in that of the business of those who are fevered by political controversy—of *William Wordsworth*.”

Another estimate of the poet's merits will, I am sure, be read with interest, coming as it does from the pen of one so highly venerated as the present Lord Chancellor:—<sup>1</sup> “Wordsworth I esteem as the greatest and most truthful poetical thinker of his generation, who has done far more than any other man to neutralize the poison of Rousseau's system, and to extract what is good from it, leaving the poison behind. He is a poet conscious of a great vocation, whose works (to use a metaphor of his own) are an intellectual temple dedicated to God as seen in nature, and in the power, variety, beauty and sacredness of natural human feeling. The whole office and object of his poetry is to harmonise the philosophy of sentiment with natural religion—not opposing natural religion to the Christian scheme (the truth and exclusive sufficiency of which he never fails to

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<sup>1</sup> Earl Selborne.

recognize)—but appealing to the voice of God in His works, as one, in its moral meaning, admonitions, and tendencies, with the voice in His word.”<sup>1</sup>

But the tribute to his genius which gave most pleasure to the poet was that offered by the author of *The Christian Year*, in the dedication to his *Prælectiones Academicæ*, which was as follows :

Viro Vere Philosopho  
Et Vati Sacro  
Gulielmo Wordsworth  
Cui Illud Munus Tribuit  
Deus Opt. Max.  
Ut, Sive Hominum Affectus Caneret,  
Sive Terrarum Et Cœli Pulcritudinem,  
Legentium Animos Semper Ad Sanctiora Erigeret,  
Atque Adeo, Labente Sæculo, Existeret,  
Non Solum Dulcissimæ Poeseos,  
Verum Etiam Divinæ Veritatis  
Antistes.

Mr. Keble’s expression “ad sanctiora erigeret” was particularly grateful to the poet, indicating, as it does very happily, the main scope of the writings of him who left his laurels to his living and worthy successor—

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<sup>1</sup> *The Connection of Poetry with History*. A Lecture, by Roundell Palmer, Esq., Q.C., M.P. for Plymouth. Jan. 8, 1852.



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——greener from the brow  
Of him who uttered nothing base.<sup>1</sup>

## NOTE VIII. PAGE 33.

Any reminiscence of the sojourn of Wordsworth under the shadow of our Quantock Hills would be very imperfect, if it failed to include a reference to his accomplished and fascinating sister. During his residence at Alfoxden, she was the cherished associate of her illustrious brother; the well-informed companion of his mountain walks and of his winter fire-side. She combined with the most charming simplicity an intimate acquaintance with the best and purest literature, and a fund of various knowledge, which was never obtruded. In fact, there was nothing about her at all resembling that irksome personage, the blue-stocking lady, or *femme savante*. In the poet's early temperament there existed a certain hardness and harshness, which her gentle influence and exquisite sensibility tended to soften and refine; she diverted his attention from the exciting politics of that stormy period, and

——preserved him still  
A poet; made him seek beneath that name  
And that alone, his office upon earth.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tennyson: Dedication to the Queen.

<sup>2</sup> *The Prelude*, 309.

He has recorded in a number of passages his obligations to his "sole sister," and the power for good which her tenderness and the hallowing sway of her fine mind exerted over his own sterner nature: it is to her that he refers in this stanza—

She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,  
And humble cares and delicate fears;  
A heart the fountain of sweet tears,  
And love, and thought, and joy.

The few extracts that have been hitherto printed from Miss Wordsworth's "Diary" reveal, if not the actual "accomplishment of verse," in her journal about the daffodils, a critic in the *Quarterly Review* some years ago observed, "Few poets ever lived who could have written a description so simple and original, so vivid and picturesque. Her words are scenes and something more. The poet's own pretty stanzas are only an enfeebled paraphrase." Of this my readers shall judge for themselves:—"We saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. As we went along there were more and yet more; and at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw there was a long belt of them along the shore. I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about them. Some rested their heads on these stones as on a pillow; the rest tossed and reeled, and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, they looked so gay and glancing."

Favoured by the kindness of an intimate friend of the poet and his sister, Lady Richardson, of Lancrigg, I am enabled to subjoin some pathetic verses (probably the last effort of her pen), which Miss Wordsworth wrote while lying on her couch, hopeless of recovery :—

## AN INVALID'S HYMN.

The worship of this Sabbath morn  
How sweetly it begins ;—  
With the full choral hymn of birds  
Mingles no sad lament for sins.

Alas ! my feet no more may join  
The cheerful Sabbath train ;  
But, if I inwardly lament,  
Oh ! may a will subdued all grief restrain.

No prisoner am I on this couch,  
My mind is free to roam,  
And leisure, peace, and loving friends  
Are the best treasures of our earthly home.

Such gifts are mine ; then why deplore  
The body's gentle slow decay,  
A warning mercifully sent,  
To fix my hopes upon a surer stay.

D. W., March 19th, 1840.

Miss Wordsworth became, in 1836, as the poet has told us, a confirmed invalid ; yet such was the natural strength of her constitution, that she survived eighteen years ; but her fine mind was clouded long before her decease, and during the latter years of her life became a melancholy blank. The poet

relates a pleasing incident of her long sickness. "While confined to her room, a red-breast came and took up its abode with her, and at night used to perch upon a nail from which a picture had hung. It used to sing, and fan her face with its wings in a manner that was very touching :

—————She long had lain  
 With languid limbs and patient head,  
 Reposing on a lone sick-bed ;  
 Where now, she daily hears a strain  
 That cheats her of too busy cares,  
 Eases her pain, and helps her prayers.  
 Now, cooling with his passing wing  
 Her forehead like a breeze of spring,  
 Recalling now, with descant soft,  
 Shed round her pillow from aloft,  
 Sweet thoughts of angels hovering nigh."

There are several poems inserted in Wordsworth's collected Works (ed. 1857), that were written by his sister. *The Address to a Child* (i. 171). *The Cottager to Her Infant* (p. 275). *Loving and Liking* (p. 338). *The Floating Island* (iv., 332). Miss Wordsworth died at Rydal Mount in 1855, in her 84th year.

I have now finished my task. It will be a source of much gratification to me, if the few facts I have collected, and the description I have attempted to give, should prove useful to any of my friends who may visit this district, or to others into whose hands this little *brochure* may chance to fall ; and still more so, if its guidance should contribute to lend some additional interest to their walks or rides over our breezy

downs, or to their explorations of the countless beauties that lurk in many a nook of our secluded combes.'

The amount of *literary* associations that cluster round our Quantock Hills may possibly prove a surprise to some of my readers. Omitting further mention of the other distinguished individuals that I have enumerated, this locality may claim as its own a large share in the fame of two great Poets—the half, and more perhaps, of the choicest writings of one of them; and, of the immortal productions of the elder bard, no inconsiderable portion owes its inspiration to his wanderings over 'smooth Quantock's airy ridge.' It is no exaggeration, therefore, to designate both of them as *Somersetshire Poets*, and to assert the claim of the county to inscribe in the long roll of its worthies, the grand names of WORDSWORTH and of COLERIDGE.

A List of the Poems composed by Wordsworth while residing at Alfoxden, or written elsewhere, and containing allusions to Quantock scenery:—

*We are Seven.* Written at Alfoxden in the Spring of 1798, but suggested by an incident which occurred during a visit to the Ruins of Goderich Castle on the Wye.

*An Anecdote for Fathers.* Suggested in front of Alfoxden House.

*The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman.* Written at Alfoxden.

*The Last of the Flock.* Written at Alfoxden: the incident occurred in Holford Village.

*The Idiot Boy.* Composed in the Holly Grove at Alfoxden.

*Her Eyes are Wild.* Written at Alfoxden.

*A Night Piece.* Composed on the road between Nether-Stowey and Alfoxden, 1798.

*Ruth.* Written in Germany, but the scene laid on the Quantocks.

*The Thorn.* Written at Alfoxden.

*Lines Composed a few Miles above Tintern Abbey.* While resident at Alfoxden.

*Peter Bell.* Written at Alfoxden in the summer of 1798.

*A Whirl-Blast from behind the Hill.* Written in the Holly Grove at Alfoxden in the spring of 1799.

*Expostulation and Reply.* Composed in front of the House at Alfoxden in the spring of 1798.

*The Tables Turned.* Ibid.

*Lines Written in Early Spring.* Composed in the Glen at Alfoxden.

*To my Sister.* Composed in front of Alfoxden House.

*To Simon Lee.* Written at Alfoxden.

*Goody Blake and Harry Gill.* Written at Alfoxden, 1798.

*Old Cumberland Beggar.* Written partly at Racedown, 1749, partly at Alfoxden, 1798.

*Animal Tranquility and Decay.* Written while at Alfoxden.

Some parts of *The Excursion*; the fine passages describing the affliction of Margaret, and the lines which form the conclusion of the fourth book, were also written at Alfoxden.

## NOTE IX. PAGE 49.

At the time of the conquest this Holford was a part of Alured de Ispania's manor of Stringston, which manor in the time of Henry II. came into the possession of Adam de Canteville, by his marriage with the daughter and heiress of Ranulph de Stringston, the owner and inhabitant of that township. This Adam, who had his surname from the seignory of Canteville in the duchy of Normandy, by his said wife had issue two sons William and Hugh, of whom William de Canteville, being by his father settled at Dodington, then written Dodeton, assumed that title, which continued in his descendants ever after.

William, eldest son of this William, married Agnes, daughter of Simon Portbrief, and was father of Roger de Dodeton, lord of the manor of Dodington, 14 Edward I., contemporary with whom were Simon and Thomas, perhaps brothers. This Roger was succeeded by his son William, who succeeded 35 Edward I., and left issue Philip, who died 18 Edward III. having for his heir and successor Thomas de Dodeton, who died before 36 Edward III., having married Maud, daughter and coheir of Stephen Laundey and Cecilia his wife, daughter and heir of Cecilia, wife of Sir Edward Burnel, knight, and sister and coheir of Sir Thomas Trivet, of Durborough. By the said Maud he had issue another Thomas, who by his first wife Beatrice, daughter of John Buckler, was father of John Dodington, of Dodington; and by his second wife Joan, daughter and heir of Thomas

Gapphey, of Gapphey, in the parish of Meare, had Philip Dodington, ancestor to the Dodingtons of Gapphey, as also to Sir William Dodington, of Bremer, in the county of Southampton, knight in the time of Charles I.

John Dodington, of Dodington, eldest son of Thomas above-mentioned, married Mary, daughter of John Pain, and had issue another John, who was living 2 Richard III., and married Elizabeth, daughter of Oliver Hywish, by whom he had Richard Dodington, of Dodington; which Richard married Margaret, daughter and heir of John Lyte, and was father of John Dodington, of Dodington, Richard, and Giles.

John, the eldest son, was twice married; by his first wife Thomasine, daughter of Thomas Duland, he had issue George Dodington, who succeeded him in the estate of Dodington, and died in 1617; he married Catherine, daughter of Robert Walsh, Esq., by whom he had several children. John, the eldest, was of Dodington, and by Catherine his wife was father of Sir Francis Dodington, knight, which Sir Francis, 6 Charles I., was sheriff of Somerset. On the breaking out of the civil wars, he was the first that executed the king's commission of array in this country, after which he joined himself to the Earl of Hertford, and served as a colonel in the western army with such zeal and fidelity, that he was by name excepted in the treaty of Uxbridge, and all other treaties that were afterwards entered into by the parliament with the king. Upon the destruction of the royal party he fled into France, and there maintained himself several years



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by selling English knives and buckles, till at last a French widow took compassion on him and married him, and by her he had two sons, both bred up in the French army. His first wife Anne, daughter and heir of Sir William Hoby, and relict of John Sydenham, Esq., by whom he had John, his son and heir, who married Hester, daughter of Sir Peter Temple, bart., and died in 1663, in his father's lifetime. After the restoration, Sir Francis Dodington lived privately at Dodington, and though his estate had been greatly wasted by what he did in the civil war, yet he could never be prevailed upon to ask anything of the crown, having engaged himself (as he always declared) on a mere principle of conscience. John, his son above-mentioned, took another party, and was Secretary to Thurlo, Secretary of State to Oliver Cromwell. He was a learned and ingenious man, and translated several books from the French language, among which was the history of the administration of Cardinal Richlieu, which he dedicated to Thurlo. He left issue George, his only son, who succeeded Sir Francis Dodington, his grandfather, in the estate of Dodington; which George, in the time of King William, was Secretary to the Earl of Oxford, Treasurer of the Navy, and in the reigns of Queen Anne and George I. was one of the lords commissioners of the admiralty. He married the daughter and heiress of H. Bull, and died in 1720, S.P., leaving this his estate to George Bubb,<sup>1</sup> Esq., son of Mary his sister, and

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<sup>1</sup> Bubb Dodington was rather a noisy fussy politician in the time of the first and second Georges. His diary exhibits a large share of vanity, and reveals much about Prince Frederick and his doings, neither very amusing nor edifying.

Jeremias Bubb, Esq., who by act of parliament assumed the arms and name of Dodington. Which George was of Gunvil Eastbury, in the county of Dorset, where his uncle began a most magnificent building, and intended it for the future seat of his family. He was employed by George I. as his envoy and plenipotentiary in Spain, and was afterwards by the same king made one of the lords commissioners of the treasury, and represented the towns of Bridgwater, Weymouth and Melcomb-Regis, in parliament. In 1761 he was created Baron of Melcomb-Regis, and dying without issue in the year following, the seat and estate of Eastbury, and the manor of Dodington, came by a family settlement to Richard Earl Temple.

## NOTE X. PAGE 57.

The property of this parish was at the conquest divided between Roger de Curcelle and William de Mohun, and is thus recorded—"William holds of Roger, Holford. Adelwald held it in the time of King Edward, and gelded for half a hide. The arable is one carucate. There are two cottagers and two servants, and one acre of meadow, and ten acres of pasture, and one acre of wood. It is worth eighteen shillings. Alric holds of Roger, Holeforde. Alward held it in the time of King Edward, and gelded for half a virgate of land. The arable is half a carucate, with which there is one villane, and it renders three shillings. Hugh holds of William Holford. Alwold held it in the time of King Edward, and gelded for one hide. The arable is two carucates, which are in demesne,

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with one servant, and one villane, and five cottagers, and one plough. There is a mill of tenpence rent, and three acres of meadow, and sixty acres of pasture, and four acres of wood.

## NOTE XI. PAGE 59.

Lies eastward of St. Decuman's. This Manor was given by the Conqueror to Sir William de Mohun, and is thus recorded in the survey—"William himself holds Cantocheve. Elnod held it in the time of King Edward, and gelded for three hides and a half. The arable is eight carucates. In demesne are three carucates, and seven servants and ten villanes, and four cottagers, with six ploughs. There are sixteen acres of meadow, and fifty acres of wood. Pasture one mile long, and one mile broad. It was worth three pounds, now four pounds. It was held in the time of King John by William de Punchardon, of the Castle of Dunster. At his death this William left several daughters, heiresses to his possessions, of whom Aubrea was married to Hamelyn de Deaudon, of Deaudon, in Devonshire, by whom she had a son named Thomas, who died without issue, and two daughters, Mabil, wife of Sir Baldwin Malet of Enmore, and Joan, wife of Roger of Claville. In the partition of the estates this manor became the property of Malet, and continued in the heirs of that family in a regular descent till the time of Henry VIII., when William Malet, of Enmore, sold it to his younger brother, Baldwin Malet, afterwards Sir Baldwin Malet, the solicitor-general. This Sir Baldwin married—1, Joan, daughter and heir of John Tacle, of Honiton, and 2, Ann, daughter

and heir of Thomas Hatch of Wolley, by both of whom he had children. Those by the first were settled at St. Audries, and continued three generations, till in the time of Charles I. Arthur Malet, great grandson of Sir Baldwin, sold this Manor to Thomas Malet, who was descended by a younger branch from the Malets of Wolley above-named. This Thomas was bred a lawyer, called to the degree of Serjeant in 1635, and in 1641 was made one of the judges of the Court of Common Pleas. He died in 1664, leaving two sons, Sir John Malet and Michael. Sir John married Florence, daughter of John Wyndham, of Orchard, and was father of Baldwin, whose son William was the last of this name that possessed St. Audries. He died in his passage from Lisbon to Jamaica, having married Margaret, daughter of William Baily, chancellor of the church of Wells, who died before him without issue. In 1791 the manor belonged to Robert Everard Balch, Esq.

Baldwin Malet, in 1702 was appointed Receiver General for Somerset and Bristol, and with his son, William, gave sureties to Queen Anne for £40,000 then £10,000, and again, in 1703, for £45,000. About Lady Day, 1805, Baldwin Malet lent Richard Veale, of Exeter, a very large sum of money. Veale became bankrupt, and Baldwin and William were unable to pay their debt to the Crown. Baldwin and William obtained an Act of Parliament to sell or raise mortgages on the following estates belonging to them,—St. Audries, West Quantoxhead, Brompton Ralph—Tolland—Lawrence Lydiard—Lydiard St. Lawrence—Preston Bowyer

— Gittisham — Alascombe — Bucknell — Honiton. The Trustees appointed were Sir John Trevelyan, John Malet, William Clayton. Baldwin and William petitioned Parliament to be permitted to compromise, and their prayers were granted. William succeeded his father, leaving a daughter, Ann.

## DEED DATED JULY 1st, 1737.

Ann Malet was the only daughter and heir-at-law of William Malet of St. Audries.<sup>1</sup> Between William, Earl of West Hartree, John Horner of Barwick, of the 2nd part, Thomas Strangway Horner of Mells, of the 3rd part, William Mayne of West Hartree, of the 4th part, and Baldwin Malet of Doulting, Clerk, uncle and heir-at-law of Ann Malet deceased, only daughter and heir-at-law of William Malet, late of St. Audries, deceased, the said Baldwin Malet being also brother and heir of the said Wm. Malet of the 5th part. John Glass of the 6th part. Edward Dyke of the 7th part, and James Smith of St. Audries of the 8th part. By an indenture dated 17th Feb., 1706, made between Sir John Trevellian, John Malet, William Clayton and Richard Shoreditch of the 1st part, the said William Malet of the 2nd part, and Ann Milner of the 3rd part, reciting that all the Manors belonging to Malet were vested by

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<sup>1</sup> Baldwin Malet, the Father of William Malet, married Anne daughter of Sir George Horner, of Wells, by whom he had William, George, Baldwin, Thomas; and then, secondly, Anne daughter of George Harben by whom he had John, Francis, Alexander, Anne and Jane.

a late Act of Parliament in Sir John Trevelian and the other trustees, that they should sell for the best price, or mortgage, any part or parcell of the above manors, so as to raise so much money as to satisfy the money owing to Queen Anne by the said Baldwin Malet, in respect of his having been Receiver General of the County of Somerset, and City and County of Bristol, of divers duties for the years 1702, 1703, and the costs of the said trust.

In consideration of the sum of £1200 paid to the said Anne Milner on account of the said Baldwin Malet for discharging the debt to Queen Anne, the said Wm. Malet agrees to sell to the said Anne Milner the manor of St. Audries and the living, on the condition that if Wm. Malet or his heirs should pay Anne Milner £1200 their bargain to her should terminate.

The above act is called an Act to enable the Lord High Treasurer to compound with Wm. Malet for the debt of his father for whom he was surety, recites that the said Wm. Malet had paid £4768 : 7 : 0, raised by the sale of lands entailed upon him, and that there was still £1614 : 9 : 5¼ due, it was therefore enacted for the Lord High Treasurer to compound with Wm. Malet for the said debt by the 29th day of September, 1709.

On William and Ann's death, his brother and heir, Baldwin, Rector of Doulting, succeeded to the estate, which was so heavily encumbered that he sold it to James Smith for £8000. He left four daughters. To Elizabeth he left lands in

Spaxton, Cannington, and others bought of Sir Robert Smith, Kt. To Francis Langford Budville, with lands bought of Lord Waldegrave; to Lavinia, St. Audries, Sandhill Farm, Aller, Box; to Margaret, Lands in Devon, and £9000. Lavinia Smith sold the estate of St. Audries to Robert Balch for £13,662. Robert Balch died and was succeeded by his son, Robert Everard, who died and was succeeded by his brother George, and on his death, he was succeeded by his sister Christiana, who bequeathed her estates at St. Audries, Stowey, and elsewhere to her nearest relation Henry Harvey. He sold St. Audries to the Rev. Elias Webb for £35,000, who sold, in 1836, to the Rev.—Luxton of Widcombe, 69a. 2r. 18p. and 95a. 2r. 14p., and the remainder of the Manor and the Living to Sir Peregrine Acland, who settled these and his property in Sampford Brett and Aller on his daughter, Isabel Harriet, on her marriage with Alexander B. P. Hood, eldest son of Sir Alexander Hood, of Wotton, Bart., now Sir Alexander Acland Hood, Bart.



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The aëration of Mineral Waters is by no means novel. It has been attempted more or less successfully in the case of many Natural Mineral Waters, sometimes for the purpose of making them more agreeable to the taste, and at others to prevent them from deteriorating or decomposing by time; but in the case of the Bath Waters, neither of these is the object in view, and without wishing to be tedious, the real reason is here scientifically explained.

The Mineral Waters of Bath present the paradox of being at once the most permanent and yet the most unstable of fluids—permanent, because no appreciable change has taken place in their constituents since their discovery ages ago, but yet unstable, owing to the fact that from the moment of issuing from their source a change takes place, which progresses as the water cools by a process of oxidation from

contact with the air, but which, by the system now brought before the public, can be *prevented*. These waters, among other constituents, contain iron, but in a peculiar and more than usually active form—namely, that of Carbonate of Iron. This substance is of a highly evanescent character. It can easily be prepared in the laboratory, but, to use the words from a well known treatise on Chemistry, “it cannot be washed and dried without losing carbonic acid and absorbing oxygen. Such waters are known by the rusty matter they deposit by exposure to the air.” This latter fact is well known to those who have taken the Bath Waters: the peculiar discoloration on the drinking glasses used at the Pump Room is due to a deposit of what originally was Carbonate of Iron, but which, having lost its carbonic acid by decomposition, now assumes the form of the almost inert oxide.

Now, it is a well known medical fact, that the administration of the Carbonate of Iron in mineral water is often more beneficial as a chalybeate than a much larger quantity of other ferruginous compounds, but its instability which we have explained prevents its use as a medicine. The Bath Waters contain this substance when drawn from the spring, but in a few minutes or, at most, hours they no longer contain it, but in its place a small quantity of oxide.

To remedy this defect, and to enable patients at a distance to reap much of the advantages of a visit to Bath, is the object of this process of aëration. The change of Carbonate to Oxide of Iron will not take place in the presence of Carbonic Acid Gas, and therefore advantage has been taken of this chemical fact to saturate the Waters with the gas, and thus to preserve them (with the exception of temperature) in their original state as they issue from the spring.

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