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ALL ABOUT DERBYSHIRE.



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ALL ABOUT DERBYSHIRE:

BY

EDWARD BRADBURY,

Author of "All About Derby," "Derby China: Old and New,"

ETC., ETC.

WITH SIXTY ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

W. H. J. BOOT, J. S. GRESLEY, W. C. KEENE, LL. JEWITT, G. BAILEY,

J. A. WARWICK, R. KEENE, AND OTHERS.



"God, who is truly *thaumaturgus*, the only worker of wonders, hath more manifested His might in this than in any other county of England."—FULLER.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND CO.

DERBY: RICHARD KEENE, ALL SAINTS'.

1884.

R.K.



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In Preparation.

A POPULAR GUIDE BOOK TO WINFIELD MANOR IN DERBYSHIRE. Illustrated.

RICHARD KEENE, Publisher, All Saints', Derby.

TO
WILLIAM GILLIES, ESQ.,

OF

ARDCONNEL, OBAN, N.B.,

IN MEMORY OF THE HOSPITALITY OF THE HIGHLANDS

AND ISLANDS,

THESE LITERARY TRIFLES

ARE DEDICATED.

DERBY, NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1884.





TO THE READER.

WHEN *All About Derbyshire* was projected, an eminent man of letters objected to the title as too ambitious. A book, he contended, which told its readers "ALL About Derbyshire" would require to be of dimensions almost as bulky as the county itself; and so he, no doubt, dismissed me, and the following pages, as "all too much." The title is, peradventure, immodest and misleading. It certainly bears a double construction. The designation may be regarded as applying to a volume that exhausts everything that was, is, and ever will be known about the beloved and beautiful North Midland Shire. To write "ALL About Derbyshire" would be like attempting that "Life of Confucius" which an ambitious Celestial attacked; but, instead of taking the "life" of Confucius he took his own, so overwhelmed was he by the dimensions of a task he left to future generations to complete. The title, "All About Derbyshire," was chosen as a companion title to "All About Derby," issued by the present publisher.

I am afraid that even Derbyshire has not confined my wandering footsteps, and that occasionally I have gone beyond the strict extent of my ordnance-map

tether, sometimes stepping over the boundary into Staffordshire and Cheshire; but I have done so in the respectful hope that I shall not be regarded as a trespasser by any litigious liege of those loyal shires. But, perhaps, this question of title is not one likely to upset the Zodiac, or divert the Gulf Stream, and my readers will not complain of the placard outside the show, so long as the entertainment within the booth is worthy of their suffrage.

Au reste. The present volume is composed of fugitive essays contributed at casual intervals to *Temple Bar*, *London Society*, *Time*, *The Magazine of Art*, *Cassell's Magazine*, the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, and last, but not least, the *Derbyshire Times*, the excellent county paper in which the Rev. John Charles Cox's surpassing work, *The Churches of Derbyshire*, first appeared. These descriptions have been revised and amplified, and improved most of all, by Mr. Richard Keene's artistic illustrations, nearly all of them being drawn from his widely-known series of Derbyshire Photographs: the view of Ludchurch is an exception, being copied from one by Messrs. Frith and Co. In the *Extra Edition*, the twelve large additional pictures, some of them taken specially for this work, are printed direct from Mr. Keene's negatives, by the new and permanent platino-type process; and under the protecting ægis of this pictorial panoply the writer of the letter-press may safely seek refuge.

E. B.



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* * * *The above series of full-page Illustrations may be purchased separately, at 5s. the set.*



Undiscovered Derbyshire.

*“ — not unrecompensed the man shall roam,
Who at the call of summer quits his home,
And plods o'er some wide realm, o'er vale and height,
Though seeking only holiday delight.”*



Chapter E.

UNDISCOVERED DERBYSHIRE.

*That is best which lieth nearest,
Shape from that thy work of art.*

LONGFELLOW.

“



THOUSANDS and thousands who know Switzerland by heart have never set foot in Derbyshire.” I quote from an earnest leading-article, which is to be found in the London *Daily Telegraph* of July 2nd, 1883. This article pleads the cause of English scenery, and the relative comforts of home travelling, as compared with the

qualified attractions of the Continent. I could not select a better text on which to found a lay sermon than is supplied by this significant sentence: “Thousands and thousands who know Switzerland by heart have never set foot in Derbyshire.”

“Know most of the thresholds of thy native country before thou goest over the threshold thereof; especially seeing that England presents thee with so many observables,” is the honest advice of that archaic author, Thomas

Fuller, in one of his quaint conceits. And Mr. John Bright, on one of the last occasions when the Tribune of the People addressed his fellow-countrymen, went so far as to say that his audience knew nothing of London; and that, although he had spent six months there every year for forty years, he knew nothing about it; and that he didn't believe there was a man in it who was fairly acquainted with all the parts and districts of the great city. What is true of the metropolis is more true of the Midland Peake country, which is as far away from the ordinary Englishman as the Peak of Teneriffe. We know, my friend, more of the sources of the Nile, and of the North Pole, than of this "backbone of England." We are wonderfully intimate with lands thousands of miles away, but we are strangely ignorant and scandalously neglectful of the "beauty-spots" in our very midst, in the same parish, in the same street, next door, even. The nearest to us is the most remote. What should be the most familiar is the most unacquainted. The easiest obtained is the lightest prized. The accessible is the least attractive. The nearest is not the dearest. Scenery, like the Prophet, is without honour in its own country. While the nourished natives of Booriboola Gha are more fascinating to the philanthropist than the pinched and pallid poor of Whitechapel, so to the Englishman, seeking health, or searching for the picturesque, German spas and Swiss glaciers are more engaging than our own island landscapes, which are an epitome of everything that is fine in scenery; and extravagantly-lauded places on the Continent are held in higher regard than our own incomparable health-haunts. The advice of Bacon, "know thyself," might be expanded into "know thy Country." "England for the English" would be an apposite title for a book in defence of our island-scenery. I met the other day, at Staffa, a famous American physician. He went into raptures over the poetic horror of Fingal's Cave. He came from Louisville, Kentucky. Asked for some comparisons between the ocean-cave of Ossian and the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, he at once confessed that, although he had lived for forty-five years close to the Mammoth Cave, he had never seen it. "You see," said he, with a dry drawl you might have cut with a pair of scissors, "it is so near that I thought I could see it at any time, and in consequence, have never

seen it at all." It afterwards transpired, as we sailed down the Sound of Mull, that he had never beheld Niagara, although he had crossed the Atlantic to see "how the water comes down at Lodore." Another American, Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the millionaire iron and steel master of Pittsburg and New York, drove with a party of friends in a four-in-hand from Brighton to Inverness. This was an expedition of a thousand miles along old coaching roads, and down devious green lanes, past gray and moss-grown cathedral closes and dreamy historic towns, through a country that combined at once romance and beauty, quaintness and magnificence, grandeur and gentleness. What Mr. Carnegie thought of these *Strange Adventures of a Phaeton*, (for Mr. William Black's charming story is simply an account of a similar driving excursion from London to Edinburgh, and is really a guide-book to the villages, roads, and inns to be met with on that delightful journey,) is best expressed in a telegram he sent to some friends on the completion of the journey:—"We arrived at the end of Paradise this evening at six o'clock." These were the words sent by the wire from one who comes from a Continent where Nature has exhausted herself in scenic miracles, and who had seen all that the old world has to show the sight-seer. Thomas Carlyle proposed to preach to the poets a sermon "on the duties of staying at home," because, as he says, "in what is familiar and near at hand, the ordinary poet discerns no form or comeliness: home is not poetical but prosaic." A recent writer (L. J. Jennings) on Derbyshire has well said, "There are many strange people and odd scenes to be met with in England, if a man goes about keeping his eyes open for them, and is prepared to enter into the spirit of the thing when accident throws them in his way. As for the beauty of this little country—for we must all confess it is not large—no one will ever be capable of doing justice to it. Its endless variety astonishes me the more I see of it; travel as much as one may, there is always a pleasant surprise in store—a landscape more striking than we have previously met with, fields and hills more exquisitely grouped, nobler and finer trees, or a view which somehow finds its way more directly to the heart. I do not believe that there is any man alive who can say with truth that he has seen England thoroughly.

One may have lived in much larger countries, it is true, but there are none which it takes so long to get tired of as England." This is a great truth sensibly expressed. It receives staunch endorsement in a passage by the author of *Tom Brown's School Days*. Writing about the Vale of the White Horse, he says: "I only know two English neighbourhoods thoroughly, and in each, within a circle of five miles, there is enough of interest and beauty to last any reasonable man his life. I believe this to be the case almost throughout the country." To no place in these Isles does this terse observation apply with more cogency than to North Derbyshire. The Peak Country has claims upon every taste. The fisherman may angle in the same unpolluted streams that gave such zestful recreation to Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton. Artist and botanist, archæologist and geologist, can find few finer fields for their studies; while this North Midland shire appeals most of all to ordinary folk, such as you and I, my friend, who can admire scenery, but are unable to paint it, and know very little about chiaro-oscuro and the corregiosity of Corregio; who love wild-flowers, without a knowledge of the Latin names given them by the learned Linnæus; who reverence eloquent arch and gray ivied battlement, quite ignorant as to whether they belong to Late Saxon or Early Norman, the Decorated Style or the Perpendicular Period; and who can read the "testimony of the rocks" without being mentally distressed over the contradictions of the Silurian System. My lost friend, Mr. George Dawson, detested theology, geology, and botany; but he loved religion, the rocks, and flowers. The Derbyshire Peak is a country of religion, rocks, and flowers. Perhaps when English people have exhausted foreign show-places, they will turn their eyes to this most alluring home-scenery. Says Mr. Alfred Rimmer, in *Our Old Country Towns*, after remarking that between Sheffield, Barnsley, and Buxton, there is a district more than four hundred miles in extent that has never been startled by a railway whistle, "The wonderful stalactite caverns that abound at Castleton, and are supposed to cover many square miles, do not meet with the attention they deserve: it is a great pity they are not on the Rhine, or in the middle of France, instead of being only a walking-distance from.

Chapel-en-le-Frith station on the Midland Railway." It should be matter for local pride that the Castleton caverns are neither in the interior of France, nor on the Rhine, but within driving distance of Manchester, Sheffield, Chesterfield, and Derby. The Castleton hills, of course, are not so gigantic as those of Switzerland, (which in turn are not so appalling as those of Chimborazo;) and they would appear, perhaps, absolutely contemptible to people who measure beauty by bulk, as did the rich vulgarian in Pygmalion's studio, whose standard of art was by the lineal or cubic yard. The character of the Derbyshire Peak, however, does not depend on the judgment of Mr. Chrysal.





Derbyshire Dales.

*I was bound, like a child, by some magical story ;
Forgetting the South and Ionian Vales ;
And felt that dear England had temples of glory,
Where any might worship, in Derbyshire Dales.*

*Sweet pass of the Dove ! 'mid rock, river, and dingle,
How great is thy charm for the wanderer's breast !
With thy moss-girdled towers and foam-jewell'd shingle,
Thy mountains of might, and thy valleys of rest.*

*And Monsal, thou mine of Arcadian treasure,
Need we seek for Greek islands and spice-laden gales,
While a Temple like thee, of enchantment and pleasure,
May be found in our own native Derbyshire Dales.*

ELIZA COOK.



Chapter II.

A DERBYSHIRE VALLEY IN THE SPRING TIME.

*When will the songs be old that tell of spring?
Of buttercups that blow and birds that sing?
Ah, never may my losses or my gains
Make common things to me of fields and lanes!*

GUY ROSLYN.

THE present writer was once called upon for his sins to answer for a charming young lady a series of impertinent questions in what she was pleased to call her "Confession Book." It was demanded from the P.W., for instance, that—following the laudable example of the aforesaid C.Y.L.'s "sisters, her cousins, and her aunts"—he should record his opinion in black and white of what constituted an ideal man and an ideal woman; that he should state what his age was, and whether he was ever in love, and if so, how often; that he should give to the world his direct fiat as to what time of life people should marry, and whether they should unite for

love or lucre ; that he should confess what was his favourite poem, and his favourite hero and heroine in fiction, together with the opera of his choice and the particular colour of his fancy. And among other such inquisitorial queries wrung from the victim by his fair tormentor, was this : "What is the most beautiful thing in nature ?" Of course the P.W. wrote that his bright-eyed interlocutor was ; but after that dulcet divinity he was fain to confess came "A Derbyshire Valley in the Spring Time."

Months have passed since then, Winnie, but I endorse that opinion this May afternoon, as the birds sing to me, and the river wimples on its glassy way, in one of the most beautiful and least known of Derbyshire dales. A couple of hours ago I was a toiler within office walls, with maps and diagrams that insisted with grating emphasis that two and two are four, and could not be five or three under any possible circumstances ; the windows looked out upon roaring foundries and big workshops of scrofulous brick ; the furniture consisted of precise rows of official shelves filled with my genuine "works," as Charles Lamb, with gay gravity, was wont to say of the bulky day-books and ledgers of the East India House. But now there is a soft sky of blue above, faintly flecked with pearl, pleasing colours around, and grassy carpet beneath ; the wind brings a welcome of scent from red hawthorn and rain-washed wild flowers ; white rocks gleam from a setting of emerald green ; and a voiceful river, which intersects the valley like a line of light, is singing a "song without words." Forest, hill, and streamlet mingle in picturesque variety. This morning the forest was one of smoking chimneys ; the hills were of coal, and coke, and stacked timber ; the stream was a stagnant fermentation of filth denominated a canal ; there was the din of industry, the clanging of hammers, the shriek of steam whistles, the sob and wail of tortured metal ; revolving wheels suggested "perpetual motion ;" everywhere was the sense of brick-and-mortar bondage. This afternoon a delicious Derbyshire dale ; an exquisitely tinted picture of rock and river, tor and torrent ; a light, thin, buoyant atmosphere ; a green gladness soothing the work-wearied eye ; and the music of birds and bees, rustling wood, rippling water, and splashing fish, falling gently on town-

tried ear. What a welcome transition it is, and how great the contrast between God's Country and man's town ! What a quiet haven in a troubled sea ; what a sweet truce in the severe fight ; what a shady refuge in the feverish race !

It is the fashion for superfine writers to protest with forcible feebleness against railways ; but for the line, however, he who was the Theseus of toil two hours ago, doomed to keep for ever in a sitting posture, could not have been the lazy lotus-eater of the limestone dale. The train deposited me at a well-known station on the Midland system between Derby and Manchester. I am not, however, going to divulge the name of the station, for such thoughtlessness would betray the whereabouts of my beautiful unknown valley. The Mexicans, who are aware of a city of gold, keep the secret closely to themselves, lest the prying and profane should step in and despoil it of its untold treasures. My hidden valley is only three pleasant miles from where crowded excursion trains of sensational length deposit invading armies of cheap trippers, together with those modern Goths and Vandals who call themselves "Field Naturalists." The unlovely *debris* of paper-bags and ginger-beer bottles, which marks the festive footsteps of the former, is even more tolerable than the wholesale sacking of ferns and flowers which characterizes the forages of the latter. "Dovedale is already stripped to the bare rock of its ferns !" is the lament of the Rev. Gerald Smith, the author of *The Ferns of Derbyshire*, indignant at the rapacious robbers who "rudely tear the ferns from their homes so as to swell the spoils of a day's excursion, but who as rudely cast them off when the day's pleasure is past, or plant them in soil and situations where they must inevitably pine and die." Legislation has given us a Wild Birds' Preservation Act. Could not the life of many a coy fern and modest flower be saved by a Wild Flowers' Preservation Act? But this *en passant*. Happily my hidden valley is free from the presence of both the cheap-tripper and "field naturalist." It knows not the defilement of the one or the other. Your Excellency may walk the whole length of the valley, from where the little limpid laughing river rises, to where it enlarges the Wye, without meeting a person, unless it be a keeper in velveteens, with a gun and dog, who has a civil good day for respectable

folk. It would, indeed, seem an act of sacrilege for 'Arry to pollute the lovely loneliness. 'Arry, with his sweetheart, who wears a discordant bonnet of violent colours, is at the station as we leave it. They are off to one of the ducal show places on the beaten track, and are already receiving the attentions of the raucous-voiced 'bus drivers, who wait for the unwary outside the station gates.

We turn to the left and over the ancient river bridge: a gray, quaint, old-world bit of architecture, whose lichen-stained, moss-grown arches repeat themselves, crumbling stone for crumbling stone, in the Derwent, a swift glassy stream beneath, in which you can count the pebbles and the trout, so clear is the unpolluted water. Over the bridge, an hostelry that is another old-world bit of architecture, also gray, quaint, moss-grown, and lichen-stained. It is a picture rather than a place; a ballad sooner than a building; a song in stone; a poem in its deep pointed gables, its antique mullioned windows, its little diamond panes, its clustering chimneys, and its projecting porch. The ivy clings lovingly to this old ideal hostel; and the charm of bygone association lingers, like a perfume, in every room.

“’Tis a finely-toned picturesque, sunshiny place,
 Recalling a dozen old stories:
 With a rare British, good-natured, ruddy-toned face,
 Suggesting old wines and old Tories:
 Ah, many a magnum of rare crusted port,
 Of vintage no one could cry fie on,
 Has been drunk by good men of the old-fashioned sort.
 At the ——”

Stay! I was nearly letting out the secret of our location, and that would never do. What a vignette the building makes in the spring sunshine, with the flowing river by its side, and the wooded hills in the background that stand out in the clear bright air with distinct outline and delicate colour. The old inn seems to be a relic of the past bequeathed to the present. You half expect to see people dressed in old-fashioned costumes—in brave cavalier hats with plumes, in stately cloaks, and wearing swords and ruffles—lounging round the carved stone porch, tossing off beakers of wine. The russet building carries your mind back for generations; but you are speedily brought back to unpleasant remembrance of the 19th century, eighth decade,

by the appearance at the door of a demonstrative fly fisherman, with loudly displayed calves, who is palpably dressed for the effective pose of his part. Leave we this sartorial exquisite, for whom honest-hearted, simple-minded Izaak Walton would have had a strong repugnance, and pass the little gray thatched houses mixed up among the trees. Genuine rustic cottages, these, and not the "Brummagem" pinchbeck pretenders that Mr. Buggins, the builder, tries to pass current for "cottages" in suburbs of brick-laying barbarisms. A mile-and-a-half of turnpike, through a pastoral country, on which the eye rests on soft woods covering gentle slopes. A river bridge marks a boundary, where the little crystal river we are going to seek falls into the Wye. As we leave the turnpike and turn down a lane to the left, on which the grass and wild flowers encroach on either side, as if jealous of the cartway, we have a vision of gray old towers rising out of a deep mass of wooded hill. Baronial towers, those, eloquent of merry mediæval times. Those time-stained turrets look down on great dining-hall that erst echoed to the loyal shout of feudal retainers; on ball-room with deep oriel windows, where a dozen partners could linger after the dance; on stately terrace where gay hawking parties have gathered; and on—most poetical relic—classic doorway and steps down which tradition says tripped a runaway girl to meet a brave lad, whose elopement is every bit as romantic as that of Lochinvar, Ronald Macdonald, Lord Ullin's daughter, or Jock o' Hazeldean.

Our companion for the next mile along the left-hand side of the lane is the little river that gives its name to the valley where we are to sit and dream the afternoon away. It is a typical trout stream, made up of clear, rough, hurried water, and it contains more trout than all the other Derbyshire streams put together, thanks to the rigid preservation of the Duke of Rutland. It crosses the road at a stone bridge with curious little arches, where another trout-haunted mountain brook joins company. And here is an old village, secluded and somnolent, that might belong to Shakespeare's time. Honeysuckles at porches; old-fashioned gardens, with stocks, London pride, pansies, mignonette, nasturtiums, and gillyflowers; thatched roofs, with the sun searching out the mosses and lichens; sweet repose and quiet shadowy

nooks and corners everywhere. Here is the farm-house in whose yard, on a memorable morning in personal history, I left a canvas bag, containing trout tackle and a pigeon-pie for the dinner of two of us, while we went indoors and rested and refreshed ourselves in the best room with mighty draughts of new milk, and said pretty things to the farmer's daughter, who wore a muslin dress and had quite a bouquet of wild roses in her cheeks. When we were so occupied, two hungry harriers were interesting themselves in the canvas bag, and when we came into the yard, ready to proceed on our journey, one of the dogs was making satisfactory progress in the demolition of the pie, while the other animal was dancing in energetic pain with a fish-hook in his tongue ! Past this farm-house and through the fields, lilac with the "lady-smocks," at our right. Another time-toned bridge through which the river rushes as through a sluice ; a stretch of level meadows that give way presently to the deep shade of wooded paths where the strange, squeaky little song of the goldcrest is heard in the firs ; the banks gather closer and hug the river, and anon rise high and steep and shut it in on either side, and lo ! we are in possession of the Secret Valley.

And the beauty and wonder of the Spring Time are all around. Autumnal tints have their glory ; but look at the variety of this young foliage ; the changes that are rung upon green, the tender hesitating yellows, and the light and shade of the pines and firs. Up the mass of that steep wooded slope a wave of green seems to have spread, leaving black unrelieved patches here and there that bring out the new colour with pronounced vividness. The balsam poplars are a golden yellow ; there is the rich hue of the copper beech ; the oak-buds are red. The delicate silver spray-like leaves of the lady-birch twinkle in the sunshine like dancing motes of light ; and the new palm-like foliage of the larch, drooping from a trunk as slim and straight as the mast of a schooner, is an idyll of colour in its tender, translucent, luminous green. Yes, there is quite as much variety in the foliage of Spring as in the tints of Autumn ; and while the latter is a saddening sermon telling of decay and decline, falling leaves, fading flowers, and fleeting light, Spring is eloquent of youth and love, hope and promise, careless con-

fidence and audacious courage. The ferns are opening their fronds in obedient response to the call of the birds, although many of them are still curled up like fiddle-heads among the withered bracken. The sunlight falls in leaf-shadows on tangled paths of wild flowers. There are trembling anemones, and a wealth of blue-bells; there are the coral beads of the bilberry, and the pearl shell-like flower of the wood-sorrel, with its little shamrock-shaped leaves that make such a sour impromptu salad. It is as if Nature were rejoicing with the Reform Club at the Radical victory at the General Election and were wearing, in consequence, the winning colours. In these glades behold the gold of the daffodil, the amber of the cowslip, the pale yellow of the primrose, the chrome of the marsh marigold, the bright yellow of the little celandine, the vivid yellow of the buttercup. And are not the poplars yellow, and other trees a yellowish green? Yellow, moreover, are the sunset skies of Spring. The old lines must be reversed :—

“ For blue is forsaken,
And green is forsworn,
And yellow is the sweetest
Colour that’s worn.”

The sun which is opening leaf and blossom has also an influence upon the birds. What a concert it is, mingled with the murmuring music of the river, and the lullaby that lurks in the trees. The blackbird is whistling on the other side the stream, and the thrush is answering him on this side; a peggy-white-throat, no bigger than a leaf, is trying a duet with a tom-tit in the next tree. Water-ousels are busy on the river bank, where a heron is fishing in solemn loneliness. That profound egotist and self-advertiser, the cuckoo, is telling the woods its name; and the lark—most spiritual of birds—a speck of song in the blue above, has taken the news of opening summer to the skies. There is the crow of the pheasant in the deep wooded way, and the scream of the jay as it flies past, a patch of bright blue. Here is a little bird worth studying. It is the tree tit-lark. It flies up to a topmost branch from the ground, and then comes down in a sweet vibration of song, which just starts and finishes with the fluttering descent. Another moment, and the modest little songster flies up once more, again to

come down in a ripple of music. A study of wild-birds. Tomtits and wagtails, the one a picture of pale blue and gold, the other pied and yellow; woodlarks and redstarts; willow-warblers and whitethroats. As we walk up the stream the shining white cliffs on either side rise steeper and more sheer, and the growth of the wood is denser. Here and there the river has been dammed up into little lochs, and the trout in these deep pools surprise one by their number and their size. Majestic fellows some of them, three and four pounders, lying with their pretty heads poised up stream to catch what the current brings down; or jumping up with a great splash at a succulent fly; or lurking under tree roots to dart out into mid-water whenever there is a temptation. Next to the number of the trout, the clearness of the water surprises the explorer in the Secret Valley. It is perfectly crystal, and as clear now as when Charles Cotton described it to "Viator" in *The Compleat Angler* as "by many degrees the purest and most transparent stream that I ever yet saw, either at home or abroad, and breeding the reddest and best trouts in England." This delicate clearness is caused by the limestone bed through which the river flows, and also through the absence of man on the banks to pollute it with his money-making manufactures. The only habitation in the valley is the keeper's house halfway up; beyond are the ruins of some old lead workings, with the remains of a tumbled-down aqueduct that once strode across the brightly running water, and further on a quaint corn-mill, placed just where an artist would have it. The beauty of the scene is in its lonely loveliness. It is near large centres of population; but the river ripples in a secret solitude; in sweet, deep, tender desolateness; in infinite seclusion, as if there was no such thing as world-weariness, and human toil and endeavour. The author of *Modern Painters* has described such a scene of deserted sweetness: "The waves plashing lowly, with none to hear them; and the wild-birds building in the boughs, with none to fray them away; and the soft, fragrant herbs rising and breathing and fading, with no hand to gather them; and yet all bright and bare to the clouds above, and to the fresh fall of the passing sunshine and pure rain." A great poet has expressed it:

“A glade is found,
The haunt of wood-gods only ; where, if art
E'er dared to tread, 'twas with unsandaled foot,
Printless, as if 'twere holy ground.”

A mile further up the voiceful valley, in the wildest part, where the solitude is most impressive, and the silence most musical with birds, the river starts a mere spring from a mossy rock, and sets off with great haste to grow from rill to rivulet and rivulet to river. Close by here is a square, stout-built, old farmhouse of warmly-tinted stone, which has been in possession of the same Quaker family these two or three hundred years. There is an honest welcome for us, and bread and cheese and beer—home-baked, home-made, home-brewed, hearty and wholesome—or milk if your Excellency prefer it. Our respects to you, Farmer Bowman.

And now comes a stride across the fields with the plover distracting our attention from its nest among the long grasses by shrill cries of “pee-wit,” which are almost painful in their earnest anxiety; anon a village, not particularly picturesque, straggling and generally exposed, hungry-looking and stony; and then two or three miles tramping along a lonely turn-pike, blinding white and very dusty, with limestone walls dissecting fields that seem to grow limestone boulders as big as sheep; then a grand old church, where those runaway lovers, I spoke of when we started, sleep in a last long embrace that knows no parting; and then, behold! a quaint mediæval market town, with the repose and poetic shadows of the centuries hanging about its dreamy public square and its narrow streets filled up with glints of green. Pleasant it is to step into the recesses of the river bridge and watch the fishermen below, and trace the windings of the Wye, which wanders in splashes of light in the green breadths of meadow, giving to the landscape by its wilful sinuosities alternate glances of flood and field. Turn where we will there is something pleasant for the eye to rest upon, be it the clear flowing river, with the broad path by its bank, where the growing youth and garrulous age of the place loiter in the soft sunset light; or the swelling ducal woods beyond, which tuck in the town on every side; or the old-fashioned houses of gray stone or mellow brick with red

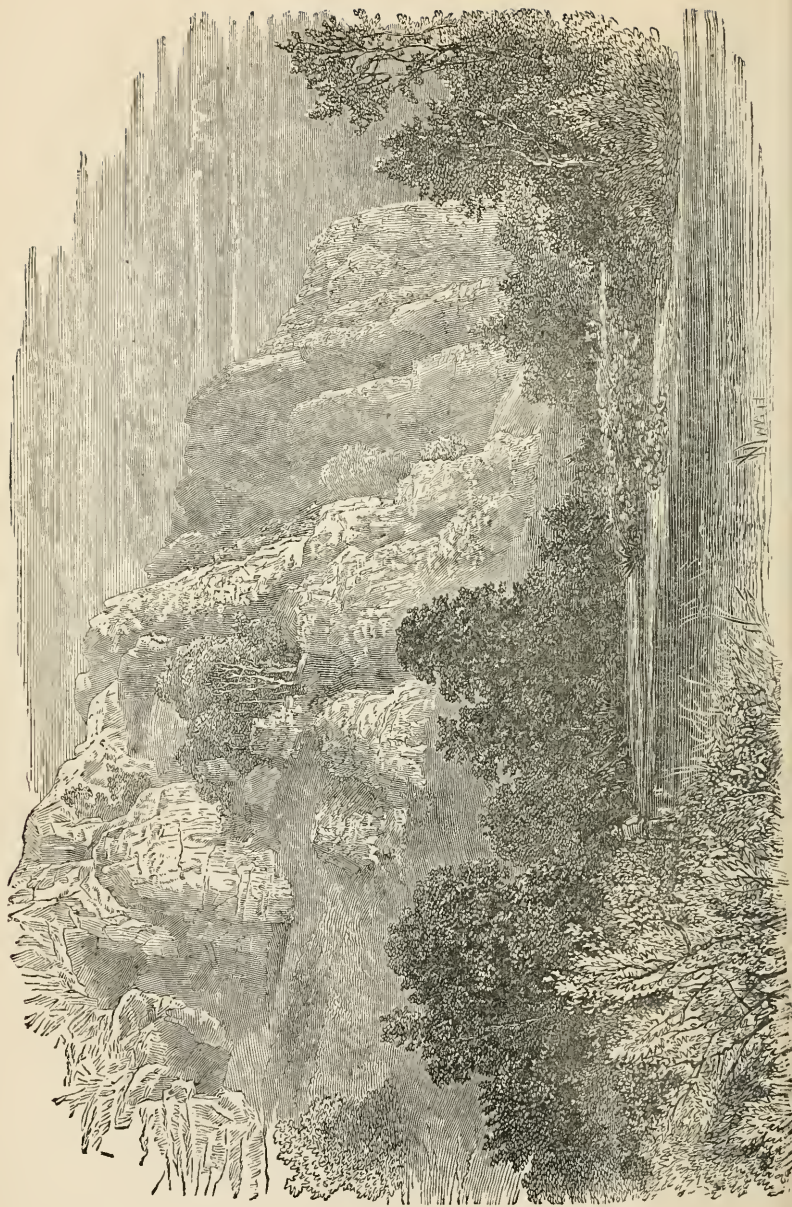
tiles, that speak of rest and peace. All too soon does the train time come. All too soon is the brief truce in the battle over. All too soon we shall reach the actual jostling, greedy, sterile, unsympathetic pain-world.

“O no, I do not wish to see
The sunshine o'er these hills again ;
Their quiet beauty wakes in me
A thousand wishes wild and vain.

.
And fancies from afar are brought
By magic lights and wandering wind ;
Such scene hath poet never sought
But he hath left his heart behind.

It is too sad to feel how blest
In such a spot might be our home ;
And then to think with what unrest
Throughout this weary world we roam.”







Chapter III.

BY THE BANKS OF THE DOVE.

*Oh, no indeed, I know THY land will never chase away
The happiness we found in MINE on that long, sunny day ;
I know thy great White Mountains cannot dim the winding steep,
That lured us dreamily along to gain the " Lover's Leap."
Do you remember how we sat, and tried to find a word
That would express the plashing gush of water that we heard ?
And how we watch'd the alders bend, as peacefully and light
As though an angel's wing had pass'd and touch'd them in its flight ?
And how we said that Eastern clime held no Arcadian Grove
Of more romance and sweetness than the valley of the Dove ?*

ELIZA COOK (" To C. C. in America.")

“**T**HREE courses”—as a certain Homeric statesman would put it—lie before the man who would visit Dove Dale. He may journey to the Dale from Derby by road ; or he may get as far as Ashbourne by rail ; or he may join the Dove near Buxton, and reach the Dale through Hartington. Some special advantage may be cited in favour of each alternative. Pleasant is the drive from Derby in the fresh and fragrant summer morning, past the woods of Markeaton, noisy with birds ; past Mackworth, with its deep ferny little lane leading to a quaint church and an artist's "bit" of ruined castle arch ; past Brailsford and Osmaston, by wood, and hall, and pasture ; then down into Ashbourne, slumbering in a sleepy hollow, where Somnus, the son of Erebus and Nox,

sits on his black-curtained throne of feathers, attended by Morpheus and the Dreams. Here a dish of speckled trout for breakfast at the "Green Man," with its swinging sign taking up half the main street, with the delightful flavour of the old coaching days clinging to its precincts, and with its amusing visitors' book, wherein idle tourists alternately compliment the hotel and criticise each other in prose and worse. And then, your Excellency, a further four mile drive along steep and narrow lanes, with the sun throwing shadow-trees athwart the path, till we are deposited at the "Peveril," or the "Izaak Walton," and Dove Dale is all before us where to choose.

The distance by road from Derby to Ashbourne is something like a dozen miles. By rail it is only 32 miles. An additional inducement in favour of this route is that the train stops at every way-side station, so that the guard may have a gossip with the station-master; you change at a misanthropical place called Uttoxeter Junction, and wait while the stoker has his hair cut; and you wait again at a one-horse sort of spot named Rocester, to (as it seems) allow the engine-driver time to enjoy a pipe of tobacco. If your patience is proof against this *in circumbendibus* line of the North Staffordshire Snailway, there are views during the ride to reward your endurance. The rails run past Tutbury, with its historic castle walls reposing among the deep woods of a commanding hill, and follow the valley of the Dove, giving poets' inspirations of wood and water that make you even wish that the sluggish train would go slower than it does, so that you may mentally adjust the camera of the brain and photograph these "beauty-spots." There is some talk of carrying the line on to Dove Dale. I hope the projectors of so sinful a scheme will come to a bad end. Why should the romance of Dove Dale be so chased away? Commerce certainly does not demand the sacrifice, and Pleasure can certainly walk the four picturesque miles that separate the enchantment of Dove Dale from "the shriek of civilization." In the third place, you can make Buxton your starting point, and a pleasant pilgrimage it is to Hartington, and thence down the Dale, walking with and not against the river. The scenery fronts you; the rocks then have, as it were, their faces to you; and, as the author of

Lorna Doone in one of his gentle stories says, "It is surely more genial and pleasant to behold the river, growing and thriving as we go on, strengthening its voice and enlarging its bosom, and sparkling through each successive meadow with richer plenitude of silver than to trace it against its own grain and good-will towards weakness, and littleness, and immature conceptions."

At the present moment I am at Ashbourne, and, when my friend the Senior (Wr)angler has returned from a certain fishing-tackle maker's, we are going back to Dove Dale. Quiet, quaint, Ashbourne, with its ripple of river, and gables of gray and brown, and glimpses of green tree and filmy smoke. There is an old-world atmosphere in the little town. It is soothing, not striking. The repose of the Middle Ages rests upon its still, silent, shadowy streets. The dreams of dead centuries seem to dwell in the old-fashioned houses. There is a pleasant diversity about the architecture; even the public-houses are ancient and picturesque. Most towns grow newer as they grow older, but Ashbourne is as ancient and peaceful now as it was before Prince Charlie was proclaimed King of England in the Market Place in '45. There are the shadowy nooks and corners of eld; the place seems like a dream, a tradition, an antiquity, a moss-grown memory.

The church is the glory of Ashbourne, and we will, if it please you, pass in at the gates and down the gravelled walk, where the trained lime trees rise on either side, a wall of delicate green. A summer's day might be spent meditating among the green grasses and graves of this "God's acre," under the shadow of the crumbling walls and the gloom of the venerable yews. There is character to be studied, and histories to be traced in grave-mounds. There are tongues in tombs, and sermons in stones. Here, with a fresh offering of wild flowers, heavy with dew, is the grave of a little Nell; there, black with neglect, and dark with nettles, is the vault of a Scrooge. But we find but few neglected graves. The resting-places are bright with flowers. There a child's little grave is made radiant with roses, emblems of undying love; while a cluster of sweet-eyed Forget-me-Nots has been reverently laid on the next green mound. No grave is theatrically dressed up with the tinsel

gew-gaws of artificial grief, such as burlesque true sorrow on the tombstones of a Montmartre or a Père la Chaise ; but on every side of this garden of the dead are tender tributes of



ASHBOURNE CHURCH.

that natural affection which longs for "the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still." Pass we in at the church porch, where the people, who are now mingling their dust together outside, erst passed Sunday after Sunday, and confessed themselves "miserable sinners."

In at the aged worn

doorway, through which many a sturdy yeoman, when a fretful baby in long clothes, was carried one Sunday afternoon to his christening ; where, in the years after, he, tall and handsome, took to himself a blushing wife, and the bells rang in the tower above a jubilant marriage peal ; and where he has been followed by his children's children to the beautiful, still, yew-shaded churchyard, with the same bells tolling a death-knell, and other bells that ring above the world, pealing out a heavenly welcome.

The shadow of centuries falls upon us in the cool aisles of the church. Stained glass throws a warm patch of rainbow on the cold floor. A shaft of sunshine falls upon the effigy of a knight in armour, and rests tenderly upon his wife in her Elizabethan gown and kirtle, ruff, and head-dress. The sacrilegious hand of the ecclesiastical "restorer" has touched the fine old fabric of the church, but it has spared much that is ancient and interesting to antiquarians. If the dead who are buried here under the weight of marble monuments could be summoned, the town would be filled with a noble ancestry, with brave squires and stately dames, county kaisers and queens of hunt balls. Look we at the long series of Cockayne monuments, an uninterrupted succession of memorials, effigies in marble and alabaster, dating

from the middle of the twelfth century to the end of the sixteenth century ; and then turn and *read* Banks' poem in marble—the matchless monument of Penelope Boothby. Her father's *Sorrows sacred to Penelope* show how much he loved and lost ; and sympathetic inscriptions in English, French, Latin, and Italian, further express on pedestal and slab the parent's poignant grief at the death of the child of his heart. The English inscription says : “ *She was in form and intellect most exquisite. The unfortunate parents ventured their all on this frail bark, and the wreck was total.* ” No, not a wreck ; rather a haven safe from the deadly rocks and storms of life. The little bark is safe, for the Heavenly Pilot directed its destinies and steered it away from the hungry quicksands and hidden reefs, the whirlpools and tempests that make shipwreck of our hopes, to the calm, celestial shore.

From the “dim religious light” into the glad, green world again, with the sun shining hot and bright on the daisied grass, touching gently the white tombs, silvering the ripple of the cool brook, searching out the grays and greens and russets on roof and gable, and tinting the trees that bring the repose of woods into the very heart of the little town. The Senior (Wr)angler equipped with rod and landing net, creel, and live-bait can, and with his flies wound round his hat, is waiting for us impatiently at the Green Man, and wants to know what we have been mooning at, although before now he, too, has wandered within the shadowy precincts of that sacred church, and come back better for his sweet, sad session of thought. Dove Dale is our destination now, and the talk is of trout, and in particular of a twenty-brace basket being taken in two hours yesterday with the floating Mayfly by a London barrister. Bravely we step up that steep hill leading out of Ashbourne, which has been the *bête noir* of many generations of willing horses. The S. A. tells a story which is four miles long. We were leaving Ashbourne when the narrative began, and when he is reaching its dramatic and disastrous climax, lo ! Thorpe Cloud and Bunster are sentinelling the portals of Dove Dale with their burly presence. We challenge the mountain giants and enter the Happy Valley. The story, by the way, was about a pike. It was a *monstre* pike. Every fisherman,

I have noticed, has an experience to recite of a *monstre* pike, and this particular fish was almost as appalling as that historic *Lucius* whose carcass was preserved at Mattheim, and which was nineteen feet long and weighed 355 pounds ! I forget the S. A.'s story, but it was very touching.

But behold ! here is the Dove. Let us leave the "judicious Hooker" to his angling, and explore the beauties of the Dale. Bars of radiant light and purple shadow chase each other along the river banks. Listen to the concert of the current, a music as sweet as the stream is silvern. This wild and beautiful "princess of rivers," the runaway daughter of the grim mountain-king Axe Edge, is full of melody. Her voice is never silent. Sad is the chant she sings at this turn of the dale where the valley is wild, and the mountain slopes are cold and lifeless, as if she were mourning the loss of her companion, Wordsworth's Lucy, who

"Dwelt among the untrodden ways,
Beside the springs of Dove ;"

boisterously merry is the song there where she hastens down in cascades of waving white ; dulcet is the air where her coy presence is sheltered by hanging trees, and she kisses the water-lilies, and whispers her secrets to the silent and listening reeds and rushes. She joins in a duet beyond with a mountain rill, whose hand she takes, and the two skip down the valley together. With what "poetry of motion" does this wild and winsome water-girl dance along ! Now gliding along with gentle grace, a turquoise and pearl, stolen from the sky above, jewelling her fair breast ; then hurrying in a mad race past bold moss-grown rocks that vainly essay to check her headlong pace ! anon recovering her breath and loitering with listless laziness, and wandering into wayward paths of her own selection. I have been keeping company with this pretty Princess Dove ever so long, and she is always in the same mood, laughing and chattering and singing to me all the day. And through what scenes we have wandered ! Rock and river, waving wood and jutting crag, and higher mountain, are blended in a poet's inspiration of fairy land. Dove Dale is a painter's paradise, an artist's Arcadia, a picture by Nature when she was in a romantic mood. The scenery changes every few

yards through a winding course of eight or nine miles, and fresh "bits" are constantly challenging each other for the prize of beauty.

We stroll up the Dale, here widening, there contracting; but everywhere full of graceful curves. Here limestone rocks spring sheer out of the silvery sparkle of the river in fantastic pinnacles, such as "Pickering Tor," and "Tissington Spires." Upon some of these equally fantastic names have been bestowed, such as the "Sugar Loaf," the "Dove Holes," the "Twelve Apostles," "Dove-dale Church," and the "Watch Box." In what romantic shapes the Almighty Architect has hewn these rifted rocks. Castle and cathedral, tower, spire, and minaret, face the river, with a background of luxuriant green, which the travelling sunshine now renders radiant, and now dark and retiring. At this point modern "Piscators" and "Viators" are misplacing the confidence of plump trout of two and three pounds; at the next turn a careless artist has erected



REYNARD'S CAVE.

his easel, and is sketching a pinnacle of rock that rises out of the river, with the gray of the lifeless limestone brightened with the green of clinging ferns and foliage and flowers, but he must be a deft painter who would catch the subtle spirit of the fleeting colours which come and go on rock and river: further up the Dale, there is

the blue smoke from a gipsy fire, where a merry pic-nic party are grouped by the water margin, and search is being made for the inevitably missing salt and absent corkscrew. Comes Reynard's Cave, a natural *Arc de Triomphe*, crowning an ascent of two or three hundred feet. A stiff climb with the assistance of a rope up the steep and stony path, and then the glory of the view from the opening of the cave of water and wood, and mountain and moor, in a fairy-land combination which can only be expressed in exclamations. Comes now the narrow pass called the "Straits," where the river scarcely leaves room for the rough foot-path, and when swollen with rains forbids the pedestrian. The Dale again widens, and we are soon at the isolated mass of rock called "Pickering Tor," which rears its hoary head sheer from the river to a great height, its face decorated with clinging ivy. Passing this and looking back, down the river, one of the most striking views is obtained; it has sometimes been called the Northern Entrance, sentinelled by "Pickering Tor" on the right, and the "Grey Mare's Stable" with its cavern and the overhanging "Watch-Box" on the left. "Dove Holes" form the next feature, two large shallow caverns in the face of the rock, beyond which the ordinary visitor rarely proceeds. And yet there is much that is alluring in the four or five miles of river-side between this point and Beresford.

It is a wild and lonely walk, the features of Dove Dale still impressing the scenery, though verdant slopes and more open views obtain as we proceed up the banks of the river:

"In this romantic region wandering on,
 (Where every living cry can stir the mind,)
 Recurs the bold rock-scenery: anon,
 A rustic bridge appears, and lodged behind,
 A group of cottages, with mill to grind."

This is Mill Dale, more than a mile from the Dove Holes, a small hamlet clothed in green and gray and hidden from the haunts of men. Alstonfield is not far off up among the hills, to the left, but we see nothing of it as we wander on by the side of our loved stream, which comes dancing and laughing to meet us, and nothing distracts the deep seclusion of the Dale, save some lads who have just come down Gipsy Lane, and over the picturesque Cold Eaton Bridge,

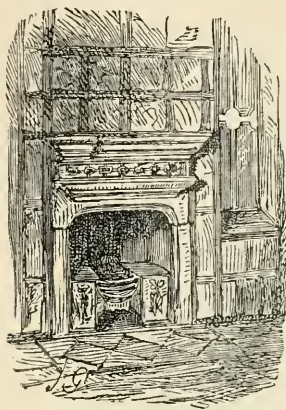
to bait their little circular nets for craw-fish; and how well they harmonize with the scene. Just before entering



“THE STRAITS,” DOVE DALE.

“Beresford’s Enchanting Glen” comes Wolfscote Bridge, a picture to delight the eye and employ the pencil of the painter. But we are at Beresford now, and passing over a rustic bridge are soon shrouded in the cool shade of luxuriant trees. Here is Pike Pool, with its curious pinnacle of rock from which it takes its name, and the rustic foot-bridge; here are pleasant grassy walks, towering tors,

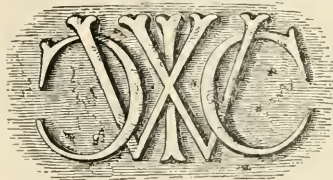
and lovely trees; and amid all the "Princess of Rivers" glides along, reflecting the pictures by which she is overshadowed and surrounded as she passes on her peaceful way, broken occasionally by tiny waterfalls, the music of whose voices make a restful undertone to the song of birds. On a rocky platform above are the ruins of the Prospect Tower, and close by stood Beresford Hall, the residence of Charles Cotton, a gray gabled building built by the Beresfords. Twenty-eight years ago it was standing in a partly-ruinous state, but it was soon afterwards demolished, and nothing now remains of a building that was as quaint in its architecture as it was rich in



FIREPLACE IN BERESFORD HALL.

its associations. In Beresford Dale is the cave where Charles Cotton retired from his creditors. It is a narrow crevice in the rocks through which a man, who is not of Falstaffian corpulency, may just penetrate. You pursue this loop-hole of retreat for six or eight yards; then there is a flat shelf of rock, dry and sheltered, upon which a pallet of straw would afford an acknowledgment for a bed. Rich in verse, Cotton was at times poor in pocket, and had experiences of the *res augusta domi* quite as keen as those of the distressed poet illustrated in Hogarth's picture. At Beresford, too, is the famous old fishing-house built by Charles Cotton for his friend Izaak Walton. It is a square building of gray stone, built on a little peninsula of the Dove. Trees shelter it, and the river reflects it.

The inscription (*Piscatoribus Sacrum*, 1674) on a tablet, cut in relief, placed on the key-stone over the circular-headed door, addresses all anglers. Underneath this dedication the initials of



Cotton and Walton are entwined in a monogram. The building consists of a single room. It forms a perfect cube of 18 feet, the inside measure being 15 feet. There are windows and shutters on all sides ; and on the front, facing the dale, is the door, with a window to the right and left, approached by three steps, gray and moss-grown. A high-pitched stone roof forms the apex from which springs a stone pillar and ball terminating with a vane. Time has been more gentle with the exterior than man has been with the interior of this interesting memorial. The fireplace, occupying the left angle facing the door, and a marble table in the centre of the room, are all that is left of the old appointments of this archaic apartment, which, if walls have ears, must have listened to many pleasant converses between Izaak and Charles, while the smoke from their pipes made incense in their secluded little temple. Charles quaintly describes the little fishing sanctum, and Izaak adds this postscript:—"Some part of the fish-house has been described, the pleasantness of the river, mountains, and meadows cannot ; unless Sir Philip Sydney were again alive to do it." Sir Philip Sydney ! Yes, this is surely his "Arcadia." Charles was right. Dove Dale cannot be described. It has been described, and will be described, and yet has never been described, and never will be described.

"What need

Of words to tell of things unreached of words?"

asks the author of the *Epic of Hades*. But if the glories of Dove Dale are not to be described, they can never be forgotten. The picture is lithographed on the tablets of memory to be re-produced at will in far different scenes and amid far diverse associations. It reminds you by its subtle spell of haunting beauty somehow of Mr. St. John's fine outburst in *Jane Eyre*, when taking leave of his wild Yorkshire moor. "*And I shall see it again, in dreams, when I sleep by the Ganges, and again in a more remote hour, when a deeper sleep overcomes me, on the shore of a darker stream.*"

* * * * *

Come light your pipe, *mon ami*, and we will return down the Dale, and see what success our friend has had among the trout and grayling.



Chapter IV.

IN THE VALLEY OF RASSELAS.

(DOVE DALE RE-VISITED.)

*Good God! how sweet are all things here!
How beautiful the fields appear!*

CHARLES COTTON.



THE speculative contractor, the enterprising engineer, and the opulent utilitarian of Great George-street, Westminster, S.W., do not have it quite their own way after all. It will not be Mr. John Ruskin and the Transcendentalists alone who will hear, with a feeling of satisfaction, that the projected line of railway from Derby to Ashbourne and Dove Dale, for which Parliamentary Powers had been sought, has been abandoned because of lack of support from the landowners, and that the pass of the Dove "through the world's divinest dale" has escaped the unclean invasion of a noisy civilization. This is surely cause for gratitude; for Dove Dale, with its wild romance of scenic charm, and the literary associations that lend to its green and rocky beauty an added poetry, is one of the few magical spots left uncontaminated in this once fair England of ours. "That whistle," against which the irate recluse of Rydal Mount called upon the "mountains, vales, and floods" to "share the passion of a just disdain," when the screeching steam startled the peaceful heart of English Lake-land, would sound like a hideous sacrilege amid the sylvan solitude of Dove Dale, where the



DOVE DALE FROM BUNSTER.

only sound is the cadence of the current, the plash of the trout, the voice of wild birds, and the stir of the softened wind in the tremulous trees. Dove Dale, at any rate, is for the present spared from the hand of the despoiler—a consolation which will perhaps the better enable us to bear the indignity of the abominable proposals to send the iron horse spouting sulphur and smoke over the virgin beauty of the New Forest, up the exquisite glen at Derwentwater, and through the unexplored stretches of Charnwood Forest. Why a railway to Dove Dale should have ever been proposed is a conundrum as vexatious as that mentioned in one of Mr. William Black's stories, which was so good that the man who made it, after endeavouring in vain for two years and a half to find out what it meant, gave it up and cut his throat in sorrowing despair. Ashbourne is only a matter of three or four miles' pleasant stroll from Thorpe Cloud, which sentinel, with austere guard, the entrance to Dove Dale; and Ashbourne, as Bradshaw's recondite *Guide* will inform you, has a railway-station in direct communication with the iron-roads of the Midland, the London and North-Western, the Great Northern, and the North Staffordshire Companies. Dove Dale therefore is already almost within the sound of "that whistle." A railway direct to the portals of such a "beauty spot" would serve no purpose. It would be fed by no collieries, by no large towns, by no arteries of commerce. Perhaps it was because of these considerations that the landowners did not embrace the railway scheme that would have furnished the magical Valley of Rasselas with signal-boxes, engine-sheds, and shunting sidings. Otherwise self, sooner than poetry, might have influenced their attitude. Anyhow, I hope the authors of the abandoned project, whoever they may be, will come, like it, to a speedy and desirable end.

Perhaps, on subsequent reflection on the turpitude of this reckless wish, I shall feel constrained to moderate its tone. At present such a concession is not to be thought of. For at this instant the "Princess Dove" is coquetting with me, and confiding to me her secrets. I am seated by her side, while the sun is shining on her fair and beautiful face. Flowers repose on her bosom, and she sings with such eloquent expression that the trees hang over to listen to

every meaning of her voice, while the fortress-like rocks seem softened by the sound. I have been following the course of the "Princess Dove" these several days past, and she has grown up from a petulant infant to this sheeny Princess as I have walked by her side. I met her first running away in fear from the cavern-home of her father, King Axe Edge, near Buxton; and I have followed her wanderings by dell and meadow until she gained confidence, and grew in beauty; prattling at first, then chattering, then singing, as the sun caught the shimmer of her white wing. "Princess Dove!"—that was Charles Cotton's apostrophe. He calls "fair Dove" his "beloved nymph," and was never so happy as when he could make young again the heart of Izaak Walton by bringing the old angler down into the Peak to share his love of the Dove. They fished in tranquillity through all the stormy troubles of the Civil War, more interested in perch than Puritans, and more attracted by roach than Royalists. This afternoon I visited their fishing-house in one of the upper reaches of the Dale at Beresford, where Izaak Walton was Cotton's guest till the age of eighty-three. In this little fishing sanctum the good old man discoursed to his "son Charles" of the pleasures of simple content and the delights of country life. I wander down the Dale, and pause to creep in the sheltered cave where Cotton, in the latter part of his life, much involved in debt, escaped from duns and bailiffs. You may pass and re-pass this cave close by it and never discover it; a sufficient proof of its security as a hiding-place. There is a flat shelf of rock, dry and secure, in the cave. Upon this the impecunious poet was wont to stretch on a pallet of straw, and have for company Horace, Catullus, Virgil, Corneille, and Montaigne; meanwhile writing:

“Lord, would men let me alone,
What an over-happy one
Should I think myself to be!
Might I, in this desert place,
Which most men in discourse disgrace,
Live but undisturbed and free!
Here in this despised recess,
Would I, maugre winter's cold
And the summer's worst excess,
Try to live out to sixty full years old!

And all the while,
Without an envious eye,
Or any thriving under Fortune's smile,
Contented live, and then—contented die."

Poor Cotton! How differently his life was ordered to that of his "most affectionate father and friend," the frugal, prudent, methodical Izaak Walton. The primitive angler must have been a pretty shrewd man of business, for he was able to leave his linen-draper's shop in Fleet Street and exchange the yard-measure for the fishing-rod, with a comfortable fortune of his own earning, at fifty. He had a son, Izaak, who was a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral. But it was to Charles Cotton that he seems to have shown the most paternal feeling. Primitive and prudent was the foster-father. He left London, "judging it dangerous for honest men to be there," and lived "mostly in the families of the eminent clergymen of England, of whom he was much beloved." Cotton, on the other hand, was extravagant and imprudent. The Beresford Hall estates were heavily encumbered, and Charles Cotton the Younger was not the man to redeem the mortgages. It has been said of Burns that he was "a mixture of divinity and dirt," and the remark would apply to the character of Cotton. A true poet, with a poet's love of nature, yet he wrote several works for profit, which, dying, he might have wished blotted out. They were penned to please the public and the vitiated age in which he lived, and were successful in proportion to their indelicacy. Like Burns, he might have prayed, "oh, for a little of the cart-horse part of human nature!" Yet there must have been some fine traits in his character to have commended him to the confidence of Izaak Walton. True affection is said to be like the law of magnetism "the attraction of opposites." . . . But to return to the poet-angler's river.

Did the waters of the Dove possess no poetical witchery of their own, did not white tors repeat their pinnacles in crystal water, and loving greenery bend down to kiss each ripple, they would possess a charm from their association with genius. It is wonderful how scenery is influenced by the interest of immortal lives. Imagine Sinai without the Law-giver; Jerusalem without the memory of the Man of

Sorrows ; Greece with no Homer ; Rome with no Horace ; Iona without Columba ; Mull and Morven without Ossian ; the Avon bereft of Shakespeare ; the Doon devoid of the memory of Burns ; the Tweed without Sir Walter Scott ; the Ouse without Bunyan and Cowper ; the Trent without Kirke White and Byron ; the Sheffield Don without Ebenezer Elliott ; the Lake Country without Wordsworth and Wilson, Coleridge and De Quincey, Arnold and Southey ; Chelsea without Carlyle ; Antwerp without Rubens. Landscape is linked with lives. As Longfellow, in one of his prose passages, says, " Even scenes unlovely in themselves become clothed in beauty when illuminated by the imagination, as faces in themselves become so by the expression of thought and feeling." Genius enriches scenery with a human interest, rendering it radiant with

" The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the poet's dream."

Dove Dale has a share of fame like this. It should be classic to all time by its association with dear old Izaak Walton, and his friend the angler-poet, Charles Cotton, alone ; but there are other names connected with it to make the Dale a literary shrine and the Dove a sacred stream.

I sit by the feet of the " Princess Dove " this May morning, as the breeze brings her a *billet-doux* of scent from the hawthorns, and the flowers open out their wonders, and the birds serenade her from green branches that embroider towering rocks, and all around are the idyllic influences of the spring-time. And I apply this law of association between scenery and genius to this Derbyshire dale. The banks of the Dove suddenly become crowded with famous figures, and the valley is consecrated by genius into a shrine.

Dr. Johnson called Dove Dale the " happy valley " of his *Rasselas*, and it must have been a grateful experience for him to leave the dirt and din of Fleet-street to spend hospitable hours with Dr. Taylor of Ashbourne, amid the wild beauty of the Dove Dale country. Next to Boswell, Taylor was Johnson's greatest familiar. Schoolfellows at Lichfield, they were college-companions at Oxford, and friends for life. Johnson had such implicit regard for the character of the Ashbourne worthy that, when his wife died, he sent for him to console his shadowed life with prayer ; and, when the

great philosopher found himself about to face the dark flood, it was to the simple parson of the Peak he applied for that peace which the world cannot give. Taylor became Prebendary of Westminster. He lived to read the funeral service in the historic Abbey over all that was mortal of his literary friend. If Johnson had been the survivor, his declining days would have been made placid by Taylor's estate. And a very comfortable estate it must have been. Boswell gives us a striking pen-and-ink picture of the Ashbourne divine :

“There came for us an equipage properly suited for a wealthy beneficed clergyman—Dr. Taylor's large roomy postchaise, drawn by four stout horses, and driven by two steady jolly postillions, which conveyed us to Ashbourne, where his house, garden, table, in short, everything was good, no scantiness appearing ; and his size, figure, countenance, and manner were those of a hearty English squire with the parson superinduced ; and I took particular notice of his upper servant, Mr. Peters, a decent good man, in purple clothes and large white wig, like the butler or majordomo of a bishop. Dr. Johnson and Dr. Taylor met with great cordiality.”

There are no more pleasant passages in Boswell's biography than where he reproduces the conversations between Johnson and his Ashbourne friend. The two doctors, so widely divergent in disposition, walked along the banks of the Dove together, as much a Pylades and Orestes, a Damon and Pythias, as were Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton before them. The eye of the mind can see the little party. Taylor, rubicund of face, rotund of form, a compromise between the fox-hunter and the theologian ; Johnson, with the big brown coat with the brass buttons, and the seared, kind, ugly, wonderful face, shadowed by a wig full of strange phrenological protuberances ; Langley, the trenchant disputant, talking to Gilpin the tourist ; Boswell, spaniel-like in obedient attendance. Johnson, to whom ordinary scenery carried no captivation, and to whom the conventional country-side appealed so little as to provoke the dogmatic remark, “Sir, one green field is like another green field ; let us take a walk down Fleet-street,” stands with his eyes arrested in admiration at the picturesque

“straits” in Dove Dale, saying, “I should like to build an arch from rock to rock over the stream, with a summer-house upon it.” Ilam, a lower reach of the Dale, he thus describes: “Ilam has grandeur tempered with softness; the walker congratulates his own arrival at the place, and is grieved to think he must ever leave it. As he looks up to the rocks, his thoughts are elevated; as he turns his eyes on the valley, he is composed and soothed. . . . Ilam is the fit abode of pastoral virtue, and might properly diffuse its shades over nymphs and swains.” Boswell remarks: “He that has seen Dove Dale has no need to visit the Highlands.” The comparison is as far-fetched as Lord Byron’s remark that “There are prospects in Derbyshire as noble as in Greece or Switzerland.” If Dove Dale were Scotland, or Greece, or Switzerland, it would cease to be Dove Dale. Pleasant, however, are the pictorial touches Bozzy gives us of that odd, old-world Ashbourne, the threshold to Dove Dale, and the door that opens out many avenues of delightful scenery. Ashbourne is little changed from the time when Johnson and Taylor held friendly controversy together in the roomy hospitable house near the church. The quaint town wears the dress of last century. The tide of progress has left it almost untouched. There are the same old Elizabethan Grammar School, many gabled, the same ancient alms-houses, the same shadowy nooks and corners, the same suggestions of the green country mixed up with the filmy smoke of the steep irregular streets, the same picturesque diversity of architecture, the same shimmer of brightly running water. The Green Man hostel, about whose mistress — “a mighty civil gentlewoman” — Boswell is so enthusiastically eulogistic, is unaltered. The quaint old sign still swings in the middle of the street, and the ale is more to the palate than it was when Charles Cotton wrote “for Ashborn has, which is a kind of a riddle, always in it the best malt, and the worst ale in England.”

The church at Ashbourne recalls another of the “shining great ones” I see in imagination walking by Dove side. Tom Moore lived at Mayfield Cottage, Hanging Bridge, on the Staffordshire side of the river. From the banks of the Dove he wrote many of his “Letters” to Byron, and passed the happiest years of his life. Here, too, he com-



“TISSINGTON SPIRES,” DOVE DALE.

posed *Lalla Rookh*, holding "the gorgeous East in fee" with its blaze of Oriental colour and its sun-fed splendour, amid the wild rocks and moors of the Peak of Derbyshire. By the banks of the Dove he penned a more familiar poem than *Lalla Rookh*. The bells which ring out to the wild sky from Ashbourne steeple are "Those Evening bells" which Moore swung into a melody more musical than their own. You know those familiar tender lines, reader? In the last verse he refers to Dove Dale :

"And so 'twill be when I am gone,
That tuneful peal will still ring on ;
While other bards shall walk these dells,
And sing your praise, sweet evening bells."

"Those Evening Bells" echo the chime of the Ashbourne belfry, and their sweet cadence will be heard when the metal throats high up in the hoary old Derbyshire tower have lost their music even as have the Flemish bells cast by the famous moulder, Van der Gheydn, of Loudain. This old church at Ashbourne seems to be the shrine of tender memories. In the chancel a great sculptor has thrown his soul into what is the music of marble. It is worth while making a pilgrimage to the Peak to see Banks' monument to the memory of Penelope Boothby. She was the only child of Sir Brooke Boothby. Sir Joshua Reynolds painted the portrait of this sweet girl as she appeared in all the glow and grace of health. One of the illustrated papers has reproduced this canvas, and made the innocent little face familiar in every home. The relentless "Reaper," of whom Longfellow sings, took the choice flower away before it had passed from bud to bloom. It is a child of only six years whose fragile form Banks has sculptured. She rests upon a mattress of marble that seems as soft and white in its texture as the daintiest down. The fretful fevered arms are drawn up in sharp pain near the head, which reposes on a pillow. The naked feet are folded over each other. The face wears an ineffable expression. It is enchanting in its exquisite tenderness. The body is in pain, but the soul, symbolised in the face, is with the angels. The details of the sculptor's work are a revelation of art. The drapery, with the graceful sash of the frock, is a study. Both in conception and execution the work is wonderful. Sir Francis Chantrey stole

into the church to study this dream of art. It gave him the inspiration for his master group, "The Sleeping Children" in Lichfield Cathedral, which he designed in the aforementioned Ashbourne hostel. There is an aching pathos in the inscriptions on Penelope's tomb, that vainly endeavour to translate into language the father's feelings over the death of the child of his heart. Speaking of Sir Francis Chantrey, his *chef-d'œuvre*, in the opinion of many people, is to be seen at the pretty little church at Ilam in the "Valley of Rasselas." It represents the venerable David Pike Watts on his death-bed, giving his last benediction to a sorrowing family group.

I sit and smoke and ponder by the Dove. She is chattering to me all the time. More people of the past wander down the Dale. I raise my hat to Congreve; he is on his way to his friend Mr. Port's house at Ilam, where, in a rocky recess "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife," he wrote more than one of his best comedies. Politicians, as well as poets come this way. The "Derby Dilly" brought Canning to visit the Boothbys yesterday. You remember his political squib beginning:

"So down thy slope, romantic Ashbourne, glides,
The Derby Dilly, carrying six insides."

And now, gathering flowers, who is that benevolent-looking old gentleman talking to a little girl with tangled hair and naked feet? It is William Wordsworth with his child-friend Lucy.

"She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone,
Half hidden from the eye;
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and O,
The difference to me!"

And now, who are these coming this way, I wonder? One is communing with himself, and scattering, seemingly,

seeds on the slopes of the cliffs and on the banks of the voiceful river, as he cherishes his philosophic dreams. The other is immersed in a book as he saunters by his comrade's side, occasionally looking up at rock and river. The one has a French-looking face. His gait, his manner, his dress, are strange. The other might be taken for a Scotch divine. The repose on his thoughtful face is in strong contrast to the shifting, restless, piercing eyes of his friend. The two are Jean Jacques Rousseau and David Hume. Rousseau lived at Wootton Hall hard by. It was there he parted with his best friend, David Hume, whom he miserably misjudged. "The Apostle of Affliction" came to Wootton Hall in mid-March. The snow whitened the Derbyshire uplands. The wild wind shrieked down the dale; it sobbed over the sullen outline of the moorlands. The Peak was a picture of bleakness; but we find Rousseau writing: "It has been freezing ever since I came here; it has snowed incessantly; the wind cuts the face. In spite of all this I would rather live in a hole of one of the rabbits of this warren than in the finest room in London." In the Dove Dale country Rousseau began to write his *Confessions*, the most introspective biography the world has ever seen. By the banks of the Dove he wandered, planting rare plants and flowers (some of which still keep his memory green); for he was a born botanist, and the wild profusion of green beauty in Dove Dale gladdened his heart. The tors reminded him of his Jura peaks. He escaped from the world. The people of the Peak regarded him as an exiled prince. He could not speak English. The villagers were ignorant of French. Thérèse interpreted his wants by signs. And so the refugee communed with the heart of Nature free from intrusion.

The Dove Dale country is haunted with other names. Alfred Butler, the novelist, author of *Elphinstone*, *The Herberts*, &c., subsequently resided at Tom Moore's Mayfield cottage. A mile away from Wootton Hall, on the other side of the river, lived Michael Thomas Sadler. At Okeover, within a short stroll, was the home of Ward, the author of *Tremaine*. Tissington is associated with Richard Graves, the author of the *Spiritual Quixote*, whose portrait Wilkie painted; while I can imagine old Hobbes, the philosopher of Malmesbury, leaving Chatsworth to smoke his pipe in

peace by the banks of the Dove. After him comes "Wright of Derby," with his pencil, and Edwards, the poet, with his pen.

But the dominating genii of Dove Dale are Izaak Walton and his "dear son," Charles Cotton. Their invisible presence haunts and hallows the deep and devious valley which, with the declining sunlight making the glassy pools look like so many rich stained-glass cathedral windows, I reluctantly leave.

"Izaak, still thou anglest near me
By the green banks of thy Dove ;
Still thy gentle ghost may hear me
Breathe my reverence and love.

O, my kindly old piscator,
Sees't thou not these waters clear ?
Time, thou changeling, Time, thou traitor,
Give him back—his home was here !"

Time, which has taken so many of the great, the gentle, and the good from the banks of this winding, singing river, reflecting tor and tree as in a mirror, has, happily written no wrinkles on Dove's fair brow. She is as young and beautiful to-day as when "Piscator" of old pledged his friend in a flagon of the best Derbyshire ale, saying: "And now, sir, my service to you, a good health to the honest gentleman you know of, and you are welcome into the Peak." Which service and toast I respectfully indorse in your favour, my city reader.





Chapter V.

A VISIT TO THE VIA GELLIA.

*And fast beside there trickled softly downe
A gentle streame, whose murmuring wave did play
Emongst the pumy stones, and made a sowne
To lull him soft asleep that by it lay.*

THE FAERIE QUEENE.

WE call him "Kalmat," after the hero of Joseph Hatton's *Clytie*. He is so broad-chested, bronzed, bearded, and boyish. He broke in upon me in the busy Midland town, where I, a descendant of the Danaïdes, am doomed day by day to empty an inkpot whose ink never diminishes. He was "passing through," he said, and came to "look me up." A wanderer upon the face of the earth is "Kalmat." Like Dr. Syntax, he is ever travelling in search of the picturesque. He has employed most of the Swiss guides; he knows Lombardy better, perhaps, than some cockneys know London; he has penetrated into Japan and been half-perished at Jericho; he has communed with Nature in the far-away fastnesses of the Sierras and the Sacramento. He can converse for hours about the discomforts of the Nile, the dangers of Norway, and the dirt of Normandy; and he has even been contemplating writing a book on a trip from St. Pancras to San Francisco. He lighted a cabāna, and began to talk about his next trip.

"Have you ever done Derbyshire?" I asked.

He owned, after some hesitation, that he had once been to Buxton, and that he was at one time the owner of a spar ornament which was inscribed, "A Present from Matlock." These two facts comprehended all "Kalmat's" knowledge of "the English Switzerland." He had seen acres of art at Antwerp, Rome, and Versailles; but somehow the princely galleries of Chatsworth had escaped his notice. He had been packed with perspiring tourists on full-flavoured steamboats to behold ruins on the Rhine; but the olden glories of Haddon Hall, Hardwick Hall, and Wingfield Manor were unknown to him. He had climbed the Matterhorn and Mont Blanc, and could chat glibly about the giant Jungfrau and the terrific Schreckhorn; but had never heard of Axe Edge, Masson, Crich Cliff, Thorpe Cloud, and Kinderscout. The Peak of Derbyshire he, like many other people, no doubt dismissed as a solitary rocky altitude, instead of a wide expanse of alternating moor and meadow and mountain, green valley and glancing stream, limestone tor and forest ridge; a single peak, instead of a stretch of poetic country which, while it absorbs most of the shire of Derby, embraces the counties of Stafford and Nottingham, and loses itself in Cheshire and Yorkshire, only to reappear in Lakeland, and afterwards across the Border. No; "Kalmat" knew nothing of the Peak country.

It wanted a couple of hours to noon, so I prevailed upon "Kalmat" to stay and have a day in Derbyshire. I planned a walk that should enrapture him. The June sun came through the window, and supported the invitation with promises of an unclouded day. The wind brought messages of scent from the country. We were just in time for the Wirksworth train, and soon were steaming through the green valley of the Ecclesbourne, which may be tersely described as a land flowing with milk, if not wild-honey. The fields here are dairy-pastures, and the farmer looks not to corn for his rent, but to his dairy. The market is close at hand, and the money is ready cash. The way-side stations are animated pictures of fresh-faced farm lads, with their bright milk cans. The labels on the cans show what long distances the Derbyshire milk travels every day. From the direction on some of the cans we learn that Mr. J. G. Crompton, J.P., sends his milk to Hull; while cans belonging to other

people are destined for London, North Shields, Durham, and Jarrow. What lazy little stations! How sweetly pretty is "Hazlewood"! How do you pronounce "Idridgehay"? and what do you think of "Shottle"? The stoppage of the train at Wirksworth brings the short railway journey and my long introduction to a close.

* * * * *

A peaceful Peak town this Wirksworth. None of the throb of the nineteenth century disturbs its dreamy streets. The town, clustering round the crumbling old church, is completely shut in by investing hills from the noisy world. On these hillsides Dinah Morris used to preach; near here is the workshop of Adam Bede; there is the Hall Farm; and yonder is Donnithorne Chase; for it is in this district that George Eliot found the characters and scenes of one of the noblest novels in the literature of fiction. She denied "the soft impeachment;" but in the Wirksworth Wesleyan Chapel is a tablet which bears the following inscription:—"Erected by numerous friends to the memory of Elizabeth Evans, *known to the world as Dinah Bede*, who during many years proclaimed alike in the open air, the sanctuary, and from house to house, the love of Christ. She died in the Lord, Nov. 9, 1849, aged 74 years. And of Samuel Evans, her husband, who was also a faithful preacher and class-leader in the Methodist Society. He finished his earthly course Dec. 8, 1858, aged 81 years." "Kalmat" is hungry for the legends of the place; but in Wirksworth you are not liable to "break your shins against history." The Roman and Saxon lead-workings are a reminiscence of the past industrial importance of the town, and are certainly more interesting than the more modern lime-stone quarries and kilns which are blurring the beauty of the rocks. One of the heir-looms of the place is the Miners' Standard Dish, kept at the Moot Hall, and made of brass in the time of Henry VIII. It is used for testing the measures used in valuing and selling lead ore. But the most mendacious local guide cannot hope to point out a dungeon in which Mary Queen of Scots was confined, or a ruined wall which was ever the butt of Cromwell's cannon. One charming custom of the past, however, clings to the place. "Kalmat" has never

heard of Wirksworth "Well Dressings." The festival of well-flowering is a piece of ancient poetry which appears to be preserved only in the Peak. It is a survival of the Italian festivals called Fontanalia. The *Comus* of Milton commemorates the custom. The poem represents the rustics honouring their river-goddess. The early summer-time brings Derbyshire people several celebrations of the kind. The Tissington Festival is held on Ascension Day, and is of a more sacred character than the others. The one at Wirksworth takes place on Whit-Wednesday; that at Buxton on the Thursday nearest the 24th June. Each public well or spring is converted into a floral shrine, formed in the first instance by wood covered with wet clay and white plaster. This frame-work receives a magic mosaic of wild-flowers, an arabesque of blossom. The woods and valleys are waited upon for decorative subscriptions, and respond liberally. Forget-me-nots, hyacinths, lilacs, and violets contribute gradations of blue. The gold is given by the tassels of the laburnum, the blossom of the furze bush, the celandine, the marsh-marigold, and the buttercup. More subdued tints are presented by gray lichens and brown mosses, by fir-cones and fir-foilage. The tender spring shoots of the yew give a light green, and the winter foliage of the same tree supplies a sombre shade. Crimson berries produce a gleam of gay colour. White daisies are embroidered by deft fingers into doves and lambs. Scripture texts are worked in blended wild-flowers, and framed with feathery ferns. The designs show the village architects to be true artists—poets, painters, sculptors, though they may not be able to read or write. They produce floral pictures, poems in flowers. Arches and temples, spires and towers, are built out of blossoms. Bible allegories are made in flowers. Perhaps no more pleasing custom than this antiquated ceremony is left in "merrie England." Let us hope that civilization, which has given us much and robbed us of more, will not frighten this lingering festival from the Derbyshire hills.

Me! This gossip about well-dressing has been above a mile long. We have sauntered up-hill out of the town, and are now at the foot of Stonnis: a group of piled-up embattled crags so ponderous and sombre that they have been called

the Black Rocks. The shape of this dark ridge suggests, even to a mind not given to ready comparisons, an impregnable bastion. The topmost blocks projecting over the



THE BLACK ROCKS.

precipice look like threatening cannon. The highest of them are pointed out the furthest; and one monster mass of iron-like stone, a natural 100-ton gun, broad at the breech, and narrow towards the muzzle, aims across the land, as if the tall pine gunners standing behind had orders to open fire on the battlements of Riber Castle on the opposite hill. Across the metals of the High Peak railway, writhing

through the hilly country like a serpent of steel, and then a steep ascent for us knee-deep in ferns and over fallen rocks. A stiff climb up the side of gray gritstone, with here and there a friendly young tree to lend assistance to the outstretched hand, and then a grateful rest on the wind-swept summit, where there is a breeze that would make a schooner-yacht take in several "reefs"; a green carpet of velvet pile, softer than product of Kidderminster or Brussels, with a poetical crest of pines waving their storm-rent funereal plumes above, and a mossy wood behind. "Kalmat" admits that below is one of the sublimest views he ever beheld. It is certainly one of the most romantic prospects in Derbyshire. Fairyland is at our feet; a wide-reaching radius of romance; a painter's dream of landscape loveliness; one of the largest areas of bird's-eye view that the eye can enjoy. We sit and let the scene sketch itself on our memory, photograph its outlines on a mental collodion-plate. Let me focus the camera while the sun is on the picture, and secure it by the "instantaneous process." A stone dropped from our observatory would alight upon the High Peak railway—a mineral line—that is winding round curves which make one shudder for the safety of the approaching train, panting in the distance up gradients that seem to upset the law of gravitation. Low down to the left lies Wirksworth, hid in the white vapour of the limekilns; climbing up the roadside, past those precipitous stone-quarries, is Middleton; that intersection in the hills below is where the Via Gellia valley traces its romantic course; beyond a patchwork of green fields gray with sheep, so motionless that they appear to be protruding pieces of limestone; fields, by the way, divided by low walls of loose stone, for the shade of hedgerows is unknown in the Peak country. Right down in the hollow at our feet nestles Cromford. The sun flashes back its bright beams from the windows of the Arkwright mills. There is the church, and the river bridge, and the Derwent, now a band of silver in the meadows, now lost among the trees, then radiant in the valley again, and anon absorbed by the woods of Alderwasley, where the directing finger of a sunbeam points to Crich Stand, shining in the blue hazy distance, like a Cleopatra's needle, on the crest of the great gray volcanic, umbrella-shaped cliff, scarred by the glacier-like "slip" of

1882, which carried nearly twenty acres of the limestone over its clay bed, together with house and chattels. "Kalmat" is enchanted with the view of Matlock in the middle distance, which the eye, skipping over Cromford, lingers upon long and lovingly. The tall projecting crags, that break through the foliage and overhang the curving river, seem small from this altitude, where we look down upon the swelling hills that expand above the cliffs and reach to the horizon line. The highest point across the valley is where the sham baronial towers of Riber stand out clear-cut against the summer sky. Below, like the other Matlock rocks, dwarfed in dimensions by the eminences above, is the majestic mass of limestone, the pride and glory of Matlock—the High Tor. Opposite to it rises Masson with its plume of pines; while the wooded villa-dotted spur of hill down at its side is the Heights of Abraham. Beyond Matlock, where the sun-light ripples over an ocean of gorse and wild thyme and heather, is Ashover; and, right away in the picturesque perspective, hill and dale, cottage and farm and hall, and white winding roads—But there! my prepared plate is not large enough for the picture, and "Kalmat" is reading aloud "the testimony of the rocks," scratched by the penknives of a nation of enthusiastic Smiths and Browns and Joneses and Robinsons. The Black Rocks seem to be the happy hunting-ground of amateur stonecutters. One adventurous mortal, not to be out-done by the John Smith who tried to carve his name on the iron face of the mighty mystic Sphinx, or the Robinsons who leave their autographs on the Pyramids, has cut his initials on the very nose of the highest projecting rock, that hangs sheer over the giddy precipice. The author of this folly must have crawled to the brain-reeling point, and lain prone while he toiled at his madman's monogram. "Kalmat" says he shall be disappointed if that man's epitaph is not to be found among the rocks below. Some penknives have broken out into verse; one defacing donkey has elaborated a drawing of himself, and entitled it "Balaam's Ass;" and in places where the rock has been too flinty for persevering steel, the scribblers have taken their distressed blades to the naked trunks of the pines, and entered their names and the day of the month upon the bronzed bark.

Scrambling down again, and on to the turnpike leading

to Middleton, with a marching accompaniment from a band of birds—the trumpet of thrush, the bassoon of cuckoo, the clarionet of blackbird, the piccolo of robin, and the fife of linnet. The laburnum hangs out its banners on the outer walls of a roadside cottage, and there is an intoxicating sweetness from the purple lilacs. Middleton is one long, narrow, straggling, sordid street, climbing up the shoulder of a hill so steep that the wonder is the houses do not push each other down. One or two pretty houses, flanked and fronted with garden gleams of colour, only serve to lend additional meagreness to the little struggling shops and hovels. The hamlet might have been borrowed from Bulgaria, or it might illustrate Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. Some of the houses turn their backs on you. Others are in ruins. The thick stone walls are crumbling into decay. The rafters are grass-grown and desolate. The decline of lead-mining has made the village a vulgar Baalbec. The tumble-down tenements are so many melancholy *Hic jacets* of a departed industry. But Middleton (whose name, by the way, is shared by a much prettier village in the High-Peak) gives access to the *Via Gellia*,* one of the sweetest of the Derbyshire valleys.

Deep down winds the secluded valley between steep mountain walls of living green, inclined planes of trees, broken here and there by the gray scarp of a ragged limestone crag. The ambushade on either hand, alive with the trilling intercourse of birds, and fragrant with perfumes that a Rimmel could never extract, is a study of foliage. On the lower waves of the billowy sea of green a thicket of dense undergrowth, wild-briers, woodbines, hollies, and hazel and blackberry bushes that in the autumn time will make the *Via Gellia* a forest of fruit. Over this tangle the willow, with her flower-catkins, droops her leaves of delicate gray, satin-silvered ever and anon by the stir of the wind. Above is the luminous leafage of branching limes and the stout foliage of alders and chestnuts. Higher still, the silvery birch, "the lady of the woods," waves her winsome tresses,

* The name *Via Gellia* is a compliment to the late Mr. Philip Gell, of Hopton. At his expense the road through the romantic valley was formed.

and the mountain-ash disputes a place with the larches and sycamores and maples and the young oaks that are being strangled in their upward growth by the tendrils of the picturesque but paralysing ivy; while right above the bright broad boles of these trees the dark spires of the sombre fir and the storm-stained pine-spines stand out erect on the windy edge of the summit in a solitude of their own, a *chevaux de frise* against the sky. It is a valley of flowers. The roadside is starred with primroses. Lilies-of-the-valley are as common here as the buttercups in May meadows. The blue eyes of the forget-me-not, heavy with tears, peep from the bank-side. The bluebell and harebell are eloquent of floral campanology. The pale wood-anemone is mixed up in a "fern paradise," adder's-tongue, hart's-tongue, and maiden-hair sleepwort, of gray moss and silver lichen, and the coy violet betrays her presence in scent. There is no place in Derbyshire where a better bouquet of wild-flowers can be obtained than among the labyrinthine leafage of the Via Gellia Valley. They are the sweet, old-fashioned simple flowers that stirred the hearts of the great poets into song. Scientific florists would, perhaps, despise them, and landscape gardeners laugh them to scorn; but was it not the meanest flowers that blowed that filled Wordsworth with thoughts that lay too deep for tears? A chattering little stream runs alongside the road. Presently comes a Gothic cottage, and at its side Dunsley Waterfall, leaping a white ribbon of spun-glass from the hill-top, and lighting the trees above it under all their leaves, shouts with joy as it tumbles down the rocks to be welcomed by the laughing little rivulet, which has changed its course from our left hand to our right, momentarily ceasing its song to pass under the road unobserved.

A felled tree in the glade by the water-margin begs us to be seated. Our satchel is opened. There is an epicurean flavour about our sandwiches for which an Apicius or a Lucullus might have craved. "Hunger-sauce" makes them appetising. The fresh elastic air is a sort of ethereal champagne. Our table-cloth of green is adorned with Nature's epergnes of wild-flowers, and a choir of feathered choristers are singing while we eat. The odour from our pipes now mixes with the resinous scent of the trees. The only sound

is that of birds and brook. Such experiences as these are the renewals of life. They are payments into the Bank of Health, leaving a balance in hand to meet the claims of Sickness when he steps in for his dividends. The country is the true physician. When Hercules could lift Antæus from the fields he was too strong for the giant; but when Antæus again touched the green earth, he was inspired with new vigour, and at once overcame his foe. The fields and woodlands freshen us for the fight against Hercules, as they did the mythical Antæus, son of Poseidon, who personified the regenerative power of water.

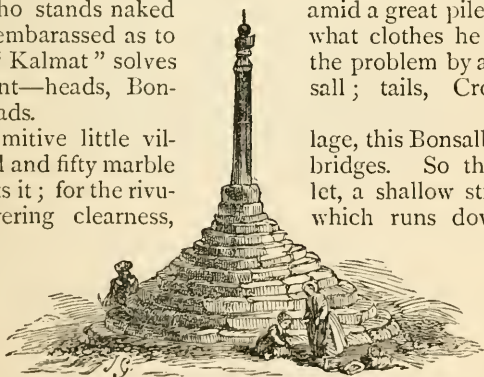
Sauntering down the valley again. There are dark gaps in the universal green that excite curiosity. They turn out to be ancient lead-workings. The adventurous "Kalmat" pilots the path into the cavernous gloom of one of these vaults. We light a newspaper torch, and stumble over the stones underfoot. Ugh! the water breaks from the cold walls on our left, and there is a channel of water on our right. The damp mine winds in its rocky course for a hundred yards or more. There is an unearthly sound of weird water rumbling into unknown depths in front. The newspaper flambeau is giving out, and we see the wet walls and each other's face in a spectral, shuddering, Rembrandt light. Suppose we should stumble on the victim of some secret murder in this deserted cave? Suppose—"Kalmat" positively proposes to ignite some letters he has found in his pocket; but I give ominous hints of "fire-damp" and "choke-damp." It is damp enough anyway; and so we turn back to the opening, which has diminished into the size of a threepenny-piece, and I inwardly resolve to introduce the scene in a blood-curdling chapter of my ghastly romance, the *Lost Lead-Miner: a Secret of the Hills*. (A fern-gatherer from Wirksworth was, by the way, lost in one of these lead-workings, and his absence for some weeks made a sensational paragraph in the newspapers.) The glad light again, with the sprightly stream rambling through a bed of furze and fern and foxgloves and flowers, until it is directed into a sort of continuous wooden trough, green with lichen and clinging weeds; but the glancing water despises the restraint, and wanders out of the artificial channel into mossy windings of its own. Half-a-mile of this

wild beauty, and then comes a cluster of cottages, colour-works, lime-kilns, and cupola furnaces. The trees wear a dimmer green. The birds are less blithe. The water of the rivulet is reddened, like a little Alma, as if with blood; but a little further on in its progress it becomes pure and pellucid again, like a soul that has been washed from sin, and forms itself into linked reservoirs, fed by tributary streams that trickle down the hill-side. There is an old weedy water-wheel by the roadside in an artist's setting of scenery, and presently comes what was once the sign of the "Pig of Lead," but is now called "The Via Gellia Inn," a hostelry that reminds us that we have reached Bonsall. Shall we pursue the rivulet to the cotton-mill romance of Cromford, and the comfortable tea at "The Greyhound," or desert it for the beauties of Bonsall? The difficulty of decision is a great one. Both paths have particular charms. We are in the position of the classic donkey, which perished between two bundles of equally dainty hay because it was such an ass as to be unable to determine which was the more toothsome; of De Quincey, who, having six hours to spend in London when passing through, spent them on the steps of the hotel vainly endeavouring to decide what to go and see; of the typical Englishman of the time in the old cartoon, who stands naked amidst a great pile of garments, embarrassed as to wear. "Kalmat" solves expedient—heads, Bonsall; tails, Cromford. It is heads.

A primitive little village, this Bonsall, with a hundred and fifty marble bridges. So the local joke puts it; for the rivulet, a shallow streamlet which runs down the

quivering clearness,

quivering clearness,



BONSALL CROSS.

side of the street, is crossed at the cottage doors by blocks of Derbyshire marble. Bonsall once boasted a market,

and a prim market-cross climbs up from a basement of ten or a dozen steps to proudly assert the fact. But the most picturesque object in this old-world village is the venerable church, which stands upon a rocky elevation and gives its benediction over the heads of the houses that are kneeling beneath. The landscape from this tranquil church-yard on the steep shoulder of the hill, with the westering sun throwing up his last lances of light from the Wirksworth hills, and the valley lying in a shining stillness, is one of the most pleasing visions of the day. Through the churchyard, where the trees are tapping, tapping at the windows of the old church; past the grand old yew, gloomy with age, for it has braved the storms and basked in the sunshine of centuries; and over the hills in the sunset light to Matlock, which bursts abruptly upon us below—a *coup de théâtre* of wooded hill, jutting crag, bright river, and scattered houses all steeped in the last glow of day. Down the steep side of Masson, over somebody's fences, to a late dinner at the Devonshire. A balcony at the hotel overhangs the Derwent, whose bosom is now jewelled with a trembling star. We are sitting outside in the twilight, with coffee and cigars, facing the old rook-haunted elms of the Lovers' Walks, with the river murmuring down below, and the evening breeze bringing the musical roar of the weir up the stream. It would be pleasant to linger; but the warm glow has died out of the sky, a mist is rising from the water, the wooded banks opposite are becoming black and shadowy. It is, moreover, train-time. So we leave for the station, carrying away with us choice vignettes photographed on the brain; so many pleasant dreams to be recalled when we are confronted by the crushing realities of life; poems to be read amid drear pages of prose; summer sunshine to be borrowed on dark wintry days with louring skies, brutal winds, and blinding fogs; green oases in the sandy Sahara of existence to cheer "our uneasy steps over the burning marl."

* * * * *

I am emptying the inkstand again. It is autumn now. The post brings me a letter from "Kalmat." He says: "I own with humility that I have been scandalously neglectful

of the charms of my own country ; for England, I am finding out, is the most beautiful place in the world. That Derbyshire of yours is a pocket-edition of Switzerland, a microcosm of all that is romantic in Nature. I can only pay penance for my past neglect by making another Pilgrimage to the Peak."





Chapter VI.

UP THE DERBYSHIRE WYE.

*I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles!*

* * * *

*I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling.*

TENNYSON.



It would be an interesting task for the archæological genius, which Carlyle calls "gentle dulness," to account for the identity in name of distinct English rivers running in diametrically opposed directions in different parts of the country. We have, for instance, a river Ouse which, after draining Yorkshire, flows into the Humber; there is Cowper's sluggish Ouse, rising in Northamptonshire and passing Ely and Huntingdon, Bedford and Buckingham, on its way to the Wash; while a third Ouse enters the English Channel. There is Wordsworth's Derwent in Lake-land which joins the Irish Sea, and the Derbyshire Derwent which feeds the Trent. Another Derwent flows into the sea near Scarborough; a fourth falls into the Yorkshire Ouse; while a fifth member of the family is to be found in Kent. The youthful student of home

geography is further puzzled by three Avons—the South Avon, the Bristol Avon, and Shakespeare's classic Avon at Stratford. And are there not two separate Wyes—the wooded water-valley of the West, and the sylvan stream of the Peak country?

The dual rivers are alike only in name. It is, perhaps, a piece of local vanity to describe the Derbyshire Wye as a river at all. It would be more correct to designate it a mountain stream; for, while its western rival is more than a hundred miles long, and broad and deep, and carries ships and steamers to and from the sea, the Peak streamlet is always narrow, never navigable, and so short that you may follow its serpentine wanderings, from its embouchure at Rowsley to its source at Buxton, in a summer day's walk. Perhaps the brevity of the stream enhances its beauty.

The little river is everywhere picturesque: at Buxton, where it rises in the pitchy obscurity of Poole's Cavern; at Ashford, where its beauty heightens the old-fashioned picture presented by the quiet, quaint village; at Haddon Hall, whose hoary battlements look down from their setting of green upon its winding waters; and at Rowsley, where it falls in love with the dusky Derwent, and the two are joined together in a happy alliance. But perhaps the most romantic passages of the Wye are found between Monsal Dale and Buxton, through a succession of valleys, contracted and secluded, where the chattering of the stream, and the bare, grim grandeur of the limestone cliffs, rising from banks of fern and foliage, afford poetical contrasts.

To enjoy the Derbyshire Wye we must not leave its side. Boating is out of the question, on account of the number of cascades and stranded rocks; and if we drive along the turnpike road we shall often lose sight of the river altogether, to say nothing of the delicious valleys which it silvers.

We start from the Peacock at Rowsley for our water-side pilgrimage in the Peak. We are early risers, but the sun was up before us, and is glorifying the landscape with a wealth of bright colour. Ripples of light and shadow are chasing each other on the hill-sides. The birds are singing a May madrigal in the trees which fringe the river, and the musical swirl of the current adds new notes to their melody. In the limpid Derwent there is a daugerreotype of the

quaint old bridge, complete gray stone for gray stone, arch for arch, lichen for lichen, while the greenery of the banks looks admiringly at itself in the liquid looking-glass.

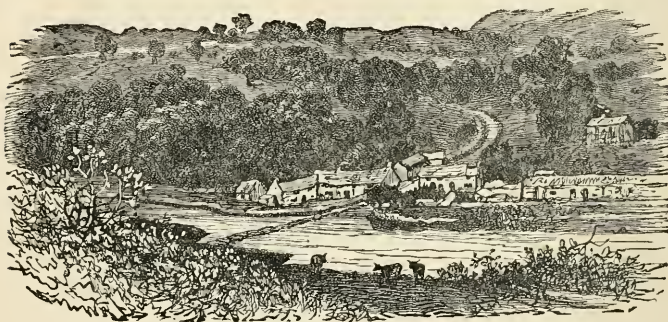
The Wye, after picking up several companions on the way, and tired with its wanderings, settles down at Rowsley into a quiet union with the peaceful Derwent; and it is at this junction of the two rivers that we commence to trace the tributary stream. The student of colour must be struck by the contrast the dual streams afford:—the Wye, clear from the limestone, and shining like a crystal, the Derwent topaz-coloured in the brown it has derived from the peatlands above Chatsworth. From Rowsley to Bakewell, it waters, with many a graceful curve and intricate winding, a verdurous valley which has been called the “Garden of the Peak.” At Fillyford Bridge, half-way between Rowsley and Bakewell, the Wye receives to its bosom the bright-eyed Bradford, which sparkling stream has just been enriched by the waters of the Lathkill, a little limpid river which gives a name to one of the most secluded and sylvan of Derbyshire dales. Meandering through flower-gemmed meadows, our stream murmurs under the wooded hill-side from which Haddon Hall looks down upon the valley. The baronial battlements are half-smothered in foliage, and the birds are singing their loudest, as if to awaken the hoary old towers to fresh life. A dragon-fly floats through the air, a glimmer of gauzy light; and a kingfisher, “a feathered fragment of the rainbow,” contemplates his own burnished breast of sapphire and gold in the flowing mirror. The dull gray of the castle walls, mixed up with the bright tender green of the trees, with the olive-hued river babbling at the foot of the feudal pile, forms a picture that lingers in the memory like a delicious dream.

It would be a prolonged stroll to follow each winding of the Wye throughout its serpentine course from Haddon to Bakewell. The stream turns aside to coquette with the flowers on either bank. It chatters with them; it caresses them; and then, mindful that it must be off on its business, bounds away with a rush, to make, anon, a further dalliance. In its changeful, capricious course, it is far different to those stately streams that move slowly in broad, level, calm lines through the monotonous meads. But while we need not

follow each sinuous turn of the Wye in walking through the meadows to Bakewell, we encounter one of its curves every few steps, and at every point some fine old thorn, or alder, sways soothingly over the water, seeking its refreshment. At Bakewell, a pleasant half-hour is passed in visiting the historic church, and chatting about trout with the fishermen who hang over the antique bridge, where the Wye is wide and river-like, until it looses itself in the emerald meadows beyond. And some of the tales that the anglers tell of the Bakewell trout must not be distrusted. In the May of 1881, I happened to see a trout that had been caught in the Wye under circumstances that are worth recalling. An angler's attention was aroused by a large fish rising to the surface and then sinking with something in its mouth, which it seemed unable to swallow. After some difficulty, a landing net was got underneath it and the fish landed, when it proved to be an immense trout. The size of this altogether exceptional fish was twenty-six inches in length and sixteen inches in girth. Its weight was $8\frac{3}{4}$ pounds. The fish was photographed and sent to the Duke of Rutland, as the largest trout ever taken from the Wye. He was well known to anglers was this trout, but no bait was ever able to "fetch" him. He made sport of the sportsman. Guess how he came by his death? Somebody had been drowning blind puppies, and the trout choked himself in trying to swallow one. I have heard of trout eating full grown frogs with the relish of a French gourmand; but for freshwater fish to resemble Chinamen and go in for "dogee, dogee," is a new departure.

Sauntering by the banks of the stream again—artificial at Lumsford Mills, lake-like at Ashford Hall, tranquil at Ashford, with its sunny cottages and shady trees—at Monsal Dale we have the most enchanting section of the stream. We come suddenly upon Edgestone Head, and the abruptness of the view below stuns the imagination. Far away below stretches the deep valley, with the Wye stealing under coloured cliffs, and making a graceful curvature under the railway viaduct to wind round the base of the great wooded mass of Fin Cop. It is the scenery of a fairy dream; more sylvan than stern; more pretty than awe-inspiring; associated with smiling beauty sooner than frowning grandeur. The

river is so tranquil in its enchantment ; the blue smoke from a farm-house in the valley curls up the grassy slopes like incense ; the stream ripples between the knees of cattle standing in the cool water ; the gray stepping-stones and a rustic bridge are situated just where an artist would have placed them ; there is a subdued grace in the bold features of the circling hills. The wooded ravine, the higher moorland, the jutting cliff, are the mere outlines of a picture whose colouring and gradation only the Divine Academician could fill in. The Dale is a dream of scenery. A person of the most prosaic temperament might be challenged to



MONSAL DALE.

pass along this moorland shelf at Edgestone Head without involuntarily pausing to take a mental photograph of the romantic scene.

There are æsthetic people who would urge that the Midland Railway, tunnelling the romantic rocks and spanning the valley with viaducts, gives a harsh note to Nature's harmonic arrangement. Mr. Ruskin directs his Jove-like jeremiads against the Midland intrusion. He wrote in *Fors Clavigera*—"That valley where you might expect to catch the sight of Pan, Apollo, and the Muses, is now desecrated in order that a Buxton fool may be able to find himself in Bakewell at the end of twelve minutes, and *vice versa*." But to other people, who can see sentiment in science, the railway is regarded more as a glory than a grievance. It makes these lonely valleys accessible, and it is a notable victory of

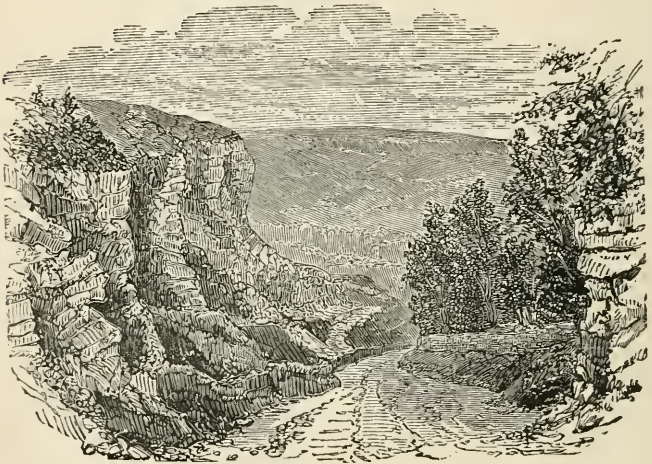
man over the omnipotent forces of Nature. What scenic beauty people have lost by the Midland line perforating the precipices of the Peak, has been repaid in double compound interest by the facilities that have been given of becoming familiar with what was previously comparatively unknown and inaccessible; while the marvellous and exciting triumphs of engineering genius have been added to the old wonders of nature. If it had not been for the railway, the beauties of North Derbyshire would have been unknown to thousands of people confined in unlovely towns of toil; and even Mr. Ruskin would surely not deny them a vision of Arcady to take back in pleasant memory to their brick-and-mortar bondage. As Lord Houghton pleads:

And thou, the Patriarch of these beauteous ways,
Canst never grudge that gloomy streets send out
The crowded sons of labour, care, and doubt,
To read these scenes by light of thine own lays.

Monsal Dale leads us to Cressbrook Dale, where the wild little Cressbrook joins the Wye. Here are some extensive cotton mills, and Swiss-like workmen's cottages, smothered in foliage, which make a bold grouping of the wooded hill-side. Between Litton Mills and Cressbrook, one of the least-known and loveliest portions of the river runs between limestone cliffs and steep wood-covered hills; and a momentary glimpse is all that is got of the fairy-like scene whilst passing the short space between the two tunnels, which here connect the railway between Monsal Dale and Litton Dale. This secluded part of the Wye (for there is no river-path here), locked in by sheer precipices and impending woods, has been fitly named *Water-cum-jolie*, and nothing more beautiful could be imagined than the combination of wood, water, and rock, curving in the shape of the letter S. Bull Tor and Eagle Tor look down upon the Wye, whose waters are here gathered in a small loch. Litton Mill intervenes, and here we make a detour for Tideswell, locally pronounced "Tidser." Its ebbing and flowing well, once one of the guide-book wonders of the Peak, no longer ebbs and flows. But the old church, with its historic monuments, repays a visit. It is called the Cathedral of the Peak. Here the ancestors of Lord Lytton lie buried—Sir Robert Litton and his wife Isabel (1483). The family derives its

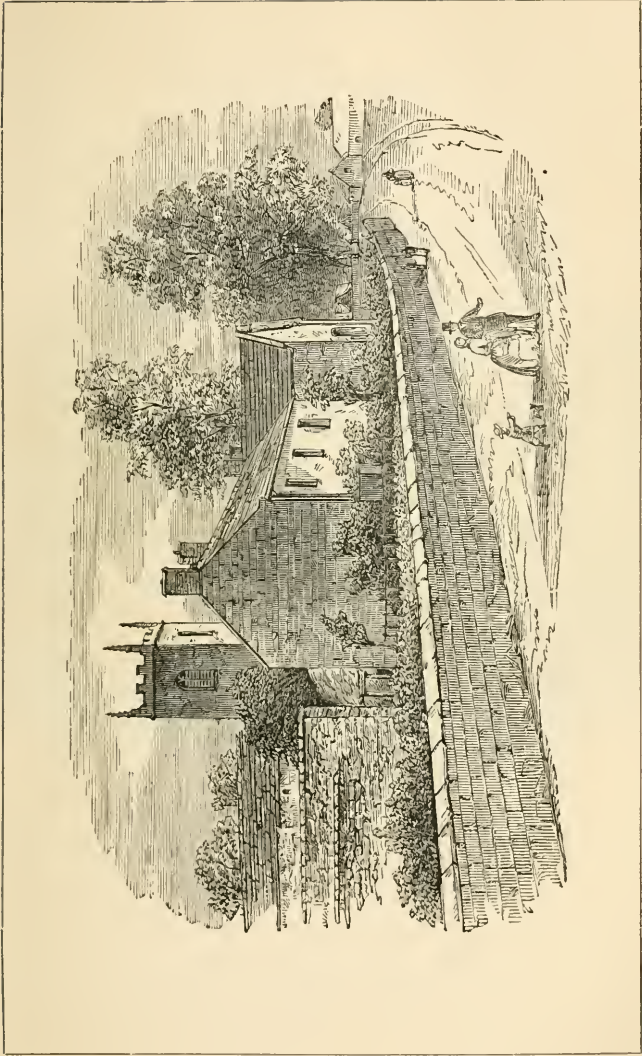
name from the Litton we have just left. There is a brass that calls for study of Bishop Pursglove, Suffragan-Bishop of Hull, and founder of Tideswell Grammar School, together with other fine monuments.

Lunch at Tideswell, at an hotel which is next door to the church, and then we are tempted to stroll on to Eyam. This primitive hamlet, three miles 'from anywhere, is one of the most interesting places in the Peak. The railway invades



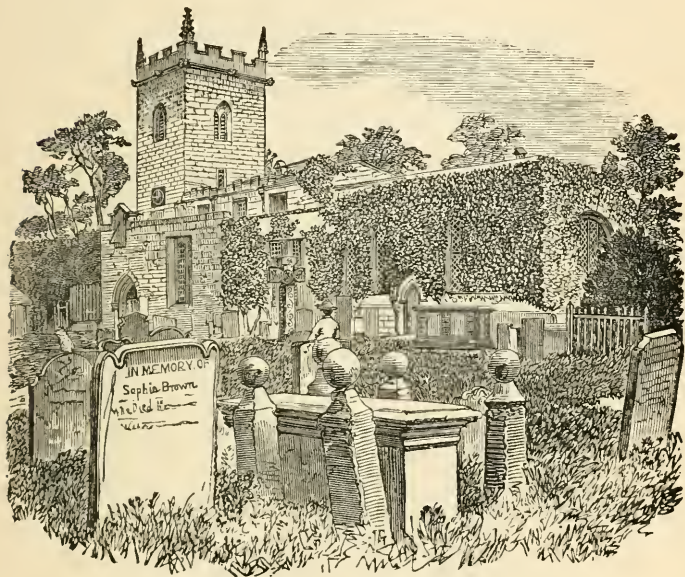
EYAM DALE.

not its solitude. It is outside the tourist track. Cheap-trippers vulgarise not its valleys. The village itself is a classic spot. Thomas Seward, poet, playwright, and theologian, was the rector. At the parsonage his daughter Anna, the novelist, whose *Letters* were edited by Sir Walter Scott, lived her literary life. It was in the dreamy repose of this odd, old-world district that Peter Cunningham penned his poems; that Richard Furness cherished his strange genius; that William Wood revelled in historic lore. It is not, however, to these associations that Eyam owes her fame, but to an event more pensive in its pathos than poet ever imagined. The plague of 1665 found its way from London to this little



EYAM, LOOKING EAST, SHEWING THE HOUSE WHERE THE PLAGUE BROKE OUT.

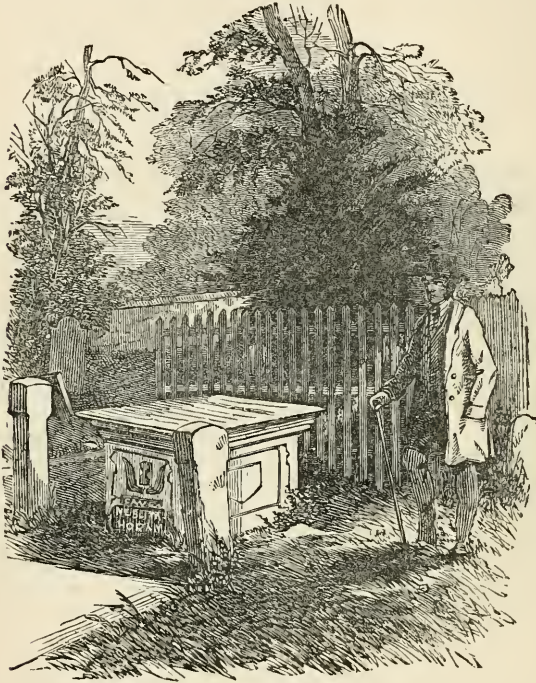
village hidden among the hills. Out of a population of 350, the disease swept away 259 in a space of seven months. The Valley of Poppies became the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The Destroying Angel passed from house to house, from farmstead to cottage; and, to quote Mr. Bright's memorable metaphor, you might have almost heard "the



EYAM CHURCH.

beating of his wings;" while "there was no one, as when the first-born was slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two sideposts of the doors, that he might spare and pass on." The Angel of the Plague studied neither class nor caste; regarded neither age nor condition. He selected not his victims. He spared no home. He struck down the sturdy yeoman in his strength, and snatched the first-born from its mother's breast. He reaped alike "the bearded grain," and "the flowers that grew between." Rachel wept for her children, and refused to be comforted.

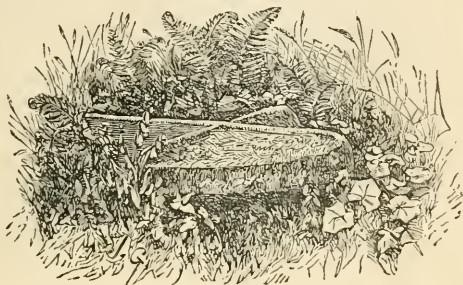
The devout, turning over the pages of the Book of Consolation, found it indeed difficult to believe that "God is Love." Come into the churchyard, thick with the graves of those who sickened of the plague, and I will tell you how



CATHERINE MOMPESSEON'S TOMB.

the infection was introduced into Eyam by a box from London, containing clothes and tailor's patterns; how the fatal plague-spot appeared first of all upon the journeyman, Vicars, who opened that destruction-dealing chest; how whole families were swept away; how about ninety years afterwards some clothing was accidentally exhumed by a party of workmen, who fell victims to a putrid fever, which killed three of them, besides several other persons

in the village. Here is the grave of Mrs. Mompesson, the wife of the peerless pastor who remained with his people in the midst of the pestilence, preventing the calamity from extending to neighbouring hamlets. She shared with him the scenes of suffering and death, until the virulent malady snatched her heroic presence from his side. He lived through the terrible trial. The runic cross close by, with its carved angels and interlaced knot-work, is the finest of its kind in England. The stream yonder, laughing and leaping in the sunshine, as it runs away from the restraints of its moorland home, is the self-same rivu-



MOMPESSEON'S WELL, EYAM.

let which supplied the reservoirs placed by Mompesson to receive and purify the money deposited in exchange for provisions left on the boundary line of communication between the outside world and the poor plague-stricken community. That graceful mountain glen leading to Middleton Dale is where the same man of God gathered, during that time of trial, his parishioners Sunday after Sunday, and often on weekdays, to celebrate the simple services of the church, and to point their aspirations to that Promised Land where there shall be no more sickness, and parting shall be unknown. The rude portal of the perforated rock called Cucklett Church is the hallowed spot of Mompesson's ministrations during the worst period of the plague. Eyam is a small spot into which to concentrate so much heroism, but :

“There are homesteads which have witness'd deeds
The battle-fields, with all their banner'd pomp,
Have little to compare with. Life's great play
May, so it have an actor great enough,
Be well performed upon a humble stage.”

The “Queen of the Peak,” as Eyam has been called, is

surrounded by pleasant uplands, wild dells, and lovely landscapes—saddened, it may be, by the memory of a “mighty



“CUCKLETT CHURCH,” EYAM.

woe”—where the lover of Nature may wander unmolested. Suffering has sanctified the neighbourhood, and whether we



RILEY GRAVES, EYAM.

visit the lone tomb of Humphrey Merrill, or those of the Talbots and the Hancock family on the sunny hill-side at

Riley, while lost in admiration of the wide-spread landscape, we cannot but remember, with still greater admiration, the heroic victims who sleep at our feet,—the brave men and women who were induced to give up all thought of flight from their plague-stricken homes, so that the contagion might not be spread over the whole country.

Back again to Tideswell, where a conveyance is leaving for Miller's Dale station. At Wormhill are some springs, which repeat the phenomenon presented by the waters of the Spanish river, Guadalquivir, of losing themselves in the ground and suddenly re-appearing some distance off. These "Water-Swallows," as they are locally called, are, however, common in the Peak. The most notable instance is the river Manifold, which emerges from a cavity in the limestone cliff at Ilam, after having pursued an underground course from just below Wetton Mill, a journey of about five miles.

By the side of the Wye again. The railway viaduct which crosses the deep chasm of river and road at the Miller's Dale railway station, is an engineering triumph, and diverts our attention from the hill-side which limestone companies are disfiguring by their quarrying operations. The solitude of the valley is, however, soon entered upon. Miller's Dale has not the Arcadian softness that characterizes its neighbour Monsal. It is wild and savage, and occasionally gruesome in its aspects. The river tumbles in a succession of water-falls. Limestone crags rise from the water's edge, their sternness scarcely softened by the luxuriant foliage that smiles at their feet. The path is rough with stones. There is no sound save the brawl of the river. One seems to commune alone with Nature in her own secret solitude.

This part of the river, some years ago, was the scene of a fatal poaching affray between Mr. Bagshaw, of Wormhill Hall, the owner of the land in the vicinity, his keepers, and a number of poachers. The most furious part of the fight took place in the river, where Mr. Bagshaw was killed. The lawless band of poachers were brought to justice; but, through a legal flaw, they were acquitted at the trial. One of them, "Big Ben," is described as "a man not soon to be forgotten."

The Wye here is haunted by fly-fishermen. No more picturesque spot than this wild dell could be chosen by an

Izaak Walton or a Charles Cotton for a day's sport ; for, as quaint old Burton puts it, "if so be the angler catch no fish, yet he hath a wholesome walk to the river side, pleasant shade by the sweet silver stream ; he hath good air, and sweet smells of flowers ; he hears the melodious harmony of birds, he sees many water-fowl with their brood, which he thinketh better than the noise of hounds, or blast of horns, and all the sport that they can make."

Some of the "Compleat Anglers" are experts, who whip the water with skilful ease ; others, we notice, are the most awkward embryos in the craft, with brand-new rods and tackle, and new creels exasperatingly empty, which yesterday, no doubt, were in the windows of Buxton shop-keepers. Very musical is the river ; exhilarating here with its wild motion, soothing there with its repose and soft cadences ; demonstrative as it bounds, foam-flecked, past great boulders of lichen-stained rock ; dreamy as it pauses for breath in the deeper pools, where it is arched by bending foliage, and kissed by loving greenery, and where, especially in the morning and evening lights, tree and tor become two-fold, as their green and gray beauty is repeated in the clear mirror, and there is a little world of leaf and rock above and its perfect copy below. Under jutting rocks, capped with trees, and past mossy dells, silvered with tiny tributary streams, the Wye wimples on its way, or sweeps in curves where the foam-bells swim round and round in joyful procession.

At Chee Tor the impressive wildness of the scenery reaches the highest point of romantic grandeur. The Tor is a bold promontory of rock, convex in shape, and rising sheer from the edge of the river, an impending precipice. A pendent tree—ash or hazel—here and there mixes its green with the pale gray of the lifeless limestone. Rooks and daws and jays hold a clamorous convocation in the rents of the rock above. The river is confined in a narrow strait, and the water rushes with an angry swirl through the rocky channel to the broader and more peaceful passage beyond, where the darting shadows of trout make animate the bottom of the river. A corresponding bastion of limestone, half hidden by hanging foliage, rises opposite the giant Chee, in the form of a crescent, which faithfully responds in size and shape and strata to the projecting Tor, from which, in some

prehistoric revolution, it must have been severed. There is a path, not without peril, over the river, which is rushing with foamy agitation through the rocky abyss beneath. Chee Tor is shut in in a dale of its own. You are brought in close communion with the solemn wall of rock : for solemn it is with its awful sense of a perpetual presence, contrasted with ephemeral human existence. That silent limestone wall does not count time by heart-throbs. Its minutes are centuries. It has seen the past generations. It stood immutable and austere before

“ The glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome ; ”

and it will regard the far-off future with the same stony unconcern as it looks upon us to-day. After this pass is left behind, the dale again widens, and the rocks are less bare. We tread knee-deep in ferns to Blackwell Mill. Here the lines diverge to Buxton and to Manchester, and the sudden scream of the Midland express, with the flash of a Pullman car, on the lofty viaduct above, reminds us how narrow is the frontier line between fact and fancy, how thin the partition between Pan and Apollo and Naiads and water-nymphs, and the busy world of profit and loss and fever-fret. The Dale here expands, giving way to sloping hills of an open and wild character, that impart the charm of variety to the scenery. The path now crosses the river over a wooden bridge of primitive planking, and then leads through a plantation of firs and pines and birches to the foot of Topley Pike, where the high road to Buxton is reached. River and road and railway now run together the entire distance.

Along the Buxton turnpike. Here is Topley Pike. The character of the great hill is being traduced by limestone workers, who evidently regard the Peak district with the utilitarian eye of Thomas Fuller, who, in his *British Worthies*, speaks of North Derbyshire as “poor above and rich beneath the ground.” The walk to Buxton is one of surpassing beauty. Rock, river, and foliage are picturesquely interspersed, and high hills swell above the hanging woods.

The promontory of Pig Tor presently comes, a bold feature in the landscape. It possesses those strong contrasts of grim gray rock and smiling green vegetation which are

the leading characteristic of Derbyshire rock scenery. Then a contraction in the valley brings the beauties of Ashwood Dale, where castellated limestone cliffs, trellised with green, much like the Hag Tors at Matlock, hang over railway, river, and road. That opening in the rocks to the left is the Lovers' Leap, exactly a mile from Buxton. It is a yawning chasm between two tall precipices. According to a local legend, it was leapt in safety by the heroic horse bearing two runaway lovers, whose pursuers paused at the ugly rift, and returned to Buxton defeated. But the story must be accepted *cum grano salis*. Neither modern lovers, nor the horse-flesh of our degenerate days, are equal to such Curtius-like enterprises, and the gorge is too wide for such a phenomenal feat to be even remotely possible. The romantic title of "Lovers' Leap" is applied to other crevices than this. There is a "Lover's Leap" at Middleton; and is there not a "Lover's Leap" at the classic precipice of Leucate, where Sappho, unable to bear the neglect of Phaon, threw herself into the sea and extinguished her life and her love? The opening in the rocks, however, gives access to an exquisite glen, called Sherbrook Dell, a "Fern Paradise," with a waterfall that is *not* "turned on," and rocks of remarkable beauty. Then the Duke's Drive is entered upon, and behold! Buxton, the "Queen of the Peak," crowned with a chaplet of hills.

At Buxton art has tampered with the natural wanderings of the Wye. The stream is laid out in set-pieces, which look like Euclid's elements worked out in water, and has been diverted by ornamental gardeners to meander through muddy mazes, and to make artificial waterfalls. Outside the gardens, and about a mile from the town, is the source of the Wye. The wilful river leaps into life at the foot of a hill leading to Poole's Hole, a cavern which is a curiosity even in a county of such wonders. The Wye is born inside the wonderful cavern, and the voice of the infant stream may be heard fretting in the darkness for life and liberty, crying to enter the wide world it is about to beautify. Our tramp has rendered our appetite too ravenous to allow us to inspect the stalactites and stalagmites, and grotesque geological formations of Poole's Hole to-day. It is a pleasure postponed. So hie we back to Buxton. The hotels have

improved in the beautiful spa since the seventeenth century, when, according to Macaulay, "the gentry of Derbyshire and the neighbouring counties repaired to Buxton, where they were crowded into low wooden sheds, and regaled with oatcake, and with a viand which the hosts called mutton, but which the guests strongly suspected to be dog." There is something better than disguised dog at the "Old Hall" to-day, and the dinner-bell is now ringing.



POOLE'S HOLE.



Chapter VII.

UP THE VALLEY OF THE GOYT.

*Hie to haunts right seldom seen,
Lovely, lonesome, cool, and green.*

SCOTT.

T all came about through Somebody—a sweet symphony in seal-skin—losing a skate-strap. The discovery of the loss—as paradoxical an expression by the way, as the “If I am found, then I am lost!” ejaculation of the hunted fugitive in the melo-drama—was made when we were approaching the reservoir that supplies the engine-house on the High Peak Railway at Bunsal Cob. We had walked from Buxton along the Manchester Road—a distance of three miles—with the intention of cutting our initials on the ice.

“Have you ever seen the Goyt Valley in the depth of winter?” asked this bonny lithe maiden, the keen air heightening the beauty of her face with an unwonted colour.

“I have not even seen the Valley in summer,” I was fain to confess, ashamed of my own ignorance.

“Then you shall make its acquaintance this afternoon,” she said with a matronly air of decision. “It is an old and favourite friend of mine, and if you don’t thank me for giving you an introduction, I will ——” But no matter. The threat was an idle one, and we chatted away merrily.

We did'nt say anything clever, or poetical, or æsthetic ; we posed in no attitudes of romantic admiration ; and I am apprehensive that if our careless talk came to be coldly analysed it would be proved great rubbish. But the happiness of life, my friend, is not made up of heroics. It consists largely of little things ; it is composed of trifles. And that afternoon we were both as happy as I daresay we ever shall be in this mundane sphere. But to return to that bright time.

It is a beautiful day at the end of November. That misanthropical month, so associated with drizzle and fog, has at Buxton redeemed its bad character by giving us a bright blue sky, and a thin clear crisp air that must be very trying to the able-bodied poor, since it trebles one's appetite, and gives the *genus homo* a whole series of anti-dyspeptic stomachs. Why Buxton is not replete with visitors is to me one of those puzzling phenomena which, in the phrase of my Lord Dundreary, "no fellah can understand." Buxton in mid-winter is every whit as charming as Buxton in the height of the summer season. At a time when London and Manchester are choking with fogs that might be blasted with dynamite,—Buxton—a thousand feet above the mud and mist—has an elastic, lucent air that braces the nerves ; and when the perverse east wind is making everybody peevish, the residents of this Derbyshire Spa are barricaded at every approach by barriers of determined hills from the assaults of the bronchitis-dealing blast ; while the scenery of the Peak in winter has charms of which few people have any conception. For that matter, nature is as beautiful in her winter appearance as in her summer aspect. It seems so to my eyes, and Somebody emphasizes my opinion with her endorsement. Of course the charm is a different one. It is as distinct in colouring and contour as the sunny light diaphanous muslin of Somebody in July, with bright flowers jewelling bosom and hat, is from the soft dark furs of that vivacious young lady in January. But there is a charm, nevertheless, just as there is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars. The picturesque side of winter has been neglected by painters. They represent Nature in Art only as seen six months out of the twelve. Then out-door landscape painting is a more

luxurious occupation. In literary description the same one-sided practice largely prevails. Somebody protests that nearly all the pen-pictures of Derbyshire scenery which she has read have commenced: "It was a bright June morning;" or, "The time was the merrie month of May;" or, "The fair scene lay in the languid sunshine of sultry July."

"As if," she said, "there was no beauty about hills and valleys, no attraction in the moorland steppes, no grandeur in the tempestuous sunsets and twilights and cloud shadows of winter. As if men were so many dormice, and hibernated through the artistic winter months, when there is a sharpness of outline and a tenderness of colour on the hills, and a fresh elasticity in the air, which are lost in the heat and haze of summer."

All this she argued with an earnestness that became really eloquent by its manner, by the witching animation of eye and the musical inflexion of voice.

And yet Buxton is empty. The stray visitor monopolizes the whole of the light, buoyant air of the place. Standing in the shadow of the Crescent, he is as much alone as if he were in the vast solitudes of Sahara, and he feels like a second-hand Marius, contemplating the desolation of a fashionable Carthage. The proprietors of the hotels are dining with each other to make up a table for dinner. They would, I verily believe, bribe a visitor just now for the curiosity of his patronage, unless in the process of treaty, the said visitor shared the fate of Actæon, and had his *disjecta membra* strewn along the Colonnade by competitive waiters tearing him in pieces in jealous rivalry. Some day, some celebrated person will suddenly discover what a delightful winter residence Buxton really is, just as Lord Brougham made Cannes by believing that that place agreed with him. Then it will become fashionable to repair to Buxton from October to March, and lodgings will be at a premium.

Me! Where, and oh where, have I left the reader during the digression? Pardon the long aside. Here we are regarding the skaters on the little lonely tarn among the moors, and picturesque enough is the scene. The atmosphere has the rich softness of a Claude landscape. There

is such a golden mellowness in the November sunshine that the afternoon seems to swim under the sky; across the ice, virgin white, save where some frozen-out labourers have swept broad black rings for skating, the western sun, a ruddy copper shield, shines with a red horizontal light across wild tracts of hilly moors, with just a suggestion of snow relieving their sombre shade. There are great hollows in the moors, and there is an interesecting space between the hills which tells of a deep valley. Not a tree. Not a house. The only other object in the landscape, from the point whence our mental camara now focuses it, is the tall chimney of the solitary engine-house of the High Peak Railway, a mineral line whose rails wind round miraculous curves and up extravagant gradients through Undiscovered Derbyshire, from Whatstandwell to Whaley Bridge. But the foreground of the picture is filled with a merry-moving steel-shod multitude, mostly Buxton residents, all mixed up in kaleidoscopic combinations, the patches of cardinal about the hats and throats of the girls, giving just the warm tints which a painter would distribute in the grouping. The captivating swing of that tall lissom lass now swiftly curving yonder, with the sun glancing on the blades of her skates, is one of the most graceful sights possible; for a handsome English maiden skating makes a really fine picture, as stately as the pose of a swan, or the movement of a yacht. Somebody is delighted with two bright-eyed girlettes—vignettes in black velvet and clocked stockings—who are being taken in tow across the ice by a big St. Bernard dog, and it would be difficult to say which most enjoys the fun: the harnessed animal or the two bonnie weans. That is their brother learning to strike out, and tumbling down very often. But, bless you, he never seems satisfied with the frequency of his falls, and is adding to their number, when Somebody, nudging my elbow, says:

“We are not stationary engines, and I must really remind you that our exploration will involve some walking.”

Without being tediously topographical, I may remark that the valley of the Goyt is approached from Bunsal by a road called Goyt's Lanc. A rough declivitous road, more like the dry bed of a bygone mountain torrent, than the carriage way it claims to represent. Heath, cranberry, bilberry, and

whortleberry infringe on either side, and sometimes dispute the possession of the road with the traveller altogether. The bilberry leaves are a vivid green among the prevailing neutral tints.

Presently comes a glimpse of firs and larches, pine and spruce, on the bank rising out of the valley, and now behold ! there is Goyt's Bridge : a wooded hollow amid the meeting of waters. There is a gray farmhouse, and here and there the blue film rises from a cottage mixed up in dark patches of pine and fir. A solitary arch of lichened stone spans the little voiceful river, which rising from the slopes of Axe Edge—the great watershed of the Peak District—separates Cheshire and Derbyshire, even as the Dove and the Dane, running in different directions, divide Derbyshire and Staffordshire, and flowing in a deep channel by New Mills is robbed of its sweet music by money-making manufacturers, who blacken its pure, transparent life, until sick, and sluggish, and impure, it crawls feebly into the Mersey near Stockport.

“Why”—asks Somebody in an indignant and injured manner—“why do we hold guiltless the greedy gold-grasping men who poison our beautiful streamlets? For private gain they disfigure the very face of God Himself, and stifle the voice of His Spirit.”

I must talk seriously to Somebody about Political Economy.

At Goyt's Bridge, the road to the right leads to Errwood Hall, to which Somebody is wishful to take her charge another day. Our present path is that to the left, and follows up the river as it runs away from its mountain home. The spot is musical with the meeting of waters. A gray stone arch spans a tinkling tributary; there is an old cottage; with an interior like a bit of Teniers'; together with a picturesque blending of swift water, projecting rock, and hanging tree, that might be a scene specially “set” by Nature for a stage-picture.

“There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet,
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet;
Oh! the last rays of feeling and life must depart,
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart.”

So carols Somebody, who has already forgotten all about the

millocracy of New Mills and Stockport. For we are now in the deep cañon, pursuing a narrow path that rises and falls and skirts small precipices. And which of us will first forget that sudden vision of a long vista of valley, seen under a cold lemon sky, with the eager rushing river breaking over a tumult of mossy boulders in a thousand white waterfalls, and here and there catching a tinge of red from the frosty sun? At the bank-sides, where the current is not swift, the water is frozen, and little tributary water-threads have a surface of thin clear ice under which we see the water moving like quicksilver. There are icicles on the gray lichened rocks, and crystals of snow shine on the roadway, which winds high above the torrent. The dark-limbed trees are brought out in sharp relief by the white rime of hoar-frost, feathery, fantastic, lace-like; and the needles of the firs are coated with shining crystals. But the light covering of rime and snow cannot hide the carpet of faded oak, and copper beech, and long Spanish chestnut leaves, which lie ankle deep in heaps of red and brown and yellow. There is scarcely any foliage left on those trees, but on either bank soldierly rows of dark green fir and pine and larch are drawn up in line to salute the river as it passes in hasty review. On the hazel are threads of scarlet; a few red haws remain on the hawthorn; and there is the plum-like bloom of the black sloe. But for the ceaseless song of the river—now soft and tender in a minor key, like a lover's entreating whisper; now a sweet lullaby, with a note of sadness in it, sung to the silent and listening rocks, as the water reposes in contemplative pools that mirror bits of sky; then a gay careless shout, a loud defiant laugh, as it wakens from its reflective mood and dashes in restless madcap race heedlessly past lichened rocks and stretched-out arms of compassionate trees that try to stop its flight;—but for this voiceful water, I say, absolute silence would reign in the valley. Frost and snow hold Nature in quiet restraint. We have seen, it is true, the robin and the tom-tit; once there has come the scep-scep of a snipe, rising in zig-zag flight, with breast as brown as the fallen chestnut leaves; once the missel-thrush has shown his spotted chest; once we have caught sight of the golden bill of the blackbird. There are the footprints of rabbits and hares; we hear the hollow note of

the wood-pigeon ; and Somebody says that she has seen the heron sitting watchful and weird by the water when the gloom has been gathering in this wild solitude.

As we pass up the valley the walk increases in its lonely beauty. At Goyt's Clough, where a torrent roars across the path, the rocky sandstone sides of the stream break suddenly into moorland escarpments, and these stretch into higher expanses of moorland, that rise and fall until their far-off waves meet the purple line of the horizon. Geological authority tells us that these ridges are the result of the outcrop of a sandstone bed ; while the steep-sided valley below is hollowed out in shale ; and each of these bands of grit and shale has its own place in the series. And now the aspect of the valley is altered. The trees cease, the bronzed moors rise precipitously from the stony bed of the stream, and encompass it on either hand. Presently, to our right, are one or two houses that seem to make the solitude all the more lonely. The sun has insensibly gone down, and there is a metallic twilight. The glimmer of a candle shines in one of the ghostly cottage windows. Close by is an old gritstone quarry, which has a story that belongs to the romance of trade. It was first worked by the originator of parcel-vans, the Pickford whose name is as familiar to us as Her Majesty's face on pence and postage stamps. That was in the days of last century. The flagstones which paved the Regent-street of those days were hewn from this quarry. They were carted all the way to London, *via* Leek. Brindley had not then developed his water-highways, and George Stephenson, in his pitman's clothes, was learning to read and write for fourpence a week at a night-school. But canals came to be made, and railways were constructed, and it became no longer profitable to pave Piccadilly from the Peak. The supply of stone in this quarry is by no means exhausted, but the cost of carriage renders its working no longer profitable. Time, which deals gently with most wounds, has healed the scars the quarrymen of a past generation inflicted on the cliff, and with lichen and ivy, fern and foliage and flowers, has lovingly repaired the ruin caused years ago.

And now we leave the river-side and strike across the moors. We are alone on the top of the world. The moon

looks down upon us with pale steadfast gaze; the stars regard us with a thousand eyes. The road shows wan in the wide space of encompassing moor. A far-off group of gloomy pines stand ghost-like in the white light. The only sound is caused by the plaintive cry of that bird of triple name—lapwing, peewit, plover. Once, too, the curlew—"the Whaup" of William Black's *Daughter of Heth*—rises with its sharp wings in swift flight, with a shrill call with a roll in it, just like a pea-whistle. Far away in front is a yellow light from a solitary little farmhouse which has made a scanty clearing in the moor. Somebody is strangely silent. The cold refining light of the moon touches her face with a saintly radiance. And at last when she speaks there is an unwonted tremor in the soft voice. She says:—"I sometimes think that to be in the middle of a moor under the stars is to experience more spiritual feeling than is induced in the solemnest cathedral or by the most earnest sermon."

It appears that she knows the people at the house whose yellow window, in the broad space of mysterious moor, shows like a lighthouse gleam in mid-ocean. An old woman, with a white mob-cap—something like what the fashionable ladies of æsthetic South Kensington are reviving to-day—sits in the ingle-nook smoking a clay pipe of marvellous colouring. There is a smell of peat about the fire; the only pictures on the walls are in the shape of substantial sides of bacon; there is a cheese-knife on the table fashioned out of the old broad-sword of a cavalier. The ancient dame is crooning alone, "John"—the sharer of her years—"has gone to Booxton to pay th' rent to th' Duke," and she is fretful that he will be "coming whom full up wi' yell which'll do his rheumatics a power o' harm." And she puffs away silently at the consoling pipe. And Somebody, with a tender consideration for the weaknesses of old people, quietly prompts me to leave the whole contents of my own pouch to solace the old lady's hours. It is one of the aged dame's boasts that she has never slept out of that house for over fifty years. Half-a-century spent in vegetation! To the dwellers in busy towns, who crowd so much experience and so many sensations into each day, these isolated hill-people do not seem to live. The number of their days is longer

than ours, and the days are longer, but one day is so much like another, that their existence is only a monotonous routine of food and sleep, a slow process of going to the grave. They do not really feel the pulse of life.

“They from to-day and from to-night
Expected nothing more
Than yesterday and yester night
Had proffered them before.”

And yet, perhaps, these simple, dull, quiet people are happier in their lives than we, with our daily discontent.

The moon shines on the waves of moorland in a long path of white light, just as it does on the sea, making, as it seems, a silver road upon which you might walk up to the entrance of Heaven. But what is that strange object in front of us standing out in sharp silhouette between moon and stars? It is a man, but his steps over the rough uneven way are very erratic. He is walking in figures of eight. The old lady in the lonely farm yonder was quite right in her sorrowful apprehensions. It is “John,” and he is, indeed, “full up wî’ yell.” He is made more grotesque by a number of parcels—for he has been shopping—which, he being unable to carry, are tied all over his body. We console with him about his rheumatics; and his efforts to balance himself in a dignified perpendicular position of attention are as broadly comic as a farce. “Aw munna stop and talk or aw shall set,” he says at last, and the honest old man stumbles on, paying his attentions to both sides of the road.

The path across the moor brings us on to the Macclesfield road just above Burbage, where we are a mile from Buxton, whose gas lamps in the hollow strike strange to eyes which have grown accustomed to the sharp lights and dark shadows of the moors. When we get back to the town, we have walked altogether about eight or nine miles. The exercise and the air have given us appetites that are Homeric in their greatness, and the old-fashioned knife-and-fork tea in the snugly-curtained room, with its glowing fire and wax candles, is not the least acceptable sensation of the day.

And afterwards Somebody is not too tired for music. And she has, perhaps, a lingering vision in her memory of that deep, still, beautiful, secluded valley of the afternoon,

where a dozen rivulets and rills join their young voices in a perpetual hymn, which only the bending trees and the grand old hills are privileged to hear, when she sings :

“Sweet vale of Avoca ! how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade, with the friends I love best,
Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should cease,
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace.”





Chapter VIII.

DOWN THE VALLEY OF THE GOYT :

A SPRING SKETCH.

*Oh, mind ye, love, how oft we left
The deavin' dainsome toun
To wander by the green burn-side,
And hear its water croon ?
The simmer leaves hung ower our heads,
The flowers burst round our feet :
And in the gloomin' o' the wood
The throssil whistled sweet.*

MOTHERWELL.



FRENCHMAN of genius maintains that the odious climate of England is an overbalance for her good constitution, and that, considering how servile the free-born Briton is to skye influences, the sun of the south is in truth well worth the liberty of the north. But now and again come days that compensate us for all meteorological shortcomings, or rather longcomings ; that would not be appreciated in a land of perpetual sunny weather, and skies monotonously and intolerably blue ; and that make us agree with the shrewd observation of King Charles II. that, with all the imperfections of our climate, more days in the course of every year could be spent in England in the open air than in any other country in

Europe. Saturday, the 7th of May, this year, was one of these rare days. It brought us the first Spring day with the warmth and gladness of Summer in it. There was the most shining of blue skies; there was a rare atmospheric clearness that brought distant points out in close detail; the sun made luminous with light the tender green of the new foliage; the birds answered with their music to the sweet idyllic influences of this May-time. Who on such a day could tolerate towns when all Nature was inviting him out? The man, indeed, is not to be envied upon whom the month of primroses has no influence, and whose heart does not put forth shoots of generous sentiment and tender flowers of fancy with the leaves and blossoms that the sun is bringing out upon the trees. Like the war-worn David in the thirsty Philistine land, the mind of the prisoner in the debilitating town is on such a day carried to the green valley, where the water flashes in the sunlight, and the trees throw leaf-shadows on the sward, and he exclaims with the Shepherd-King:—“*Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!*” No wonder that the prisoner escapes and finds himself rambling out in his beloved Peake Countrie, with the Young Man, the companion of many a romantic rampage. This vivacious venerable joins gayness with grayness, age with ardency, and unites the elasticity, the exuberance, and the enthusiasm of a young Etonian with the wisdom and experience of extended years. He is as sturdy and hard as a bluff weather-beaten Derbyshire crag, and as blithe and bubbling as a moorland stream shouting and leaping in the light for very joy. In his innate sympathy with bird-life he might have in a past stage of existence belonged to the bird-world; and if his fortune failed him, he might make a respectable income by giving imitations of the notes of the various birds he can mimic so well as to deceive themselves; just as Thackeray, to whom caligraphy was one of the fine arts, boasted that if all trades were closed to him, he would earn sixpences by writing the Lord's Prayer and Creed in the size of that coin.

The Young Man and myself had started out for a pilgrimage in the Peak on the previous Saturday, but were driven back by gray skies and gusty rain. What a difference the

sun makes in a picture ! A week before there was no colour anywhere ; drizzly and dreary was the day ; the hills were blotted out in brooding mists ; Buxton seemed a town without hope ; a watery gleam that was to be seen in the west, only added to the sombre effect of the day on our emotions. But now behold ! the bright, blithe day, its burning blueness rejoicing us with its sparkle, and mirth, and strong colour. As we ascend the Manchester Road, Buxton, in the hollow, shines like a pearl, the sun flashing on white houses and windows in a glare of glittering light. The uplands by Chelmorton are strangely near ; one can see the stones and grass tufts on the hill sides, as if there were no intervening distance of several miles. Aerial perspective is lost in the intense light. Every line in the subtle curves of the hills in the west by Axe Edge is drawn in minute detail. The most beautiful translucent green is creeping over the steep slope of the Corbar woods ; but the foliage is very late this year, and there are some trees that will never open their buds again in response to the Spring time. At the top of Long Hill we leave the Manchester Road, descend the rough declivitous lane to the left, pass Bunsal, with its melancholy engine-house for the High Peak Railway incline, and are soon in the deep cool solitude of the Goyt valley, musical with a thousand threads of water and beautiful with colours that the miserable inadequate art of word-painting is utterly lost to reproduce. On a previous occasion we explored this narrow secluded dale. We then pursued it up stream from Goyt's Bridge to the Axe Edge moors above Buxton, where the voiceful river rises. And a wild, picturesque, lonely ramble that is. "Let us be silent," pleads Emerson, "that we may hear the whispers of the gods." In the upper solitudes of the Goyt Valley you might almost listen to their talk. But to-day we are content upon keeping company with the river down stream to Whaley Bridge ; and the Y. M. is confident that the walk will reward us with the wealth of pictures that would detain the most fastidious artist. We are to keep the riverside the whole of the way. The excursion is quite practicable from Buxton within the limits of an idle afternoon.

Past the scattered houses at Goyt's Bridge, with the trickle of many moorland rills taking their tributary waves to

the eager strong-willed river ; leaving to our left the wooded slopes that enclose Errwood in investing lines of beauty—with the massy rhododendrons rising in banks of glossy green ; with the silver birch—wearing a veil of lace-like green ; with the larches clad in the most vivid emerald that stands out in emphatic contrast with the sad, dark shading of the pines and firs, and the bare black boughs of the tardy oak and reluctant ash ; past all this woodland wealth—with restful chords of colour which would have won the enduring love of Lord Beaconsfield with his attachment for sylvan scenery ; past an inclined plane of the High Peak Railway ; past the isolated Powder Mills a little further on, the scene, despite all the care of manufacture, of more than one explosion (the Y. M. is expatiating upon the paradox of a parson inventing gunpowder, and of a Sheffield Wesleyan minister patenting a new engine of murder of the torpedo species), with the river Goyt growing up from infancy, and with a winning individuality of its own, talking to us with incessant and innocent chatter all the way. The modulations in the voice of this shining brown-faced mountain-stream are among the most exquisite sounds in the whole realm of Nature. There are minor keys of sweet sadness as the river loiters under sympathetic trees that bend low and kiss the sensitive water ; anon the river is wilful and coquettish as it runs playfully past loving greenery ; then the notes are glad and swift as the stream skips along in excess of joy, heedless of obstructing rocks and stepping-stones, and innocent—alas ! of the trials and tortures that will upset its young happiness at the reeking mills and manufactories only a few miles beyond. The scenery of the lower reaches of the Goyt is not of such a wild character as the upper and earlier portions. Errwood seems to be the dividing place where the landscape loses in sad, savage, poetic wildness, what it wins in sylvan beauty. Instead of the hungry moors slipping down in declivitous steepness into the water, there are woodland glades with lawns of green, and the broken rocky track gives way to a well-ordered path. Glade after glade of green opens out to challenge admiration with its predecessors. On the moors above us the heather retains its winter sadness of colour ; and the bracken is of a rusty red ; but in the valley here the ferns are unfolding their

fronds ; and the banks are starred with the little white wood-sorrel, with its tender trefoil leaf, with the wood-anemone, with constellations of primroses, and a milky-way of cowslips. The lily-of-the-valley grows wild, but the botanic brigands known as "Field Naturalists" have thinned the growth of this flower. A squirrel is springing himself, an aerial acrobat, from bough to bough ; young rabbits, little balls of fur, are scurrying underneath. A bank of blue forget-me-nots looks like a patch of fallen sky. The blue-bells are not out yet ; and where is the purple-mouthed orchis ? The level stretches of meadow-land with the young short grass make the most perfect lawns gently sloping to the water—"sward"—as Mr. Ruskin would write—"smooth as if for knight's lists, and sweet as if for dancing of fairies' feet, and lonely as if it grew over an enchanted grave." The lady-smock is not yet out, and it is too early for buttercups ; but a field of the cloth of gold is not altogether wanting ; for there is the golden yellow of the celandine, of the marsh marigold, and of the coltsfoot. We miss the song of the thrush—what, oh what, delays the arrivals of that sweetest of feathered choristers from the great spring musical festival in the leafy cathedrals of our Derbyshire dales ? But the yellow-beaked blackbird whistles cheerfully in friendly rivalry with a confident redbreast ; we have been watching the twittering flights of young wrens making trial trips on their new wings ; the shadows of swallows flittingly fall on the grass ; the lark has lost none of its celestial sweetness ; the wagtails are busy by the water ; and on the moors is ever and anon heard the querulous note of the "wanton lapwing," now getting itself that "other crest" mentioned by the observant hero of "Locksley Hall." At intervals the cuckoo tells the other birds his name. It is the first time we have heard his song this year, and we recall the tender beauty of Alexander Anderson's aching lines :—

Two simple notes were all he sang,
 And yet my manhood fled away :
 Dear God ! The earth is always young,
 And I am young with it to-day.

A wondrous realm of early joy
 Grew all around as I became
 Among my mates a bearded boy,
 That could have wept but for the shame.

For all my purer life, now dead,
Rose up, fair-fashion'd, at the call
Of that gray bird, whose voice had shed
The charm of boyhood over all.

O early hopes and sweet spring tears !
That heart has never known its prime
That stands without a tear and hears
The cuckoo's voice for the first time.

There are plenty of merry little mountain trout in the river pools ; and down the stream is a fly fisherman, standing at a bend of the water just where an artist would have placed him for effect in a picture. We sit down, with a long vista of broken river above us, on a huge boulder that is cushioned with a marvellous mosaic of mosses and lichens. All around us is the cadence of the current, the talk of the tremulous trees, the caress of the sweet clear air, the stirring of many forms of Spring life. The sky is a pale shining blue, with the glare here and there broken by a line of light cirrus cloud ; the moors rise in bold curves against the horizon. It is just the place to dream a long afternoon away with contemplative pipe. The Y. M. ceases describing a funny experience at what is known as the " merry meal " by the old farm dames of the High Peak—" a sup o' tea wi' a sup o' sum'at in't "—and we give ourselves up to the poetical influences of the wood and water and distant wold. When he takes his pipe from his mouth, it is to read aloud a passage from a favourite author which harmonizes just now with our own emotions. " Here no man, however lame he may be from the road of life, after sitting awhile and gazing, can help feeling that he is refreshed and even comforted. Though he hold no commune with the heights so far above him, neither with the trees that stand in quiet audience soothingly, nor even with the flowers still as bright as in his childhood, yet to himself he must say something better said in silence. Into his mind, and heart, and soul, without any painful knowledge, or the noisy trouble of thinking, pure content with his native land and its claims on his love are entering. The power of the earth is round him with its lavish gifts of life—bounty from the lap of beauty, and that cultivated glory which no other land has earned." " Sweet, indeed," as Wordsworth says, " is the lore which Nature brings."

The sylvan scenery loses none of its sequestered charm as we proceed by sweet winding walks down by the river margin to Taxal, where we cross the stream and leave Derbyshire for Cheshire, the Goyt dividing the two counties. Taxal is moss-grown and still. The only life we see consists of a black-faced ewe and her pretty staring lamb; an inquisitive group that made us wish to summon to the spot, instantler, Mr. T. Sidney Cooper for him to paint it against the lovely background of hills; together with two children at a farmhouse, with tangled hair and faces whose healthy complexion it would be difficult for a painter to catch, with the young red glowing through the sun-burnt brown. The Y. M. is never so happy as when he is making friends with little children; and despite the broad expanse of his gray beard his heart must be as young as theirs, for they become instant companions. The little girl whispers with a face of laughing mystery to her brother, who dives off suddenly, and we are next attracted to his presence by a mocking shout from the topmost window of a gray moss-grown old barn, where the lithe young rascal appears nursing a white long-eared tame rabbit, while her little ladyship below crows with delight. The window just frames the picture, and in sooth it is a pretty study; but I must lead the Y. M. away, or he will be playing whip and top, flying kites, or dressing dolls, and forget all about his friend, and the fact that Time and the London and North Western Train wait for no man. A look at Taxal Church, a not particularly interesting building, and no archæologist would rage against its "Restoration." There is, however, a splendid old yew in the churchyard, where the good Rector's sheep are thriving mightily on departed parishioners who have been transferred by the chemistry of Nature from the animal into the vegetable kingdom. The sheep has his revenge on us after all. We eat him; but a facetious Fate ordains that his children shall eat us. *Revenons à nos moutons!* There is a subtle law of compensation in Life, and the sheep has ultimately the best of it. Taxal Churchyard is on the slope of a steep hill glancing over the Goyt Valley. The view is one of the most majestic in the whole of North Derbyshire. It demands the space of a large canvas; how can I crowd it into this little cameo? It is Saturday afternoon, bear in mind. There is

no smoke from the chimneys of the manufactories with which Mammon has dared to affront Nature in her most romantic mood. The crystal clearness of the air brings out the heights in great vigour of outline and "modelling," and the number of bold hills meeting here in concert supplies almost every shape of mountain form: peaked, rounded, rampart-like, serrated. To the left of the picture, with the Goyt Valley intervening, Combs Moss rises an austere gray moorland bastion, lofty and threatening. The Trophonius-like cave beyond, from whence an express train escapes with a wild scream, is the Dove Holes tunnel on the Midland main line to Manchester; at a more northern point of the same valley, above Chapel-en-le-Frith, a delicate mist of blue smoke, is the Tod-brook reservoir, one of the feeders of the Peak Forest Canal; right across the picture in a pearly haze of heat are Mam Tor and the Castleton hills; nearer at hand in the mellow slanting sunlight Eccles Pike towers over the Whaley chimneys, boldly supported by Chinley Churn, Cracken Edge, and reinforcements of other hills; and then behold! standing out blue and vague against the soft sky line, the two haughty peaks of Kinderscout. The reservoir below—mirroring green shores—supplies a peculiar charm in the scenery, a charm which Derbyshire landscapes notably want. The Peake Countrie is rich in rivers and musical with rills and rivulets; but it lacks lakes. This reservoir below, reflecting sky and shore, looks like a natural mere in the beauty of its wild mountain surroundings and in the broken irregularity of its winding shores. It just serves to show how water would improve Derbyshire scenery. People who have never seen the Alps would instantly compare this view to something in Switzerland. It certainly carries with it the illusion of Cumberland and Westmoreland. Enough that it is in Derbyshire, which need not depend for a pictorial reputation upon comparisons with either the Lake Country or the Continent.

A pleasant walk of little more than a mile brings us to Whaley. Perhaps we have walked nine miles altogether in following the windings of the river. The train is almost due that will take us back to Buxton. Whaley Bridge is a healthy moorland town, which has, however, caught the infection of mills and colliery shafting. The spirit of Pelf

is being pitted against the Picturesque. In a few years, no doubt, "God's Country" will have been disfigured and degraded into "man's town"; and the giddy Goyt will be sobered into steadiness by sewage; and the now bright emerald grass will pine sickly for a coat or two of green paint. At present the Goyt at Whaley Bridge is child-like in its innocence and clearness and careless prattle; but it does not proceed much further on its voiceful, vivacious path of poetry and purity before its young life is fevered with factory filth and ferment, and, black and reeking, poisoned and polluted, it creeps past New Mills and Stockport to crawl feebly—a liquid leper—into the Mersey. Such are the triumphs, my masters, of this noble nineteenth century!





Chapter XX.

AN EXCURSION TO ERRWOOD.

*The rooks scarcely swing on the tops of the trees,
While river-reeds nod to the tremulous breeze ;
A rose-leaf, a-bask in the sunshiny gleam,
Half sleeps in the dimples that chequer the stream ;
The dragon-fly hushes his day-dreamy lay,
The silver trout sulks in his sedge-shaded bay.*

J. ASHBY-STERRY.

“**D**RIVER !”

The Buxton petrification does not hear us, and the horses crawl lazily up a very easy gradient. When the address is repeated, the man turns round on his box respectfully.

“We are not going to a funeral !” says the Young Man, cheerily.

There is no improvement in the sluggish pace for the moment. Then, quite suddenly, the Derbyshire Jehu breaks out into a spasm of wiry activity. He tugs the reins, brandishes the whip, shouts to the pair of horses, and away we go at a reasonable trot. The mortuary observation only took a minute or two to make its occult meaning clear, which is, indeed, a very short space of time for the average Peak intellect to receive and understand a joke. Sydney Smith, who must be credited with the few good things Shakespeare left unsaid, placed the assertion on record that

it requires a surgical operation to get a joke into the head of a Scotchman; and it is said that at a supper-party, and in passing a plate, Theodore Hook made a madly-outrageous pun that convulsed with spontaneous merriment everybody in the room but one man, who did not even smile, but who, more than an hour afterwards, and to the surprise of all, abruptly broke out into the broadest of laughs and complimented the wag on the joke he had made over supper. That man was either Scotch or Derbyshire born. Misty hills must induce a mental melancholy that the sunshine shaft of wit takes time to pierce. Not that there was much of the sunshine shaft of wit in the remark we made to our charioteer. But even so transparent a joke took careful consideration.

May is merging into June, and we are bound for the Home of the Rhododendron: Errwood. Topographically I may be wrong in including Errwood in Undiscovered Derbyshire. Really it is in Cheshire, but it only belongs to that county by the width of the little river Goyt. At any rate Errwood is in the Peake country, and only a matter of four or five miles from Buxton.

We leave the carriage at the engine-house at Bunsal Cob, better known as Long Hill, only having availed ourselves of the vehicular convenience because of the encumbrance of an easel and a fishing-rod; for Somebody is going to take a treasured beauty-spot back with her on canvas, and the Young Man proposes to try the fortunes of a new artificial fly in a deep pool in the Goyt, where plump trout lie lazily poisoning their speckled bodies under the shade of wooded banks. So the charioteer is dismissed with instructions to pick us up again at the same place at the close of the day.

Leave we artist and angler awhile to their amusements, while we stray round Errwood.

Instead of taking the turn to the left at Goyt's Bridge, and following the road up the river, we pursue the road to the right. A walk of a hundred yards brings us to the lodge gates of Errwood. The carriage drive up to the Hall is before us. Be not deceived by the appellation carriage drive. Conjure up no decorous roadway of mathematically ruled gravel, dissecting methodically shaven grass. There

is nothing formal about this carriage drive. It runs at the bottom of a wild valley, where nature assumes one of her most romantic moods. A blithe mountain stream sings by its side all the way. Bold rocks and steep wooded slopes shut it in on either hand. There is the shade of foliage and of deep wooded ways everywhere. Banks of hollies, with the red berries of winter still glowing in the dark gloss of the green; pines and firs of majestic height, very different to the bleak, ragged, storm-shrivelled trees on the hills, trees which turn to the East as if trained in strict Ritualistic observances; but Goliaths of their race, just like the giant firs and pines that are the glory of the Duke of Argyll's forest at Inverary, by the banks of the brawling Aray and under the shadow of the Peak of Duni-quoich. But it is not for these splendid growths that Errwood is famous. Behold the pride of the place! See the rhododendrons rising tier above tier, tint upon tint. Pelian piled upon Ossa, a blaze of bloom. They are not plants; they are trees. They rise in ramparts of flowers. It is an artist's study of colour, these tints, from the deep Tyrian imperial purple to faint blush of pink, with every seeming gradation of rose-red, scarlet, vermillion, lake, carnation, cardinal, and all relieved by the deep glossy green of the dense leafage, toned down still more by the sombre foliage of fir and pine and yew. This is, indeed, the Home of the Rhododendron. Forty-thousand plants—according to the unimpeachable testimony of the Young Man—were set here some thirty years ago, and they have flourished into this magnificent growth.

The road winds uphill at the base of these towering walls of showy flower, and the little tributary stream hurries down under arches of foliage and ferns, cascading now with a shout of joy over a lichened rock; pausing now in a quiet cool pool where water-plants bend low and kiss the sweet-faced water. There is a lark, a speck of thrilling song, in the June blue above; the wooded slopes of the deep green valley are full of untranslatable melody; but surely the sweetest sound to be heard is the voice of that joyous streamlet, as it hugs the road all the way down the drive. A mountain rivulet, taking its tributary wave to the ocean, surely does make the sweetest music St. Cecilia can evoke;

tenderer in the pianissimo passages, more exultant in the full forte, than the notes of a Malibran, a Lind, a Titiens, a Patti.

Errwood Hall stands on a plateau commanding a view that would exhaust the ornate descriptive powers of a George Robins. The vision comprehends the whole of the deep green wooded valley, with a range of moorland heights beyond. The house is the home of the Grimshaws, a Roman Catholic family. The white stone mansion is in the Italian style, and a crucifix one sees at an upper window lends to the mind the delusion that the scene is Italian too :

“ A deep vale
Shut out by Alpine hills from the rude world.”

On the summit of the hill above Errwood Hall—an observatory which gives an expansive panorama of rising and falling hill and moor—is the Mausoleum Chapel. At this height the wind comes with a cool caress to the face ; there is the hum of the bee among the heather ; a butterfly flies past like a winged flower. Down again by the Hall. We will return, if it please you, by a footpath on the right, high above the carriage-way. It is a lovers' walk ; a deep-green wooded way made for Phillida and Corydon. Boughs interlace above ; the hare-bell, the fox-glove, and the blade-like fern are at our feet ; at our side behold the beautiful chalice of the giant campanula, the cup of the golden cistus, the blue eyes of the forget-me-not ; the wind brings us messages of scent from azalea, and woodbine, and wild sweet-cicely. Now the path descends under an aisle of rhododendron and pine, and ever and anon a mighty tree has thrown its network of fibrous roots across the wooded walk, till we are brought out at Goyt's Bridge again ; Goyt's Bridge which might have been the inspiration of Longfellow when he drew that pen-picture where :

Reflected in the tide the gray rocks stand,
And trembling shadows throw ;
And the fair trees lean over side by side,
And see themselves below.

Our stroll, my friend, has occupied more time than I thought, for when we scramble down the steep wooded bank of the river, with the lace-like leaf-shadows falling athwart the winsome water, Somebody has got the outline of

a pretty vignette on her canvas, and there are already three brace of fine trout in the Young Man's creel. It does one good to see the Young Man whip the water; to witness the light easy graceful touch with which he drops the cast on the stream with the gentleness of a gossamer; the adroitness with which the flies are thrown upon hanging leaves on the bank and made to naturally alight on the river; the ease with which he floats the yellow dun May-flies over the rising fish, the quick, dexterous, almost imperceptible, turn of the wrist, as he sees the suck of the pearl-tipped mouth and strikes; and the subtle skill with which he plays a valorous fellow of at least a pound—the diplomatic lowering of the point of the rod when the fish, feeling the prick of the tempered barb, attempts an aerial evolution, and the ready running out of the line when he makes a frantic rush—a downward flight to release himself—until the speckled beauty has the landing-net put under him, and presently lies among the cool grasses on the bank, with that sweet evanescent musk-like aroma about his plump body, which seems to dry off with the water. And I contrast this “judicious Hooker” with the Cockney unaccountables, who, with wonderful armaments in the way of rods and tackles, affect the “Peacock at Wowsley,” as they call Rowsley. I mind me of one of those superlative superfine gentry once getting up the Wye as far as Bakewell Bridge—I remember he was encased in awkward fishing boots, exasperatingly new; he had a white hat with a marvellous piscatorio-entomological museum of flies wound around it, a stupid muslin veil,—puggarees, don't they call those effeminate abominations?—kept the sweet, glad, sunshine from his poor, dear, tallow-coloured neck; a landing-net and gaff were fixed vertically behind his back; a brand-new creel encumbered his shoulders; he wore an impossible belt and an unaccountable pouch, while on his long, lithe rod was affixed a patent winch that made a clicking sound like the wheel of a steam crane. A wonderful man; the promise was tremendous; the performance terrible. His flies fell in the water with a splash like a big brick-end; then the line was jerked back for the gut to become entangled, a Gordion knot of difficulty, in an unoffending elder bush that grew over the wall behind. The caustic village humourist, hanging over the bridge, laughed

at the perspiring piscator, who lost his temper and his tackle, and instead of fish caught nothing but foliage. Very different is the Young Man, cool of body, calm of mind, and cunning of hand, with his two silken flies, so temptingly natural that they impose upon us, much more the trout, and his half dozen yards of line, working up the narrow stream between the hanging bushes, and leaving hardly an inch of water unfished. A trout is, indeed, a fish worthy of an able rodster. A fish with the pride and instincts, the taste and tone of a gentleman. A fish dignified and dainty, aristocratic and handsome, who grovels not in muddy ponds and in sluggish, slimy streams; leaving the stench of the canal, and the taint of the river to plebeian and coarser natures, electing waters that are clear and crystal, and abounding with cascades, and sheltered with rocks and trees. A fish dauntless, daring, and full of resource, who demands the highest skill and nerve from his antagonist, and is oftener victor than vanquished, snaring the angler instead of the angler snaring him. An epicurian fish, who prefers the graceful fly or the silvery minnow, before nasty greaves and grubs, lob-worms and maggots. An artistic fish, who revels in wild mountain scenery, and fixes his home in the still green solitudes of deep sylvan valleys, where the only sound is the shout of the waterfall and the sweet cadence of the current.

But lo! We have been following the Young Man down the river, and Somebody is left sketching behind in solitude. She is surely as dainty a picture as the scene she is transferring to canvas, this fair Derbyshire girl with the frank clear eyes, and the friendly laughing mouth, in the bright, happy, early, springtime of life, just like the opening ferns and blossoming flowers and newly-budded boughs that frame her portrait, as she sits at her easel in the lonely loveliness, with the glad June light about her, and the swift voiceful river flowing at her feet, as it hurries down from the hills from rock to rock, now altogether hidden by jealous foliage, and now shining in patches of blue in an opening among the trees.

We apologize for our desertion.

"Oh, I have had lots of company," she laughs. "I have had the society of a linnet and two tomtits picking up crumbs from my dress; and then a great stupid pre-

Raphaelite bull, with perverted artistic tastes, came and began inspecting the sketch, finally pointing his opinions with his nose, and smelling at the wet colours like an ignorant art-critic, and I had to drive him away with my mahl stick, although if he had only kept still I should like to have included him in the picture ; while the river has been chatting to me all the time."

It is a pretty picture whose beauty our lady artist is throwing upon the canvas. A reach of river showing bright and glassy over a dark rocky bed ; a gray stone bridge where a tributary rivulet adds its clear water ; at the side of the old arch a gritstone cottage, with filmy peat smoke mixed up among ragged pine trees ; a glimpse, and only a glimpse of brown moor beyond. It is a suggestive bit of "silent poetry," full of light and air and whisperings of the sweet coolness of green trees and running water ; a picture to be hung up in a curtained room in a far-off town sometime, may be, to take the mind back to this pleasant, peaceful Derbyshire solitude, when in a place, and amid associations, far removed from those which inspired the painter.

All too soon does the early summer day pass away ; and when the Young Man with fairly filled creel summons us to pack up, there is still much to be done to the picture, and so it and easel and palette and tubes of colour and sheaf of brushes are left at the gritstone cottage. To-morrow we hope to treat ourselves to another excursion to Errwood. And to-night as we ride back, the clearness of the skies, and the sharp distinct outlines of the hills, hold out pleasant promises for the day.





Chapter X.

IN THE ASHOVER VALLEY.

*“I yearn aside to fling
The yoke that binds me to the labouring throng,
And ramble forth my native scenes among,
Boy-like, to go again a-violeting.”*

“**B**UT, my friend, where is this wonderful Ashover country you rave about?”

An expression of surprise was all that acknowledged the receipt of such a question.

“Well, I have certainly heard of the place; but if I had a map I could not put my hand on its precise whereabouts,” continued this shrewd Sheffield man of steel, whom we call the Practical.

Now this Utilitarian is not altogether such a Philistine as you might properly suppose. He, perhaps, knows more about Derbyshire than the great majority of his countrymen. We have lost our way and our love for mankind and money together amid the wild, morose, moorland fastnesses of Kinderscout. He knows all the gray, old-world corners of the county that the edges of Millstone and Froggatt frown upon. He has worshipped the ferns in Lud Church, and read the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius in Thor’s Cave. We have had fishing days and painting pilgrimages all through Peak Land; and it is an inspiration to look at

the scenery through his eyes. So it could not be urged against him, as it may be against thousands of his neighbours, that, while he was familiar enough with what is remote or difficult of access, the near and accessible was unknown to him. And yet he asked where Ashover was.

The Practical's enquiry proves a curious and significant fact. It illustrates how little this fine Ashover valley, with its voiceful water, its romantic hill-ranges, its dark undulations of moor, its quaint, quiet life, its ruined hall and ancient church, its sense of dreamful repose, its primitive ways, its moss-grown memories and by-gone industries, its thin, pure, buoyant air is known to the people who are constantly flying past it at fifty miles an hour on the iron highway to the north and south. Ashover lies quite off the rail, and yet quite near to it both on its eastern and western sides: so near that the Clay Cross Colliery mountains of slag are but a matter of three miles away in one direction, and the limestone crags of Matlock Bath are but four miles away in the other. But yet so nigh the conveniences of civilization, Ashover seems further away from the fever-fret, the stress and strain of modern life than any place I wot of.

"Where is Ashover?" This question had, I ought to state, followed an enquiry which our friend the Practical, passing a weary hand over a harassed forehead, had just asked, "Where can I go to so that I may get away from the sound of steam whistles and the smell of smoke, and yet be near my work at a few hours' notice?" Ashover was suggested. Away, then, from the traction-engine and the locomotive; escape from whirling wheels that for ever suggest perpetual motion; relief from the hiss and scream, the sob and wail of tortured metal, emancipation from moil and toil, the fevered air, the scrofulous streets, the sordid faces of this mercantile, metallic tyranny of modern civilization. The one-eyed sons of Coelus and Terra, with their foreheads of fire, may weld out of the lives of nature and man the helmet of a colossal fortune for Perseus, the Iron Prince to wear; but not for us the Acherontic streams flowing through Pluto's Kingdom. At least for a space we are bound to Elysian fields; and after a season we hope to say "We, too, have been in Arcady."

And thus it all comes about that we find ourselves

deposited at the little wayside station of Stretton, on the Midland Railway, about equi-distant from Derby and Sheffield, this gracious May morning. A slow train has given us an introduction to the quiet careless life we are to lead for the next few days. A delightful train of "slow coaches" that seem in no heedless hurry to run the risk of a collision; a train that starts slowly, steams sluggishly, slacks gradually, and stops with no alarming abruptness. It waits a minute while the guard has a chat with the station master, and our luggage is carried up a steep slope by a very country-looking porter (for the station hides itself modestly down below a bridge, and does not wish to be Stretton station at all, and endeavours to shuffle out of that deceptive distinction by plainly hinting at Ashover on a bleached sign-board on the platform). We follow the luggage up the slope under which the station thus crouches. More idleness, and nobody in a hurry at the top. There are one or two conveyances waiting: a dog-cart belonging to a county squire, a pony carriage, a milk cart from a neighbouring farm, a 'bus from the Hydropathic Establishment, and comfortable contrivances on wheels from the "Crispin Inn" and its neighbour the "Black Swan." These latter are never agitated. If you come by the down train, and want to get to Ashover, you must wait till the up train arrives something like three-quarters of an hour afterwards. To-day these jarveys lie basking in the sun and doing nothing as hard as ever they can. There is no clamour of competition among them. It is happie-go-luckie land. If you choose to ride the three picturesque miles which separate Stretton from Ashover, you get into the chaise just as if it were your own coach which had met you at the station by appointment. The coachman might have been in your service for years, and he drives you to the village as if it were your own country seat. This is all very soothing, and our American visitor compares its Sunday quiet, its absence of touting and trouble, bawling, bustle, and "Backsheesh" with the tourist show-places at home and abroad. Happily, Ashover is not yet discovered. It lies in the secret valley.

The drive to Ashover amid the idyllic influences of the May-time, with the scent of the hawthorn in the air, and the undulations of peak and plain a study of colour, and the

leaves which make tree-shadows on the ferny lane lambent with light, is a pleasant prelude to the holiday time to follow. We amble along leisurely enough—life is too short for hurry—leaving behind Timberfield, the pleasant country mansion of Mr. John Sterland Gratton, with its green woods colouring gentle slopes, and Clay Cross climbing the hill like an octopus in the north-east, a final memento of the bricks and mortar bondage we have left.

Than in this Ashover country nowhere are the hills more finely grouped. There is, it is true, nothing tremendous or terrific, nothing awful or awe-inspiring, nothing to call forth the descriptive epithets of the writers of guide-books surer of their genius than their grammar. But on every side is a picture which takes the artistic eye captive with its own special charm of colour and character. To the left behold ! first the green uplands of High Oredish, then the rounded mass of Ashover Hay, and then the bold hilly ridges of Ravensnest, shining white at their base with the glistening spar—the *debris* of bye-gone lead-mining days : a study of light and dark greens half-way up, where the steep slopes are shaded with pine and fir, mountain ash and birch ; storm-stained, sombre, and wild where the grim gritstone crags have been shaped by the Titans of old at the windy summit. To the right Stubbin Edge with its green breadths of meadow ; beyond, the shadowy nook where the trees treasure the gray ruins of Eastwood Hall, that once echoed the steel of Royalist and Roundhead ; further on the fine massive hill called the Fabric, whose historic memories date before the time of Cromwell's troopers, for here the Druids once had a temple and looked down upon that same wide Scarsdale Vale which to-day comes upon the eye from that point of prospect a *coup de théâtre* of scenic wonder. Close to the roadside on our way is Milltown, with its scattered gray cottages, its ribbon of river, and its old lead-mines which you may reach by Dicklant Lane, one of the prettiest lanes out of Devonshire ; and further on to the left, Overton Hall, with its sunny slopes, and its classic association with the good genius of Sir Joseph Banks, and then lo ! we see the church in the basin of the valley, smothered with trees. Here is focussed the history and interest of Ashover ; and the slender spire, rising above the encompassing green,

links together at once the dead past and the living present. An American sums up the distinguishing characteristics of Ashover, in a phrase, "Guess"—he says with his long dry drawl—"guess there's just too much sunshine here for any money to be made!"

Lying near to those Fabric rocks I spoke of, which protect it from the stress of the storms, is the only institution in Ashover of any importance. "Ashover House" is an hydro-pathic establishment with none of the repellent rigidity and precise propriety which generally mark the management of such hygienic retreats, for here hilarity, and sometimes Hymen, go with hydrophathy. For us, at least, during the next few weeks the "cold water cure" will be associated with the charms of a new district, with explorations all along this deep valley, with fishing days in the Amber, with geological surveys up the crags by the Gregory Mines, with long rambles over the moors, and with restful times at the old church and the ruined hall, studying the past history of this beautiful and varied Ashover country. Reader, will you go with us?

There is a North Country phrase, that has a nautical derivation, known as "Shooling," and which means going from place to place in an easy radius in a very leisurely and pleasant manner. Now the friends we left a week or two ago at the Establishment in the heart of the Ashover Valley have been doing their "shooling" in a tranquil and enjoyable sort of way since we last heard of them. The American physician, accustomed to a continent of immense distances and colossal effects, is more and more astonished that within a compass so limited as this hidden nook of Derbyshire, there should exist such a diverse wealth of scenic charm. Southey somewhere contends that the history of any private family, however humble, could it be fully related for five or six generations, would illustrate the state and progress of society better than the most elaborate dissertations. And as with persons so with places. Out of the annals of Ashover itself, not only a history of England, political and social, might be written, but the great epochs of geological science might be established. A man might, indeed, with

pleasure and profit devote his days and nights to this Ashover country, filling up the hours of rain and cold by following the advice of the Rev. John Charles Cox's *How to write the History of a Parish*.

There is one endowment you specially want in this district, and in the Peak generally, next to eyes and the faculty of seeing, and that is a pair of serviceable legs and stout boots; for you must get off the smooth highways and take stony paths that are rough and hilly, and then you have your reward. For "high art" of this kind the roundabout route from romantic Ravensnest, by North and South Carolina, down into Matlock will challenge comparison with anything in North Derbyshire. "Why Rookery?" asked the angular and acidulated aunt of David Copperfield; but we are not told that the inquisitive old lady ever received an intelligent answer. "Why Carolina?" was asked by the Elfín when we were first introduced to the solitary clachan perched on the dusky uplands, and indulged in etymological speculations as to its bygone connection with the United States, a problem which our Kentucky visitor was unable to satisfactorily solve. But before enquiring into the nomenclature of Carolina you will naturally ask about its whereabouts. How many Derbyshire people, for instance, ever knew that there was such a spot in Derbyshire at all? Its position, however, is defined on the Ordnance Map. Other curious places exist around it. How briskly life would pass at "Slack!" Could you have any breadth of public opinion and political liberty at the "Narrows?" Would it be possible to settle down on "Gorse?" Is "Nob Hill" sufficiently aristocratic for you? Would "Scotland Nursery" act upon the Sassenach stomach as the fare of Mr. Squeers at Dotheboys Hall did with Nicholas Nickleby? How do you like "Coker Spring Wood," and what do you think of "Great and Little Clattercoles?" There are more names equally out-of-the-way and curious among these upland ridges; but let us look at this old-world country for ourselves. This morning we have decided to ramble round Ravensnest and cruise about the Carolina country, dropping anchor at Matlock, when the day is done and the sunset fire sheds a new glory over the hills in the west.

Yesterday some of our party accepted the invitation of a

sturdy Derbyshire yeoman to spend the evening with him at the ancestral house of his home at Ravensnest. No Summer picture as we sat at tea. A wild, wet, windy evening in a joyless July. Everything down. Hay down. The weather-glass down. The farmer's swearing-month. A fire blazes in an old-fashioned room of the old-fashioned house. A house of gray stone and high gables, and surrounding farm-buildings. The fire flashes on old oak furniture; great chairs that were made for portly, port-wine Peakrels of the past, shrewd of head, warm of heart, rubicund of face, and rotund of stomach; shines on brass-clasped chests as big as a modern drawing-room of the "semi-detached" order of architecture; glows on old writing-desks consecrated to epistles of love and laws written with gray goose-quill pens, and sealed with a profusion of wax, and "franked" by the friendly county member. The ivy taps mournfully at the deep casements of the windows which look over a wet garden of old-world flowers, bee-hives, and moss-grown sun-dial that has no sunny hours to record; over kitchen gardens; and then to fields of clover and corn, until a mist of rain sponges out the tree-growths that bring the green repose of the woods into the heart of the house. Behind, steep and sheer, rise the austere black crags and bygone lead mines of Ravensnest Tor, a Pisgah summit under which the undulations of hill and dale lie as if seen from a balloon. To-day, however, the mist is on the mountain. The rain chokes the valley. "There is but one cloud in the horizon" as Charlotte Brontë says in a heart-breaking passage, "but it stretches from pole to pole." There is a story told of a Highland laird who invited an English novelist to spend a few days at his shooting-box up among the land of "Bens and glens," "purple heather and wild weather," as Professor Blackie sings. It is what the people of the far north call a "a saft tey." When the guest arrived the next morning everything was blotted out in rain and mist. Only web-footed people could venture out. After breakfast, the laird tapped the barometer with a dour expression. Then he escorted the *litterateur* into the study. Lo and behold! the blinds were there drawn; the shutters were closed; there was an illumination of wax-candles; the peat sent forth its fragrance of fire; on the table the spirit-

lamp was lit under the toddy-kettle, for the steam of Glenlivet challenged the aroma of snuff and cigars. "It's a pad tey, whateffer,"—said the old Hieland host,—“Let's see what sort of a nicht it'll mak!” At Ravensnest this July evening, while the rain is on the roof, the Derbyshire yeoman seems anxious to emulate the Scotch host, and as the “tey is pad,” he will “see what sort of a nicht it'll mak.” Our American friend is enchanted with this ancient house under the wooded hill-side. In the whole of America there is nothing so old. Indeed some part of this farmstead was in existence before Columbus discovered the new world. The antique furniture here is honestly ancient, and would look down reproachfully on the impudent pretences and pinchbeck imitations of modern æstheticism. . . . So let the logs crackle, let the winter rain of midsummer sob and soak, let the wind moan among the pines, there are pleasant reminiscences to-night, and bright weather to-morrow.

In the Parish Church of Ashover—an interesting fane of which I hope to say something by and bye—there is an old chest in the vestry. It is of worm-eaten oak. Iron clasps embrace its pathetic secrets. The lid opens regretfully when the parish clerk, himself a living reminiscence, takes out a register of damp and mouldy paper. The ink is as faded as the paper is yellow. The writing is cramped and crooked. The vellum smells of the tomb. But the book is not so old as it looks. In appearance it might have belonged to the Heptarchy. It only dates from 1641, the original register being destroyed by the Puritans. But a vibrating record of tragedy and comedy is enshrined between the ragged covers of the time-worn tome; one of infants, little bundles of weeping and white, carried to the font; of brides, bonny and coy, brought by lads, handsome and awkward, to the altar; and of gray patriarchs of the valley carried on rugged Derbyshire shoulders to the long resting-place under the shadowy yews that have kept silent vigil over the dead for centuries. Only an old Parish Register! A trite and commonplace document to the calculating, unemotional, attorney mind; but what a world of heart-throb and human interest its dumb pages reveal to the sympathetic interpreter. Only an old Parish Register! But it photographs the life in the valley for more than two centuries—family felicities

and family feuds, loves and hatreds, scandals and slanders, eulogy and respect, laughter and tears, hope and despair, the birth of the heir, the marriage of the cousins, the death at the hall. A truce, however, to sentiment. On the first page of that yellow register is to be read the name of Gregory. It occurs many times afterwards in connection with the various events of life. But it is the only name among the early entries of the book that exists in the Ashover Country to-day. Other families are extinct, and have only left to the Peak their names, which survive in the nomenclature of lanes and bye-ways. The sole record we now have of the Le Hunt family, who possessed considerable property in Overton up to 1596, is in the lane called Hunt Lane. The Lant family are obsolete in the Ashover country, but Dick Lant Lane, Lant Lodge, and Peg Lant, perpetuate their name. It is a Gregory of the old stock who is entertaining us with the folk-lore of the valley at Ravensnest to-night. If you will turn to the Ordnance Map, you will notice a darkly-shaded patch of hill-country with a white space of moorland dividing it from the Matlock chain of headlands. This dark, rugged region is lettered "The Gregory Mines." Not many years ago, you might have taken a horse right away from Derbyshire over the moors across Yorkshire to Carlisle and Scotland without encountering a toll-gate; but many of the moors have been reclaimed, and the dark patch on the Ordnance Map—the survey was taken more than forty years ago—now shines white amid the black chaos of rocks and dark firs and pines. That shining surface of white belongs to the story of lead-mining, which is one of the romances of trade. The Gregory Mines closed with the last century. Hundreds of thousands of tons of rich mineral were taken from under those storm-beaten crags and cromlech-like rocking-stones, with the rude appliances of that period. Once the mines yielded a profit of £20,000 a year, after the Lord of the Manor had received one-ninth of the whole produce. So rich was the vein of ore that it was computed that the biggest man in the mine could stand with his back to a wall of solid lead, and it would give him two or three inches in breadth, while it ran fathoms of feet above and below him. The groove runs under the hillock for nearly a mile, at a depth of some three hundred yards below

the level of the entrance. The white mass on the hill-side is the spar from which the lead has been separated. After the mine was closed, this spangled *debris* was sifted over again. Ore to the value of £5,000 was obtained by the repetition. This process was rehearsed several times with lucrative results; and now Mr. Gregory is sorting the scintillating rubbish, and it is being extensively used for glass-bottle manufacture, and his laden carts are always to be met in a procession on their way to the railway. This transit might last till Lord Macaulay's New Zealander takes up his prophetic seat on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's, for the Gregory Diggings are of a great depth and area, the shining deposit of pulverized rock being for years rolled down the hill until tons by the million have accumulated, now and again to "slip" into the valley to the alarm of the cottagers below.

The generations have come and gone in the Ashover valley, but the grim gritstone crags that overlook it remain immutable as the Pyramids. They are storm-rent and wind-swept. Over their heads waves a plume of pines. Underneath the lead-miner has robbed the granitic giants of their riches. But neither the winter-blast, nor the lead-mining shaft, has changed the countenance of those solemn crags. They sentinel the valley as they did when the Druids built their temple over the way on the rocks of the Fabric. They reign over the valley with the same stern unconcern as they did when the Romans rifled their hidden treasury of lead. They stand with their garniture of green as they did when Roundhead and Royalist were burning gunpowder at Eastwood Hall.

Rich and active was Ashover in its prosperous mining days; but now a quiet agricultural spirit has taken possession of the people of the valley, tempered by the excitement of poaching. Unfortunately the poaching does not always take the dash of adventure attending the enterprise of an old gun, a dark wood, and a moonlight night. The voiceful little river Amber is robbed of its trout by poison. Chloride of lime is thrown in the water, and the fish float down the stream, dead. This abominable practice not only kills the full-grown fish, but all the small ones, and cannot be too indignantly rebuked. Poaching seems peculiar to

the Ashover Valley. Years ago, when the Volunteer movement was started, and a company formed in connection with the little mining hamlet of Milltown, it was said that the *corps* could not want any instruction in musketry *because they could all shoot*. The Ashover Valley has, however, been always military in its spirit. Mr. Gregory shows us an old parchment book in his possession. It contains the names of subscribers towards a fund for clothing the King's Volunteers, raised in the parish of Ashover, on the 26th of October, 1803, when the nightmare of Napoleon I. was frightening our fathers. Several hundred pounds were the outcome of this patriotic appeal. Some old Derbyshire names appear on the list, including that of the Grattons, and others representative and hereditary of the soil. Lead-mining in the valley has given place to pastoral employments, but there are no large farms in the Ashover country. Not twenty farmers in the parish—which is an extensive one—employ labourers. The work of Triptolemus is done by the families themselves. The produce is that of the dairy mostly, very little corn being grown. Now, all this is the subject of our talk in the ingle-nook; together with folk-lore connected with this cottage or that, for every house in the hill-country seems to have a history, and “windows and walls have lips to tell.”

So blue and radiant the morning is after the rain, and cold, and mist. And the view we have from the summit of Ravensnest Tor almost stuns the imagination by its exceeding beauty. This Cliff, or “Scar,” as the good Yorkshire folk call these stone precipices, is as steep and sheer as the High Tor at Matlock Bath; but instead of gray limestone it is of mountain grit, black and weather-stained. The geology of the rocky ridge from Ravensnest to Overton might inspire the genius of a Hugh Miller. The top is pure gritstone and this strata runs down many yards; then comes a deposit of shale; anon a rich layer of lime; then what in the parlance of the miners is called “toadstone.” Ravensnest Tor, as a sheer precipice, is not discernible until you clamber up the wooded slope and down a somewhat slippery and giddy depth of fern and undergrowth to where the gritstone rises some two or three hundred feet above you, layer upon layer, as if placed by the hand of

some colossal mason, right up from the valley to the mists above. Its naked austereness is draped with graceful flounces of green. Rare ferns and coy plants grow there free from the ravages of cheap-trippers. The ridge of rock extends some distance from east to west, with dark, storm-rent crags and rocking-stones overlooking Overton Hall, and then across the valley to the church and clustering houses of Ashover; and then away over the Fabric to the wider Scardale Valley, with Clay Cross smudging the hill-side and challenging the Erewash Valley; with Chesterfield northward, with the crooked steeple bowing stupidly down to the incense of smoke from the chimneys of the dear, dull, old town. But it is not to the tea-cup hollow of Chesterfield that we look, with colliery stacks spouting out a sooty protest against the sun, but far away across the ample Scarsdale Valley to where Bolsover Castle, with its resolute Norman tower, stands sentry-like above an ambushade of trees, as if to protect the neighbouring church, and to where three or four miles away the glass frontage of Hardwick Hall is touched by the sun-wand until it looks like a huge diamond in a setting of emeralds. It makes the descriptive writer ashamed that his inadequate vocabulary can only describe sparkle and colour by jewellers' shop comparisons, that he must go to the emerald as a verbal equivalent for a verdant grass-green, the sapphire for the blue of the sky and the sea, the opal and the pearl for the fleeting, fleecy, sun-touched cloud, and the ruby for the rose of sunset and sunrise. . . .

Alfreton Hall is also to be seen from this observatory, with the Erewash Valley where the capitalist and the coal-miner in their eager pursuit of pelf are blurring some of the Almighty Artist's best pictures. But no matter, we must remember that we have a Sheffield man with us. And Sheffield is of a commercial turn of mind, and has turned silvery streams into golden coin, by a process of filth, so that the water in which trout once delighted the eye, and which mirrored tree and rock and sky, is now paralysed and stricken and stagnant. Enough that the Amber at Ashover is still crystalline in its purity, as it winds beyond Overton Hall, now restless and rushing over mossy boulders, now reposeful in deep pools under hanging trees and curving banks, where the trout entice the angler.

We might linger all day on this ridge watching the country below and around as the sun plays with the picture, now revealing, now concealing, until the eye is bewildered by the changing light, and the extent and profusion of the prospect. To-day our journey is to Matlock. It is not on the old dreary moorland road—the Chesterfield and Matlock turnpike—that our footsteps are directed. Our route is at the back of Ravensnest, climbing above the Overton Tors, and then by North and South Carolina, through the village of Tansley, by a deep and steep round, made pleasant by the confession of musical water-threads, into Matlock. For the information of the reader, following the footsteps of our careless little party, I may observe that the high road to Matlock from Ashover is heavy and monotonous, relieved only by the stirring scenic interest of the view of the Matlock Valley seen from the ridge of the hill dipping into Matlock; but diverse and beautiful, though somewhat rough, is the romantic route by Tansley. When we have heard of North Carolina, we are not at all surprised to hear of “New York House.” It is a desolate cottage on the top of the hills. The world lies below. There is only the broad dome of ether above. Around, the moors. No poetry of filmy smoke adds comfort and colour to the lonely habitation. The windows are broken; the doors falling to pieces; the roof is in ruins. Bret Harte might tell a story of aching pathos from this cottage wreck. The story is simple and crude, as all pathetic stories are. Years ago a villager in Ashover Valley burst the bonds of those

“Twin jailers of the daring heart
Low birth and iron fortune,”

and sought out a new career in the New World. He made a competence, and lost it, and came back from New York poorer than he started. He settled down in his old age in this bleak house on a hill overlooking the Ashover Valley where he was born and spent his early days, and to where he had returned a gray recluse broken on the wheel. And thus living alone, his strange dwelling became known as “New York House.” And thus he lived on the healthful country side in simple and honest ways after his wanderings, the rising and setting of the sun being his only record of existence. One day, as the hill-people passed the isolated

house, there was no smoke arising from the chimney. They re-passed. There was no stir of life. When at last the latch was lifted the old man sat in his oaken chair asleep. He had taken a longer journey than he had gone in his adventurous youth, and embarked on a wider and more mysterious ocean than the Atlantic.

Crossing a farm kept and managed by two maiden ladies, and passing an old house where a poacher lives when he is not "winnowing the buxom air" on the Derby treadwheel, behold! we are under the shadow of a ruined tower, lonely and lofty and standing four-square to the winds. It might be a Pictic watch-tower. Peradventure it was associated with the Roman occupation. There it stands on the high table-land, like a grim fortalice frowning over one of the widest stretches of country in the Midlands. But instead of being connected with the conquests of Cæsar, it belongs to the genius of Bolton and Watt. *It is the Overton Engine!* Our American Doctor is disappointed. The tower is not even "early-English." Like the Philistine in *Patience*, it "might be early-English before it is too late!" Overton Engine! It belongs, however, to the Romance of Trade, and the Poetry of Peace. The engine was one of the first constructed by James Watt. It was then considered to be a machine of colossal power, and was designed to draw out the water from the Gregory Lead Mines. The well was three hundred and twenty yards in depth, and the wealth of the mine it made safe for working was greater than that of any fabled mine in Mexico or California. But the mine is exhausted, and only the ruined tower remains to remind one of the ponderous beam that used to vibrate, a miracle of mechanism, in the days gone by. . . . Another mile and then we stand on the edge of the table-land. This is the Carolina Country, why so called I know not. One farm is North Carolina; another South Carolina. To the left we have a sight of what might be a bit of Haddon Hall. It is the gray, old embattled tower of Dethick, the chapel which is an off-shoot of the mother-church of Ashover. All that is left of the old hall of the Babingtons is a farm-house at the east end of the church. The hamlet of Lea closely adjoins that of Dethick, and Derbyshire contains no country-side more quaint,

irregular, withdrawn, and secluded. Below stretches the Matlock valley from Ambergate to Bakewell, a sudden

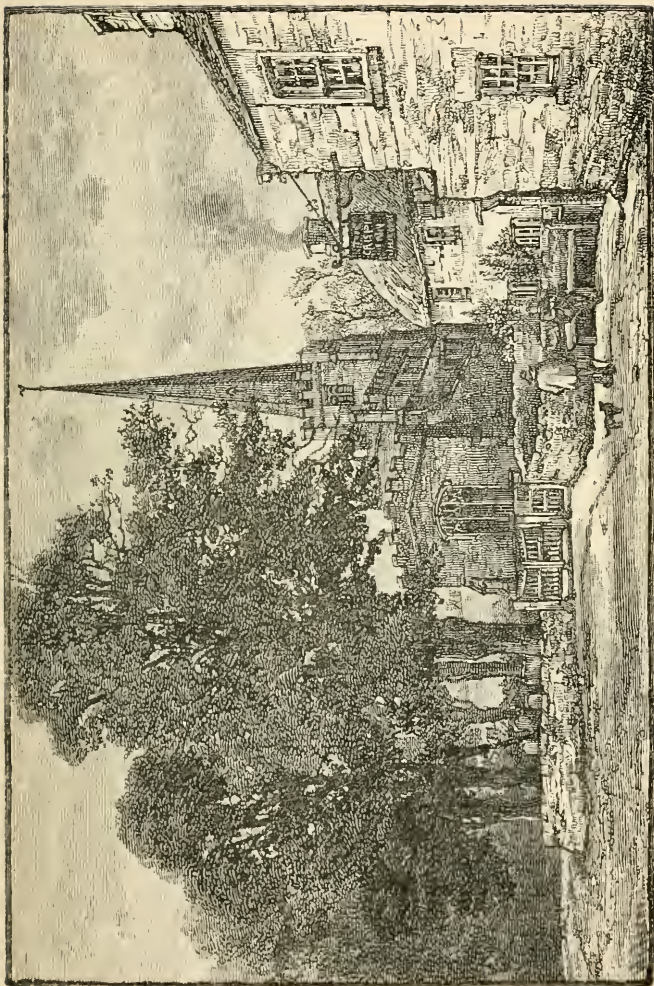


DETHICK CHURCH.

theatrical surprise in scenery. The valley stretches under swelling hills from below Crich Stand in one direction to above Stanton Woodhouse in another. To-day the hilly ridges swim in a sort of silvery mist that Turner has sometimes caught when he wished to idealise distance. The panorama is, perhaps, the finest in the whole of the Peake Countrie, and the most prosaic of

persons might be challenged to pass it without pausing in admiration and wonder. The walk down hill to Matlock, through the idyllic village of Tansley, musical with rushing waters working the mills, is not the least picturesque feature of the day. Then past Riber Castle, with its mock mediævalism, sheer down into Matlock; but Matlock seems pinchbeck and common after our six miles ramble—such a six miles as is to be met with nowhere else save in “Undiscovered Derbyshire.”

We have divided to-day between an old church and two old halls. The church is that of All Saints', at Ashover;



ASHOVER CHURCH.



the halls are Eastwood and Overton. Ashover Church contains much that is interesting. The tapering spire which rises with such elegant grace from the brooding tombs and encompassing trees, was built in 1419, a fact which establishes the venerable character of the building, which contains, in the interior, evidence of even greater antiquity in the shape of a unique lead font, that goes back, according to some authorities, to the Saxon period. The lead circle is diversified with twenty bas-relief figures of men in drapery, each holding a book. The font alone is worth a journey to inspect. It has aroused considerable speculation among archæological authorities, as lead fonts are exceedingly scarce, there being only two others in the kingdom. The Rev. John Charles Cox determines the date of the Ashover font as belonging to 1150. The fine monuments and brasses are treated so exhaustively by Mr. Cox in his incomparable book, the *Churches of Derbyshire*, that it would be superfluous to paraphrase him in these pages; but there are two curious matters in connection with Ashover Church that he has omitted to notice. Lying exposed in the churchyard is a very ancient stone coffin, with a ponderous lid of stone, on hinges. There is a recess carved out for the head. The folk-lore of the village has it that it has served as a sarcophagus for more than one departed brother who has crumbled into dust, and left his place of sepulchre at liberty for the next tenant. At any rate, the coffin is a fixture. Equally curious is an epitaph, cynical in its sardonic suggestiveness. It reads :

THIS TABLET
IS HERE PLACED
IN REMEMBRANCE OF
JOHN MILNES,
A MAN OF BUSINESS AND IN ALL CASES
AN ADVOCATE FOR A PLAN.
HE WAS BORN AND LIVED AT THE BUTTS
WHERE HE DIED A BACHELOR,
JUNE 28TH, 1838.
AGED 68.

N.B.—'Twas said he was an honest man.

The Rev. Emanuel Bourn was the rector of Ashover at

the time of the civil war. He lived at Eastwood Hall, now standing in ruin as it was left by the Parliamentary forces under Sir John Gell, of Hopton. A very curious letter was published a year or two ago in the *Derbyshire Times*, in which Mr. Bourn relates the story of the destruction of his house. It is a suggestive bit of literature, and I reproduce it here :

“For Mr. William Bourn, who lived in Long Millgate, near to Fennel-street, Manchester, or elsewhere.”

“By the hand of my trustie friende, T. BUNTING.

“Deare Couzen,—As I have written divers letters to you since this wicked war began, and as yet received no answer, I begin to feare that some mischief has either befallen you, or that the waye has been soe interrupted that my letters and messengers have failed to reach you ; and that the letters you have sent to me may have also miscarried.

“But this comes by the hand of a trustie friend who will try to find you out, and will also wait for an answer, which I praye God may be much better than the news I send you ; which news I will make as brief as may bee, but I have a long tale to tell of my losses and misfortunes.

“In the beginning of the yeare of grace 1642 when I saw bothe sydes bent on war and destruction, I made up my mynde to take part with neither, but to attend to my two parishes and leave them to fighte it out.

“Now in attending to my poor peopul I have had to forgoe many of my tythes and charges, and to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked, but in doing this I have been nobly helped by some of the good friends you know and have met at my table ; namely the Gregories, the Broughs, and the Hopkinsons and others, not forgetting the bearer of this letter ; who, notwithstanding their own losses, have done all they could to help the poor and needy ; for which I have thanked them and God. And indeed I have found that although this wicked war has brought out almost everything that was evil, it has also brought out much that was good, even kindness and Christian charity ; and men who have suffered much have done all they could to help those who had suffered more.

“In beginning the war I think both sydes were to blame ; the Parliament went too far, and the King could not be justified ; for indeed he had done in favoring the Papists and in exacting taxes not sanctioned by Parliament ; such as the coate and conduct money, and worse than all, the tonage and poundage ; the shipp money and worse than all the benevolences, which were collected as an highwayman collects his plunder—namely, ‘Your monie or your lyfe.’

“You will remember Sir John Gell, of Hopton, who was once on the King’s syde, and he when Sheriffe did grievously oppress the peopul in collecting the taxes, and I never could bear the sighte of him since he starved Sir John Stanhope’s cattel to death in the pound for shipp money ; but now on the syde of Parliament he was trying to enlist the myners, a troupe of souldiers, in their favour, and he had also become a

great braggart, and did pay the diurnals well for sounding his praises ; but when the King came to Darbie, Sir John thought him too near a neighbour, and did move to Chesterfield, and thence to Hull, to aske assistance of Sir John Hotham ; and when he was awaye the King did send Sir Francis Wortley to Wirksworth, with a company of dragooners, to laye waste Sir John's estate, and to collect benevolences, which they did with great goodwill, and left Sir John little to come to. And they did also committ great riott and excess in the country round ; but, thinking that either Sir John or Col. Hutchinson would some day or night be coming on them by surprise, Sir Francis did send some fifty men to Asher [Ashover] to watch the Chesterfield road and keepe a look out towards Nottinghamshire, and also, as usual, to collect benevolences.

“These men, on coming here, did take up their quarters at Eddlestone, but as Sir John Pershall was awaye at his other house in Staffordshire, they obtained no benevolences from him, but they lived at free quarters, and there was great slaughter of pigs and sheep and fowles ; they also did drink all the wine and ale in his cellars. They then, drunken and madd, did come down to the towne and did do the same at the alehouses, but Job Wall withstood them in the doorway, and told them they should have no drink in his house, they having had too much already : but they forsoothed him and did turn him oute and sett a watch at the doors till all the ale was drunk or wasted. They then came to me, and to Dakin, and to Hodgkinson, and demanded ten pounds from each for the Kyng's use, and also smaller sums from the farmers and myners ; and when we did beg them to be content with less they swore we were Roundheads, and enemies to the king, and if we did not paye they would burn our houses about our ears, which I believe they would have done, and we were glad to paye. Soon after this, however, Sir J. Gell did return to Chesterfield with a large companie of souldiers, borrowed of Sir J. Hotham, and by beat of drum he did raise many more in the neighbourhood ; upon which Sir Francis thought it best to retire, and so he withdrew his men from Eddlestone. And they, not liking to goe awaye empty, did take all the cattel they could find on the hills awaye with them. Sir John soon tooke his place at Wirksworth.

“Now there is one, Charles White, a native of Milltown, a man of mean birth and education, but glib of tongue, and making a great show of piety, did sett himself up to be somebody ; and he going into Nottinghamshire by some means did get himself chosen Captain of a troope of dragoons, and being sent to Wirksworth to assist Sir John, he did raise near a hundred more in that neighbourhood ; but having been sent for to help Col. Hutchinson, he did come by the waye of Asher, on purpose to spite his betters, and he demanded twenty pound eache from me and Hodgkinson, and said if we could afforde ten pounds for the Kyng, he would make us give twenty for the cause of God and the Parliament. Now, I did not feel inclined to paye soo much money to such a mean fellow, and I told him I would write to Col. Hutchinson, or some of his betters ; but he replied with an impudent face that he had noe betters, and that if I did not paye the money he would take all my cattel, in part payment, and do the same with all the

others ; so at last we payed him, and were right glad to get rid of such a knave.

“Not long after this the Earle of Newcastle, with part of his arnee, did come to Chesterfield, which soon made Sir J. Gell feel uneasy in his shoes, and he thought he had better be going with a whole skin, so he went to Derby, and thence into Leicestershire. This left most of the county in the hands of the Kyng’s troopes, who like demons destroyed all they came neare, and left the poore to starve ; but this wilful waste and destruction made the Kyng many enemies, and hundreds now joined Sir John either for revenge or to keep from starving, and in all these misfortunes we had a full share, and if it had not been for the lead myners, all would have been deserted and gone to ruin.

“I now honestly confess that I began to syde with the Parliament, and on the death of Laud I complied with all their ordinances, and laid aside both the surplice and the prayer book ; and I even gave over praying for the Kyng in publique (for which God forgive me). I also left all the marriages to Justice Spateman, and when the Kyng’s cause became hopeless I did accept appointment of Commissioner of Sequestration ; thinking thereby to soften some of the hard measures dealt out to the Kyng’s friends. This, however, caused me many enemies, and Sir John Gell and others say I am a malignant in disguise.

“After the battle of Naseby the Kyng retreated northwards with the remnant of his armie, about 3000 horse, and met with and defeated Sir J. Gell at Sudbury and Ashbourne. He then tooke shelter in the high peake, and carried off a great part of the cattle remaining, and left us to starve. This I did hope would be the end of our trouble, and that we should now have peace ; but in the spring of this yeare all the souldiers were wanted for Ireland, and Parliament agreed to demolish most of the castles to prevent them again falling into the hands of the malignants, while the troopes were awaie ; and on June 23rd, (1646), an ordinance was passed for the destruction of Wingfield Manor—which for its strength was not easy tooke, and had at last to be blown up with gunpowder. When the work of destruction was nearly done, one of the souldiers, who had once been in my employment, sent me word that I was to get out of Eastwood Hall, as it would be the next to come down, he having overheard order given to that effect. Soe I borrowed the myner’s and farmer’s cartes, and did make all haste to get my goods to the old rectory ; but by being in such haste great destruction was made of the beautiful carved furniture I bought with the hall.

“The next daye a companie of dragoones, under the charge of a Muster Master named Smedley, came to the hall and demanded possession in the name of the High Court of Parliament, which I at once did give, but I told them that I had done nothing against the Parliament, and that I was also holding office under their highnesses at the tyme, and that I should bring their conduct before either Fairfax or Col. Hutchinson ; but they replied with all civility that they had orders from their commanding officer to destroy the hall, and that he had also said he would not leave a nest in the countrie where a malignant could hyde his head. They, however, offered to assist in removing anything I set store bye.

“I now found that they had brought three small pieces of ordnance,

which they drew to the top of the ferbrick, and discharged them at the hall; but the cannons being small (only two drakes and one suker) they did no harm beyond breaking the windows and knocking off the corners of the walls, and they soon tyred and sett the pyoneers to work, but the walls being thick and the mortar good, they made little progress, till, at last, growing impatient, they did put a barrel of powder in the tower and at once destroyed more than halfe the hall and left the other in ruins, so that it cannot be repaired. They then sung a psalm, and afterwards marched to the Church and for fear they should injure the house of God I did soon follow after, and to my great surprise did find the Scout-master Smedley in the pulpit, when he did preach a sermon two hours' long about Popery, priestcraft, and kingcraft; but Lord! what stuff and nonsense he did talke, and if he could have murdered the Kyng as easily as he did the Kyng's English, the war would long since have been over: then singing a psalm they prepared to go, but some of the pyoneers seeing the stayned windows once belonging to the Reresbys, on which was paynted the crucifixion, they said it was rank Popery and must be destroyed; soe they brought their mattocks and bars, and not only destroyed the glass, but the stonework also. They then found out the prayer booke and surplice and the old parishe registere, which had been hid in the vestrie, but the registere being old and partly in Latin they could not reade it, so they said it was full of Popery and treason, and tooke the whole to the market-place and making a fyrc did burn them to ashes. They then mounted their horses and sang another psalm and rode awaye and have not since been seen, and I believe they have gone to Chester to embark for Ireland.

"Wheatcroft, my clerk, who you know makes rhymes about almost everything, is still on the Kyng's side, and he brought me the following doggerell, I suppose for consolation:—

The Roundheads came down upon Eastwood old hall,
And they tried it with mattock and tried it with ball,
And they tore up the leadwork and splintered the wood,
But as firmly as ever the battlements stood,
Till a barrell of powder at last did the thing!
And then they sung psalms for the fall of the kyng.

"The destruction of my house, however, has almost broken my heart, and I trust you will joyn me in praying for better times, and for grace and patience to bear my misfortunes with resignation. Pray come if you can to comfort me, and may God bless you.

"From your loving cousin,

"EMANUEL BOURN."

"Ashover, August 28th, 1646."

The historian of Ashover is the Leonard Wheatcroft referred to in this interesting letter. He was clerk of the parish, and a man so versatile as to be at once poet, tailor, and school-master. He left a MS. book full of parochial record, but where this valuable volume is now it would be idle to speculate. Full of significant *data* it must be, supposing it still to be available for reference. Mr. Cox ascribes

the date of 1722 to Wheatcroft's book, but it must have been far earlier. The destruction of the stained-glass windows forms but one of the many instances of the blind barbarity of the Puritan party towards our Derbyshire churches. Says Mr. Cox: "Judging from the extensive remains of painted glass that existed here one hundred and fifty years ago, it is probable that All Saints, at Ashover, was unsurpassed by any church of the county in the beauty and interest of its windows."

Not so mixed up with history is Overton Hall, still standing under the Overton Rocks, about a mile from Ashover Church. It lies in a valley, but is really four or five hundred feet above the sea-level, and the windows frame such splendid pictures of hill and valley that one might almost live upon such landscape. The house is famous as being the residence of Sir Joseph Banks, who circumnavigated the world with Cook, and was the first person to discover the island of Staffa. Overton Hall is a queer, quaint, rambling building, abounding with additions and after-thoughts. It has lost its original shape entirely, and is made up of architectural addenda. It belonged to the Le Hunts in 1556, when it passed to the Hodgkinsons. A crumbling tablet bears the initials, "W. E. H., 1699." The Hodgkinsons worked the Overton lead-mines. The family became extinct. Sir Joseph Banks was a nephew, and the hall came into the hands of the scientific explorer. On the eastern side of the house is a fine plantation of old beeches, that throw poetical shadows upon mossy paths of sylvan seclusion. There is an ancient summer-house of gray stone, lichen-stained, in this beechen shade. Now and again you stumble against an old stone-seat, made for two, under the leafy shelter. This plantation dips suddenly down to a ridge of limestone cliff overlooking the windings of the Amber in the valley that spreads below. There are some curious caverns in this limestone wall, where bats hide by the hundred, and in whose undisturbed crevices the owls have found a home for generations.





Chapter XX.

A DAY AT DALE:

A SHOEMAKER'S HOLIDAY.

*More beautiful in ruin than in prime,
Methinks this frail yet firm memorial stands,
The work of heads laid low, and buried hands:
Now slowly mouldering with the touch of time,
It looks abroad, unconsciously sublime.*

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

IN the chequered life of gentle Goldsmith which was the happiest time—the days when Oliver, like Orpheus, wandered with his flute on foot among the peasantry of France and Flanders, Italy and Switzerland; or the nights when everyone was flocking to Covent Garden to applaud his new comedy, “She Stoops to Conquer”? The memorable evening when dear “Goldy,” like Hans Breitmann, “gife a barty” at his chambers in the Temple, and sung “Johnny Armstrong’s Last Good Night” and “The Three Jolly Pigeons,” and played blind-man’s-buff and rollicking forfeits, and danced jigs until the erudite Mr. Blackstone, engaged upon his “Commentaries” in the rooms below, was driven from his learned labours by the merry madness of the high-jinks in the rooms above; or those *noctes cæcæque deùm* when he met that classic Club which embraced Johnson, the prince of

writers, Garrick, the prince of actors, Burke, the prince of orators, and Reynolds, the prince of painters? Or the days when the little Irishman blossomed into a dandy, and courted "The Jessamy Bride," attired in his new wig and coat of Tyrian bloom, and garter-blue-silk breeches, and bravely embroidered waistcoat (unpaid for), with a sword dangling at his side, and a gorgeous gold-headed cane flourishing in his hand? Goldsmith was light-hearted enough, and happy enough on all these occasions, no doubt; but he has himself owned to experiencing the supremest enjoyment of life when he took what he called a "Shoemaker's Holiday." A Shoemaker's Holiday was a day devoted to the country, and spent in the society of one or two congenial companions. Oliver and his chosen comrades met at his chambers after breakfast, and walked through the fields to Highbury Barn, or Hampton, to dinner, and returned to sup in Fleet Street in the evening. "The whole expenses of the day's *fête*," says one of the "Doctor's" biographers, "never exceeded a crown, and oftener were from three-and-sixpence to four shillings; for which the party obtained good air and exercise, good living, the example of simple manners, and good conversation."

I, *ma chère*, have taken many "Shoemaker's Holidays": Saturday afternoons in the country; Sundays in the sunshine. The memory of them shines brighter than does the recollection of more ambitious expeditions when I have journeyed *en grand seigneur*, and been sea-sick, and miserable at grand hotels. Turning over a bundle of papers to-night, I came across some old numbers of the *Hornet*, dating back to the time when genial Joseph Hatton presided over the destinies of that post-puissant periodical. In one of them I found an account of a particularly happy "Shoemaker's Holiday." I follow the footsteps we then took, and when memory fails me I check off the landmarks of the journey from the pages of the bygone paper.

"It fell upon a day in the merrie month of May," when the spring was all that the bright fancy of the poets had painted it, and not winter prolonged by three months. The Clerk of the Weather was not then bribed by the *New York Herald* to embitter our spring with boreal blasts; nor had the Gulf Stream been tampered with by that unmerciful

American orator who once angrily threatened to dam up the genial current and divert it from our shores, thus reducing our temperature to that of "Greenland's icy mountains." There were flowers in place of icicles; and instead of that ruffianly assassin, the East Wind, with sharpened assegais, whistling for one's blood round the corner, there was a gentle zephyr bearing a perfumed message from tender leaves and opening blossoms.

It is May-time now, as I pile more coals upon the fire, and add another rug to my shoulders, and recall that hot happy holiday morning when we started on a pilgrimage to Dale Abbey. There were no peas in our shoes, I assure you. Our motto was *carpe diem*. We had decided on a delightful round-about rural route; a charming circular-tour in the country. We had forsworn railways as religiously as Mr. Ruskin. We had not consulted Bradshaw, and we only carried walking-sticks, tobacco-pouches, and light hearts. Newly emancipated school-boys were not more exhilarated than we were as we stepped along the Nottingham Road from Derby Market Place on our rustic rampage. There is not, perhaps, much that is exhilarating in the first mile or so of the said Nottingham Road, unless a deserted race-course, a disagreeable rammel-ground, a dingy canal, a bleak cemetery, and some Licensed Victuallers' Almshouses contribute to an excess of joy. But when the turnpike was exchanged for the lane on the left leading to Chaddesden, the park spread out its soft green acres, on which the level sun-light lay; trees waved their branches over the path; thrush and blackbird whistled a marching accompaniment, and all around was the green glamour of country landscape in the spring time. The scene is photographed on the tablets of memory. There is a picture of Highland cattle, standing in the warm effect of the sunshine, that might have been painted by Rosa Bonheur. Then there is another picture of an old-fashioned, red-brick hall, looking out from the trees. That is Chaddesden Hall, the ancestral home of Sir Henry Wilmot, soldier and squire, who has a nobler affix to his name than "Bart.," or "M.P.," both of which he owns, for his breast is distinguished by a modest Maltese cross, of plain bronze, on which is inscribed the eloquent word "Valour." Comes Chaddesden village, a passing

fancy of square-towered little church, of filmy blue smoke, curling above roofs of red tile and lichen'd thatch, of porches before old-fashioned cottages, overgrown with rose and honey-suckle. Presently we thread a narrow stile which gives access to a succession of fields. Such glorious fields ! Not your common-place grass-plots, but meadows, sir—meadows that glow like the “field of the cloth of gold” with the gorgeous yellow of the buttercup. A country lane in which the wild flowers in the hedgerows, warmed by the red tints of the dog-oak, compensate for the dust in the road ; and then the gates of Locko Park open to receive us. Our path lies across the park ; but a chestnut near the lake invites us to rest for awhile under its grateful shadow. Which of us has forgotten that delicious experience of the *dolce far niente*, with the grass a carpet beneath us, and the green an awning above ? The waxwork pagodas of white and pink blossom intervene between us and the mid-day sun that streams through the foliage and makes its broad leaves a luminous, lambent green. Before us spreads the lake, the wind stirring the damascened surface with dark ripples. A fishing punt, picturesque in its ugliness, lies lazily on its own shadow ; now and again a fish rises to a tempting fly ; flashing swallows wheel in curves and circles over the water. A lark soars in the burning blue above, a brown speck of thrilling song. Across the lake and the plain of grass, whose bright emerald is chequered by patches of shade from shapely beech or twisted thorn, a herd of deer browse before the white front of Locko Hall. Behind the building is a wooded background that might be painted against the sky. Near at hand there is the drowsy pulsation of insect life along the banks of the water. There is the coo-coo-oo ! of the dove down in a wooded hollow close to the path, where the running water of the lake slips away with a musical plash among the cool willows. Far away in the sunny haze are white specks that we know to be sheep ; and the bleat of a lamb comes across the daisies like the distant cry of a child. The May is not quite out ; but the hawthorns are covered with hailstones, which will soon melt with the snow of blossom. Already there is the perfume of it in the sweet scented lanes, bright with crab-blossom. The cuckoo and the corn-crake are telling their names to each other. There

is the trill of a thousand bird-voices, sweetest and strongest being the clear note of the thristle. The pastures are flecked with strong sun-shadows, now a steely blue, now a vivid green, now a burnished brown as the south wind wafts a message of summer over the fields. We are reluctant to leave the shelter of the leaves that throw a trembling tracery of light and shadow on the grass. We are lotus-eaters. One of us has said :—

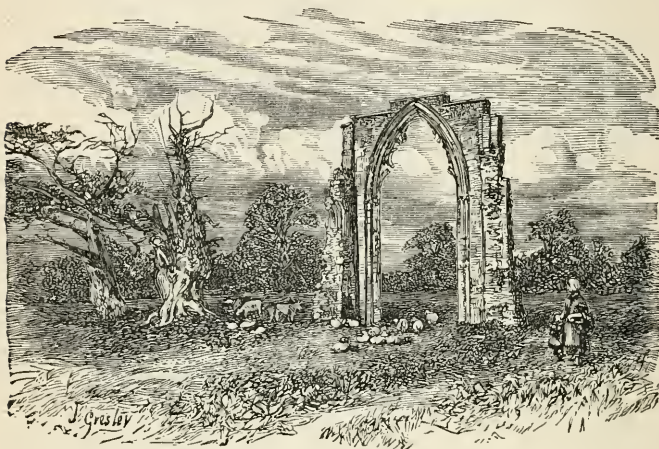
“Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotus-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.”

The indulgence of another pipe, and then “quick march.” Locko Park gives access to a second country lane, dusty as the first. There is a little glen by the roadside. This green dell is no doubt only a disbanded stone-quarry, but Time has festooned it with branching foliage, and it has become a blooming wilderness of bushes and ferns and flowers. Presently we espy a blacksmith’s shop, lacking that “spreading chestnut tree” under which the “village smithy” should stand; further on there is a tavern with a taproom full of turbulent navvies “licensed to be drunk on the premises.” And then we approach Deepdale through the fields. The tall mowing-grass grows over the path, and gilds our boots with the yellow pollen of the buttercups. We skirt the side of a wooded slope that grows steeper and wilder as we proceed. The sun glints on clumps of gorse. There is the cool odour of garlic in the undergrowth. And there, behold! the great Abbey Arch stands in its lonely majesty in the fields below. Gone are the blasted yews that for years stood by its side. The wooded hill overlooks the little old-world hamlet of Dale. In the valley is the ancient Church, the scattered cottages that meekly apologize for the absence of a tangible village, and the solemn, solitary arch,

“A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings.”

Beyond, the furnace fires of Stanton burn a pale blue in the sunny distance. Fate has dealt harshly with the Abbey. At one time it must have been a building of noble proportions. Traces of its foundations cover the area of the entire village, and recent excavations of an

elaborate character reveal the original dimensions of the Abbey.* The site of the holy building was fixed by one Uthlagus. In a vision he beheld a golden cross planted where that ruined arch remains. The Abbey was founded in 1204, and the legend has it that the King granted to the



DALE ABBEY.

Prior St. Robert as much land as he could encircle with a plough, drawn by two deer (the deer to be captured in the forest), between sunrise and sunset. It is to be hoped that the Prior chose June the 21st and not December the 21st for the enterprise. The one tall window arch is all that is left

* These excavations were organized and carried out at much expense by the Derbyshire Archæological Society, and were commenced on Sept. 9th, 1878, and resumed on July 2nd, 1879. The choir, part of the nave, the chapter-house, several side-chapels, &c., were laid bare, and many interesting relics brought to light. Examples of Early English, Transition, and Decorated Gothic work were exhumed, together with a great number of encaustic tiles; but perhaps the series of sepulchral monuments gave the greatest delight to the diggers. All these "finds" are preserved in a shed built on the spot, and detailed accounts of the discoveries will be found in the first and second volumes of the Society's Journal.

of a once mighty monastery ; and we turn from the ruined work of man to the wooded hill-side again, where Nature never gets old, but is always new. How new Nature is this May-time, and how pleasant it is to pass through the tangled undergrowth in search of the Hermitage whose legend the poet Howitt has sung. The story has thus been told in prose :—"There lived in the parish of St. Mary at Derby, a baker, 'a religious man, fearing the Lord, and much intent upon alms and good works.' On a certain autumn day, about noon, he fell asleep, when the Virgin Mary appeared to him in a dream, and bade him leave all his worldly possessions behind him and go and live a life of solitary devotion in Depedale—a place to which he was then an entire stranger. But while wandering forth he was miraculously directed to the place by hearing a woman tell her daughter to drive some calves there. He found it a cold and desolate spot, but staid in it, while forming a small cave in the rock on the hill-side, 'serving God day and night, in hunger and thirst, in cold and in meditation.' While thus engaged, however, the smoke of his fire attracted the notice of Ranulphus, son of Gereumund, lord of Ockbrook, who was hunting there, and at first excited his ire ; but as the sportsman drew nearer, and saw the poor devotee clothed in rags, he took compassion on him, and not only made him a grant of the place, but gave him tythe of the mill at Burgh (Borrowash). Here he struggled on through many difficulties—one of which, the want of pure water, was very severe, until he found a spring and made a well, which yet remains at the corner of what is now the orchard of 'the Church-house,' and is to this day called 'the Hermit's Well,' and here he dwelt until he 'departed happily to God out of the prison-house of the body.'" In the recesses of the wooded wilderness we find the Cave. It is a cavern apparently scooped by patient labour out of the rock, and is smothered in leafy luxuriance. The interior is of the size of an ordinary cottage-room. Openings for windows and door are hewn out of the solid rock. Stone walls and ceiling are covered with numberless autographs and dates, the evidence of the pen-knives of modern picnicing pilgrims. Otherwise the solitary refuge of the old recluse, with its sylvan surroundings, does not recall the "turbid whirlpool of our days." One would

hardly be surprised to see the Hermit, gray-bearded and stooping with age, coming out of the cave with the crucifix suspended at his breast, a girdle of rope round his loins, sandals on his feet, and a pitcher in his hand, and following a path among the trees to the tinkling spring below. Wild and lonely when the Hermit of old left all his worldly possessions and betook himself to this picturesque solitude, wild and lonely it remains amid the noise of this nineteenth century. It is on the very border line of the Battle of Bread, and the sound of the conflict, softened by the distance, comes up like a murmur to the leafy retreat. In the world and yet out of it. Fairy elves might follow Mab, their queen, in these mossy glades, and dance in the moonlight to the music of the rustling leaves. It is a place to dream in, and thank Heaven that civilization has not yet approached this woodland nook with its effacing fingers.

When the ashes have been knocked out of the contemplative pipe, we will proceed, if you please, down hill to inspect the Church. It is one of the marvels of Dale. It is grotesque in its quaintness, a caprice in ecclesiastical architecture. The sacred edifice is partly a church, and partly a dwelling-house, but I defy you to decide where the church ends and the house begins; to define the line of demarcation between the secular portion and the sacred portion; to say how far the roof is consecrated and how far it is unconsecrated. Church and cottage are covered by one roof, some of which is thatched, some tiled. The right-hand of the building is black-timbered, with climbing roses smiling on the weather-stained walls; that is a dwelling-place. The left-hand portion is partly of hoary stone, grim and gray; that is the church. The house was erst a pilgrim's hostelrie. Until a recent date a door that could be opened at will was all that served to separate the interior of the church from the common room of the inn. This fatal facility of communication between the parson and the publican, between beer and the Bible, between things spiritual and things spirituous, is said to have provoked scandal. The doorway was in consequence bricked up. Its former position in the wall is readily recognisable. The churchyard where, as George Augustus Sala would put it, the clergyman's white pony is quietly browsing on parishioners that have

sprouted up into salad, is amicably shared by both church and cottage, save where the latter has secured a small garden patch against the front door. If the outside of the church is curious, the inside of it is even more interesting. The church is not merely a church, it is a cathedral. "Think of that, Master Brook!" It boasts a bishop's throne, and the owner of the manor is the "lay bishop" of the diocese. A tablet on the wall has this inscription: "Philip Henry, Earl Stanhope, of Chevening, in Kent, Lay Bishop of this Church. Died March 2, 1875." The church is probably the smallest church in England, although on the way from Black Gang Chine to Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight, there is a church whose proportions are probably even less. Deepdale Church is a church in miniature. It might have been brought to England by Gulliver, from the land called Liliputia, in confirmation of his travels. It might be the chapel in King Pippin's palace. It might have been built for General Tom Thumb, Commodore Nutt, and Miss Warren. It recalls Lord Hervey's famous phrase, applied to the Duke of Devonshire's Italian villa: "It is too small to live in, and too large to hang to one's watchchain." It is a church in duodecimo; a church seen through a lessening lens. There is a miniature nave, a miniature aisle, a miniature screen, and a miniature chancel. The singing-loft is entered by steps from the *outside* of the church. The worm-eaten old pews, from which generations of villagers have confessed themselves "miserable sinners," are like packing-boxes distributed, as Miss Miggs would observe, "quite permiscuss like." The only big thing about the place is the bishop's throne. It is an infant church, but this carved chair is grown up. The communion table is in the confined space immediately below the reading-desk. It suggests the lid of a painted box. There is a tottering old pulpit that would have a bad time of it under the fervid thumping of the hot-gospellers of Dissenting conventicles. Lozenge-patterned windows, at which the ivy taps, let in the sunlight as if by accident; the church is chilly, as if the cold of some old-fashioned winter years ago had got in the building and could not get out. Service is held in this venerable fane every Sunday; and I hope it will be long before the old fabric will receive the attentions of those

ecclesiastical Goths and Vandals, Messieurs the "Church Restorers."*

Ham and eggs are the only refecation the pantry of "mine host" in the village can supply; but they are not doled out in the homœopathic doses of fashionable hotels, and, with excellent home-brewed beer and home-made bread, we satisfy an appetite that had been rendered ravenous by the elastic air. It had been ordained that our route should be a roundabout one; so we decide to return to Derby by way of Ockbrook and Elvaston.

"Wall, I should sey its on thra gud moils to Hockbruk," says a beefy-faced yokel who directs us across the fields, and accepts a pipe from our pouch with clumsy pleasure. We walk on and on and on. We encounter another son of the soil, and he is of opinion that we are yet three miles from Ockbrook. Up hill and down hill, on and still on, and we halt to inquire of a third farm labourer how far distant we are from the aforementioned village. The response is that we are still a league away. What elastic miles these Derbyshire miles are. They compete in length with Irish miles, which a true Hibernian justified in the lines—

"The miles in this country much longer be;
But that is a saving of time you see,
For two of our miles is aigual to three,
Which shortens the road in a great degree."

Another perspiring spell of hard walking, of jumping ditches, of performing gymnastic feats over five-barred gates, of tearing our coats on unyielding branches, of crossing brooks over the most uncertain stepping-stones, of puffing up furze-covered banks, and then we make the discovery that we have lost the path and gone astray. A "roundabout route," forsooth! We stumble upon a guide-post, but it turns out to be a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. The board is bare, bleached, and blistered, and the out-

* During the month of August, 1883, the old "Guest House" at Dale was effaced. This ancient memorial had become so time-tottering that the lord of the manor, Lord Stanhope, sooner than go to the expense of repairing the decaying fabric, determined upon its demolition, and the dire act of destruction has now taken place. Perhaps the quaint old church awaits the Vandal summons.

stretched arms point idiotically anywhere. There is, however, another inscription in white paint on a black board which is *not* washed out. But it bestows no comfort, for it informs us that "Trespassers will be prosecuted, by order." We know not what heinous crime we may be committing in thus wandering at large in these fields. We begin to conjure up "man traps," to suspect "spring guns." What we conclude to be the steeple of Ockbrook Church turns out to be a delusive poplar tree. We ask another bucolic acquaintance what o'clock it is, by way of challenging conversation. He has obtuse notions of Greenwich time. "It wants that much to foive," he says. "That much to foive," is expressed by his placing his right hand across the second joint of the forefinger of the left hand. But whether the digital distance refers to the dial of the parish church or to that of a Geneva watch, we are at a loss to determine. At last we come across a friendly farmhouse with picturesque pointed gables, with the golden tassels of the laburnum gleaming over the walls, and the scent of the lilac in the air. We are mightily refreshed with new milk, and get put right as to our topography.

Ockbrook is celebrated for its Moravian settlement; but it is not an ideal village. When we reach Borrowash, where the Derwent shines among the trees in sleepy reaches, the scenery improves. The stream near the old mill presents a "bit" of river scenery worthy of the upper Thames. Pleasant is the stroll through the fields to Elvaston, amid the fragrance of the evening air. The day has been hot; but there is promise of a hotter day to-morrow. Those patches of smoke in the meadows are columns of gnats. The sky is rosy in its radiance. In the west is a conflagration of smoky reds that are reflected in patches over the whole of the sky. The sunset fire pales into carnations and delicate pencillings, of purple, lilac, cobalt blue, and here and there streaks of that pale sea-green that I thought you saw nowhere save in the magical skies in the Western Highlands. In the south, Elvaston Park lies tranquil in the soft evening light, with the old Church tower and the outline of the Castle mixed up among the trees. The picture is one of the most pleasing sensations of the day. It wins by its rich repose, its subdued and stately grace, its charm of

quiet beauty. Those masses of foliage enshrine, perhaps, the most fairy-like grounds in these islands. Art has done its best in producing a scenic enchantment. The place is a dream in Arboriculture. To Charles, the Fourth Earl of Harrington, belongs the credit of producing the beautiful scene. It was here he brought from the London stage Maria Foote, and made the actress a Countess. It was not a happy union. She was excommunicated by "Society." She was rarely seen except by her servants. Strange stories took the air respecting the Earl and Countess, their quarrels, and their jealousies. He died in 1851, at the age of 71, but she survived till 1867. It was not the first time the peerage had gone to the playhouse for a wife. Did not a real Duke of St. Albans, a veritable De Vere, marry Harriet Mellon, on the death of her first husband, Thomas Coutts, the rich old banker? And what a grand, good, handsome duchess she was, with her downy crescent of moustache, her black velvet train held up by a page, and her choice Dutch pug. She used to drive down to Brighton in a coach and six. She was wont each Twelfth Night to have a diamond ring baked in the cake, which was to be distributed by lots. Her life shed lustre on the coronet she wore, and the recipient of the bulk of her enormous wealth was inherited by another noble English daughter, and lover of the stage, one Angelina Burdett Coutts, a benevolent Baroness, of whom you may have heard, my son. And then, to pursue this connection, did not that charming comedian, Miss Farren, become a Countess of Derby? And was not that Lady Waldegrave, whose loss society is still lamenting, the daughter of John Braham, the singer? And did not "enchancing Kitty Stephens" become the stately Katherine, Countess Dowager of Essex?

Last of this dear, delightful list—
 Most followed, wondered at, and missed
 In Hymen's odds and evens—
 Old Essex caged our nightingale,
 And finished thy theatric tale,
 Enchanting Kitty Stephens.

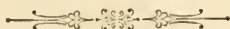
as James Smith, writes in *Rejected Addresses*. And, as I write, are not the nuptials declared between the son of a "highly susceptible Lord Chancellor" and Miss Fortescue

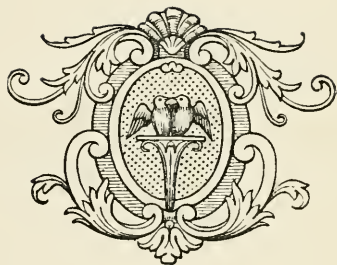
of the Savoy Theatre? This digressive gossip has taken us away altogether from Elvaston, and we are tramping along a country lane that leads to Alvaston. Far away in the west is a strange cloud picture. Over the grave of the sunken sun has arisen a heavy mass of inky cloud, mountainous in shape, and tufted with funereal plumes. Just at the foot of this mountain, like the light of an Alpine village, shines a hint of yellow fire. Above is a sea of saffron, in which floats an island cloud of fantastic shape and sombre hue. In the east one star throbs in a green metallic sky. The lane winds under interwoven boughs, and is spectral in the wan light. In the meadows a white mist has spread over the grass like the waters of a lake. In the south-east the moon—now full—rises a shield of ruddy radiance, and the new light evokes new songs from birds that had become silent with the declining sunset. Some partridges are dusting themselves in the road in front. There is the nightingale-note of the sedge-warbler.

Alvaston left behind, the lights of Derby are seen; over Osmaston Park there is a dense, disagreeable roll of smoke from the foundries of Litchurch; and all too soon we taste the town-tainted air. Our "Shoemakers' Holiday" ends with a smoking supper and pleasant songs. We are a little group of different countrymen, and each of us sings a national song. The great, genial, black-bearded Welshman, a big Newfoundland-dog sort of man, sings of the "March of the Men of Harlech;" and what pathos that merry Irishman puts into the tender words of "Killarney." And when my insufficient tenor voice has failed to soar to the high notes of Longfellow's "Bridge," "Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot" comes with the ring of genuine sentiment from a certain little Scotchman. We cross hands, and what life we do but throw into the chorus of Burns' earnest words. And then when we separate under the silent stars, if there is one place we dream of it is that green valley at Deepdale.

* * * * *

"Oh, you beautiful, still valley, I greet you a thousand times. Farewell—Farewell!"





Derbyshire Gills.

Even among our own hills, though often too barren to be perfectly beautiful, and always too low to be perfectly sublime, it is strange how many deep sources of delight are gathered into the compass of their glens and vales; and how, down to the most secret cluster of their far-away flowers, and the idlest leap of their straying streamlets, the whole heart of Nature seems thirsting to give, and still to give, shedding forth her everlasting beneficence with a profusion so patient, so passionate, that our utmost observance and thankfulness are but, at last, neglects of her nobleness, and apathy to her love.

JOHN RUSKIN (In *Fronde Agrestes*).



Chapter XXX.

IN THE KINDERSCOUT COUNTRY.

A north-midland shire, dusk with moorland, ridged with mountain There are great moors behind and on each hand of me ; there are waves of mountains far beyond that deep valley at my feet. The population here must be thin, and I see no passengers on these roads : they stretch out east, west, north, and south—white, broad, lonely ; they are all cut in the moor, and the heather grows deep and wild to their very verge I have no relative but the universal mother, Nature : I will seek her breast and ask repose I struck straight into the heath. I held on to a hollow I saw deeply furrowing the brown moorside : I waded knee-deep in its dark growth ; I turned with its turnings, and finding a moss-blackened granite crag in a hidden angle, I sat down under it. High banks of moor were about me ; the crag protected my head ; the sky was over that.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.



UGUST the Twelfth ! Summer—two months behind its time—come at last, and making up for its lateness by its warmth. A day white with heat ; the sky steely in its blue brilliance ; the air a burning radiance. Everybody off and away to the land of the grouse, or to the cool fresh salt scent of the sea. Everybody departing, except those who have already gone ; or those who—like myself—have already

eaten their holiday cake ; or those—God prosper them !—who never have any holiday cake to eat, and to whom there never comes a truce in the conflict of life, or an armistice in the Battle of Bread. I mop my head with my handkerchief ; I pick out the shady side of the glaring street ; I don't think it effeminate to put up an umbrella to filter the fiery fierceness. The dapper clerks at the Bank are cashing cheques in their shirt sleeves ; the pavements are hot enough to serve the purposes of the humane men who teach young bears to dance ; the air pulsates with heat ; the dogs are rushing about with hanging tongues horribly suggestive of hydrophobia ; claret cup is popular. The only man to be envied is the custodian of the municipal watering cart ; and I am almost inclined to carry out one of Mr. Ashby-Sterry's whimsical "warm weather wishes," and bribe that functionary to let me get inside the cart, and allow my head only to be seen through the trap door, whilst in cucumbrian coolness I could jeer at the panting and parched passers by from my delicious retreat.

"*Oh ! for a day on a moor !*" I sigh, as the window blinds are pulled down, and I shut myself up in an atmosphere of ink. The postman must have heard the aspiration ; for, just as it is expressed, there comes a letter with a familiar post-mark, and addressed by a "fine Roman hand" I have often grasped in greeting and good-bye. It is an invitation to refuse which would subject me to the direst penalties and pains. It comes from the Young Man before mentioned in these pages, who unites the wisdom and experience of a long and eventful life with the robust strength, the vivacious feeling, and the youthful temperament that belong to the teens. He has refused an invitation to Lord Loamshire's grouse-shooting party, because he thinks the sport cruel, and he has sympathies with the sufferings of the birds which are shot but yet escape to die a lingering painful death in the hidden hollows. But the spirit of grouse-land has got possession of him ; he must get on the moors ; and will I tramp the untrodden Kinderscout country for a couple of days ? And is not the invitation indorsed by Somebody, and emphasized by her sister ? And is not a sprig of purple heather enclosed in the letter, just to complete the temptation ? Man is but mortal, let business plead

never so powerfully ; and with such weather, and under such circumstances, it is not long before a plausible excuse presents itself to justify an escape from the city.

The same night the train brings me from the broiling town to Buxton. Cool breezes are coming down from the hills to the crowded Spa, now in the full throb of the season. The next morning is like its predecessor, white with cloudless heat. A fascinating Watteau picture the Gardens and the Pavilion present, with the green trees mixed up in the glare of the sun, and gay dresses competing with bright flowers in rivalry of colour. But not for us Gounod's melodies ; not for us the drawling chatter of the rich dawdlers, languidly promenading on the terrace ; not for us the trivial lawn tennis ; not for us the flirting in Corbar's deep secluded paths of green shade ; not for us the grateful waters of St. Ann ; not for us the idle shopping in the Colonnade. Somebody's serge dress of navy blue, and simple hat with just a suggestion of red in it, is not meant for the scrutiny of critical eye-glasses. She carries a satchel of sketching materials ; while the Young Man, who is wonderfully juvenile this morning, bears the shepherd's crook that was once of good service to him in climbing Ben Nevis in the year of a memorable "border raid." And Sweetbriar, too, is of the party, with an animated flush on her pale, sensitive, poetical face at the anticipation of two whole days amid the moors. I wonder who it was who first called our little Hypatia "Sweetbriar" ; but I can easily understand why, for she always carries such a quiet aroma of intellectual sweetness about her, impalpable but present, indefinable but irresistible. She makes such old-fashioned, fanciful, philosophical remarks with such childish faith, such sweet innocence, such perfect trust, as to lead one almost to wish she could never grow older and know what a hollow hypocritical humbug of a world it is into which she is born.

It is not a far cry from Buxton to Hayfield by train. Hayfield is the point for striking Kinderscout, the highest mountain in the Peake Country. I dare say a good many people will smile at my ambitious vanity in describing this moorland height as a mountain at all ; and no doubt it would appear even contemptible to the tourists who have found in Switzerland a telegraph office 6,000 feet above

the sea, and have "cabled" direct away from the Alps to America. But one's estimation of hills should not be measured by the foot, like gas; any more than the beauty of a river should be regarded by the number of miles absorbed in its length; or the loveliness of a lake appraised by its largeness. Bigness is not always beauty. Diamonds are never found of great dimensions; and precious stones are not to be weighed by the pound avoirdupois. The latter observation comes from Sweetbriar, herself an illustration of the charm of little things.

Hayfield, says the Young Man as we arrive at that place, ought to be called Haguefield. The English tourist when he is at Antwerp hardly knows whether Antwerp was made for Rubens, or Rubens for Antwerp. Hayfield might have been made for the late Mr. Joseph Hague, who died at nine score, in 1786. He was one of the men who begin life with the traditional two-and-sixpence and attain to the opulency of Croesus. Joseph Hague's first trading transactions were done as a pedlar with a few small articles in a basket. Then he bought a donkey, went to London, and became wealthy. Somebody asks with a laugh whether the ass in question had the same happy influence over his commercial destiny as a certain cat exercised over the fortunes of one Dick Whittington, sometime Lord Mayor of London? Certain it is that Joseph Hague became fabulously rich, and in the years of his retirement came to live near Hayfield, where he died. The Charities of Hayfield are his bequests. In the Church there is a sonorous mural monument in marble, surmounted by a handsome bust, to his memory. This church—standing between the river Kinder and the stream from Phoside Valley—is neither ancient nor architecturally attractive; but the Young Man, who is well up in Cox's *Derbyshire Churches*, tells a good story about the Hague monument, as we leave the church behind and drive as far as the first of the Kinder-scout passes. It appears that the beautiful monument was first erected in the neighbouring church of Glossop, where the good man it commemorates is buried. The chancel of that edifice was to be rebuilt, and the churchwardens were sorely exercised as to the removal of the Hague memorial to a place of safety. Fearful lest it should be stolen (it had cost £420), these sagacious Dogberrys placed it in—the lock-up.

When thus "in durance vile," the occupancy of the cell was shared by a violent "drunk and disorderly," who, in a state of liquid lunacy, commenced a violent attack on the white and silent bust. The monument to this day bears marks of the disfigurement. So discreditable a transaction excited the indignation of one of the heirs of the Hague estate. The monument was at once taken out of custody, and erected in Hayfield Church, where it has received better treatment than it met with at Glossop. There is a strange sequel to this strange story, which is not without a tender touch of pathos. A few years ago an elderly stranger sought the parish clerk of Hayfield. He desired admission into the church to see the Hague monument. After gazing at the memorial with reverent earnestness for some time, he expressed his satisfaction at seeing it so well cared for. The verger, concluding that the visitor was connected with the family, told him of the ignominious incident in the lock-up. With tears in his voice, the stranger stopped the recital of his story. "Nobody knows that better than myself," he said. "I was the drunken man who knocked the monument about in Glossop lock-up. I have since been abroad for many years, and have only just returned to England. The damage I did to that monument has often troubled my conscience, and I determined that as soon as I set foot in England again, I would at once journey to Derbyshire to see what had become of it; and now I am satisfied."

I have been regarding Sweetbriar's face while the Young Man has told the story, and what a revelation of deep interest was written there. It would have been a study for Leslie, a suggestion for Millais, a sketch for Sandys. We have left behind the gray, bleak, scattered stone houses, and the isolated print mills of Hayfield; and now, a mile or two only out of the town, the steep slopes of Kinderscout block the path against further riding. Walk we now must, for the burly mountain monarch will receive only the homage of the active and the hearty, the nimble-footed, and the lusty-winded. The person who would find favour with the Kinder King must leave his crutch and toothpick, his patent leather boots and languid manners behind. There is no nonsense about this natural "Peveril of the Peak." Sturdy is he in his sympathies, and rough and rude and old-

fashioned in his robust ways. It is the wish of Somebody to take the path to the waterfall which descends from the head of Kinder, the wild beauty of which she wants to throw upon her canvas. The Young Man and myself are somewhat imperiously informed that we may then potter about with our pipes. Sweetbriar holds views of ambitious breadth with regard to the *flora* of the mountain, and is pointing out yellow breadths of flowers that turn out to be mountain-pansies, and white patches of snow that are the fluffy flower of wild-cotton, growing from moist marsh land.

What a glorious walk it is to the Kinder Downfall. It seems incongruous, however, that we cannot explore the wild solitudes of the Scout without an "order." Fancy binding the Kinder King with red tape, and applying "rules and regulations" to the broad freedom of the moors. This mountain, over which the pedestrian might have at one time roamed at his own sweet will, has become absorbed by the various proprietors of the adjoining lands. It is now strictly "preserved," and the tourist, cherishing an old-fashioned faith in the freedom of the mountains, is apt to come into ungrateful greeting with the keepers, if he is not armed with the official *open sesame*. The necessary "order" is, however, not difficult to obtain; and the Young Man tells me in this connection that the footpaths and bridle-roads of the district have aroused the interest of some neighbouring gentlemen who, under the name of "The Hayfield and Kinderscout Ancient Footpaths Association," endeavour to guard from further interference such footpaths and bridle-paths as belong by indisputable right to the people, and also to prevent, as far as possible, annoyance to legitimate land-owners from the trespass of excursionists heedless of private rights in their reckless pursuit of pleasure. The second motive of the Society is a laudable one. Mr. W. Walker, the president,—a jealous guardian of the rights of the public, mark you,—tells us that he has witnessed many wanton depredations of well-meaning, but thoughtless persons. Once he saw a *mêlée* between Sunday-school teachers, who armed themselves with beautiful specimens of foxglove, torn from the bankside, and who in their pious ardour tore several yards of wall down; on another occasion a number of tourists, observing how steep a field was, proceeded to roll

the coping-stones from the loose walls of the district to the peril of the sheep in the pasturage below ; again at the railway station, a tourist was innocently displaying his "find" during his ramble—only sixteen moor-birds' eggs!

While the Young Man has thus been discoursing in his usual discursive manner, we have gained the summit of Kinder Low, an eminence of 2,088 feet. The entranced eye skips over gray gritstone knoll and wild clough, lying immediately below, wine-stained in heather-bloom, and accentuated in outline in the white, cloudless light ; passes the lonely white farmhouses that here and there give a human interest to the spacious solitudes in the slopes of the valleys ; lingers for a moment on the soft peaceful repose of Edale ; and wanders over the map-like area of far-off peak and plain, now sharply defined in the strong sunshine, now dreamily indistinct in the impalpable silvery haze of heat. Right away in the south-west some hills that are sketched in dreamy dimness against the sky, like softly-tinted clouds, are the Welsh mountains ; and beyond, Somebody's glasses search out for us the Irish Sea, a gray, glimmering plain, almost imperceptible against the remote horizon. The sun, picking out every tint of the moor, is tropical in its white glare above ; but the wind blows a gale around us in delicious freshness. The Young Man's long gray beard is stirred like a sail ; Somebody's hair is blown in a wild tangle of sunny brown all over her face ; Sweetbriar's ribbons flutter like the pennons of a yacht. Just below our eyrie is the Kinder Low Cavern, a hole which is not worth exploring by people who have seen Poole's Hole, at Buxton ; the Blue John Mine, at Castleton ; or the Rutland Cavern, at Matlock. So we press on through the heather northward. There is the somnolent hum of bees in the purple blush of the heather ; now and again a moor-cock rises with a frightened cry ; sometimes we make the acquaintance of an impudent black-faced sheep, who stares the ladies out of countenance with shameless effrontery ; ever and anon Sweetbriar breaks away to make up a bouquet of silvery white-headed cotton sedges, ivy-leaved crowfoot, and blue-eyed forget-me-nots. The most striking feature in the rugged landscape now is the Three Knolls, a trinity of rounded hills rising from a deep hollow in close company ;

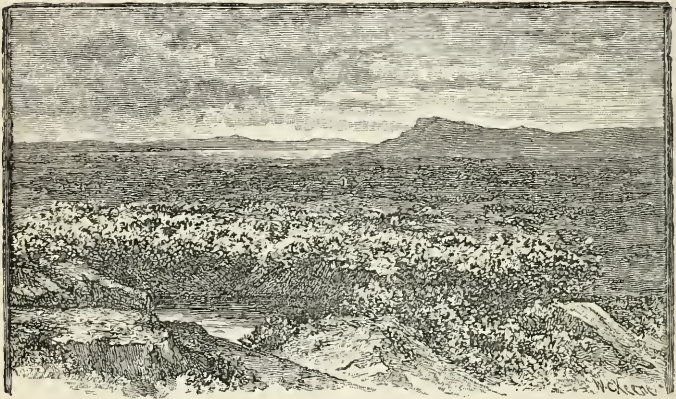
and then we are filled with speculations as to a ruin which is known to the Young Man as the Old Smithy. Come now the imposing Cluther Rocks, with a *debris* of time-stained millstones, strewn about in picturesque disorder. Presently we cross the little Redbrook, which is in a great hurry to run away from its bleak mountain home; and then lo! there is a musical roar in the air. Somebody utters a cry of delight, and we behold the smoke of the Kinder Downfall. Before The Twelfth brought the country such a burst of brilliant weather, there had been a serious spell of wet, and reports of floods filled the newspapers sufficiently deluged with the watery eloquence of St. Stephen's. However unfortunate the excessive rain may have proved to the farmer, it has been flattering to us—if one can be so supremely selfish as to place one's own petty pleasure before the absorbing agricultural interests of an entire country—for it has given to the Kinder Downfall, which otherwise might have been dry, a volume of water which makes us simultaneously compare its power and beauty with the famous Falls of Foyers. Somebody has fixed her easel in the cool hollow looking direct up the great foaming gorge; and I wish I could reproduce in this cold column her vivid picture, which repeats the poetry of the scene in all the enchanting inspiration of its rugged outline and varied colour. The cataract descends from the lofty table-land at the head of Kinderscout, down an angle formed by two steep flanks of the mountain, and falls from ledge to ledge of the great black obstructing rocks in successive plunges of several hundred feet. It is at the lowest gorge, called the Runge, that Somebody's little patch of white canvas is to be seen. Looking up at the plunging water, she has spread before her a revelation of romantic beauty; the picturesque pushed to almost a theatrical point of possibility. The roar of the water fighting against the huge flanking rocks is the only sound. The sun catches the water, and now there is a dazzling constellation of diamonds; now there is a softer lambent light, as the shadow of an obtruding rock softens the glitter; then the spray is a beautiful prism; anon the smoke is a sunny mist broken into glints and splinters of light. A mountain ash here and there hangs its vivid coral berries over the headlong torrent; cool ferns show

a tender green against the gritstone crags; lichens and mosses cushion the rocks in every shade of orange, and brown, and green, and yellow, and gray. The Young Man has found out a resting-place on a couch of heather. He has unpacked a basket, that is now going to liberally reward us for so much trouble in the way of carriage. A bottle of dry champagne is placed in a cold pool to cool; in the meantime the Y. M., with a sparkle of humour in his eye, produces a well-remembered flask, and, pouring out a libation of "Arnbarrow," says, "Derbyshire scenery is best seen through a glass."

The tonic atmosphere has certainly stirred the vagus-nerve. Something less tempting than the present contents of the luncheon basket would have met with an alert appetite from all four of us. Even the ethereal Sweetbriar confesses to a stomach; and the lady with the mahl-stick is not too æsthetic to be assisted to a little more of a certain game pie. We shall not readily forget that wild dinner on the banks of the Kinder. Trout rise to our crumbs, as we drop them on the water; once we catch sight of a kingfisher's rainbow breast; further down the stream—where a broken old mossy bridge "makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam beyond it"—a melancholy heron stands in lonely vigil; the Young Man remembers years ago seeing the eagle on Kinderscout. We leave Somebody and her sister at the picture—be friendly to it, Sir Frederick the Great, with thy Council of Selection, when it comes in full view of thee and thy brother judges!—and crossing the little river, strike still in a northerly direction across the cliffs. Far away below the still water of a lonely tarn gleams in the sun. It is the Mermaid's Pool. Legend has lent to it a weird interest. Further on we come to a stupendous tumult of weather-beaten rocks, to which it seems ridiculous to bestow the domestic and little title of the "Armchair." But "Armchair," anyhow, suggests rest; and we seat ourselves here surrounded with the natural ampitheatre of Kinder. The view arrests conversation by its bold wildness and sublime solitude. We sit and smoke. In our tobacco trance we are more united in sympathy than if we chatted the closest confidences and made the most friendly mutual confessions. Speech would seem a profanation. The

poetry of silence prevails. Its pathos is only broken by the distant echo of the sportsman's breechloader, and the plaintive call of the plover. All around are the sweet, mysterious influences of Nature, most eloquent where she is most still :

“A presence ! when no one is near me ;
 A touch ! when no fingers are nigh ;
 A kiss ! when no lips are caressing ;
 A voice ! when no speaker is by.”



KINDERSCOUT.

The sun brings out a wonder of colour from the moorland vastness. There is the black of the swampy peat ; the rose of the heather flowers ; the gray of the coarse grasses on the boggy hillocks ; the soft shade of the deep hollows. Suggestions of silver and gold are given by scattered wild flowers, gorse, and lichens. Down below, the windows of a lonely farmhouse laugh with sunlight, and there is a vivid green patch of meadow where the hay has been newly gathered. In the far distance there is a pearly gray where the moor mingles with the sky at the hazy horizon line. The moors have often been compared to the sea ; and the vast breadth of undulating distance at Kinderscout gives special force to the trite fancy. It is an ocean of billowy heather ; distant hills rise like dark sea cliffs ; a far-off ordnance survey cairn supplies the illusion of a lighthouse ;

here and there a block of dark gritstone, growing above the purple waves, with the sun catching on its weather-stained side, conveys the suggestion of a russet sail; a remote farm looks like an island in the heathery sea.

The afternoon wears on. The stillness and solitude, the infinite space and the lofty remoteness of these towering ridges above the littleness of the work-day world, come as a satisfying solace to soul and sense; an ineffable charm to the eye, a deep peace to the mind, a sweet contentment and calm to troubled nerves and harassed life. This love of the hills is really a sacred thing. It is a religion. The Man of Sorrows went up into a mountain to pray. The world below becomes but a babbling booth of little lives, small ambitions, and sordid ideals, and he who can pass a day on the heights without coming down the better in mind and soul is not to be envied. All the momentous events of Divine history are associated with mountain solitudes: Ararat with the Ark, Sinai with the Law, Hermon with the Transfiguration. "Escape to the mountain," was the command of the Deity to Lot; "Get thee up into this mountain," was the last Divine injunction to Moses.

There is a blitheness and buoyancy in the air that stirs us at last into a further walk. Our talk is of how much the dweller in towns appreciates the country.

"Only those who in sad cities dwell
Are of the green trees fully sensible;
To them the silver bells of twinkling streams
Seem brighter than an angel's laugh in dreams,"

I poetically protest. Pretty, but generally inapplicable argues the Young Man. The strength of habit, he maintains, prevails over the spell of the hills, and he instances Charles Lamb, who, when asked how he had enjoyed the lakes and mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland, answered that he was obliged to think of the ham-and-beef shop near St. Martin's Lane! Some people take London with them wherever they go; and a highland shooting box is every bit as Sybaritic as a Piccadilly Club. The charm of the moors is destroyed when Pall Mall is thus taken into Perthshire, and the sophistries of a complex civilization break upon the simplicity and solitude of the heather. This, mark you, is only a small portion of the Y. M.'s profound observations on

the subject. He is still inveighing against the laxity and luxury of the present age when we arrive at the north-western point of the Edge. A large cairn here marks the second highest point of the Peak range: 1,981 feet. When we had gained the ordnance barrow on Kinder Low we were at the greatest altitude: an eminence of 2,088 feet. The table land is flat and boggy, and furrowed with deep watercourses, that expose the mountain gritstone beneath. The waters are shed west and east, the Kin and Sett entering the Goyt and the Mersey, and the Ashop and Noe flowing east to the Derwent. While the western side of Kinder appeals to the artistic eye as strongly as any Derbyshire scene of which I know, there is a fascination in the Ashop side of the mountain. The Ashop waterfall is as wildly beautiful as the Kinder downfall. The river, as in the other instance, flows from the great trackless table land. There is a savage gorge of gloomy precipitous rocks, strewn with mossy boulders, through which the bright brown peat-stained water flashes and foams till it reaches its leap, which is through dark weird rocks that form a rude arch over the plunging fall. The river now descends in its picturesque headlong course in an easterly direction, keeping along the northern flank of the Scout. Here it is fed by tributary streams from the swampy moors and mountain ridges. After winding for some three miles it falls in love with the Lady Brook, and the two healthy joyous streams skip hand in hand through a narrow defile close by the Sheffield and Glossop road. It would be pleasant to pursue the Ashop and Lady Brook along their romantic route, past the pretty "bit" of water-colour where the Alport becomes their sweet-faced child, and right away through the Woodlands, beautiful with birch trees, to Ashopton itself. Following the "Edge" to Fairbrook Naze, we step down briskly to the Snake Inn: a lonely hostelry shining white in a belt of dark firs. The "Cat and Fiddle," near Buxton, claims to be the house of the most elevated entertainment in the kingdom; but the traveller should get the real "mountain dew" at the "Snake," which is 1,069 feet above the sea. Shenstone found his warmest welcome at an Inn; but I doubt whether the poet had such scenery thrown in as the "Snake" affords from its hospitable doors. Behind are the tors of Alport moor; right

opposite are reared the sturdy shoulders of Fairbrook Naze, one of the boldest ridges in the whole of the Scout; while the jagged, fantastic cliffs known as Seal Edge afford a wild romance of rock. The Young Man has something to say about the turnpike in front of the door. This Glossop road, he tells us, is no engineering trifle. It is, he believes, unsurpassed in height by any other turnpike in England, scoring, as it does, 1,666 feet amid the morose moorland. The heather encroaches on either side of the road; at intervals there are tall poles to guide the traveller in time of snow. The Dukes of Devonshire and Norfolk are credited with the construction of this emphatic highway, which is the old coaching road between Sheffield and Manchester.

It is a lonely walk of several miles back to the locality of the Kinder Downfall. The two artists must have now lost their light for the picture. There is a flush of red and gold in the west; and the hilly ridges are growing dark in the deepening shadows, save where some remote peak is brought strangely near and distinct in the warm colours of the sunset. But the Young Man, bless you, has no concern for the girls. We are to find them, he says, at a certain isolated farm in the great breadth of valley under the Kinder Fall, at which house a smoking hospitable meal awaits us. A confusion of hay ricks, of gray gables, of thatched roofs of lichened russet, and of tiled roofs of finely-toned red. A square, solid, low-spreading stone house, with thick walls as abiding as the gritstone crags to which they once belonged. This is our good caravansary. A chained mastiff gives us a fierce salute as we approach the gate; but Somebody and Sweetbriar, thus apprised of our arrival, change the turbulent fury of the wild animal into quite a frisky friendliness, into much wagging of tail, clanging of chain, and bounding joy. Over the hills in the west there comes a strange melodramatic radiance of blood red, which fades impalpably into a tinted mist of rose and amber; while in the east the scarcely risen moon is striking silvery and cold over swelling ribs of dark heath; in the sky overhead is a clear twilight; at present the stars do not show. There is the babble of an adjacent beck; there is the soft coo of pigeons somewhere up in the shadowy mossy roofs of the farm buildings; the cattle are being driven in from the pasturage to be milked; the plover

is calling "pee-wit-pee-wit" on the moors; we can hear the muffled roar of the Kinder Fall. This is the only house within a radius of some miles.

The girls seem quite familiar with the interior. Somebody is showing off her art in the mashing of tea, singing all the while in her soft contralto voice:

"Oh the oak, and the ash, and the bonny ivy tree,
They grow so green in the North Countrie."

What a broad fine specimen of the Peak farmer our host is; but I wish he had not grasped my hand with quite such a fervid grip; still one shouldn't wear rings. And what a quaint grace there is about his good wife, as genuine and shining as the old polished oak chairs and tables of the room. And the room itself, with that black old oak furniture, which would fetch any price in æsthetic Kensington; and with a great fireplace as big as the drawing-room of a modern villa, and under which one can sit on an old oak settle in the inge-nook and see the stars. And the heartiness of our evening meal, with the inviting milk that drinks like cream, and which induces one of us, who comes from a great town, to wish he could have the rich beverage laid on in pipes at his house, in a supply as plentiful as the water. The Young Man has on his knee two bonny, brown-faced, bright-eyed children with a tangle of hair that makes them look as shaggy as Shetland ponies. He is singing

"Ride a cock horse to Banbury Cross,
To see a fine lady on a white horse,
With rings on her fingers, and bells on her toes,
She shall have music wherever she goes."

Each of the Y. M.'s knees is a wild "cock horse," going at a sensational trot, while the young riders cling on and crow with delight. The Y. M. has preserved that youth in age which the gods denied Tithonus when they gave him immortality.

After tea we saunter in the cool air outside. All around is the majesty and mystery of the moors by moonlight; the weirdness and wonder of the mountains at night. The twilight has cleared away; and the moon has climbed above hill, and sheds a broad path of silver down the slope of the moor, so strange and ethereal that Sweetbriar says it seems to be a road of light for us to walk up to the gateway of

Heaven. Kinderscout is a heavy mass of hill rising sheer and dark like a wall up to the stars. The planets, throbbing in the great silent expanse of sky, seem very near to us. The evening star, in the rarified air, is as lustrous as the Kohinoor. The pole star is like a lighthouse gleam in the north; faint and far-off is the diamond dust of the Milky Way. In the east Mars pulsates with a ruddy light; there is the radiance of Jupiter. Between these two great planets, the intense pure white light of Vesta is to be seen in the clear serenity of the sky; while that bluish-white light, seldom revealed to the naked eye, is Uranus. Sirius is the brightest star in the whole sky.] The Pleiades stand out among a world of stars; there is the V shaped cluster of the Hyades. Sharply defined is King Charles's Wain; Orion wears a silver belt; the jewels flash in Cassiopeia's chair; there is the pale wistful gleam of Andromeda's face; and there are other trembling white constellations, each of which Sweetbriar connects with some classic romance. Once or twice a shooting star flashes across the sky. And now the moon is rising more overhead of us, as we are walking alone in this silent, solemn world of moorland masses, with the weird Scout rising like the apparition of another sphere. The road shows white in front of us. Somebody is talking in quite a Ruskin manner about the blackness of the shadows that impart so much mystery to the picture, and the sharpness of the light that searches out both colour and outline. The Young Man explains that the thin purity of the air gives strength to the starlight. Sweetbriar is enchanted with the scene. The moonlight falls with a softened radiance on her sweet young face, and invests it with a saintly fancy. The moon seems to belong entirely to this Derbyshire moorland, and to be shining alone on our own sympathetic little group. It seems strange to think that there is a world outside these hills, and that the same placid face is looking down upon many countries and upon millions of people at this very hour; upon London's teeming streets, upon the lighted chattering Boulevards of Paris, upon the water-ways of Venice, upon the laurels of Italy, upon great ships outward and homeward bound in mid-Atlantic. And what scenes other than this simple healthful undulation of the Peake Countrie the same moon surveys

with the same impassive gaze : scenes of love and hatred ; of hope and despair ; of success and failure ; of joy and fear ; of reckless sin and silent self-sacrifice ; of debauchery and devotion. The same impenetrable eyes look on the squander of riches and the squalor of poverty ; on mental wrestlings and moral prostrations ; on pale sick chambers and gay ball-rooms ; on the dinner party given by Mr. Croesus, M.P., the special event of the season, and the lonely stone cell where a murderer can hear the fixing of the hideous apparatus that shall make him dangle a dishonoured corpse at eight o'clock prompt in the morning ; on mothers in quiet country-side villages, praying for sons exposed to the temptations of great cities ; on women selling their souls in infamy ; on students at midnight lamps ; on the burglar stealing forth on his mission of plunder ; on humour and pathos ; on laughter and tears ; on the endless tragedy and comedy of human life ; on carnival and charnel house ; on the weeping eyes and shrunken face of Melpomene, and the inane laugh of Momus ; on swaddling clothes and winding sheets ; on hopes that are broken and ideals that are shattered ; on friendships that are faithless and loves that are false. The moon regards all these contrasts—the good and the evil—with the same placid face. She is moved neither to love nor pity. She has seen the same scenes and contrasts in the world for these thousands of years, and may be she will see them for thousands of years to come. She is the same moon whose argent light shone on Homer's Camp before Troy ; and gave such romance to Lorenzo's wooing of Jessica ; and revealed the sleeping Endymion. The same moon whose beams lit up the hoary, haunted ruins of the Colosseum for Byron, and inspired Ben Johnson's deathless lyric. The pale Empress of Night, with her retinue of stars, is destined to look down on many battlefields yet, to affect generations of lovers yet unborn, and to inspire whole libraries of poetry. The one dominating feeling of this communion with the solemn starlit moors is, indeed, a revelation of the eternal and immutable. Human existence seems a frivolous, fleeting trifle compared with the unchanging moon, and stars, and hills that have seen the generations come and go. The mind is stunned with the sense of its own smallness ; and——

It is very cruel of the Young Man to upset us with a spirit of flippant levity, to associate Luna with lunacy, and to say to the moon

“Never you mind : shine on.”

But, perhaps, the Young Man is as affected by the emotion of the hour as any of us.

It is, however, growing chilly. The moon is bringing out the red roofs and gray gables of the farm in sharp silhouette ; there are yellow lights in the window for us. What a picture for a shadow-loving artist is the broad, low room in which we are seated. A bottle of whisky finds its way on the table, also a quaint iron tobacco jar ; peat is smoking in the old-fashioned fireplace, over which is suspended a three-legged iron pot ; and the strange smell of the turf makes us think that we are somewhere up in Sutherlandshire. There is an old lamp, which compensates in power of perfume what it lacks in clearness of illumination. But the light suits the room just as an artist would adjust it. Glow and gloom seem to alternate. The shadows are broad, and warm, and mellow. The light catches the old oak chairs ; there are weird shadows thrown across the ceiling, half revealing and half hiding an old fowling piece, a string of onions, and some hams enclosed in white bags, suspended from the rafters ; ever and anon some copper vessel flashes in the luxurious semi-darkness ; mysterious reflections flicker on the wall ; the red glow falls upon the old clock case, and upon shining dish-covers that might have been cunningly arranged in order to concoct a Dutch painter's “bits” of light and shade and “doubling of line.” A collie blinks before the fire ; the odour of the peat is exquisite. The Young Man, with his fine face profiled in the uncertain light, and a yellow tinge spreading over his long gray beard, reminds me of the King of Borva. Somebody, with her simple manners and natural grace, suggests Princess Shiela. Frank Lavendar is not in the group. It is difficult to think that we are not somewhere up in Scotland ; but we are at least in Derbyshire.

The Young Man is engaged in a deep conversation on yonder shadowy settle, open to the sky, with a flaxen-haired philosopher of the advanced age of seven.

“Now, what should you like to be, Joseph?” we hear the Y. M. earnestly ask. “A lawyer?”

A shy shake of the head.

"A doctor?"

A shake of the head, with a shudder.

"A clergyman?"

"No!" emphatically.

"Perhaps you would like to be a soldier now, a captain, you know, with a sword?"

"No! I should like to be a butcher."

"A butcher! Why! Oh why?"

"*Cos their 'osses goes the fastest.*"

It is time for Joseph to go to bed. Indeed, he has been specially privileged in regard to remaining up to-night. He retires, after marvellous draughts of new milk. Somebody and the good wife are very confidential. Our host is discussing with the Y. M., slowly and deliberately, the question of the bygone allotment of the land to various adjoining owners. "Luke at Kinder"—he says with much honest indignation—"while the rich mon has received according to his riches 2,000 acres, the poor mon has not bin gien a single yaerd o' land. In fact, the poor hae been robbed on the 40 acres o' what used to be knowed as t' Poor Mon's Pace (piece), and o'er which t' poor o' Ayfield 'ad the rights o' turfery. But t' ole plot 'as bin absorbed in proivate estates."

"Fairfield common will be claimed next," says Sweetbriar, with the mounful air of Cassandra prophesying evil of her beloved Troy. No wonder that so robust a religionist as Mr. Spurgeon is incensed at this modern spirit of selfish exclusiveness, and that we find him writing: "I sometimes feel very glad when I look at the sea, and think that it belongs to the great and generous God, and not to greedy man. Here upon land every foot of earth is enclosed by somebody, and jealously guarded from trespass. The village had a breezy common, upon which a poor man might at least keep a goose; but the great folks could never rest till every inch was put within hedges and made their own. You can scarcely walk anywhere without being met by '*Trespassers Beware.*' Mountains and hills, which everybody ought to be allowed to climb without leave, are fenced in and kept free from all intruders. . . . No such greed can appropriate the sea. The free sea cannot be parcelled out, nor hedged, nor ditched, nor dyked, nor walled. It

has no lords of the manor, but remains free and unappropriated for ever." Such grasping Conservatism is enough to make us Radicals, or Communists, or Land Leaguers, or something equally wrong and revolutionary. I wonder, by the way, if the red Phrygian Cap of Liberty would suit Somebody as well as the Blue colours she wore at the last General Election? It certainly makes a very charming *chapeau* in M. Jean Gautherin's marble impersonification of "The Republic."

To put an end to the grievance the Y. M. proposes a song. After a little pressing, the farmer rolls out the old strains of "The Vicar of Bray" in a hearty baritone voice. Later on, Somebody is persuaded to attempt a song without accompaniment. We have never heard it before, and the air she imparts to the sweet homely Scotch pathos of "Cuddle Doon," is her own.

We are loath to leave the room; the flickering lights would enchant an artist. There are trembling reflections in every shadowy corner; the face of the Y. M. stands out of an ebony background, like the study of "a head" in an ancient picture; while the lamp casts an alarming silhouette of the farmer's head and shoulders on the wall behind.

What a great ghostly old bedroom the Young Man and myself share; a room big enough to run a steeplechase in over the widely divided furniture. And what a great ghostly old bed; an antiquated four-poster, heavily canopied and curtained, in which one could get lost; a bed almost as big as its over-rated contemporary at Ware. But there is a pleasant smell of lavender about the sheets, and the Young Man is already snoring like a trombone in trouble. The moon peeps in weirdly through the lattice windows. Once an owl flutters past with a hoot. There is a scramble of mice in the wainscot. A clock in the room ticks with a thrilling, throbbing emphasis. The room seems full of corners, and each corner boasts a closet, with great brass handles on the doors. It is just the room for ghosts. I believe I should see a ghost were it not for the Y. M.'s solo on the nasal trombone. It has been the dream of my life to see a real respectable good-mannered ghost. Speaking of dreams— . . .

The Young Man shakes me roughly in the early dawn

and bids me rise and see the sunrise. He is already dressed and humming

“As I was going to Darby, Sir,
All on a market day,
I met the finest Ram, Sir,
That ever was fed on hay.
Daddle-i-day, daddle-i-day,
Fal-de-ral, fal-de-ral, daddle-i-day.”

I wish he wasn't quite so vivacious. I am an old young man; he is a young old man; and the balance of spirits seems all in favour of the latter. I am supremely sleepy. The strong mountain air is more somnolent than poppies; the long walks of yesterday have made me stiff and tired.

“Get up, my, boy, at once,” continues the Y. M., with a voice of command, trolling

“The Jaws that were in his head, Sir,
They were so fine and thin,
They were sold to a Methodist Parson,
For a pulpit to preach in.
Daddle-i-day, &c.”

“Just one more minute,” I implore, with an effort. He goes trampling down the broad echoing stairs; I hear the sound of life stirring in the yard; there is a confusion of farm voices, and after that I am steeped in sweet sleep. . . . The Young Man, with an assumption of temper, breaks in upon my rest, hours after, to say that breakfast is waiting. I never saw the sunrise, of course. If I had only been left alone I might have got up just in time to see it set; like Mark Twain who, when up the Rigi, missed the *morning* horn-blow at the Rigi-Kulu hotel, and saw the rare spectacle of an evening sunrise. Readers of *A Tramp Abroad* will recall this critical incident in the life of the American humourist. . . . I suppose the sight of the sun coming up over the bleak misty shoulders of Kinder Scout was a spectacle to be remembered. I am rather glad I missed it, for I should have lost the girls' enthusiastic description of it: how there was a cloudy wall of dark mountain edged with a cold gray light; how that became a saffron, which warmed to a pale rose and sent up lances of light, spreading in the shape of a fan; how everything which had been hitherto blurred, indistinct and spongy,

slowly emerged from its misty monotone, and showed delicacy, sharpness, colour, and detail; how the sun itself—a blood-red shield—floated above the topmost ridges, and swam higher and higher in a bath of gold, till the whole heavens caught the glamour and glory of a new day.

The chief sensation at breakfast is the appearance of the young philosopher Joseph, drenched through. He has fallen into the forbidden horse-trough in the yard. Soaked is he to the skin. The Y. M. is severe.

“Now suppose you had been drowned and had gone straight to God, what would He have said to you?” he enquires.

“He’d a sed you’r very wet.”

There is really no reasoning with such a boy; and the Y. M. takes his revenge by flying a kite with the culprit’s brother. In China the old men only are allowed the pastime of kite flying. How would it be to call the Y. M. the “Heathen Chinee?”

We get back to the Kinder Fall. Somebody must have another hour or two at her picture. It is another day white with heat; but there is a brisk stir of wind which gives movement and light and shade to the panorama. Pleasant it is to sit and watch the cloud-shadows sail in soft progress over the hills, pursued by tidal-waves of strong sunlight that bring out every gradation of colour, burnishing the gold of the furze, warming the purple acres of heather, picking out the green of the bracken, and showing the sharp, shining grays of far-off rocky ridges.

After luncheon our farming friends, who have business at Castleton, drive us thither by rocky devious roads, along the soft, sylvan Edale Valley, by Mam Tor, and through the Winnats. At Castleton we catch one of the big excursion breaks which ply between there and Buxton, and avail ourselves of the homeward journey of the vehicle. One side of the break is ornamented by Young Manchester, a dozen callow youths, slangy, shallow, sallow, whose “loud” get-up is emphasized by their vulgar manners. The other row is composed of young couples who swoon on each others’ shoulders and encircle each others’ waists. The Manchester line is spirituous, and sings, amid the fume of much cheap cigar, “Dear old pals, charming old pals.” The opposing

rank of Joseph James' and Maria Eliza Hannahs', is spiritual, and is singing in debased tune: "We shall meet on that beautiful shore," with quite vehement and unnecessary certainty. The effect is striking—very striking. Our companions are to us as the offensive unspirited Cockney bagmen were to Christopher North on that memorable journey by the Dumfries mail-coach from Edinboro' to Tweedside. Luckily the Y. M. obtained seats for the girls on the box, with one of the jolliest reminiscences of the old coaching times that exists in these days of cads and paper collars.

The summer day is fast declining as we approach our journey's end. The sunset is shining over the wild western ridges of the Peak. The hills seem to soar larger in the burning crimsons and purples and golds of the glowing sky. As the conflagration of colour spreads in splendour, our Philistine cargo is silenced by its magic and wealth and wonder. The beauty of the scene increases

"Till all the sordid earth
Is hued like Heaven, and Life's dull prison-house
Turns to a golden palace."

The sun itself has now sunk behind the hilly ridges, giving to their broken edges an embroidery of fire. The sky cools from the radiance of flaming reds and crimsons and carmines into delicate gradations of orange and amber; but the hills facing the sunset still reflect the glow; a solitary chimney, yet here and there on a steep slope, becomes idealised and shines like an Eastern minaret, while the gables of a lonely house are magnified to twice their actual height. The light dies; the day is done; and now the infinite tranquillity of a clear twilight comes over hill and valley; and the peace and beauty of it possesses us until it is broken by the life and movement of Buxton, stirring after the drowsy heat of a tropical afternoon.

There is not much more to be said concerning our two-days' desertion of duty. All that does remain Somebody begs to be allowed to offer. And surely the readers whom I have rendered most irascible by my intolerable prolixity will listen to her brief postscript. She says:—

I am *very vexed* to think that you have associated my

poor little picture of the Kinder Downfall with Sir Frederick Leighton and the Royal Academy. It will *never* leave Derbyshire. It is *already* given away, and when I have made it *less imperfect* it will go to Mrs. ———, of ——— Farm, near Kinder, in memory of “Cuddle Doon.”





Chapter XXX.

CLIMBING COMBS MOSS.

*Will you go with me to the moors?
To the land of grouse and heather—
You level-ridge in the distance,
Where hill and sky meet together?
One hour from where we are standing,
In sound of the forge and the hammer,
And you'll hear the crow of the moor cock,
And the lapwing's ceaseless clamour.*

J. H. J.



JANUARY morning at Buxton. Gray sky, gusty east wind, and grim black frost. There is a friendly glow in the fire; across the room the cold window frames a picture of sullen hills drawn in Indian ink. The North-Easter has lost its temper, and is shrieking because no one ventures out to do battle with its vengeance.

“Just the morning for a ten mile walk as a tonic before dinner!” says the Young Man breaking in upon some touch-and-go criticism of the poetry of *Festus*, which I am enjoying with Somebody, with frank gray eyes and good-natured mouth. She has got Philip James Bailey's volume, a gift of the poet, resting in her lap. By the way, who reads *Festus* now? a dramatic poem of which Alfred Tennyson said that “he could scarcely trust himself to say how much he admired it, for fear of falling into extravagance.” It is a

remarkable composition, and all the more remarkable because its author was barely three-and-twenty when it was given to the world. But he has never done anything of merit since this youthful masterpiece. He exhausted himself for all time.

“ He sang himself hoarse to the stars very early,
And cracked a weak voice to too lofty a tune.”

Single Speech Hamilton ; One Book Bailey.

But to return to the Young Man. He is not thus called because he is young, for his beard has long been iron-gray, and the steel ploughshare of Time has left deep furrows in the fine-featured face ; but because his heart is full of juvenility and his sympathies are all with youth. One of us, indeed, proposed to dub him “The Boy.” He takes a school-lad’s fresh interest in country-life, and his greatest delight is to romp with children, or pause to have a *tête à tête* with little strangers of the mature age of five and six, whom he may casually encounter in his travels. I should not be astonished to find him setting a back at leap-frog, or playing at shuttlecock and battledore, when he is eighty. Although he is now in his sixth decade, and is surely old enough to know better, he has been exposed to the genteel disgust of his grown-up family “knuckling down” at ring-taw with the small urchins of the neighbourhood ; and only last spring he went bird-nesting with some young lads, finding the mossy nests for them, but, mark you, not permitting the theft of a single egg, or fledgling, for the Young Man is as much a champion of wild birds as St. Francis D’Assisi was a friend of fishes. When remonstrated with by an indignant potentate in petticoats, he quotes a favourite author to prove that cricket has been made a manly game simply that men may think themselves boys for an hour or two.

The Young Man, in addition to these dreadful deformities of character, is the only person in the world I ever found to agree with the Rev. Charles Kingsley’s love for the north-east wind. “To be able to enjoy the brave east wind is a sure sign of good health, my nephew,” he says, after he has dragged me away from the genial fire, and the warm gray eyes, to face the gloomy Hyperborean hills.

Once outside, there is something strong and healthful in the dash of cold, tingling, tonic air, that inspires courage ; and the ramble we have before us is through a wild tract of picturesque country that is new to me, and one which my friend's ecstatic descriptions have led me, in the drudgery of a dull life in a dingy office, to look forward to with no ordinary anticipation. We are bound for Combs Moss, a romantic solitude upon whose heather the foot of the tourist has seldom trod. It is quite near Buxton, yet very far away from Buxton ; and while artists would revel in its scenic charms, antiquarians would delight in its interesting historic relics : but practically the place has yet to be discovered.

The Young Man makes light work of the steep slopes of the Corbar Woods, in their winter aspect very different to the dense green forest which summer visitors haunt. Overhead there is now no fretwork roof of lambent foliage, through which the sunlight steals with a softened radiance ; underfoot there is no tangled carpet of wild flowers. The bracken is brown ; the ferns are yellow and sad. The pleasant summer glades of cool green are now represented by black trunks and bare, frosted branches. The incessant concert of birds is hushed. One misses, too, the sweet confusion of lovers whose reverie has been disturbed by encroaching footsteps. The only sound is the axe of the woodman. The woods are being thinned by the Duke's forester, for the growth has become too thick. Several trunks lie athwart the path, others still standing bear the fatal white paint cross of destruction. Among the winding walks, so cool and fragrant and beautiful a few months ago ; across the secluded bridge where Mr. Manchester has so often plighted his troth with Miss Liverpool, and Miss Birmingham, with the deadly eyes, made promises to Mr. Sheffield, with pretty lips that have since perjured themselves, and with honeyed smiles that are now sweetening another's hours ; still ascending the lovers' path, until the very summit of Corbar is reached. And now above stretches a vast expanse of moor. This is Combs Moss, a mountain ridge several miles long and one or two miles across. We are to explore it this morning. Buxton lies below, shut completely in with barriers of hills. The town lies, as it were, at the bottom of a tea-cup. Across

in the cold gray mist is the hill locally known as Solomon's Temple; behind it the blade-like contour of Axe Edge stands out clear and defined with waves of brooding mist below it. The Young Man, to whom this gray peak of the Midlands is as dear as the Matterhorn is to an enthusiastic member of the Alpine Club, says he has often clomb the hill when there has been a sea of clouds islanded with rocky headlands beneath him, but a sky of vivid blue above; and in winter he has stood on its summit when a snow-storm has been beating below, blotting out the earth in a dancing mist of white, while the sun blessed the head of the mountain with its beams, and left it unspotted by the wintry element, and when thunderstorms have raged in the valleys below, while a clear atmosphere shines round the edge. Cawton Hill and Chelmorton Low are high in cloudland; yonder is Priestcliffe; there the hills encompassing Tideswell; while that indistinct nebulous mass, difficult to decide whether it be the mist or mountain, is Mam Tor, the shivering mountain of Castleton.

We strike across the moor. The North-Easter at this altitude shaves one like an atmospheric razor. The long beard and moustache of the Young Man are being frozen into matted iron; there is ice on the mouthpiece of my pipe; but we perspire with the plunging exercise through the springy heath which we, being lovers of birds and loathers of the battue, protest has all the glow and excitement of grouse shooting without its cruelty. Several grouse rise, but at long distances from us. Once a hare starts from our feet.

But there seems an utter suspension of life. The moors are a picture of wild desolation, and a cold loneliness, that is not altogether without poetic fascination. The black rigour of the frost seems to hold everything fast in its iron grip. The peaty pools are frozen; there is a great stillness: everything is dead; the prevailing colour is dead; a neutral tint, a shroud of swathing mist, a brooding cold gray that half hides and half reveals. The moors themselves seem to be a vast black sea of raging billows suddenly checked in the height of a storm and held in eternal arrest. The heather, regarded as a mass, is a dark bronzed green-like velvet, and is as attractive to the artistic eye as in its wine-stained purple of full bloom. But taking the individual plant it is withered and dead. One looks in vain for a single

sprig of green, and recalls the pathos of that passage in Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, where the author of *Jane Eyre* went over the December moors searching in the little hidden hollows and sheltered nooks for a lingering spray of heather, just one spray—however withered—to take to her sister Emily, and found that the flower was not recognised by the filmy, fading eyes. Combs Moss, indeed, is just such a moor as the strange wild-bird-like nature of Emily Brontë loved, for here are the vast spaces, the sense of freedom and of loneliness, which gave to her dauntless poetic nature such ministering companionship. But if the heather is dead, the bilberry is a bright green, for it is freshest in the depths of winter, and duskiest in the summer; while in the protected clefts and sheltered crevices of the gritstone are beautiful lichens and mosses that are miracles of colour. The Young Man points out a bold rock that is called Robin Hood's Tor. It was the scene of one of the Sherwood hero's hunting exploits, when he—but no matter. The story is quite a mile long. At least we have got over that space of ground while the Young Man, a lover of legends, has been detailing the country-side tradition. We are now making our way across the moor to its north-eastern extremity to something less apocryphal: an actual Roman Camp, as complete as it was when the warriors of Julius Agricola left it.

Our steps are directed thither, the Young Man diminishing the distance with a fund of local anecdote that is as unfailling as the widow's cruse of oil. A grouse at last rises near us. It flies up almost at our feet with a startled cluck-cluck-cluck, and then alights a few yards off with a temerity which the Young Man cannot disturb. The bird is waiting for his timid wife, who is trembling somewhere near us and is afraid to join her lord and master. He accosts her impatiently, and now there is a sudden flutter of brown feathers as the dear lady has summoned up courage, and the wedded pair fly away into the misty distance, evidently under the delusion that the 12th of August has arrived prematurely. Our next acquaintance is a horned ram as black as his native millstone grit. We approach him, and he contemplates us with a grave stare of critical scrutiny. After he had judiciously summed us up, he gives vent to a

bah! of unmistakable contempt, and walks off with an air of disdain in his curly horns, and lofty scorn in his dirty fleece, to tell his club of the strange creatures trespassing on his estate. The Young Man says that these mountain sheep are very different animals to your domesticated meadow mutton. They are as wild as the hills they range. Fierce and defiant, when a hostile dog is after them they will take the rough stone walls of the country like stags. And he also adds something about their superior culinary qualities.

Presently, as we approach the eastward edge of the Moss, there comes a patch of blue in the cold, gray, gusty sky. The mists that have been trailing along the hills are lifting. The sun, as yet, does not absolutely shine; but his presence is indicated by a lance of yellow light that strikes athwart the Landseer mists of the landscape. And far below us is a deep broad vale shut in with bold hills whose burly shoulders claim attention by their aggressive attitude. Chapel-en-le-Frith hides down in the hollow; close by is Bradshaw Hall, once belonging to the John Bradshaw, lord high president of the tribunal which sent the head of Charles I. to the block; and lo! there is a broad mere which is not frozen, for the water shivers in the wind. The Young Man vouches that it is only the Peak Forest Canal Reservoir; an artificial lake formed by a natural basin. But are we not in Wordsworth's country? Say, is not that Grasmere? The expanse of water certainly gives to this Derbyshire landscape a charm which Derbyshire landscapes emphatically lack. Who was it who said that a landscape without water is like the human face without the eye? And now behold! the sun with a sudden burst turns the drawing in Indian ink into a radiant water-colour picture. The light touches the water, and the silver spreads over the cold black surface until it is a damascened sheet of liquid light, framed in a setting of gray-green, where the irregular banks and grassy promontories, which give the water a picturesque variety, are reflected. The burnished expanse is broken only when a fitful gust of wind ruffles it in dark ripples. The day is fast brightening. Hills that have been invisible now sketch themselves in the picture with great clearness of outline. The Young Man enthu-

siastically proposes a vote of thanks to his Puissant Majesty, the Clerk of the Weather, for turning on the opportune sunshine; it is seconded by his companion-in-arms, supported by both, and carried unanimously. And now the views on every side have broadened to the vision, as if seen through a powerful telescope. Distant objects stand out sharp and clear in the thin bright air; the lake below mirrors a patch of blue sky. The little mist lingering in the valley is now a silver gauze. Taxall,—Lyme Moor,—Disley,—Whaley Moor,—Eccles Pike,—Chinley Churn,—Dympus,—rattles off the Young Man pointing to this and that hill, with his stick, like the descriptive lecturer at a penny panorama. To our left, right across a vale in the north, are the sombre shoulders of Kinderscout, the highest point in Derbyshire; the isolated Peak on the opposite side to the right is Cracken Edge, on whose summit a famous landscape painter, in a notable picture, placed Joshua commanding the sun to stand still, while in the valley the warriors of Israel were vanquishing with great vigour the army of the Amorites. Tom Moore conceived *Lalla Rookh*, with its gorgeous glow of scenery and vivid Oriental colouring, by the banks of the Dove; but it was even a greater geographical achievement to pass off this hungry Derbyshire hill as a peak in Palestine, and that Chapel-en-le-Frith dale as the valley of Ajalon.

The expansive view which we are now comprehending is the same as the soldiers of Cæsar beheld, as their sentries looked down upon the country and watched with strained eyes for the rising of any of the desperate, disaffected Britons whom the Roman legions had driven from the Derbyshire lead-mines and lime-workings. Here at this northern termination of the Moss, at an elevation of 1,670 feet above the sea-level, is the Roman fort. Look how clearly from the valley the artificial chariot-road, a ruled line of green amid the dark heath, climbs the stubborn side of the hill until it reaches a level plateau at the summit. This flat and angular platform is flanked with precipitous escarpments several hundred feet in height and invulnerable against attack; while on the southern boundary are formidable entrenchments still distinctly definable. The inspection of this ancient stronghold is like reading a

chapter of history. The memory sees more than the eye, and the imagination peoples the silent trenches with helmeted men armed with shield and spear. The Young Man points out the fountain in the centre of the Camp. It quenched the thirst of valiant warriors dead these two thousand years, but the clear water is bubbling up still a perpetual spring, the emblem of immortal youth. We also stumble, when at the northern angle of this old-world fortress, upon excavations which are said to be the remains of sentry shelters.

The supreme idea of the Roman strategists, in entrenching this windy table-land, was to command an outlook over as large an area of country as possible. From this unassailable eyrie they had certainly one of the most expansive prospects in the Peak. At the foot of the fortress right down in the wide valley, may be seen in the summer days another encampment, for regiments of Her Majesty's infantry of the line, from the depôts of Manchester or Sheffield, camp out here, and have target practice in a country as wild as the defiles of Afghanistan or the dhongas of Zululand. And a very picturesque sight it is in the soft, hot, hazy weather to see the red-coats scattered over the heather, little patches of bright colour amid the bold inequalities of the hills, pinging away with the Martini-Henry under the very camp where the imperial eagle waved its symbol of conquest in days when the Nazarene was performing His miracles.

When the Romans left the country, and their Saxon successors lost it, Combs Moss overlooked the Royal Forest of the Peak of Derbyshire. It was held by William Peveril, the illegitimate son of William of Normandy. Peak Forest is now a railway station, and the blasting of the limestone companies is heard where once the woodman's horn awoke responsive echoes. Chapel-en-le-Frith, according to the Young Man, owes its name to the fact of the foresters and keepers of the deer becoming so numerous that about 1225 they purchased a portion of the crown lands held by one William de Ferrers and erected for themselves a chapel for divine service, which they named the Chapel in the Forest (firth). The ancient chapel is as dead as the sturdy green-woodsmen who built it, and the present church has

neither the attraction of age nor architectural beauty to detain us.

Combs Moss falls away rapidly into Dove Holes, for which place we make with appetites as sharp as any that may have belonged to Roman soldier or Norman forester. Dove Holes is the picturesque name for a commonplace lime-burning village which has a station on the North-Western system, while it gives a name to a long tunnel, perforating a massive hill, on the main line of the Midland to Manchester, between Peak Forest and Chapel-en-le-Frith. There was something big in landslips here some years ago ; while the history of the tunnel is in itself a romance ; a fascinating story of engineering skill conquering insurmountable forces. More than three years were spent in this difficult undertaking. Water-springs in the rock defied both capital and labour. At the present time there is an underground stream in this vault in which trout and grayling are so numerous that it has been suggested by a practical angler they should be captured and transferred to the over-fished waters of the Wye and Derwent. Fancy trout in a tunnel ; imagine grayling in the gloom !

It is a sudden transition from the broad silence and the sublimity of the moorland mountain to this commercial village of Dove Holes, with its public-houses, and its hulking "corner-men" at each turn of a street. There is a train bound for Buxton in a few minutes, and, leaving the Young Man to propitiate with a penny the shrill anguish of a little fellow, who has fallen down and broken a jug, I hasten to the rabbit-hutch of a booking-office to take tickets.





Chapter FFD.

ROUND BY THE ROCHES,

WITH A LOOK AT

LUDCHURCH.

*Come, let us to the hills! where none but God
Can overlook us; for I hate to breathe
The breaths and think the thoughts of other men
In close and crowded cities, where the sky
Frowns like an angry father mournfully.
I love hills and I love loneliness,
And oh! I love the woods, those natural fanes
Whose very air is holy; and we breathe
Of God; for He doth come in special place,
And, while we worship, He is there for us.*

FESTUS.

“**F**IFTY, fifty-seven; fifty-two, fifty-seven!” It is a tournament under the gas-light. The combatants have their coats off, and are tilting with pointed lances, which they ever and anon render deadly with chalk. The spectators sit on seats raised above the cloth of green. There is no Queen of Beauty, but an automatic herald, in the evening dress indispensable to the successful waiter, proclaims the issues: “Fifty-nine, fifty-three.”

The scene is the billiard-room of a Buxton hotel where “Kalmat” and myself have been driven by stress of rain,

which is making the Spa of the Peak more than ever a "watering-place." The weather does not look auspicious for a Pilgrimage in the Peak to Ludchurch and the Roches, which we have planned for to-morrow. The pluvian deities seem to have set their faces against "Kalmat"—a wanderer in many lands—seeing a little of the neglected scenery of his own country. "Kalmat" had never heard of Ludchurch. He asked whether it belonged to the Anglican Establishment, and his ignorance of the Roches is as dense as a London fog. Buxton is crowded with visitors. The "season" is at its height. How many of the people—educated Englishmen—visiting the North Midland Spa, I wonder, have ever heard of our shrine? There is no part of England less known than the heathery highlands half-a-dozen miles from Buxton, where Staffordshire and Cheshire and Derbyshire meet in a wild solitude whose scenery haunts the senses like a spell. These highlands of England have yet to be discovered. They are very near civilization, and still very far from it. They are not on the beaten track. They are off the rail. The guide-books know them not. The Royal Engineers could not find Ludchurch. You may scrutinize the ordnance map in vain to find indication of that solemn temple. "Why Ludchurch is only eight miles from Buxton!" exclaimed the late Duke of Westminster to one of many parties he was driving from Eaton Hall to Ludchurch, and he spoke with the suddenness accompanying a startling discovery.

Over supper our prospects for the morrow seem damp and dubious, and a certain Potentate in Petticoats, who will not be able to accompany us, throws even more cold water on the scheme But lo! this morning there is a radiance in the air; the sky has a blueness that might have been borrowed from Italy; the sun lights up the landscape. Mornings of such brilliant promise are often disappointing as they grow older. The glory is too great to last. Like the majority of Senior Wranglers, such days put forth all their brightness into their early history. The maturity is commonplace: the eventide even mournful. But to-day the promise of the morning will be fulfilled throughout, for behold! the cattle are grazing on the tops of the hills, outlined forms sketched against the sky, surest sign

of continued fineness, as the farmers, who know nothing about meteorology, but a great deal about the weather, will tell you.

The breakfast bells are ringing at Buxton, as we are driving out of the town. There is a sweet strong air that has kissed the heather; a thin, buoyant atmosphere that laces the nerves like a tonic of iron wine. Up hill and past Burbage, where the lime-burners until recently lived in burrows, like ancient cave-men, and then all that tells of man and mammon is left behind. We are driving on the Leek road. It winds along the purple slopes at Axe Edge. The moors encompass us. On the hill-side are two rustic bilberry gatherers. A study for Birket Foster that bare-headed boy with the blue eyes and flaxen curls, and frank fresh face, and corduroy trousers, patched at the knee, that button on to his long-sleeved waistcoat; with his earnest little sister, whose brown hands are stained with the juice of the jet-beaded fruit. A picture in herself, this little mountain maiden, in her rude rush hat, unribboned save by the sunlit wind-blown tresses of her hair, and the red roses of her bonny cheeks.

In front, lying in a world of silence and solitude, rise a company of peaked hills: some with the sun catching their grassy slopes and touching them with a tenderer green; others with a gray veil of mist hanging down their shoulders. That pyramidal mountain is Croom Peak; the hill whose shape suggests a sugar-loaf is Parker's Hill; the elevated ridge on the left of the blade-like contour of Axe Edge is Wild Boar Clough, where the last wild boar in England was hunted to the death (the nearly extinct wild-animals such as the badger and wild-cat lingered longer in the Peak side of Cheshire than in any other county); the peak that keeps it company is Shutlings Low. One or two white farmhouses, with a blue film rising from their chimneys, the very poetry of smoke, are scattered in the gray gritstone hollows. Vivid patches of green among the dark heath show where a crop of late hay has been gathered. It is "high farming" in these parts; but not the scientific agriculture of Mr. Mechi. Rather the farming of Virgil's time. Steam and phosphates are as remote from the mind of the Hodges of these highlands as they were from Triptolemus, with his primitive

plough and yoke of bullocks. This stubborn land in niggard spaces reclaimed from the moors, is not exactly the earth that Jerrold described which, when tickled with the hoe, laughed with the harvest. Still I have heard of farmers in these lonely latitudes obtaining two crops of oats in one year; one in January and one in October. It was because the oats of the September of one year were not harvested until the January of the next year. "Wild oats," indeed. "Kalmat" is opposed to any attempt being made to reclaim the moors. He says the heath retains moisture, and that the moors are the natural watersheds of the country, and that cultivation would cut off the water-supply. But remember "Kalmat" is a sportsman.

A strong light lies on the nearer moorland, bringing out an opulency of purple, save where a passing argosy of pearly cloud sails in soft slow advancement of shade over the pronounced brightness; but far away in the silent loneliness, where the wide distant sea of heather melts into the sky, there is a sunny haze of delicate tints, amethysts, opals, and tender grays, blended in a dream of colour. And all around is the spell of silence, the sense of space, the scent of thyme and heather. Once or twice there is the sudden whir-r-r of a grouse; once or twice the reverberating ping of the breechloader is heard, and sportsman and smoking tube of steel are seen in relief against the sky, a sharp silhouette.

Pause awhile charioteer at this isolated group of white, wayside cottages. This is Dove Head, nearly two thousand feet above sea-level. Close by the roadside is the spring of the river Dove, rising from the great water-shed of Axe Edge. A lichened stone bears the initials of Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton, entwined in a moss-grown monogram.

It is not far from Dove Head to Flash. Whoever heard of Flash? Yet this gray, gritstone village, lost among the moors, has given the English language an expressive synonym. Spurious coin, in the "good old days," was minted here; the people were as uncouth as the country; and the inaccessible village was the scene of many pugilistic encounters. Flash is, in fact, the debatable land that borders equally upon Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and Cheshire. The three counties are so close together that you might stand in Derbyshire and bang at black-cock, and one bird

might drop dead in Cheshire, while the next shot might bring another down in Staffordshire. So it was easy for members of the P.R. to laugh at the law by stepping from the jurisdiction of one county into that of another, should the constabulary of one district interfere with their fistic art. There is, indeed, a story told of a worthy J.P. of a past decade being apprised of a great battle-royal between the Burslem Bruiser and the Preston Pet. Coming down with some friends to see the fray, he found the ring pitched within his own magisterial boundaries. He sternly ordered the fighting fraternity off the ground. They obediently moved a few yards further on the moor, passing over the frontier of another county. In their fresh location, the stern Nemesis of the law became the enthusiastic Mæcenas of the ring, for both the magistrate and his party remained to see the fight, and contributed towards the subscription. The present Flash is peaceable enough. It is more interested in farming than forgery, and the rowdy pugilism has given way to a pastoral quiet that is like an idyll of Theocritus.

We alight to enter the Church, close by the roadside. It is not picturesque. It is a squat, ugly edifice. It has not even the saving merit of being considered old, and cannot, consequently, win the respect paid to age. A list of by-gone benefactions are painted on the wall. The donors have long been dust, but their little liberalities remain.

“The good that men do lives after them ;
The evil is oft interred with their bones,”—

if common consent will allow Mark Antony to stand corrected. The inscriptions on the lichen-stained gravestones are in some cases curious. These moorland men live long lives. The testimony of the tombs is that Death takes only the very young and the very old. The Clock of Life, when once started, goes the round of the Dial. The sexton can almost tell whose grave he will next dig. Death goes by seniority among these gray hills. One of the tombstones attracts us by its quaintness. On the tomb is the design of two coffins in stone. The inscription on the headstone tells of one, Keziah, wife of Thomas Brunt. She died in child-bearing in November, 1813, in her thirty-third year. Then

follows this verse, which is better than most graveyard literature :

“The boy’s mother closes all her woes
 In bringing forth a son with dying throes.
 His cares are all to come : hers all are passed ;
 The son’s first moments are the mother’s last.
 His life’s her death ; her death his life supplies ;
 He kills in birth, and she in bearing dies.”

Thomas Brunt, the husband, continued to walk these hills, enjoying roast beef and nut-brown ale, until 1864. When he joined his wife he was a patriarch of eighty-four. The majority of his neighbours have as long an “innings.”

Now, with the sweet caress of the wind in our faces, we bowl merrily along a valley between the moors. Those gritstone posts that keep repeating themselves out of the moor are the “Duke of Argyle’s monuments.” The T shaped stone structures, which would no doubt have caused much anxious speculation to the antiquarian members of the Pickwick Club, are cattle shelters, where cattle may seek protection from the hungry wind that in winter wails over these moors. Keeping us company is a burn that is a tributary of the Dane. It is a limpid mountain maiden whose life has increased from fretful infancy at our side. We heard the first note of her baby prattle among the rocks and ferns of the brae. She was fed by freshets and sung to by the wind, and then came the careless, lispng chatter of the growing girl. Now it is the musical song of the damsel of sweet seventeen, with a necklace of white water-crowfoot trembling on her breast, coquetting with hanging tree and fern and flower, as she skips from rock to rock in all the fervour of health and hope and youth and beauty. “Kalmat’s” affectionate nature is in love with the singing stream. He finds meanings and modulations in its voice.

Here is Quarnford, with door-ways, windows, and dados wearing blue facings of lime-wash. Poor cottages, but as clean and comely as those of the boasting village of Brock. There is poverty, but not squalor ; and the children are characterized by that cleanliness which is the elegance of the poor. There is a Wesleyan chapel by the wayside. Wheresoever in the Peake Countrie there happens to be a cluster of gray houses, huddling together as if for warmth,

there is sure to be a little Bethel. The National Church at the time neglected the wilds of Derbyshire. The people grew up as savage as the country. But the fiery fervour of Wesley, and the fierce fanaticism of Whitfield, reached the heathen of these highlands, and the preaching of Methodism was as the introduction of Christianity to the benighted aborigines. Depend upon it the High Peak owes more to Wesleyan zeal than some of us imagine.

The next hamlet is Gradbach. Now our exploration must be made on foot. So our charioteer is sent away to meet us across the country some miles hence, at a hostelry among the hills called the Royal Cottage. We shall see him again in three or four hours hence. So we away. *Au revoir*, then, son of Phæton. We are left alone amidst an amphitheatre of hill and valley, over which the sun ever and anon sends tidal waves of light, turning sober grays into intense greens, and browns into burning golds. Here purple moorland, a vast undulating breadth, a sea of waves rolling away to an ocean line on the horizon; there a clearing and a patch of ripening wheat; anon a dash of white that might be snow, but it is lime spread over the heath by the farmer persistent to kill the heather and reclaim a few acres for husbandry. Everywhere is the sound of water, the music of eager water-threads stealing out of the bank past an old farm-house, with a heap of moss-grown stones at the gate, (a horse-block for the safe mounting of fat farmer or dowdy dowager bearing heavy baskets for the market), to the valley of the Dane, where there is a deserted old mill and one or two cottages in ruins. Upon broken window and decaying roof a curse might rest. The place seems haunted in its dark enclosure of wooded bank. The shadowy nook is the scene for a ghost-story.

And now the Mecca of our pilgrimage is nigh. The darkly wooded hill-side, sloping to the Dane, is the ancient Back Forest of Swythamley, whose yews furnished Robin Hood with hunting-bows, and where Ludchurch is hidden. Above and beyond the steep sloping wood rise the Roches, black and grim even under this blue radiancy of sky. The crazy timbered structure we are now crossing is Caster's Bridge. Under it the Black Brook races past a tumult of bearded gritstone rocks to the Dane, which, rising on the

western flank of the Axe Edge, here divides East Cheshire and North Staffordshire, and afterwards, when its life has been blurred and disfigured by the outrages of man, joins the Weaver at Northwich to enter the Mersey at Runcorn. The rough, old, moss-grown plank-crossing, with the stone-harrassed water racing past in a series of noisy little waterfalls—waves of white which the sun ever and anon strikes—is picturesque enough in its green setting to detain a painter. But the old Caster's Bridge of arching gray stone, long since washed away, might have enchanted an artist hither. It was a memory in masonry, a story in stone. Lingering legends lent the quaint arch the charm of heroic association. "Kalmat," however, is suspicious of the stories. But his companion loves the old grotesque, country-side traditions. They are the green oases in the arid desert of history. They have met with the unchallenged acceptance of succeeding generations, and have thus a broad base for belief. We are too eager to dissect and analyse, and follow that shrewd scientist who endeavoured to upset "Robinson Crusoe," by pointing out that the rice which the castaway sowed could not have grown because it had been dressed and denuded of its fructifying properties. Emerson has finely said "Tradition supplies a better fable than any Invention can."

The surrounding scene is picturesque enough for any romance. Walking on, at issue over old legends, we are almost unconscious that we have been following a path that climbs the shadowy hillside, high above the Dane, which is now quite lost in the shade of spruce and larch and fir, and anon sends up flashes of liquid light from the wooded waterway. The river lies in a deep cañon beneath. Steppes of far-reaching moorland rise up on the other side. We are in the green gloom of the Back Forest. The upward path winds through a Gothic aisle of lambent leaves. Mossy columns support the arched roof of foliage, through which the sun is reflected in light leaf-shadows on the tangled path. It is September, and the trees are tinted by the artistic touch of Autumn. A painter's palette with its splashes of colour seems to have been upset among the foliage. Green is still the prevailing colour; but there are spots of rose-red on the smooth-boled beeches; an orange

glow is spreading on the maple ; the oaks are splashed with maroon, and the acorns are turning brown ; there is a shimmer of light yellow on the limes ; the elms are fading into a soft amber ; the chestnut has a bronzed gleam ; the tresses of the birch are of a golden hue. The mountain ash blazes with clusters of vivid red beads ; there are bright coral berries on the hip bushes ; wild raspberries impede our progress ; the yellow and white waxwork petals of the scented woodbine stretch across the narrow path. There is an ungathered bouquet of wild harebells and streaked convolvuses yet remaining of the summer, wild-pansies, and a wealth of golden gorse, which flowers in every season. The nuts on the hazel boughs are racing the blackberries into ripeness ; the haws are reddening on the thorn. There is a harmony of hue ; chord of colour answers chord. This secluded depth of forest might almost be the home of Pan. Here in this wild-wooded solitude, as we sit awhile on a cushion of moss with our pipes amid the fragrance of the resinous pines, in a silent session of thought, the sigh of a falling leaf is like the gentle movement of the elfin tribe of Oberon, and that harebell, whose chalice is catching the sunlight, might be the azure gaze of some retiring faun ; and the Dane where the placid pools make a liquid looking-glass for ash and birch, hazel and yew, might be the home of the nymphs ; and in that mossy vista, Adonis might find a couch of leaves :

“ And visions, as poetic eyes avow,
Hang on each leaf, and cling to every bough.”

The silence of the wood carries with it a strange solemnity. A blue butterfly, like a winged flower, flits in the flickering light made by the leaf-shadows ; once we catch sight of a disappearing brush of a squirrel ; a field mouse is carrying food to its house in the ground ; now and again a timid rabbit has stared at us and shown his little white tail. But the only sounds are the murmur of the river, the movement of the wind, and the rustle of leaves. The birds are speechless. There is a flutter of wings, but not the thrill of the feathered throat. In Spring when all the birds are either courting, or commencing house-keeping, the woods are noisy with their incessant opera ; but now the eloquence of

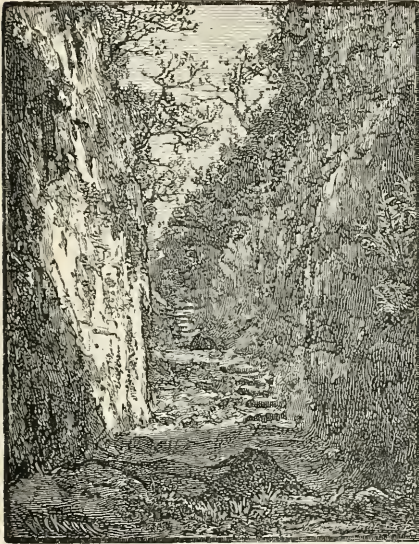
silence is well-nigh pathetic. Stay! a lonely robin has started a few plaintive notes. But there is no response to his pensive appeal. We are accosted by the contrasts in trees in which nature delights. Here is a gnarled patriarchal oak, attended by a light winsome birch, which stands supple and beautiful at its side. It is a picture of age and youth, the one radiant, hopeful and fair, the other seamed and scarred and furrowed by care and time. Close by the knotted trunk of this old oak, a little plant of green oak-leaves is springing up where an acorn has taken root, and the parent tree stretches out its tottering paralysed arms as if to bless its posterity. More gnarled oaks and graceful silvery birches, as we climb the wooded path, fringed by fading bracken and spreading burdocks, and carpeted with fir-needles.

And now, behold! the Castle Rocks come abruptly in view; a fortress by Nature of black millstone-grit embattlement projecting over the valley. At the foot of this bastion a tumult of loose rocks is strewn about like the *debris* made by a bygone bombardment. The view from this Castle Cliff in the crisp slanting September light is one that photographs itself on the memory of both of us, and time will not readily efface the impression on the mental camera. But it is difficult to convey the colour and contour of the picture in words. Perhaps the easiest way to deal with the task were to glibly dismiss the scene as difficult to imagine and impossible to describe, a method which is the favourite resort of ready writers. Yet it is very conventional scenery that the pen can reproduce, and it would be paying the present landscape but scant respect to leave out description altogether because of the difficulty of the performance. Better, I take it, an inadequate description to none at all. Even a few blurred lines, and badly mixed colours may assist the imagination more than utter blankness. Dip I, then, the 'prentice brush in the imperfect palette. The dark weather-worn Castle Rocks stand out from the wooded hill, and impend their pinnacles over a curve of deep valley at the bottom of which the Dane shines amid a dense green lining of spruce and larch. Beyond the gleam of water and the gloom of wood in the valley, the hills spread for miles, wild tracts of bronzed heath under the wide sphere of uninter-

rupted sky, here and there broken by a bright patch of emerald pasturage, washed a cleaner green by recent rains, with white farmsteads standing out against bleak, blue-black pines, such as Turner loved to introduce in the shading of his pictures. Some of these isolated buildings are sheltered in the dip of moorland valleys; others are perched like eyries on the brow of hills right against the distant sky-line, with the sun flashing heliostat signals from their narrow window panes. All around is the fascination of great breadths of undulating space, and the spell of sunlit silence. To-morrow the whole sharp, clear picture may be sponged out by the gray soaking mists that brood over these hills and blot out every outline.

And here the operations of the mental photographer are interrupted by a presence in an M.B. waistcoat, and with a copy of *Romola* under its arm and a pensile appendage hanging below its clerical coat. (Doctor Molloy, of Dub. Univ., we greet you!) The tail was, ye disciples of Darwin, only a geological hammer, or rather a fishing-rod for catching fish of the ganoid and placoid genus that the sea left in shoals on the tops of the loftiest of these hills before the time of the first Navigator, Noah himself. The apparition is asking "Kalmat" the bearings of Ludchurch, which he cannot find. No wonder that he has missed it. Ninety-nine explorers in a hundred would miss it. Ludchurch is close by. A narrow cleft in the wooded hill-side is the doorway. It leads to a flight of rough-hewn steps of slippery stone. We descend. The riven rock, fern-covered and lichen-stained, rises on either side of us a sheer precipice. The Church is really a gorge in the gritstone, worn and shaped groove-like in the heart of the hills by pre-historic forces. It is some 200 yards in length, several yards in width, some 40 feet in depth, and with a narrow entrance at either end. The sky spreads from side to side; a roof supported by walls and arches of luminous green. Young ash-trees and hazels hang above; rare plants and ferns and dwarf trees spring from every cleft; cool mosses robe the naked rocks; high up in a hazardous interstice a hawk has built its nest. At the further end of the Church a narrow slanting fissure opens out into an inner cavern ending in a perpendicular abyss which the most daring have not penetrated. Luckily

the guide-book writers are ignorant of Ludchurch, and excursionists are unable to find it. For the sacred temple would be violated by the fern-gatherers and botanists, who



LUDCHURCH.

ruthlessly tear out the leaves from the great, green, God-written Book of Nature, and who kidnap sweet ferns and flowers, lichens and mosses, and carry them away into captivity to pine away, pale prisoners, far from the nourishing influences, the dews and wind and shade and sweet air of their native hills.

There is something ineffably solemn about this romantic ravine. A lovable little friend of mine

once asked when she was here during a passing thunder-storm: "Father, is this the place where God makes the thunder?" Sterner minds might almost endorse her tender fancy. This divine defile is linked with legend and history. Here heroes have worshipped and martyrs have died. Here Robin Hood, and his gigantic Little John, and his Sherwood outlaws, met to receive the benediction of their "curtal Friar." The persecuted Lollards, hunted down by the swift death-hounds of persecution, sought refuge in Ludchurch, consecrating it by prayer and praise, sermon and psalm, and even baptizing its walls with their blood. Sir John Gilbert might seek inspiration for a pathetic picture in an incident of that troubled time. Here are the outlines. Walter De Lud-Auk, the gray-haired Apostle of the proscribed Wickliffites,

leading the simple devotions of his fervent followers. Close by him, his grand-daughter Alice, with her sylph-like figure, her streaming hair, her sweet face, her dulcet voice. She stands like May at the side of December, a picture of opening summer and declining winter. The fierce soldiers of Henry V. bursting, without warning, upon the sequestered worshippers. The beautiful Alice lying killed in the assault by a shot from an arquebus, just when her escape is being made good by one of the Lollards, her lover, one Henrick Montair, a sturdy forester, equipped with cross-bow and broadsword. Or an historical painter might find a picturesque subject in a more modern grouping of which Ludchurch was the scene, when the Pretender and his Highlanders camped in the ravine on their ill-starred march to Derby in the winter of '45, with Flora Macdonald, whose ringlets steal from under a slouching military hat, as she nurses her heroic hopes on the very spot where the December wind wails a requiem over the dust of Alice De Lud-Auk. It was well to call this classic crevasse a Church. It is Nature's own cathedral, with the blue sky for painted roof, the sun for window, the wind for organ, and wild-birds for choir, as sacred as any ecclesiastical edifice built by human hands and consecrated by mitred prelate.

Ludchurch at its extreme end leads up an ascent of rugged steps out on to the open moor. We are above the Back Forest now. The entrance to its sylvan chapel is like a mouse-hole in a wall of green. Wide is the horizon from this wind-swept height. On one side the moors of Derbyshire and Cheshire stretch in bleak hungry solitudes with intersecting walls of gray stone; while lo! on the other side reposes a vision of smiling farmsteads, and level meadows, and green hedgerows. And that sunny dream is Staffordshire. It is a striking scenic contrast. In front, a wild Scotch picture, up in the land of Lorne somewhere, behind, a fair gentle English landscape. And fancy that soft, beautiful country side belonging to Staffordshire, noxious name, suggesting Acherontic streams of black poison, Cimmerian skies, hills of slag, valleys of coal-washings, people of pottery, home of Vulcan! A few miles away in the sunny haze is Congleton, with Congleton Car intervening, a burly peak, to block man's approach nearer the moors.

Down there we can see the factory windows of Leek, only four or five miles away, whose history is bound up with the story of the '15 and the '45, admirably told in Mr. John Sleight's *History of the Ancient Parish of Leek*. Leek is "the Metropolis of the Moorlands"—the Moorlands of which Eliza Meteyard wrote that, "oftener than not my autumn holidays have led me into the Moorlands, the wild and varied beauties of which ought to attract far more tourists than they seem to do . . . a large extent of rock, moor, and hill remains in much the same state as when, centuries ago, it was the haunt of savage hunters clad in skins, and their still more savage prey." To the south the Weaver Hills watch the windings of the Dove. But we are in a world of moor. The only sound is the call of a cock grouse. The heather gives under foot like a spring-board. To the right rise the Roches. We take a shepherd's path among these cromlech-like crags. A sunburnt man in velveteens and gaiters, with gun and dog, takes a pipe of tobacco with us. He is a keeper. Grouse, partridges, and pheasants are to him the whole of existence. The 12th of August, and the 1st of September, and the 1st of October are the only anniversaries he wots of.

And so we tramp on through bog and bracken and bilberry, and the ever present purple heather bloom, 1,600 feet above the sea. The plover decoys us from its nest; ever and anon grouse rise strong on the wing in front. Three miles in length, the Roches are some two miles in breadth. The course lies from end to end of the rugged ridge, and our progress is inspired by "the live translucent bath of air," as vitalizing as the elusive Elixir of Life, which has been the search of the ages. Very bold and romantic is the scenery, almost unknown to painters. A quaint shrewd book published a century-and-a-half ago, says:—"Here are vast rocks which surprise with admiration, called the Hen-clouds and Leek Roaches. They are so great a height, and afford such stupendous prospects, that one could hardly believe that they were anywhere to be found but in picture. They are so bare that they have no turf upon them, nor indeed any earth to produce it; which whether they were so from the Creation, or were uncovered by the general Flood, or were washed clean by rain, is not possible to

account for." Our walk along this ridge is a romance in rock. Black, sepulchral, and uncanny rise the bold escarpments of the rugged millstone-grit crags above the broad undulations of heather, 1,500 feet above the sea-level. From their summits the Wrekin and the Snowdonia country may be discerned under favourable atmospheric conditions. They assume strange shapes. Now a massive block, tapering at the end, and poised over a plateau, suggests a great breech-loader pointed at some far-off threatening mountain



DOXEY POOL.

fort. Another stands an inscrutable eternal Presence, a sphinx indifferent to time, and unchanged by age, a melancholy Menhir, silent, awful, with the secret of a pre-historic crisis hidden beneath its scarred, storm-rent breast. Other rocks, like colossal dragons, and petrified lions; and still others, weather-worn and wrinkled, which remind one of monsters of antediluvian birth, with grotesque heads, turned-up noses, blinking eyes, and mouths leering horridly. Here is a rocking-stone; there an engraved dolmen, stained with soft moss and purple lichen. And then, behold! at the summit of this ridge, close by where the sappers and miners have raised their flagstaff cairn, is a lonely, rush-fringed tarn called Doxey Pool, whose peat-coloured water catches the sunlight like a shield of steel. Still we have the awful

cataclysm of crags around us, scattered like the brooding monuments of a dead world, the Necropolis of fabled giants. They are in two distinct lines now. One upright on a higher ridge; the other prostrate on a lower plateau that shelves abruptly into the valley. On the crags are shoals of fossil fish; underneath, seams of coal and ironstone. I merely mention the fact as a curiosity. For neither of us regard the country with the mercenary manufacturing eye of the Philistines to whom the map of England is a geological chart representing coal measures and iron ore, and who look upon Cornwall as a tin mine, and North Wales as a big slate quarry, and the white crags of Derbyshire as containing so many cubic yards of pure limestone.

A little further on and a bridle-path, breast-high in bracken, leads us to Rock Hall, where there is another dolmen sculptured by the axe of God. Be not deceived by the appellation "hall." It is not the synonym in this instance for an ample country-seat and architectural stateliness. Rock Hall is simply a bleak keeper's lodge beneath the beetling cliffs. It belongs to Squire Brocklehurst, the owner of the Swythamley estate. There are antlers over the door, and black old oak within. Part of the retreat is a natural cave made cosy with furniture that shines like a smile. Another room is stone-built. We are welcomed to Rock Hall by a country-woman with broad dialect and apple-like face, streaked with red, like a Normandy pippin. She wears a tall snowy cap that makes her resemble a Breton peasant. Did she often see visitors? Oh yes, she had received Royalty, for had not the Prince and Princess Teck taken tea with her when their Highnesses were shooting in this neighbourhood? This comforting fact compensates the old lady for years of solitude. We have milk and sweet brown-bread and butter here, which is as acceptable to our freshened appetite as the most toothsome dishes ever packed in one of Fortnum and Mason's hampers. We rest and talk. It is pleasant to listen to the shrewd Mrs. Poyser-like sayings of this quaint dame, when lo! an earnest clock in an upright oak case, which has no doubt been wound up regularly at a certain time every Saturday night for ever so many years, startles us with a solemn warning, and then strikes the hour of five with a throbbing heart. It cannot

be five o'clock? Impossible! But the faithful old clock always tells the truth, and would never be the means of one losing one's train and temper, if there were trains and tempers in these parts, bless you! And our watches point to five unmistakably. Conclusive confirmation is afforded by a mouldering sun-dial at the door. Now, it will be remembered, that we left the ponies at half-past ten, and the coachman was instructed to wait four hours for us at the Royal Cottage. But the R. C. is yet several miles away. So we slide down the slope, and into the valley, gaining the road which leads us to an old-world village called Upper Hulme. A mill, and a church, and clustering houses are all mixed up among apple trees. A mountain brook that washes over the pebbles, runs across the main road, where there is a ford for those who ride, and a mossy timbered foot-bridge for those who walk. And here there is an inn. The R. C. is some distance off yet; the refectation of bread and butter and milk was ample enough in its way; but our tramp has been a long one, and again there is that stomachic vacuum which nature abhors, and like Oliver, it "asks for more." So we decide to let the coachman linger longer. The order is ham and eggs and tea, and as we sit in the inn's best parlour, we can hear the sweet music of the ham hissing three or four rooms off, and ever and anon there steals upon us a savoury breath of its saline flavour.

Whilst we are taking our ease, however, the best effects of the sunset are being wasted upon us. But there is still a glory in the west; the hills stand out in sharp outline against the low horizontal light; delicate tints soften the rocks. The light lingers long and lovingly on the silent hills, that seem to rest on the earth like rounded clouds, as if loth to leave them to the desolation of darkness. The intensity of the sunset glow has gone. There are black indigos and cold violets where there has been a flame of crimson and gold; but in the west there is a faint rose-red flush of fading colour, with a soft saffron spreading to the clouds above. The Hen Clouds and Lady Rocks, at the extremity of the Roches, stand out black against the sky. They assume strange weird forms in the half-light of the darkening distance. There are still the ghostly bastions with great breechloaders about to open fire, and

behind them are stony sentinels, who seem to wear long gray coats. Now they stand like picket-posts; anon bend stealthily over their guns. On one side of us is a deep mysterious wood; on the other the moors, which are now a picture in Indian ink. An owl with white silent wings wafts over us; once a hawk swoops hissing down into the wood; a cock pheasant's plumage is seen against the white bark of a birch tree; a glow-worm shines like a fallen star. The flutter of a bat, the rustle of a rabbit, and the plaintive appeal of a peewit, make the silence intense. Almost imperceptibly the King of Day has died, and the pale Queen of Night, with her retinue of stars, now reigns in the south. At first the stars show faint and far, but when the Royal Cottage is reached they are hanging low and lustrous.

Here we make the horrible discovery that our coachman, whom we expected was waiting to take us up, departed about an hour ago. "'E gotten tired o' weetin', and 'ee happen tho't ee'd mista'en 'is d'rections," is vouched in explanation. The Royal Cottage is a lonely hostelry that seems to have strayed among the moors, a hermit from habitations. Under its rafters Charles I. is said to have hidden—a hunted fugitive. But just at this moment we would rather the house possessed an available horse and trap than its historic reputation. "Quite a dash of adventure added to the day," says "Kalmat," carelessly, lighting his pipe, and we step out sturdily under the stars to Flash, where, perchance, our belated driver may be awaiting our arrival. There is nothing but moor on either side of us. The road is cut through it. The heather grows to its very verge. Ever and anon stone posts show at the edge of the intersecting road. They are placed there to mark the way for travellers in snow time. We seem to be on the top of the world. There is nothing between us and the sky, a wide perfect sphere of light. The stars seem near us. We have never seen so many of them before, not even in mid-ocean. There is something in the broad silence of the moors—black save where a peaty pool shines spectral and wan in the white moonlight; something in the awful expanse of the sky; something in the calm scrutiny of the stars which lifts the mind from the sentimental to the spiritual, and fills the soul with tender hopes, with higher aims, with

a sense of the Infinite, with secret yearnings after what Browning calls "The Grand Perhaps." This feeling is accentuated as the wind wafts the sound of a hymn to us from a lonely little cottage of gray stone, far away from any signs of houses, with the yellow light from its windows thrown athwart the road. We pause in the reflection. There is a little gathering of week-night worshippers. A wheezy harmonium leads a few earnest singers; then an uncouth preacher, with rough ringing voice, who might be Adam Bede, prays from the heart for the weary and heavy-laden.

It was Charlotte Brontë who said that people had no conception of what a companion the sky becomes to anyone living in solitude—more than any inanimate object on earth, more than the moors themselves. It is so. The pole-star hanging like a lamp in front of us in the north, speaks to us like a friend; we become familiar with Charles' Wain, with Dick the plough-boy riding on the middle horse of the team; the far-off filmy milky way, spreading from north to south, grows palpable to our gaze. The brightest star is Mars, throbbing with a ruddy glow in the south-east. This session with the stars, is, perhaps, the tenderest sensation of the day; but it is not without satisfaction that we see the twinkling lights of the cottages of Flash, each telling a little tale of homely joy; and with something like hope we push to the inn. We find that our charioteer had enquired for us, waited, and left for Buxton. There is no accessible conveyance at Flash, and we have six miles more walking before us.

When we are taking the road along the lower slopes of Axe Edge, there is a distant sound of hoofs. Presently there is the gleam of carriage lights. We shout. The voice that responds is the glad cry of delight from Someone we both know well. She has been *so* put out at our absence. The coachman had been to St. Ann's and asked if we had returned. He thought that he had blundered over his instructions. And then the stupid man had caused the anxious heart to beat faster by a sinister suggestion that one of us might have fallen down the rocks. And so Our Lady had started out with the driver, a midnight Stanley, in search of the Livingstone of her heart. The rescuing party were equipped for this forlorn hope with Spey, an affectionate

white-throated collie, who comes to us with his cold nose and wagging tail, and with them they had a lantern, and a bottle of cognac. One of the tired tramps, in a spirit of very forced gaiety, says he would prefer to finish the journey on foot, but he is very glad to ride, and the demands made by his vagus nerve upon the supper would have shocked the medical world.

* * * * *

All that we brought back with us was a sprig of heather. Its purple bloom is dried and faded now; but that little bit of moor carries with it an undying aroma of a rare, bright, happy, careless day; and it sometimes sends us back on the rough highway of memory to linger by one of the pleasantest landmarks in life's chequered journey.





Chapter FD.

A CRUISE ROUND CASTLETON.

*Those grim and horrid caves,
Whose looks affright the day,
Wherein nice Nature saves
What she would not bewray,
Our better leisure craves
And doth invite our lay.*

MICHAEL DRAYTON.



BIT of Blue John spar ! I use it as a paper-weight. It must be dismissed from that office. It has such a tendency at times to catch my eye and send me wandering off on the wings of Memory far away from the business concerns to which I should be applying myself with engrossed earnestness. This inanimate thing has a motive power that carries me away up to Peveril's Castle in the Peak, and to "A Cruise on Wheels," Kalmat and I took through the valleys of the Castleton country, and the flight opens out recollections of other pleasant trips I have taken in the same good company. I am thus wafted away from practical pursuits, and am rudely aroused from the rapture of retrospect to discount myself as a very dreamy and ideal individual who wants a lot of romantic rubbish knocking out of his head by Mr. Gradgrind. There was an enchanted carpet in the Arabian Nights' Entertainment which transported you wherever you would

be at a wish. The most commonplace things possess this talismanic power to carry you away mentally to other scenes and back to other days. The law of association links things which to the eyes of other people seem trite and trivial with the most glowing memories, recalling pleasures of the past to gild the gloom of the present, and borrowing the sunshine of yesterday to chase away the clouds that have gathered to-day. An alpenstock, mixed up in a dusty litter of fishing rods, gaff-hooks, and landing-nets, is, for instance, an Aaron's rod of magic that summons back all the glow and inspiration of a Swiss holiday, and revives some half-forgotten passages of life in bright and minute detail. The sight of the binding of a neglected copy of *Murray* transports you from worry and trouble and sombre surroundings to the far-off mountain side and remote sea-shore. It seems to carry with it an aroma that is as the ozone of the ocean and the ether of the moorland. The fast-fading photograph of a yacht hanging up in your study acts like necromancy to take you again amid the lonely islands, the lovely colours, and the magical sunsets of the Western Highlands, and has the power to make the weary Faust of matter-of-fact life fresh and buoyant as the crested waves that tore past that pleasure craft. The same law of association imparts the poetry and pathos of a life to a withered forget-me-not crushed between the folds of a faded letter; and endows a tress of soft hair, treasured in the sacred recesses of a secret drawer, with a spell of sentiment that the lapse of long years only renders stronger. That hidden baby's glove, bitten at the thumb, and that tiny pair of blue shoes, start sobs that the mother thought had long ago been stifled. The sight of an old letter to the most unemotional of us will restore with a strange thrill "the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still." A photographic album crowds your lonely room with a jovial company, and fills it with many a cheery laugh, good old chorus, and wholesome joke. Tears flood the eyes of Charles Reade's rough outcasts in the Australian bush, as they listen to an English lark pouring out its full soul in an ecstasy of song from a wicker-cage hung over the door of a settler's log-hut; for the little feathered minstrel is connected by no common ties with fond ingle-nooks and quiet churchyards left behind thousands of leagues of stormy sea. One

of Bret Harte's rough miners in the Western land remarks apologetically to his partner "I must write a letter home," as he sees a fresh-faced English girl passing the gulch at a crossing where they are working. The same subtle spirit of association was at work in both instances.

And so it is that this piece of fluor spar touches the chords of Memory, and they respond in a sympathetic song of other days. It calls forth sweet perfumes from the flowery fields of retrospect. It is like the simple sea-shell on your mantel-shelf, which, although exiled many miles from its shingly shore, still echoes the murmur of the waves. A bit of Blue John! It is an unfailing index to the volume of recollection: an entertaining book to read, notwithstanding Mr. Alfred Tennyson's philosophy, which is borrowed from Malesherbes, who borrowed it from Dante, that "a Sorrow's Crown of Sorrow is remembering happier things." There is, indeed, no pleasanter pastime than that of visiting the sunny spots of memory when

"Our yesterdays look backward with a smile,
Nor, like the Parthian, wound us as they fly."

But a truce to these digressive didactics. Let Blue John tell his story.

Kalimat, the traveller in many lands, who is at last finding out the neglected beauty-spots of his own country, has before been introduced, and is now on speaking terms with you. He is my comrade for a Whitsuntide Trip. Whitsuntide, of the three great English holidays, is surely the most delightful. While Christmas is purely a festival of the fire-side and of sentiment; and Easter is a chilling compromise between winter and spring; Whitsuntide has all the green beauty of opening summer. And the Whitsuntide of our wandering is all that the holiday-maker could desire. Kalimat had often heard of Castleton and its caves, and the romantic dales frowned upon by Abney and Derwent Edge; and we had months before decided to drive there from Buxton, and from thence back, by pleasant stages and a roundabout route, through the heart of the healthful hilly country. The delights of *A Cruise upon Wheels* are known only to those who have read the breezy book of that name, and to the greater constituency who have been charmed

with *The Strange Adventures of a Phæton*, although they have found nothing particularly "strange" or "adventurous" in that tempting trip taken by Queen Titania, Bonny Bell, and Count Von Rosen, along the old country highways and sweet-smelling lanes from Middlesex to Mid-Lothian. The word "Cruise" aptly describes our journey. The mountain air is as exhilarating as a sea breeze; and how often does the immensity of moorland meeting the sky suggest the ocean to our fancy? We are, moreover, bound to no beaten track. We can steer into out-of-the-way bays, and call at will at little havens off the direct line of travel. We are not obliged to sail straight on, but can drop our anchor as an idle caprice takes us, and leave the ship (I mean the trap) in charge of the cabin-boy (that is the stable lad), whenever we choose to fish or sketch.

We come to the conclusion that twelve more uninteresting miles could not well be found in Derbyshire than the dozen which serve to separate Buxton from Castleton. But it is something to be out on such a day as this, and our mare seems to know it, and at a merry pace we skirt the old road once traversed by Roman chariots. We bowl along past the lime-kilns at Dove Holes, past the bygone Barmoor Clough toll-gate, and then, leaving the main road, turn at a sharp angle to the right and breast the hill. Close here is the Ebbing and Flowing Well, celebrated by a thousand-and-one guide book writers—finer in their fancy than faithful in their facts—as one of the Wonders of the World. But there is nothing now about this pool for the pen to cry out "eloquent in the elegancies of Iambics," as Mr. Ruskin's double put it to the studious youth of classic Chesterfield. Truth, like murder, must out. The famous Ebbing and Flowing Well is in truth a horse-pond which serves as a watering-place for the cattle of the adjoining pastures. This pond is supplied by a spring of intermittent action, into which water flows at intervals. The wetness or dryness of the weather governs the frequency of the action of the well. Sometimes as much as 120 hogsheads of water are reputed to rise and disappear. Rustic ignorance connects the phenomenon with the ebbing and flowing of the tide at Liverpool. Practical science, however, explodes the wonder by illustrating the motion of the spring by that of a common

syphon. When Mr. Charles Middlewick was at Vesuvius, the fiery mountain was not in a state of eruption, much to the subsequent disappointment of Papa Perkyn Middlewick, who contended that his son ought to have "hinsisted on a ruption. I spared no hexpense, Charley; I didn't stint ye; I told yer to go in for everything." The Derbyshire Ebbing and Flowing Well is not flowing for Kalmat to-day, and I want him to go in for everything. But no matter. The mare responds to the crack of the whip. The sun smiles upon the stony scenery as if to soften its bleak stern character, and to melt with sympathetic warmth its rigid angularities; upon treeless fields ruled out in low rising and falling walls of cold gray stone that strike harshly to the eye accustomed to the grateful green hedges of southern pastures, and the lavish luxuriance of southern lanes; upon the hard-faced outline of swelling hill and sweeping valley, in which the sun searches out dainty tones of colour communicated by lichen and moss, heathbell and bracken. Comes the village of Sparrow Pit. The diverging road leads to Peak Forest, where the chapelry was once extra-parochial and extra-episcopal. This made the village an English Gretna Green. Runaway couples, and politic people desirous of contracting hasty marriages, hastened here from all parts of England. Legend has lent the horror of a romantic murder to one of these clandestine marriages at what was in the "good old days" a lonely hamlet lost among the hills. It is a tale of bur-r-l-lud! Dithery music. Lights low. Dress of the last century. Two runaway lovers, as rich in money as in love, returning from a matrimonial visit to the Peak Forest Parson, who, if he brought no soul to salvation, was no doubt instrumental in bringing a good many couples to a state of repentance. They are on horseback on their happy way Hallamshire-ward. In the gloomy pass of the Winnats are a band of murderers, who waylay them and still their warm hearts for ever, simply for the sake of their personal possessions. Kalmat says English civilization has not improved so much since then, for an old man was murdered the other day in one of the Home Counties for—sixpence. We shall soon be at the scene of the dreadful deed. The place is supposed to be still haunted by the victims of the tragedy. When the

winter wind screams down the narrow pass on a wild night, local superstition associates the weird sound with the death-cry of the lovers, and shiveringly cowers under the bedclothes.

Here is Perryfoot. What a beautiful green, soon to be dimmed into a dingier hue, has spread over the plantation to the left. The mass of bleak limestone mountain to the right, standing out in rounded outline in the sunny air, is Eldon Hill. Midway up its steep side is Eldon Hole: a chasm once reputed to be fathomless. Poetry has made it one of the Profundities of the Peak in the Latin verse of Hobbes. Science has invested it with awe and mystery in Catcott's *Deluge*. Tradition establishes it as a place of blood-curdling horror. Among other terrible tales told of this perpendicular abyss, it is said that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth the Earl of Leicester had a man let down with ropes into the dark cavity. When drawn up he was dumb and died in mad contortions. He had seen—But no matter. "A good joke for the mighty Earl, but rather hard lines for his human plummet," says Kalmat. Some of the guide books have worked themselves up into throes of thrilling excitement over similar traditions; but much of the "thunder" is taken away when it is known that the hole has been thoroughly explored by capable scientists, and that the bottom was found at a depth of 70 yards. So we will not, Kalmat, steer out of our course to inspect the awful abyss. Polyphemus no longer dwells in this Cave of the Cyclopés, and we have no Achæmenides to let down with the sacrificial rope. One of the most curious caverns in Derbyshire, by the way, is omitted mention by the guide-books. I refer to Bagshaw's Cavern, at Bradwell, reached from Miller's Dale by way of Tideswell, Hucklow, and Hazlebadge.

The road winds among the treeless hills, beautiful in their very bleakness. The pasturage of the moorland sheep is enamelled with the gold of the mountain-pansy. A lark is the only spot in the bright blueness of the sky. The sun reveals every undulation of the landscape in its strong white light. There is the hum of bees. Young plovers are making trial trips on their newly-fledged wings. All round a hundred pictures of hill and valley, lonely peak and deep hollow, rounded knoll and sweeping ridge; here and there

a clump of storm-rent pines ; now and again a solitary farmstead. Presently we reach the head of the path leading through the romantic pass of the Winnats. We disembark at these straits, and, sending our craft round to Castleton by the steep Mam Tor road, proceed on foot. There is excellent anchorage at the Bull's Head, and the midshipmite unfurls his flag (that is his whip) and gets under way in good style. "The best and most forcible sense of a word is often that which is contained in its etymology," says Coleridge ; and this mountain pass giving access to Castleton is described in its name : Winnats, or "wind-gates." The ravine presents a natural passage for the mountain winds that sweep through it and wail and moan and howl and scream ; while its particular situation is such as to collect in hollow and angle the breezes from each point of the compass. This rift is one of Nature's romantic openings in the mountain limestone. Narrow is the path between the perilous and precipitous crags. The rocky confinement brings out in beautiful *chiaroscuro* the gleam of gray limestone, the green of clinging verdure, and the gloom of changing shadows. Kalmat—accustomed to some of the wildest passages in Alpine scenery, and familiar with the Sierràs of the Far West—stands enchanted in this grand nook which is an hour's journey only from swarthy Sheffield, and but half-a-day's trip from toiling and moiling Manchester. It is a romance in rock ; a petrified poem ; a lyric in limestone. The rock-ribbed gorge grows more striking in its revelations of savage sublimity as we pursue the pathway. The rocks tower to greater and wilder heights. They assume castellated shapes. Now there is the crude suggestion of cathedral turret and tower ; then threaten fortress and bastion. The carving might be the rough sculpture of the Giants and Gods of mythology. Near the extremity of the pass which is something like a mile in length, a huge sentinel tor disputes further progress. We seem locked in among the lonely limestone precipices, awful in their stony solitude ; when, lo ! a sudden turn, and a narrow passage telescopes a dream of scenery. The vista for the moment stuns the eye with the abruptness with which it bursts upon the sight ; a blow of beauty. The vision is the Vale of Hope. Castleton clusters immediately below, and the

country around spreads a broad picturesque panorama of undulating pastures, white homesteads, and distant hills, all revealed in a sunny light that brings out every distant contour in delicate outline. "It is like passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death to behold the Promised Land," says Kalmat as he stands entranced against the vast rocky screen that veils the vision from the view of those who have not Faith enough to follow the Narrow Path until the open Heaven of Hope spreads out in rich reward!

The valley of Hope is certainly one of the finest of those Derbyshire Dales whose rich beauty Eliza Cook has sung in enthusiastic verse. Perhaps it is one of the most pleasing vales that English scenery can present. Its fascination lies in its peaceful repose; in its sweet, serene, soothing tranquillity—placed in strong contrast with storm-rent rocks, wild uplands, bare peaks, and hungry wind-swept moors. The sun to-day intensifies every line of the scenic contrast, and imparts a gladder green to the breadths of level meadow on which the warm light lies. The little river Nowe ripples in silver curves past white cottages and sheltered farmsteads. There are those harmonious gradations of green—sensitive chords of colour—in the scattered patches of copse, and in the low-lying woods, which belong to the sunny days intervening between the asperity of early Spring and the rich monotonous fulness of Summer. The pastoral peace is at once a picture and a poem.

"I found the poems in the fields,
And only wrote them down,"

says John Clare, the poor Northampton poet of Nature. The contrast between the fertile and forbidding, realizes in one view "the land flowing with milk and honey" and "the land of gall and wormwood;" and one is inclined to quarrel with the genius of etymology after all, when we find that the word "Hope," in this instance, is derived from the Celtic *hwpp*—a slope, or the side of a hill, instead of having the sweet allegorical signification the Vale suggests, as it smiles on—confident and happy—amid the frowning wilderness and flinty rocks. Not only is it the strong contrast with its savage surroundings that commends this Derbyshire valley. There is also the theatrical suddenness with which its beauty

breaks upon the astonished eye. It is a surprise that holds Kalmat captive, as many other people less emotional have been enchained before him. The fertile valley is, perhaps, a mile-and-a-half in breadth. Extending in an easterly direction, for about six miles, it embraces Castleton, Hope, Brough, Bamford, and Hathersage. Below Hathersage the Nowe joins the dun-coloured Derwent, where another deep and devious valley intersects the hill country. We cruise the next day about these gray, old-world villages of the valley, sometimes fishing, sometimes sketching, and anchoring for the night at Castleton, just as the last crimson farewell of the sun flushes the west.

And what about Castleton, you ask? There are some show-places you may exhaust in a couple of hours; but to see all that will repay inspection at Castleton demands two or three days. And the expenditure of that time is at once pleasant and profitable. Surely in no other place has Nature so concentrated her curiosities as in this antiquated mite of a town, shut in from the world by the austere hills. Where else is there such a world of wonder in a space so confined? Castleton is a repository of romance. It is a natural museum. Geology in the abstract is an attractive study; but it becomes a passion when pursued amid these Derbyshire rocks and caves. "The fairy tales of science" are here wedded to "the long result of Time." To describe the sights of Castleton, one requires the dimensions of a large volume. Kalmat says that if he were only the Perpetual Curate of Mr. Joseph Hatton's *Valley of Poppies*, it would be the absorbing occupation of his learned leisure to do Castleton descriptive justice. Its history under the Romans, its penal settlement under the Saxons, its association with the proud Peverils, its wonderful caverns, its deep lead-mines, its geological and mineralogical revelations, its Shivering Mountain, and its old Castle supply attractive themes for the appreciative pen.

What happy writer was it who, when staying at Niagara, appended to one of his letters the foot-note: "There are some waterfalls hereabouts, which are said to be pretty?" In a similar manner, recalling our Castleton experiences, I might remark of the place that there are some caverns there supposed to be curious. For I must—lacking the space of

the *Encyclopedia Britannica*—dismiss in a few lines what form the special pride and glory of Castleton. Besides it would be a difficult, if not an impossible task, to say anything new, or even fresh, about a subject so exhausted by a multiplicity of writers who have paraphrased and plagiarised each



ENTRANCE TO GREAT PEAK CAVERN.

other. Even the local guide-books cannot “overdo” the Castleton Caverns, although the “high-falutin” reaches rhetorical altitudes too lofty for the safe pursuit of the ordinary follower of the English language, for the most inventive pen, in its most hysterical raptures, would find it impossible to make the weird wonders of these caves more sublime in poetic horror than is the romantic reality. The caverns, be it observed, are not a repetition of one another. While the entrance to the Great Peak Cavern is a stupen-

dous span—a sublimity in stone—a vast vestibule of natural stone-work—a Cyclopean porch, the approach to the Speedwell Mine is but a narrow insignificant passage. The grim, grand portal of the former, however, dwindles down into a mere fissure in the hill opening out into the actual cavern; while the threshold of the latter broadens out into a majestic Pantheon-like space that is awesome in its suggestive immensity. And while these two caverns stun the sensitive mind by their solemn grandeur, their Cimmerian gloom, and their constant premonition of the awful Styx and Dante's infernal Ferryman, the Blue John Mine appeals to you by its pure spectacular beauty. It is a series of glistening chambers. Stalactites and crystals make fairy halls. The stony incrustations gleam like a fretwork of frost. No wonder that the Blue John Mine has been compared to the grotto of Antiparos. The Odin Mine, again, an old obsolete lead-working, is interesting because of its historic renown. The Romans worked the lead; and in Saxon times the place became a local Siberia to which prisoners were sentenced to labour out their lives in the mines.

If Castleton is interesting underground, it is none the less attractive above. What an idle, healthful time we spend on the top of Mam Tor, watching the silent shadows sail over hill and hollow, while we discuss the meaning of the name of this shaly, crumbling, "shivering mountain." Does "Mam Tor" mean "rocky height"—derivable from "mor," "maen," or "mannin," the Celtic for rock, and "tor," the Anglo-Saxon for height? Or is it the "mother rock," "mam" being the Celtic for mother or dam? We incline to the latter, for Mam Tor is a hill with such a distinct individuality about it. Over the other hills it assumes a strong maternal command. But why will Kalmat persist in his discussion upon derivatives? He wonders now whether "Tor" is not an abbreviation of "Tower," coming from the Latin *turris*, a tower, and through the Anglo-Saxon *torr*, a tower. And when this dispute is concluded, controversy is again aroused over the remains of the ancient British encampment on the top of the hill. The frequent shivering of the shale has taken away most of the camp on the side facing Castleton; but there is still much of the double trench to be clearly remarked; and we drink at the north-east corner of the waters

of the perpetual spring quaffed by thirsty Celt and Roman and Saxon. The centuries have passed ; history has unrolled its record of good and ill ; the whole world has changed ;



PEVERIL CASTLE, FROM CAVE DALE.

but still this water sparkles in the sun an abiding emblem of Eternity. An important military position this precipitous hill, yet scarcely more unassailable than the situation of Peveril Castle, which is only approached from one side of the crag : that from the south, which is a very narrow

isthmus defended by the keep. Says Sir Walter, "the feudal Baron chose his nest upon the same principles on which an eagle selects her eyrie, and built it in such a fashion as if he had intended it, as an Irishman said of the Martello towers, for the sole purpose of puzzling posterity." The castle is but a rude shell; but the view from the height of the concert of mountains and the concentration of valleys around is not one that will be easily effaced from our memory. Such mental photographs never fade. The older they grow, the brighter becomes their colouring, the distincter the delicacy of their half-tones, the more decided their touches of light and shade; and they can be produced at will, years afterwards, and miles away from where the mental camera "metagraphed" them upon the memory. . . . Kalmat is curious as to the locality of Sir Walter Scott's scenes in the *Peveil of the Peak*. He enquires with eager interest for the ruins of Moultrassie Hall, Bridgnorth's residence, and for Martindale Castle, the home of Sir Geoffry Peveil. Where are they indeed? Where are many other ideal places? Where is Utopia? What time is there a train for Arcadia? Where can we find the Happy Valley of Rasselas? Can you direct me to the Elysian Fields? Where is the Idle Lake of Edmund Spenser's *Faërie Queene*? Where, in fact, are all our *Chateaux en Espagne*? I cannot find that Sir Walter Scott ever visited Derbyshire. The local topography of his *Peveil* shows ignorance of the Peake Countrie, although the great Magician has illuminated its hills with his imagination, and invested it with

"The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the poet's dream."

Castleton should rather be associated with Lord Byron than Sir Walter Scott. Indeed it was connected with an affecting episode that turned the current of Manfred's miserable life. It saw the rupture of that deep affection which "would have healed feuds in which blood had been shed by our fathers." Castleton is coupled with the breaking of Byron's union with the beautiful Miss Chaworth. Writing of a visit to one of the caverns about this time, the poet remarks: "I had to cross in a boat a stream which flows under a rock so close upon the water, as to admit the boat only to be pushed on

by the ferryman (a sort of Charon) who wades at the stern, stooping all the time. The companion of my transit was M. A. C., with whom I had been long in love and never told it, though *she* had discovered it without. I recollect my sensations, but cannot describe them, and it is as well." . . . And idling on the top of the castle crag in the still sunny air of this emancipated holiday time—with the Hope Valley spreading before us in the full richness of its pastoral beauty, the bleak mountains meeting around, and the deep ravines and the clustering houses of Castleton below—Kalmat talks with some feeling of the effect of the "might have been" on Byron's character, of the noble purpose poisoned, the yearning heart steeled, the generous trust betrayed, the better life blighted. . . . But a truce to sentiment. It is again a bright June morning; a blithe breeze favours our sails; the steersman is at his place; our harbour dues are paid; and once more we get under weigh for another "cruise on wheels."

Looking at the Ordnance Map of Derbyshire, there is to be seen, some seven miles north of Castleton, a broad and remarkable patch of white, deeply shaded with black. It is distinguished as "The Peak," as if it were an isolated hill, or the North Pole. But the ardent discoverer in search of some solitary eminence towering in austere, ambitious altitude above the rest of its fellows, such as the Government "chartists" have indicated, will be disappointed. The expected mountain giant is not to be found. But it is to the distinctive "Peak" of the Ordnance Survey that we now steer. (Speaking of that map Kalmat is tickled with the curious fact that while "the writing is by J. W. Froggatt"—comes he from Froggatt Edge?—"the hills are by S. Peake!") We meet with but few holidaying mariners in this ocean of heather. Excursion steamers ply not on these unfrequented seas. Aristocratic yachts know not these sheltered rocky havens and deep valley soundings. It is rough voyaging over the billowy roads cut through the heather, and gritstone boulders threaten the bravest springs. The most pleasing flower is the yellow mountain-pansy. Among the plants we observe the white leaves of the "melancholy thistle," and the broad leaves and little white flowers of the "scurvy-grass."

We traverse the exquisite Edale Valley, with the bold hills rising above the little river, tumbling in white under wooded shade, until we are stopped by the huge steep plateau of Kinder Scout, bounding its whole northern side, a black and morose platform of gritstone even on this joyous June morning, when all the idyllic charms of the opening summer-time are smiling in their soft sweetness over the land. Nowhere, Kalmat admits, could you find a wilder chaos of moor and hill, a more savage sublimity of solitude, than among the stern peaks and passes and moorland wastes of this Kinderscout country. He is stunned by the boldness and immensity of the prospect on every side; and we agree in wonder how it is that artists go so far afield in search of sketching grounds, while the moors frowned upon by the Scout, so near and yet so remote, remain practically unpainted. What pictures are presented by these misty crags, and deep water-worn cloughs! Bring thy palette here, disciple of Turner, and give us the gloom and grandeur of these secluded uplands and valleys; give us the wild scenic revelations of Seal Edge and Fairbrook Naze, the strange colours and atmospheric effects of this chaotic upheaval of another world; give us the hidden beauties of Bamford, Derwent, Allport, and Hallam Moors, and the pretty pastoral paths of the Woodlands, and the Highland vale of Ashop. The Peak has many a magic secret awaiting the touch of thy pencil, and though the paths are rough, and the inns few, Nature affords thee glorious recompense.

By devious and declivitous roads, we find ourselves later in the day at the village of Derwent, where the scenery is more soft and sylvan. It is an ideal hamlet among the hills, and after our long cruise we anchor for the night. Derwent Hall is of itself worthy of a special pilgrimage. A picturesque bridge over the Derwent, foaming and brown from the peat moss, gives access to the old mansion. Derwent Hall was originally in the possession of the Balguys, a Cheshire family. Afterwards it became the property of the Newdigates; now it is owned by the Duke of Norfolk, who uses it as a shooting-box, and has spent recently a sum exceeding £30,000 in adding a new block to the old hall, and decorating the whole. Over the old doorway is the Balguy arms and the date 1672, and the unique ancient oak furni-

ture with which the place abounds dates back three or four hundred years. Such a wonderful collection of genuine old pieces, calculated to drive the least covetous of mortals into sinful envy. The house is crowded from roof to basement with antique furniture collected from all parts of the world by His Grace of Norfolk. Kalmat speculates as to what raptures æsthetic Kensington would work itself over these quaint artistic wonders. This oak furniture is the real thing, and not the hideous mock mediævalism over which Mr. Postlethwaite and the disciples of the "intense" school posture in "consummately utter" delight. Note the tapestry from Worksop Manor, with which the entrance hall is hung, my friend, together with the quaintly carved doors opening to the suites of apartments. What a fine oak chimney-piece that is from Norton Hall which enriches the new dining-room, a delightful place with superb carvings, oak ceiling, and diamond-paned windows framing beautiful natural water-colours. I cannot catalogue all the charming old pieces that render Derwent Hall a romance. Here is a marvellous old English four-poster, consummate in carving, bearing the inscription "Rex Carolus I Anno Do 1646"; study these six figures of clever German craft dated 1216; contemplate a cabinet, dated 1634, which would send an ordinary collector crazy; regard this corner receptacle for books and china, inscribed "God with us, 1653," and pause to minutely examine this fine hall settee, with a royal hunting-party carved upon its panels, and dated 1598. A surpassing study for an historic novelist this hall of old furniture. All the cabinets, and even the bedsteads, have hidden drawers that have refused to yield their secrets of family and State in the bygone days of conspiracy and peril. How Sir Walter Scott would have revelled amid all this quaint, suggestive, imaginative upholstery, eloquent of poetry and romance, feud and intrigue, love and revenge.

We spend an idle, careless time in the Derwent Valley, fishing, or sketching, or shooting. It is a country of such a concentrated glory of moor and valley, of old Roman roads and Druidical remains, of ancient barrows, strange tumuli, and rocking-stones, of tors and cloughs and scars, that one devoutly hopes that the projected railway, which is to give Sheffield a new route to Manchester, will never break the

seclusion of so much sealed charm. It would be as difficult to contemplate with composure the money-changers in the Temple as Hathersage made a second Attercliffe, and Grindleford Bridge a screaming railway junction. There is, however, sweet consolation in knowing that the much-agitated "Dore, Hassop, and Castleton Railway" belongs to the distant future, and that the poetical picturesqueness of Derwent's pastoral dale is safe from immediate defacement;* but equally Philistine are the traction-engines which are suffered to traverse with impunity the public highways of the Peak. One of these uncouth locomotives was the cause of a fatal accident in April, 1882, to a carriage-party at Froggatt Edge; while in July, 1883, the same menacing machine led to a serious accident to a party in a waggonette close by Owler Bar, whereby four ladies and a child were badly injured, and a coach had a narrow escape from the runaway horses. The sooner these fiery, fuming nuisances are removed from the Queen's Highway the better for the rates, for they ruin the roads they travel upon. I leave out the higher consideration of the safety of equestrians and people riding in carriages. Horses that are worth anything, whether in bridle or harness, are panic-stricken by these metallic apparitions, that snort and belch, thrum and quiver, gasp and grunt, that make the ground tremble like an earthquake, and fill the air with the sulphur of a stithy. And for what, pray? In order that some mercenary speculator may haul a truck or two of coal for a few shillings cheaper than he could by horse-power!

Hathersage and Grindleford Bridge! The names recall glowing memories of our "cruise on wheels." The former old-world village supplied Charlotte Brontë with much of the fine moorland scenery which fascinates the reader in the pages of *Jane Eyre*. The Moor House of that strange,

* Since the above was written, Parliamentary Powers have been sought for "The Dore and Chinley Railway," which proposes to connect the Ambergate and Manchester section of the Midland Railway with the Chesterfield and Sheffield section, passing through the parishes of Hathersage, Outseats, Bamford, Derwent, Derwent Chapel, Derwent Woodlands, Hope Aston, Thornhill, Hope Woodlands, Castleton, Edale, Edale Chapel, Edale Holy Trinity, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Bowden Edge, Bradshaw Edge, Combs Edge, and Glossop.

subtle story is still to be seen in the neighbourhood. The vale of Hope is thus referred to in that fine novel:—"The pebbly bridle-path wound between fern banks first, and then amongst a few of the wildest little pasture-fields that ever bordered a wilderness of heath. . . . The purple moors. . . . The hollow vale. . . . I saw the fascination of the locality, I felt the consecration of its loneliness: my eye feasted on the outlines of swell and sweep—on the mild colouring communicated to ridge and dell by moss, by heath-bell, and flower-sprinkled turf, by brilliant bracken, and mellow granite crag." It should be gratifying to local pride to know that the two greatest lady writers the world has yet produced have largely drawn their inspiration from the Peak of Derbyshire, for while Currer Bell has given us the moorland solitudes around Hathersage, George Eliot's *Adam Bede* is laid for the most part about Wirksworth. And while Hathersage is connected with literature, it is also linked with legend. The village claims fame as being the birthplace of Little John, and the churchyard is said to contain the bones of the Sherwood hero. It is even maintained that the sturdy lieutenant of Robin Hood himself chose the spot where he desired to rest, while he stipulated that his bow and cap should be hung up in the church, when he passed to his rest.

"His bow was in the chancel hung;
His last good bolt they drave
Down to the rocke, its measured length,
Westward fra' the grave.
And root and bud this shaft put forth
When spring returned anon;
It grew a tree, and threw a shade,
Where slept staunch Little John."

Kalimat is, however, somewhat sceptical concerning the tradition. The antiquaries have certainly agreed to differ over Little John's grave, and it is a "burial question" awaiting settlement. One authority maintains that he died in Scotland; a second that he was hanged near Dublin; while others doubt his existence altogether. Anyhow, Hathersage is the key to the Robin Hood Country. Robin Hood's Hill rises above the vale of Castleton; Robin Hood's Stride is among the scattered tors on Stanton Moor,

some rude rocks on Combs Moss are connected with the valiant outlaw; while Loxley Chase is but a few miles from Hathersage, away in the Rivelin Valley, Hallamshire-ward. Little John's green cap and bow erst hung up in Hathersage Church; while a sepulchral stone was dug up bearing the conclusive initials "L. J.," which was pointed to with pride by the simple villagers as being those of their forest hero! The Rev. John Charles Cox sums the evidence in the controversy as to Little John's place of burial by saying "the opponents of the accuracy of the tradition seem to us to have far more difficulties with which to contend than those who accept it."



HU-GAER.

All this forms the subject for mighty pleasant discourse as we cruise again down the Derwent Valley to Grindleford Bridge; first making a *détour* to visit the grand rocky platform of Hu-Gaer, ("the city of God"), and the old British fort of Caelswark ("which means, the fort or building of the Churl—Anglo-Saxon 'Carl,'—and not "the work of the Gaels," as a repetition of writers have it;) and to bask on Millstone Edge; then breaking away in the west to climb "Sir William"—one of the most stately and personal hills in the Peak—who rewards the ascent with a surpassing pictorial map, that is what an American would call "a big eyeful of scenery," and in the east to Froggatt Edge, until we are sorely puzzled as to which upland should be awarded the prize for grandeur.

Another day with the sportive little moorland trout, and a ramble past Fox House and Longshaw, and down the delightful ravine where tumbles the Burbage Brook from the moor above on its way to the Derwent at Grindleford Bridge. We ramble among the romantic recesses of this delightful dell, we listen to the music of the mountain



BURBAGE BROOK, PADLEY WOOD.

stream as it hurries along unchecked by the great masses of rock that strive to bar its way, and over which it leaps in charming cascades of the clearest crystal. We cross a rustic bridge and rest on the seat placed just where one of the loveliest vistas opens out in this wilderness of wood and rock and water; and finish our explorations at the historical ruins of Padley Chapel, near the saw-mill just below. And then we set sail back to Buxton, calling at Eyam, for ever sanctified by Mompesson's sacrifice, and at Tideswell,

with its cathedral-like church. The sunset during this return journey burns itself into our memory. It has been a silvery, sunny day of mirthful sparkle, with all the strong, brilliant lights that Paul Veronese loved to introduce into his compositions. As evening comes apace, there is a sight to be seen in the west which must make all men for the moment Sun Worshippers. It is such a spectacular sunset that, if it were thrown upon canvas by a fearless painter of genius, the sages of the Royal Academy would reject the picture, and Mr. Mahlstick, the art critic, would pronounce it exaggerated, unnatural, and impossible. The western sky is one wild glare of burning red, spreading from north to south, brightening into light, golden wave-ripples, and then deepening to a dusky smoky red again. The vast conflagration of flame gradually fades, until all that is left of its glory is a dim blood-red line against the hill tops. The strong colours—the crimsons and carmines—are loath to let the day die; but they grow restful and weary at last; and an exquisite symphony of faint pale tones enchants us with a sense of tender sadness and gentle repose.

And now, in the moonlight, come the familiar features of Miller's Dale, and we pursue the Wye valley up to Buxton, which we begin to regard as not belonging to the Peak at all. Kalmat had thought Derbyshire was done when Matlock and Buxton, Haddon and Chatsworth, were visited; but a new and undiscovered Derbyshire has been opened to us, and he protests that the tourist, who knows the show-places, but is ignorant of the high moorland country of Kinderscout and Castleton, of Ashopton and Hathersage, of Leam and Longshaw, is only in the alphabet of the educational course awaiting him. The tourist is ignorant, too, of the inhabitants.

The character of the people is as fresh and healthy as the scenery. The abusive adage which endows Derbyshire arms with strength at the expense of Derbyshire heads has no application to the shrewd hill-farmers and stolid lead-miners of the High Peak. They appear to speak in aphorisms. When someone was extolling Charles Lamb as a humourist to Thomas Carlyle, the great philosopher said, "I have known scores of Scotch moorland farmers, who for humour could have blown Lamb into the zenith." This power of

caustic humour, expressed in a broad dialect that gives it additional force, is one of the leading characteristics of the lusty, long-headed, loyal-hearted men of the Peak; and it is combined with a cordial warmth of feeling which is all the more noticeable coming, as it does, from rough exteriors and inhospitable hills.

Our ship is paid off; the Whitsuntide cruise is over all too soon; and now the express to the South is to take one of us at least away to the "desk's dead wood." And so we bid adieu to the Peak,

" . . . a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like thine,
The mind is coloured by thy every hue."

And to-night the piece of Blue John spar revives all the incidents of the holiday, and all the scenes come up for review. The prospect through my window is one of monotonous houses looking dismal in the misty rain, and of dingy streets of slush and mud, with the movement of one or two dripping umbrellas, a cheap funeral, the howling dervishes of the Salvation Army, and a melancholy policeman. But what I see is the vale of Hope lying radiant and green under wild peaks that wear a witching smile, and that draw near in the strong sunlight. The summer breeze makes an Æolian harp of the stony Windgates. The mountains sketch their shapes before me; the scowling masses of Kinder, with a shaft of strong sunlight athwart their gloom; the haughty peaks of Win and Lose Hills; the familiar features of Mam Tor; the towering shoulders of "Sir William," with the white mist bearding his face. And now comes the sweet fresh valleys most dear to the inward eye of Memory: you Ladybower, you romantic Edale, and you fair vale of the Derwent, who can fling the heart's affection for you into words?



Derbyshire Galls.

*Still linger, in our northern clime,
Some remnants of the good old time ;
And still, within our valleys here,
We hold the kindred title dear.*

SIR WALTER SCOTT.



HADDON HALL, FROM THE BANKS OF THE WYE.



Chapter XXV.

HADDON HALL:

AN AUTUMNAL VIGNETTE.

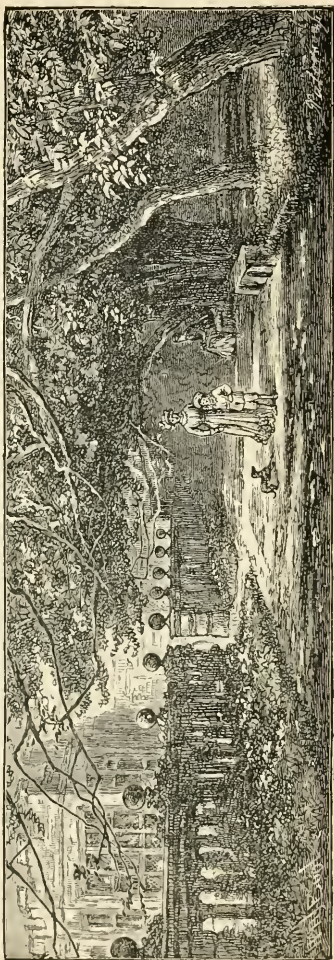
*I have seen
Old houses, where the men of former time
Have lived and died, so wantonly destroyed
By their descendants, that a place like this,
Preserved with pious care, but not "restored"
By rude, presumptuous hands, nor modernised
To suit convenience, seems a precious thing ;
And I would thank its owner for the hours that
I have spent there ; and I leave it now,
Hoping that his successors may preserve
Its roof with equal tenderness. It gave
Good shelter to their fathers many a year.*

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON.

THE Peak district is rich in historic piles. If it be true that Mr. Ruskin said he could not get along in a country where there were no castles, Derbyshire should be his delight. There is William Peveril's crumbling fortress at Castleton ; the old abbey ruin at Deepdale ; while Hardwick Hall, Bolsover Castle, and Winfield Manor may be said to be neighbours. But Haddon

Hall stands pre-eminent among these histories in stone, an ancient anthem in architecture. Every stone you tread upon has a history, said Cicero of Athens, and the same might almost be said of Haddon. Behold its gray battlements and turrets and towers, half-smothered in fading foliage, looking over the windings of the Wye. It is an October afternoon, and the autumn-time is, perhaps, the best of all periods of the year to see Haddon Hall. The colour of the woods is now in harmony with the pensive gray stone of the baronial battlements. The foliage, no longer an uniform, monotonous green, is a study of intense tints. The tresses of the lady-birch are spangled with yellow. Bronzes and russets and coppery reds are mixed up with the dark green of the solemn yews. The beech-trees gleam with rose-colour. The brilliant beads of the mountain ash burn amid the soft brown of ripening nuts and the dark hues of wild berries. The woods are silent. A solitary robin's note on the terrace intensifies the stillness. Faded leaves fall at our feet with a musical sigh. The river is running away with argosies of yellow leaves. The autumnal sadness suits the deserted old towers of Haddon. The castle itself is almost as perfect now as in the feudal days of chivalry, when its walls echoed the noisy revelry of retainers, and the wassail-cup went its merry round. The place seems as if Sir George Vernon, "the King of the Peak," and his retinue had just left it for a day's hunting in the woods, and would be back again anon. The marks of their whittles, and the stains of their trenchers, are on the massive tables in the old banqueting hall. One of the huntsmen has left his horn behind him in yonder little room. The modern tourist could no more sound it than bend Ulysses' bow. There are also a gigantic pair of jack-boots, and thick leathern doublet, should you wish to follow Sir George's party into the forest. That fire-place in the kitchen, with its incalculable capacity for fuel, is ready to deal summarily with a fat stirk; but coals are now, alas! twenty shillings a ton, and steaks are at famine price. In the state bed-room, where Queen Elizabeth slept, the bed seems to have just been made. The old ball-room, with its oaken floor and big window recesses, is deserted; but it does not need a wild imagination to people it with the guests of the past. I can hear the echo of the

bygone revelry. The minstrel is tuning his harp in praise of a "ladye faire." Young squires and country belles are dancing, who have been dust these two hundred years. The sun shines on the silent terrace, where the mind's eye sees a peacock spreading the rainbow glories of its tail, and beholds a garden party that might have lent inspiration to Watteau. In the quadrangle yonder, to which that vassal in buff jerkin is hurrying, is a hunting group that Wouvermanns might have immortalized. Dorothy Vernon has just stolen past to have a whispered interview with John Manners. Here is the spreading elm, under whose leafy gloom he used to wait at night for a hushed word of love, or a warning wave of the hand, from the little oriel window above. He is cutting her initials on the bark, just as Rosalind's name was carved on the trees by



ON THE TERRACE, HADDON.

a man who haunted the forest. A pretty "bit" for an artist is Dorothy Vernon's doorway, from whence she eloped :

"Into the night, and the arms of love."

A painter has placed his easel in front of it, and the heavy old oaken doors, and eleven worn stone steps, are having their picturesque sadness thrown upon the canvas. Haddon Hall is indeed haunted by painters. I never pay it a visit but some artists are breathing its ancient air. It is the most painted place in the world. To-day, a lady of the easel has found a fascinating study in the old tapestry of "My Lady's Chamber;" another artist is sketching an old doorway, with quaint stone carvings, and bleached timber. A third painter is in love with the avenue of lime-trees forming the upper terrace, and known as "Dorothy Vernon's Walk."* Haddon Hall does not depend upon a love-legend for its fame, but the story of Dorothy Vernon gives it a human interest that still more endears the baronial mansion to the followers of the picturesque. We are told that there is no foundation for the tender tradition: and even so respectable an antiquarian as the Rev. John Charles Cox is of opinion that Dorothy never eloped at all, "but was married after the usual hum-drum fashion." This is the age of unbelief. Robin Hood is regarded as a myth; Shakespeare is voted an impostor; even the Bible is reduced by scientists and sceptics into a piece of Hebrew mythology; and, of course, the sweet old romance of Haddon Hall

* Mention of pictures of Haddon Hall reminds me, by the way, of the disadvantages that attend artists at this delightful old Derbyshire castle. Nothing could surely be more captivating to the artistic eye than to dream about the courtyards and terraces of Haddon through the long summer days, now sketching a bit of quaint window and stonework, now making a study of trees, anon charmed with an old-world interior, then placing the easel before an ancient oaken door studded with heavy nails red with rust. Such occupations take you back to mediæval times, and merely to live is to breathe the air of romance. But the sketcher's grievance is the people, the trippers and tourists, who come to "do" Haddon, and stand looking over his shoulder and pass comments on his work. A lady friend of mine, herself not unknown on the walls of the Royal Academy, suffered much in this direction. Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton seems to have experienced the same discomfort, for he writes: "I can fully understand the refined tortures of a monkey of modest disposition exhibited in a menagerie. I am like one of Wombwell's animals, shown daily, without either pleasure or profit to himself, to a pitiless crowd at a village fair; but I have the peculiar disadvantage of understanding the language in which the various commentaries on my person are expressed."

must be duly dispelled, Mr. Gradgrind, by "facts, sir, facts." But, nevertheless, the Goths and Vandals will not quite destroy the old romance. It is one of the poems we must not willingly let die. Three hundred chequered years have passed, but still the legend is charming and new; and many budding springs shall bloom into summer, and the summers soften into autumn, and the autumns wither into winters wild and cold, before we discredit the sweet story of John Manners donning the woodman's garb, and sleeping with the hinds of the forest, in order that he might be near his Dorothy; of the midnight elopement from the brilliant ball-



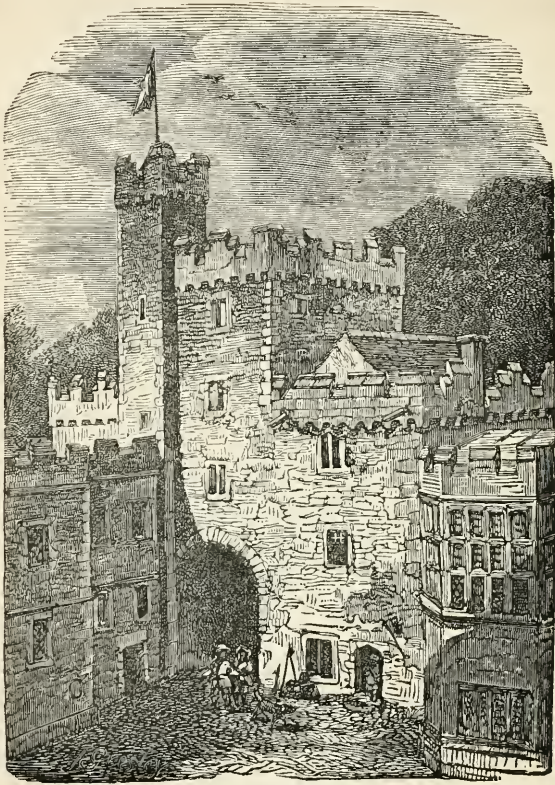
“THE PEACOCK” AT ROWSLEY.

room; of the runaway ride through the black night, and of the marriage in Leicester Forest, where Dorothy's heart promised far more than was demanded by the Prayer Book.

It is a walk for poet and painter by the Wye side from Haddon either to Rowsley or Bakewell. There are pictures all the way—suggestive studies of old gnarled trees hanging over the voiceful water, ideal vistas of meadow with wooded heights beyond, “bits” of the old-world mixed up with trees and torrent. At Rowsley, the many gables and mullioned windows of the “Peacock” bridge over gently the contrast between the battlements of Haddon and the signal-boxes at the railway station. At Bakewell, if the Haddon Hall

romance is still strong within you, there is the fine old church, with the Vernon monuments. There rest in their long sleep Sir George Vernon, and his two wives, the Dames Margaret and Maud. Besides them are "Sir John Manners, of Haddon, Knight," and "Dame Dorothie, his wife." The runaway daughter awaits the Resurrection morning at her father's side ; and the austere step-mother and the proscribed lover are reconciled in death.





THE EAGLE TOWER, HADDON.



Chapter VIII.

HADDON HALL:

THE STORY OF DOROTHY VERNON.

*One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near ;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung !
“ She is won ! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur ;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,” quoth young Lochinvar.*

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

IT is difficult to mention Haddon Hall without thinking of Dorothy Vernon. Her midnight elopement with Sir John Manners adds to the hoary edifice that “one touch of nature” which “makes the whole world kin.” It awakens that sentimental interest in the mediæval mansion which its historical associations and feudal relics would fail to arouse. Haddon Hall is not so much a mausoleum of the past as a love-story in castellated form. It is a poem, not a place, an anecdote in architecture, a memory in masonry, a ballad in battlements, a romance wrought on rock, the tradition of a great ducal house inscribed on time-stained towers :

“ The solemn arches breath in stone ;
Windows and walls have lips to tell.”

Every nook and corner of the poetic old pile in the Peak is eloquent of Dorothy. Her smile greets you as you wander

through the echoing courts and corridors ; her witching eyes gaze at you from the ivied oriel windows ; her supple figure flits along the moss-grown terraces. She haunts and hallows the place. The story of her runaway ride is the one tradition to which all others give way. It has been told by many writers. Antiquarians and archæologists have shed angry ink in controversies as to the apocryphal points of the tradition. A whole library of poems has been inspired by the clandestine love and runaway marriage. Painters have found in Dorothy a never-failing subject for a popular picture, and it is almost impossible to open the catalogue of a Fine Arts Exhibition without meeting with a portrait of Dorothy herself, a view of the historic doorway at Haddon, or a painting of Dorothy, disguised in hood and cloak, riding with Sir John into the black night. Dorothy's elopement has become a "stock-piece" with romance-writers. Poor Dorothy ! She has paid a prodigious penalty for eloping with Sir John. She has been so hard-worked by literary taskmasters that her effigy in Bakewell Church might rise and claim for her immunity from further toil, or protection by the Woman's Wrongs Association from future ill-usage, or admission into a charitable Almshouse for Aged Heroines, so that she might spend her declining days in unmolested peace. It seems a piece of presumption for me to grope among the stubble of the Haddon harvest-field, now all the golden ears are gone ; an indictable impertinence for my stumbling stump of a quill to follow the polished pens and poetic pencils of a troop of authors and artists. I therefore apologize in advance to my prospective censors, and cry, *Peccavi !* in anticipation of their strictures.

The pages of the Book of Time must be turned back till the old and faded leaves of 1567 are found. Elizabeth had succeeded Mary. An intolerant Protestantism was revenging itself upon a defeated Roman Catholicism. Darnley had been murdered. The Queen of Scots was in captivity at Lochleven. Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney were at school. Raleigh was in his teens. Shakespeare and Lord Bacon had just learned to walk. The day was dawning when daring spirits, like Drake and Hawkins, Effingham and Frobisher, were to found that naval supremacy which has made Britain mistress of every sea, and extended the limits

of our little island until it is an empire upon which the sun never sets. Elizabeth was Queen of England; but Sir George Vernon was King of the Peak. Haddon Hall was his palace. He was lord of thirty manors. He carried out a "Lynch law" of his own. No feudatory chieftian had so regal a retinue of servants. A brave, bountiful man this Sir George, of princely wealth, and princely hospitality. His first wife, the lady Margaret, was dead. She had left him two daughters. His second wife, Dame Maude, had several sons, but they had not survived their infancy. The elder daughter, Margaret, was about to be married to a son of the Earl of Derby. The younger, Dorothy, was the old man's darling. His life was brightened by the sunshine of her smile. He called her "Doll." She was a Princess of the Peak, whose beauty made many a young squire's heart beat faster than the excitement of the chase; a coheiress whose richly dowered hand was well worth the winning.

How shall a prosaic writer describe the fascinations of her face and form? Can I adopt the ornate style of the late George Robins, the auctioneer, and appraise her charms in detached lots: Lot 1, a wealth of brown wavy hair; lot 2, violet eyes and rose-bud mouth; lot 3, a Grecian nose and finely-chiselled mouth; lot 4, the figure of the *Venus de Medici*; lot 5, shapely ankles and twinkling feet? Perhaps it would be as well to leave Dorothy's personal charms to the choice of the reader. That she was as beautiful as the blue-bells on her own heathery hills we have historic evidence, but what style her beauty followed—whether she was a blonde or a brunette, a dusky Cleopatra or a fair Helen, deponent sayeth not. Portrait-painters are by no means unanimous on the point. The variety of their conflicting idealities forms one of the curiosities of art.*

Sir George doted upon Dorothy. But the elder sister was the favourite of the scheming, scornful step-mother. Dorothy, although endowed with all the graces of budding

* Perhaps the only authentic picture of Dorothy is the old oil painting which used to hang in the quaint cottage, at Haddon Hall. His Grace the Duke of Rutland believing this to be the only reliable Portrait in existence, recently had the interesting relic restored, and it now hangs in the Picture-gallery at Belvoir Castle.

womanhood, was still treated as a child. She still slept in the old nursery. Each day had its allotted tasks in embroidery, tent-stitch, and tapestry. Her only companion was Luce, her old nurse. Her only companion? Here I err, for the imprisoned maiden had a proscribed lover, whose admiration she returned with all the interest of her innocent heart. Luce was made a confidante. She entered into Cupid's conspiracy, and favoured the clandestine meetings of Dorothy and her adorer. Attended by the ancient nurse, the Derbyshire Juliet, morning after morning, took early rambles in the wooded walks around Haddon Hall, and met her Romeo amid the sheltering foliage. On her return no one suspected that the rich red flush on her cheek was referable to any cause other than that of the May-dew, which cosmetic could only be gathered at day-dawn, or that the white rose she wore in her breast had been plucked by other hands than her own. During the day these meetings were impossible. But when the sun had sunk behind the masses of moorland height, and the purple darkness rose from the valley, the oriel window of the old nursery, between the north entrance and the Eagle Tower, would open, and Juliet, whose fair young face was rendered saintly by an aureole of silvery moonlight, would hold a sweet but silent interview with Romeo, crouching under the canopy of the leafy elm that spread a carpet of thick shadow across the pathway. The language of love was oft but a whispered word, a wave of the hand, a murmured blessing; and, after these blissful brevities, the pale and beautiful face would fade from the oriel casement, and a quaint melody elicited by her fingers from the virginals would render the silent night musical. If any attendant noticed Romeo he escaped suspicion. Even Sir George himself would brush past him, taking the rough-bearded fellow for a forest churl. Romeo's disguise was complete. It defeated the most discerning eye. Under that coarse garb, the rough-leather jerkin and slouch hat and big boots of untanned hide, only a lover's eyes could have recognised the courtly John Manners.

He first met her at a hawking party. As she sat on her pawing palfrey, with her liquid eyes flashing beneath her pretty hawking-hat, his heart was enchained by the fairy falconer. He fell fathoms deep in love with the Princess of



GARDEN FRONT, HADDON,

FROM THE TERRACE.

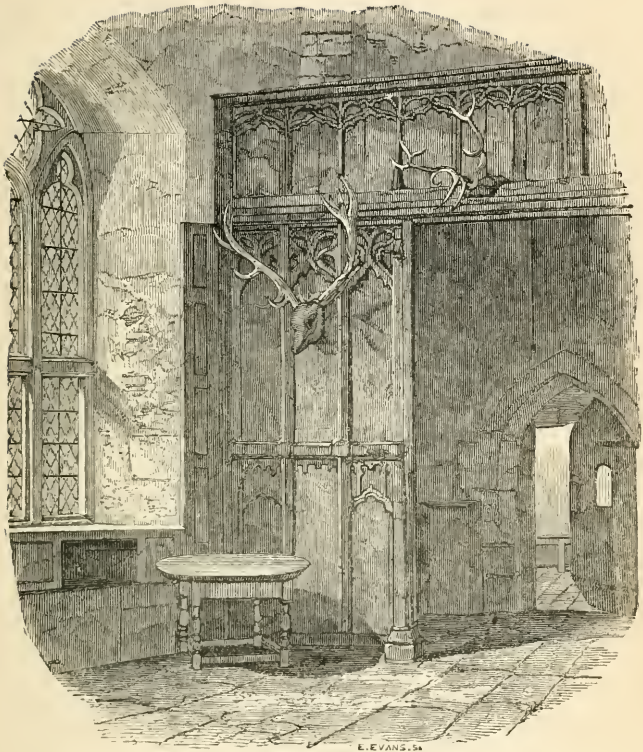
the Peak. They met again. He had a handsome presence to recommend him, and Dorothy reciprocated his attachment. He determined to win her for his wife. But there were lions in love's path. Influenced by the Dame Maude, Sir George objected to the suit of Master Manners. His daughters would inherit his enormous wealth; their step-mother was proud and ambitious; the elder sister, Margaret, would become a Countess. So it was ordained that Dorothy should mate higher than with Master Manners, a man of good family, it is true, but the younger son of a younger son, and a mere soldier of fortune. Romeo had no chances with the old Lord Capulet, who already saw a Count Paris for Juliet in another son of the same house of Stanley into which Margaret was about to marry. But the parental opposition only strengthened the young Montague's love. There was no world for him out of Verona's walls, no existence out of the soft sunshine of Juliet's love. Socially excommunicated, how was he to meet Dorothy? Luckily love, like necessity, is the mother of invention, and although Master Manners had lost his heart, he retained his head. He took counsel with Will Dawson, the head forester of Haddon, who for certain considerations entered into a compact to employ the proscribed lover as a woodman, and dressed him in a disguise that deceived the most scrutinizing eye. Some of the forest hinds, with whom Manners was obliged to associate, and whose bed of straw he must perforce share, were of opinion that the new yokel was "not worth his salt," for though he carried an axe he wasted his time in mooning about, and Dawson never rated *him* for his idleness. A park-keeper named Ben Shaw, whose affection for a pretty serving-maiden rendered his faculties a little keener than than those of his fellows, came to the conclusion that either the stranger was after the deer, or, as they remained unmolested, after a woman. Fired with the jealous suspicion that his own sweet Cicely might be the attraction, he watched his movements. He concealed himself in the branches of a spreading oak, and was an unseen witness of a meeting between Dorothy and John. Ben went boldly to Manners, confessing what he had seen, and offering to bear messages to his grandmother Luce, the nurse. Thus a ready means of communication was established between

the lovers, and Romeo had in Dawson and Shaw a trusted Benvolio and Mercutio. Day after day the dilettante forester caught the telegraphic glance of Dorothy's eye as she rode on her palfrey at her father's side, or attended the Dame and Margaret in their walks: the unconscious sweetness, the tender, tremulous, sensitive loveliness of her young face contrasting with the more mature and vigorous beauty of the elder sister; and there were the more precious moments still when Manners and his beloved stood alone in the soothing shadow of the woods, while Luce kept watch and ward against all intruders. No true-hearted maiden could resist such devotion; and Dorothy confessed, if not in words, in blushes, in tears, and in smiles, her love for the man who ran such risks for her sake. In the old nurse's opinion Manners was "a marvellously proper man," and Dorothy "the sweetest lady-bird that ever was wooed and won."

The sunny summer sobered into autumn. Margaret's nuptials with Sir Thomas Stanley, second son of Edward, third Earl of Derby, were to be celebrated at the end of October. Sir George Vernon had promised Dorothy's hand to a younger son of the same powerful house. Great preparations were now being made at Haddon for the performance of the ceremony. It was to be celebrated with semi-royal splendour, and with the observance of that large-hearted hospitality which was synonymous with the word Vernon. The whole household were too occupied with other matters now to look after Dorothy and her wanderings. Emboldened by impunity she met Manners at the back of the old shaded pleasaunce. There he pleaded his love with all the eloquence of his impassioned heart; urged her to go away with him and become his wife, arguing that Sir George would soon become reconciled when once the decisive step to happiness was taken.

"Leave my father without his consent—oh no! I cannot think of it," sobbed Dorothy, with downcast head, and hands that were entwined in his. "It would bring disgrace upon the family, it would——"

"Bear with me, Doll, let us speak heart to heart. I can wait no longer. The day has come when you must make your final choice, when you must decide between a marriage with a man for whom you care not at all, or with the one



THE BANQUETING HALL, HADDON.

who loves you, oh ! so dearly. Either promise to go with me on your sister's wedding night, when the bustle of the merry-making will give you a rare chance to escape unseen—or—or—never more look upon my face."

The strong man's voice quivered with emotion. He sank on his knees as if in the presence of a saint, and then, controlling his feelings, continued :

"I shall hie me to the wars and find death there, for you, Doll, my darling, are all that is worth living for. And you will forget me ; ay, you must forget me. It is best that you should forget the man who, as well-born as yourself, has herded all these months with the forest hinds for your sake. The game is played out. Go and please your father. Go, sell your heavenly heart for earthly gold. Farewell, Dorothy, farewell !"

He turned away with a bursting heart. Dorothy sobbed, stood for a moment hesitatingly, and then, with resolution writ strong on her tearful face, called him back.

"Oh, don't leave me ! Don't go to the wars, John," she said in a voice of earnest entreaty. "I love my father, and would not earn his censure, he is so good to me ; but I love you even more, John, and I—I—will consent."

She turned her wet, wistful, worshipping eyes into his wild love-stricken face. He kissed away the tears, and in that touch of lips an eternal compact was sealed.

It was the night of Margaret's marriage. The bridal rites had been conducted in the castle chapel with as much resemblance to the Romish ritual as Elizabeth's Papal penalties would allow. And now the hours of unlimited festivity had arrived. Open house was being kept in the old style. Seven score retainers sat in the great hall ; there were two hundred guests, and their retainers, from the neighbouring shires ; beggars were fed at the outer gates. The great salting trough was too small for the fatted stirks ; and even the gigantic gastronomical capabilities of the two huge fireplaces were unequal to the demand. There was a prodigious abundance of fish and flesh and fowl. The long oaken board groaned under the weight of boars' heads, and barons of beef, and haunches of venison. The wassail cup circulated. In the wainscoting of the banqueting hall the roysterers had fixed an iron ring for the wrists of tectotallers,

while the potent liquor these abstainers objected to drink was poured down their sleeves, *nolentes volentes*. Musicians were stationed in the gallery; and while unrestrained revelry was at its height among the vassals in the great hall, the scene in the grand ball-room was no less animated. The long oaken chamber blazed with light. Music drowned the sound of glancing feet and the *frou-frou* of brocaded dresses. High-born dowagers and rich old knights, gallant gentlemen and stately dames, sat in the oriel recesses, and



DOROTHY VERNON'S DOOR.

garrulously gossiped over their wine, while fair daughters and young squires swept by in the quick dance. Dorothy in her light bright dress was a picture—a picture whose beauty attracted many a man's admiring eye, and was followed by the most handsome women in the gay gallery with envious gaze. She was unusually winsome and playful that night, her eyes sparkled with animation, her face rippled with smiles. But when the revelry had reached its maddest, merriest stage, when the gossips were the most garrulous, when the minstrels were playing their loudest,

when the dance was at its height, Dorothy, excusing herself from her partner for a moment, stole out of the room. She crept along the stony corridors, that echoed the reckless revelry, until she gained the old nursery. Luce was there to throw a thick, coarse cloak over the ball-dress, and place a sober hood over the wedding-wreath and tresses of silken hair. Dorothy glanced at her disguise in the old mirror in which subsequently the vain Elizabeth beheld her freckled and faded features, and which only the other day reflected the sweet pale face of our own Princess of Wales. If that glass could only have permanently photographed the glance Dorothy gave it, as she stood and surveyed her runaway attire, it would have yielded to no picture in human interest. Luce gave her "nursling" a cordial in a taper drinking-glass, and then, kissing her old nurse, Dorothy passed out at the historic doorway, and down the eleven worn stone steps, into the night. The trees knew Dorothy's secret, and dropped a carpet of soft leaves across her path to silence the patter of her footfall, and they whispered to each other in a moan of sadness; "Dorothy, dear Dorothy, is running away from us, is running away with brave Master Manners, and we may never see her any more." And the rustling reeds by the river whispered in a voice of mournful cadence, "Poor Dorothy is leaving Haddon Hall, is leaving her cruel step-mother; John Manners is taking her away, and we may never see her more;" and the night wind took the news down the stream, and the greenery on the banks did nothing but talk about the story.

It was past midnight, and quite dark, save where the blaze from the castle windows sent broad pathways of yellow light through the gloom. Luna herself knew Dorothy's secret. She had watched the nightly meeting of the lovers, when no other eye had looked upon them, and now she hid herself behind a big black bank of cloud until Dorothy had passed the pleasaunce, had crossed the river bridge, and the elastic arms of Manners, had lifted her—as if a feather—into a pillion-saddle, and the sound of retreating hoofs was echoing in the mystery of night. And now she came from her hiding-place, suffusing a sheen of silver through the drifting clouds, and shedding her white wan light on the rough grass-grown roads and moorland paths of the Peak. On sped the

sure-footed steed. People from miles round were feasting at Haddon, so no one noticed the flight of the fugitives, save the silver-belted Orion, and the diamond-eyed Sirius, and the pale faces of Cassiopeia, and Andromeda, as they looked down from the silent sea of sky.

Along the romantic Matlock Valley rode the runaways. The great gray, grim High Tor looked ghostly in the wintry moonlight; the wooded heights of Masson threw a shadow across the road; the Wye had told the Derwent the secret, and the dusky river was hurrying foam-flecked on past moss-grown stones to relate the story to the Trent. Through forest glade they rode. At Allestree, on the outskirts of Derby, they paused. Gold procured refreshment, two fresh horses and a side-saddle, and a respectable riding habit for Dorothy. The morning mists were lifting in obedience to Aurora's wand as they passed through Derby. All day they sped southwards. On the evening of the second day they reached Aylstone, in Leicester Forest, where the fugitive lovers were joined together in holy wedlock.

When the feasting at Haddon was nearly over, when guest and retainer were alike surfeited with enjoyment, when the dancers had grown weary, when the merriment was subsiding, when the wintry sunlight was streaming through the windows, and laughing at the waning wax-lights, Sir George discovered his loss. Dorothy was not to be found. Search was made for her in vain. The old nurse concealed her knowledge of the elopement by tearful lamentations for her lost darling. Sir George was in a gale of passion—a ten-knot gale, that swept in its rage everything and everybody out of its way. He upbraided the Lady Maude for her harsh treatment of his child. The drunken grooms were sobered by the tempestuous knight. They were despatched in search, north, south, east, and west. Two of these couriers hunted down a man and a woman who had ridden through Bakewell; but their quarry turned out to be an honest farmer and his wife who were proceeding to the christening of their grandchild. A few days passed. The newly-married Margaret had left with her husband, for the residence of the Derbys at the Isle of Man, when a mounted messenger arrived at Haddon. He bore letters from Dorothy and John—letters explaining their flight, and en-

treating forgiveness. Dame Maude was obdurate; but Sir George's magnanimous heart—softened by the absence of his elder daughter across the Irish sea—could not withhold his pardon, and soon the runaway couple were welcomed back to the Peak. In less than a year, startling intelligence came from the Isle of Man. Margaret had died of a fever at Castle Rushen. Dorothy then became her father's sole heiress, and great was the dowry she brought to the Rutland family. Thus the two noble houses were linked together, and the boar's head blended with the blazonry of the peacock on the knightly shield.

* * * * *

In 1584 Dorothy died. Her husband was created a knight by James I., in 1603, and survived his wife twenty-seven years. The King of the Peak and his two wives sleep together in the Vernon Chapel of Bakewell Church, and beside them are "Sir John Manners, of Haddon, knight," and "Dorothie his wife."



CREST OF THE DUKE OF RUTLAND.



Chapter VIII.

CHATSWORTH.

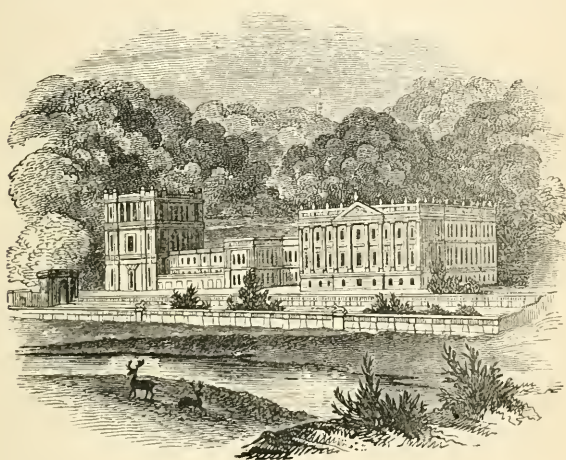
*Chatsworth! thy stately mansion, and the pride
Of thy domain, strange contrast do present
To house and home in many a craggy rent
Of the wild Peak; where new-born waters glide
Through fields whose thrifty occupants abide
As in a dear and chosen banishment,
With every semblance of entire content."*

WORDSWORTH.



AM, for this day only, the Guide to Chatsworth. My service to you, ladies and gentlemen. This way, if you please. Did I conduct my readers through the Palace of the Peak corporally, instead of in the spirit, I am afraid my ill-trained voice would only reach a few of the foremost fringe of the good people pressing to see the art-treasures of the palace. Indeed, the great house itself would hardly hold the throng, which would spread over the green acres of the glorious park, and cause the General Manager of the Midland Railway Company to run a special service of trains to Rowsley station, the threshold of Chatsworth. But, donning the cap of Fortunio, and assuming the stilts of Asmodeus, I ask you to follow me invisibly. It shall be my endeavour to repay the honour by being as unguide-like a guide as possible, neither repeating cut-and-dried descriptions, like a parrot with a mechanical

memory, nor bursting forth at inopportune moments with inapposite quotations of unpunctuated poetry. But here are the keys, and I present you my service again ; together with a welcome to Chatsworth in the name of His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, K.G., whose liberal spirit fences the place round with no selfish exclusiveness, but throws open both park and palace so freely that one is like a public picnic-ground, and the other is more suggestive of a popular museum than a princely mansion.



CHATSWORTH.

One or two of our party are loitering behind among the green glories of the park, I see. We must forgive them for lingering among such leafy loveliness. However poetical may be the landscapes that brighten the walls of Chatsworth, none can be so fascinating as the pictures framed by the gilded windows of the house. Vignettes these, of wood and water, rock and river—the soft acres of the park, with the fallow deer wandering among the soothing shadows of gnarled old trees ; the dark wooded masses of hill flanking the ducal mansion, topped with a wind-swept shooting tower ; the Derwent gliding through the wide meadows fronting the

house, the river here showing white and broken water over a weir, there shining in still pools under overhanging branches; the House itself starting with fluted columns from the bosom of the scene, a stately mass of beautiful buff stone, which the tinting hand of time has toned down to a harmonious cream colour that contrasts with the green gloom of the forest foliage behind; the Peak country climbing up to the sky in the picturesque perspective. "How old is the present house?" Well, the existing mansion only dates from the latter half of the seventeenth century, being built by that William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire, who played so heroic a part in the Revolution of 1688, and who retired to Chatsworth from an historic criminal information and employed his time—as Lord Macaulay phrases it—"in turning the old Gothic mansion of his family into an edifice worthy of Palladio." "His magnificence," says the same historian, "his taste, his talents, his classic learning, his high spirit, and the urbanity of his manners, were admitted by his enemies." Chatsworth House is, indeed, the monument of that munificent nobleman. He scarcely survived the completion of the palatial pile twelve months. Dr. White Kennett, the Bishop of Peterborough, in preaching the funeral discourse of the departed Duke, said the prodigious expense incurred in the structure of the building was the least expense "if regard be made to his gardens, water-works, statues, pictures, and other the finest pieces of art and nature that could be obtained abroad or at home." The Duke appears to have engaged the best contemporary artists of the day in the embellishment of his Derbyshire mansion. The classic allegories on wall and ceiling are the conceits of such painters as Verrio, Laguerre, Sir James Thornhill, Richard Highmore, Price, and Huyd. The chief worker in iron was M. Tijou, whose daughter was the wife of Laguerre. The carving was divided between Cibber, Grinling Gibbons, Thomas Young, Watson, M. Nadould, Geeraerslius, Harris, Nost, Davis, M. Auriol, Lobb, and Lanscroun. William Talman and Sir Christopher Wren were the architects. William Cavendish's successors have enlarged the building, and enhanced decade by decade its art-glories. The northern wing was erected by the late Duke. Some of you may, perhaps, contend that the architectural *tout-ensemble* of the Ionic façade is not improved by

the addition. The house [is like a body with only one arm. A wing on the other side is wanted to give the building completeness and perfect repose. The old house was one of the prisons of Mary, Queen of Scots. The captive princess was then in the custody of the Earl of Shrewsbury. In the park there is a sombre bower, with a moat, which is linked with her name and misfortunes. As, however, there is scarcely an ancestral seat in the kingdom but what is said to have served as a place of durance for the northern queen, her association with Chatsworth has no particular charm. More interesting, you will think, is the testimony of another illustrious prisoner which relates to the present pile. The captive was Marshall Tallard, who submitted to the Duke of Marlborough at Blenheim. He was kept a prisoner in England for some years, and spent a short time at Chatsworth. The compliment he paid the reigning Duke, when he left his hospitalities, was worthy of a Frenchman. "My Lord Duke," he said, "when I compute the days of my captivity in England, I shall leave out those I have passed at Chatsworth."

If it please you, we will now enter the house itself. The entrance hall is not a chamber of imposing proportions, nor does a stately staircase meet the view over which you can work yourselves up into raptures. The ceiling glows with a copy of Guido's "Aurora," the work of Miss Curzon. That is a statue of Domitian; these are busts of Homer, Jupiter, Ariadne, Socrates, and Caracalla. A corridor with floor of inlaid marble gives access to the great hall, a truly noble apartment extending the entire length of the eastern side of the quadrangle. The floor is of black and white and veined marble, artistic in design, and exquisite in polish. There is much that is interesting in this superb hall. Inspect the immense marble table in the centre of the room. It is of Derbyshire marble, as also is the massive chimney-piece. The tablet surrounding the fireplace gives in a sentence the history of Chatsworth House. The inscription is in tedious Latin; but the translation reads, "These well-beloved ancestral halls begun in the year of English Freedom 1688, William Spencer, Duke of Devonshire, inherited in 1814, and completed in the year of Sorrow 1840." The "year of sorrow" is an allusion to the death of the much-beloved and

lamented wife of the present Duke. The finite, unphilosophical mind would think, perhaps, that sorrow could never lay siege to such a perfected Paradise as Chatsworth; but grief is not the respecter of either persons or palaces. And reading reverently this brief inscription which tells of a "year of sorrow," one thinks of a more recent time of affliction (1882) when this ducal mansion amid the sweet, idyllic influences of May-days became the most mournful of mausoleums, and when this green, glorious park was invested with the grief and gloom of the grave. The thousands who were present at Chatsworth at the funeral of Lord Frederick Cavendish saw a sight so significant that it cannot readily be effaced from mortal memory. People who had seen historic ceremonies, never beheld a spectacle so sad in its pathos, so impressive in its eloquence, so moving in its humanity, as that dark funeral pageant which wound sorrowful and sombre and slow from Chatsworth House, over the river bridge, through the wooded slopes of the park, to the yawning grave on the sunny hillside where stands Edensor Church. The long, long procession passed between a thick lane of humanity, bare-headed and hushed, and whose great soul was stirred to its profoundest depths. The only sound from this vast concourse of voluntary mourners was a stifled murmur of solicitude which ran along the line in a continuous sob, as the kind and venerable Duke, the fond father, with tear-stained face and bowed figure, followed the mangled remains of his murdered son to their quiet rest. He staggered along under the weight of his great grief, sustained between his two sons. The face of the Marquis of Hartington twitched with a nervousness he tried hard to suppress. He had lost some of that imperturbable *hauteur* that neither exhilaration nor dejection ever affects. The impassive languor and listless, unemotional nonchalance were betrayed that day amid "the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation." All that was best in English political life followed the martyr's corse to its simple resting-place on the grassy slope of the village churchyard. Foremost, after the Cavendish family, followed Mr. Gladstone, whose pale, tremulous face might have borrowed the pallor of death. That face and figure in their distinct individuality did not seem to mingle with the other constituents of the scene. Mr. Gladstone might have been

walking to his own funeral. The dark *cortege* seemed a bitter mockery amid the sparkling sunshine and new spring life of outward nature. The awful solemnity contrasted strangely, indeed, with all the wonder and beauty of the opening summer-time which shone around. Chatsworth House was a Palace of Pain. The gloom was altogether out of sympathy with the lavish light, the new life, the emerald greens, the tender, translucent, tree-tints, the opening buds and blossoms, and the bird-music of May. It was said by Dr. Johnson, of Garrick, that "by his death was eclipsed for a season the gaiety of nations"; and on the day that gentle Goldsmith died, Sir Joshua Reynolds flung aside his pencil, passed his hand over his troubled brow, and said: "I can paint no more this day." These sentiments inadequately reflected the feelings of the people of Derbyshire over the dismal death of their noble neighbour. "The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church;" and from the dastards' deed in Phoenix Park may proceed political good. But such a life was too dear to be sacrificed in such a cause. What a difference in the two journeys the Irish Secretary took across the Irish sea! The first with hopeful heart, high aims, and honourable ambition, the peace-bearer to an unsatisfied people, whose social happiness was the sole aspiration of his errand. The second journey—a mutilated corpse, brought home amid the mourning of the whole world. It must have been a tearful stage of travel for the two saddened brothers that journey from Dublin to Chatsworth, bearing all that was mortal of their nearest and dearest kinsman. There is something aching in its pathos in the transfer of the body in the gray, struggling light of the morning at Buxton, where Lord Frederick Cavendish lived in the hearts of the people of the Peak; in the gloomy journey from Rowsley station, through the familiar Park whose glorious undulating breadths of green, whose voiceful, sheeny river, whose wooded uplands, *he* would see no more: in the simple villagers, who loved their master, seeing him as he lay in his coffin-casket at the foot of the altar in the Chatsworth Chapel—rich in carving and colour, and fragrant with the sacred scent of the cedar—with a placid expression of peace upon the pale face that seemed to smile at the assassin's successful steel and mutely say: "Father, forgive

them, they know not what they do.”* The walls and ceilings of this spacious chamber are enriched by Laguerre and Verrio, in a series of vast paintings illustrative of episodes in the life of Julius Cæsar, with colossal characters, like the prodigious Peters and Pauls that Sir James Thornhill (whose work we shall presently meet) painted suspended in a basket two or three hundred feet high in the dizzy dome of St. Paul’s, or standing on a frail platform up in the empyrean, covering with classic gods areas of ceiling and staircase greater than the Flemish ells of theatrical scene-painters. There are bronzes, and other objects of artistic interest, in this grand hall, and on the exterior are some notable stone carvings in alto-relievo by Watson.

Leaving the hall, and passing down a corridor containing some cabinet pictures, Swiss views and an exterior by Hogarth, the chapel is before us. Here all that painting, sculpture, and carving can do to enrich a room with artistic beauty has been elaborately employed. The sacred room is fragrant with the smell of cedar-wood with which the walls are wainscoted, and of which the reading-desk is composed. The floor is of black and white marble in mosaic work. The altar is made of the finest Derbyshire spars and marbles, with sculptured figures of Faith and Hope, the work of Caius Gabriel Cibber, the father of the laureate-poet. The same sculptor executed the celebrated figures of “Madness” and “Melancholy” over the gates of Bedlam, which his son Colley refers to as “the brazen, brainless brothers.” There are exquisite sculpturings round the altar, and ornamental wood-carvings by Grinling Gibbons, more of whose skilful work we shall soon encounter. The fine painting over the altar of “The Incredulity of St. Thomas,” is Laguerre’s. The same artist, together with Verrio, has filled the upper walls and ceiling with Scriptural scenes. As we leave the room, pause to look at the wood-carving over the door, of Cupids with musical instruments.

* The grave of Lord Frederick in the quiet churchyard at Edensor is visited by pilgrims from all parts of the world. The head-stone is very simple and unpretentious, with the inscription “Frederick Charles Cavendish,” the date of the tragedy, “May 6th, 1882,” and a plainly carved cross as the emblem of the faith in which he died. All the memorials of the family which surround his burial-place are equally plain.

Now the house is all before us where to choose. I need not be tediously topographical in describing the position of the various suites of apartments, nor need we go over them in any classified order. Sketches before pictures. Let us visit the sketch gallery. It contains the largest private collection of original studies by Old Masters in existence. The collection was amassed by the second Duke, the nucleus being secured at a great outlay at Rotterdam. The gallery comprises two large apartments, and the walls are completely covered with original sketches, divided into departments—the French, German, Dutch, Bolognese, Florentine, Venetian, and Roman schools. The collection is so exhaustively comprehensive that to merely mention the names of the contributors would be to give a catalogue of all the Old Masters. These interesting drawings, some of them the initial experiments in sepia, pencil, or crayon, of great masterpieces, demand a whole day's thoughtful inspection; but they must be dismissed in a few minutes. Still, note, I beg of you, the spirited studies of figures by Michael Angelo. They were for the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. There is a head of the Virgin, by Leonardo da Vinci. Raffaele's pencil contributes the sketch for the picture by Pinturicchio at Sienna of "Æneas Silvius kissing the foot of Pope Eugenius IV., at the Council of Basle," the figure of St. Paul for the cartoon of the "Sacrifice at Lystra," the original sketch for "St. Catherine" (the picture now in our National Gallery), "The Virgin and Child," "Joseph discovering himself to his Brethren," and several others. Holbein is represented by such examples as his "Fall of Phaeton," "The Last Judgment," "Hagar and Ishmael," and "Diana and Actæon." Look, too, at the excellent specimens by Albert Dürer, Rubens, Rembrandt, Titian, Claude, Vandyke, Salvator Rosa, and Correggio, the study of which is an art-education. Adjoining the sketch gallery, and really part of it, considerable space is devoted to a choice collection of coloured paintings of birds. The artist is not known, but his acquaintance with the feathered tribe was large and minute, for every species of bird is presented, and the drawing and colouring are most meritorious in their fidelity and spirit.

Proceeding now to the state rooms, pause we at the entrance for a moment to admire the collection of specimens

of ceramic art, represented by English and foreign makers, and then to behold the striking vista of the superb series of the state apartments, which occupies the whole length of the building. The first room in this splendid suite is the dressing-room. The floor, as in all the rooms before us, is of polished oak parqueterie, in which the light is reflected as in a mirror. The door-cases are all richly carved. It would be difficult for the most constrained and prosaic of persons, for the coldest professor of the *nil admirari* school, to describe the state apartments at Chatsworth without falling into the language of superlatives. One requires the ruby adjectives that glitter in Ouida's or Lothair's "jewelly hæmorrhage of words" to express his sensations. The coved ceiling is adorned in the centre with a painting of the flight of Mercury on his mission to Paris, and on the coving are groups depictive of the arts and sciences. But the most attractive feature is the wood-carving. Wood-carving, indeed, may be said to be the distinguishing characteristic of Chatsworth. It is *sui generis*, and none but itself can furnish its own parallel. Here is Grinling Gibbons' masterpiece. Horace Walpole has described it. It is a group comprising a cravat of point-lace, a woodcock, pendent leaves and flowers, and a medal with a bust in relief. Exquisite in its delicate clearness is the lace, while bird and foliage are wrought with a skill that makes the work indeed a *chef d'œuvre*. It has been disputed whether the carving in question really is the work of Gibbons. More than one authority attributes it to the genius of Samuel Watson, a Derbyshire craftsman, who, with Thomas Young, William Davies, and Joel Lobb, shared with Gibbons much of the wood-carving at Chatsworth. Over the doorway is another group of carving, excellent in design and execution, representing a collection of carvers' tools—globe, compass, brace and bit, square, augers, chisels, gouges, together with a bust. On the west side of the room are several pendants and a group; and before passing on note that clever picture in mosaic, those artistic Japanese cabinets, and the curious specimens of old earthenware. Come we now to the old state bed-room. More sights for the curious. Aurora chases away Night in the coved ceiling in great splendour of colour. Embossed leather of rich arabesque pattern,

heavily gilt, covers the walls. The wood-carving again calls for admiration. There are cabinets, vases, and old beakers that would gladden the soul of a virtuoso; and there is a particularly interesting model of the tomb of Madam Langlan, at Hildebank, near Berne, in which the spirits of the mother and her child are seen bursting the barrier of their grave. This bed-room has no bed. But no matter. There is a noble state chair with ancient embroidery, marvellously worked by a countess whose fingers now are dust; together with the coronation chairs and foot-stools of George III. and Queen Charlotte, of William IV. and Queen Adelaide, and—shade of Sartor Resartus!—the wardrobe of Louis XVI. The state music-room; more wood-carving, more mythological gods sprawling in allegorical clouds on more coved ceiling, more embossed leather walls, this time relieved by blue. Here is the vigorously painted portrait of the first Duke of Devonshire, which is attributed to Vansomer. But the special object of interest in this room is a clever piece of painted delusion, executed on one of the double doors leading to the gallery. It is a fiddle painted with such *vraiesemblance* on the door that, in the subdued light of the half-closed door, it has all the appearance of a violin hanging upon a peg. Everybody at first sight concludes it is a rare old fiddle, a priceless Stradivarius, one of the treasures of the place. Everybody is taken in by the happy forgery, just as everybody is duped by the deceptive paintings in the Museum at Brussels, from the morbid yet marvellous brush of Wiertz. Some people must touch—like Thomas the incredulous disciple—before they can be brought to believe. The tradition is that the fiddle was painted by Verrio to deceive Gibbons, who in one of his carvings, had deceived Verrio. How anecdotes of art repeat themselves. Century endorses century. Did not Apelles induce a horse to neigh in recognition of the steed he had drawn? Did not Zeuxis imitate fruit so closely that the birds came and pecked at his painted grapes; and was he not himself deceived by thinking the painted curtain of Parrhasius real? Another exquisite carving is a feather by Watson. It is as light as swansdown. A gentle zephyr, you might almost think, would ruffle the hard wood.

Here we are, in the state drawing-room. The walls are

hung with Gobelin tapestry from the cartoons of Raffaele, representing Jupiter and Antiope with the Muses of Parnassus. Phaeton is driving the horses of the sun across the ceiling with much spirit. The principal wood-carving is a military trophy. The sumptuousness of the appointments in this room gives one a sense of overpowering splendour on the brain. The furniture is richly carved and gilt. There is old china that would drive an ordinary collector wild with envy. There are cabinets of ebony and ormolu of great beauty. Behold, in addition, this table of sea-green. It is of pure malachite, rarest of minerals, and is the largest in the world. Look, too, at this table of polished black marble inlaid with a mosaic of various coloured marbles, forming a wreath of flowers—lilies of the valley, convolvuluses, wild roses, blue-bells. The effect on the black ground is charming. In the state dining-room, which next awaits your inspection, the ceiling is done by Verrio. It is a conception in classic allegory of the Fates cutting the thread of life, and is regarded by competent critics as one of the best paintings of the kind. There is an *embarras de richesse* of choice wood-carving that almost palls upon one by its profusion. Do not let me hurry you through this apartment. Look at the fragile delicacy of the festoons of flowers in the panelling of the wainscoted walls; turn your attention to the doorways: over that doorway a group of leaves and corn, over the other two entrances groups of crabs, lobsters, fish, and shells. Then admire we the fireplace. Framing that octagonal tablet is the triumph of the wood-carver's art. It is a study of dead game. The summit is crowned with heron, pheasants, grouse, and other birds. Over these the net of the snarer is dexterously thrown. This, hanging down the sides of the tablet, forms festoons on which are suspended snipe, quails, partridges, and pheasants. Each bird is a picture. Feathered wing and soft plumage are produced with a fidelity to nature which bewilders the spectator by its absolute perfection. Yes, I should say that this is no doubt wrought by the crafty hand of Grinling Gibbons, although the criticasters, who would deprive Shakespeare of the authorship of "Hamlet," and would persuade us puzzled Philistines that the statues of Praxiteles were done by vicarious assistants, are of opinion that the work was shared by the other carvers in wood, to

whom I referred a few minutes ago. Did not Horace Walpole write: "There is no evidence of a man before Gibbons who gave to wood the loose and airy lightness of flowers, and chained together the various productions of the elements with a free disorder natural to each species?" The busts in this room are by Chantrey and Nollekens of the Emperor Nicholas of Russia and his Consort, Fox, Canning, the Duke of Bedford, and others. On the central table is the rosary of Henry VIII., together with ivory carvings, silver filigree, and antique bronzes. There is a clock in pure malachite, the gift of the late Emperor Nicholas, and a charming marble model of the Victoria Regia. Carved marble doorways give access to the grand staircase. Here is a room worthy of a visit, though not shown, from the fact that when the doors are closed the entire apartment is a picture, the whole surface from floor to ceiling, doors included, presenting one painting. The subject is "The Rape of the Sabines."

Now we proceed to the grand drawing-rooms (we have left the state apartments now). Here are several notable acquisitions of art. Among pictures is Sir Joshua Reynolds' portrait of "The Beautiful Duchess" of Devonshire. There is a powerful head of a Jewish Rabbi by Rembrandt, and Titian gives a full-length portrait of Philip II. There are fine portraits too, of the Archbishop of Spalatro, and of the Admiral Nicola Capella, in Tintoretto's best manner. Holbein gives us a striking full-length of bluff King Hal; and here is a life-size portrait from life of Mary, Queen of Scots, by Zuccherò, certainly one of the most pleasing of the presentments that have come down to us of the Scottish princess. There is, further, an expressive portrait of Charles I.—as a young man—by Cornelius Jansen; while Dobson gives us the Duke of Albermarle. There are several striking family portraits, one by Vandyke, another by Kneller. Observe, likewise, the unfinished picture by Sir Joshua of Georgina, Countess Spencer, and her daughter Georgina, afterwards the Duchess of Devonshire. The noble lady is almost a finished portrait, but the child's face is amusingly inchoate. At the end of the room is the Hebe of Canova. It is a poet's dream of beauty and grace. The spotless daughter of Jupiter and Juno is descending from the skies,

and lightly touches with one foot the throne of Love. In her left hand she holds a cup; in the right is a pitcher from which she is pouring out a libation of nectar for a festival of the gods. In purity of conception and skill in execution this is a masterpiece of chiseled loveliness. The attitude is at once easy and animated, and has all the "soft Paganism" of the Italian master while not lacking in nerve and force.

"Here stands the statue that enchants the world,"

wrote the Poet Rogers of the *Venus de Medici*. The Chatsworth Hebe runs the Florentine statue very closely in the contest of surpassing beauty. Chatsworth is rich in classic chimney-pieces, but the two in the dining-room are particularly notable. Both are of large dimensions, and executed in the purest Carrara marble. One is the work of Westmacott the younger, and is embellished with life-size figures of a Bacchus and Bacchante. Sievier contributes the other, and in this Bacchus is crowned with vine-leaves, and an attendant priestess is replenishing his wine-cup. A Hopton marble plinth, of beautiful colour and lustre, surrounds this apartment; the doorways are of African marble and Siberian jasper. Family portraits adorn the walls. Now, if you please, the picture gallery, the library, and the sculpture gallery await our attention.

We will first visit the Gallery of Paintings, the ceiling of which is painted boldly and well by Sir James Thornhill, who regarded art by the acre, and was the master of one William Hogarth, a pupil who showed his gratitude to his Gamaliel by running away with his daughter, Mistress Jane. It is not a wild supposition to conjecture that Hogarth himself had something to do with the "historico-allegoricomural decorations" of Chatsworth while he was serving his apprenticeship under the King's Sergeant-Painter and M.P.

The present apartment occupies two sides of the quadrangle, and a profitable hour may be devoted by the earnest art student to its canvases. Here is the original of a picture, with which engravings have made you all familiar, and you approach it as an old friend. It is Sir Edwin Landseer's "Bolton Abbey in the Olden Time." This elaborate composition is certainly one of the most ambitious and most successful of Landseer's efforts. In it you will observe all

that charming delineation of animal life which was the painter's distinguishing *metier*. It is shown in the present for the Abbot's table: the dead buck, the fish and fowl, and in the eager dogs held in leash. But combined with this there is an expression of human character in which Landseer surpasses himself. This is seen in the portly Abbot, standing with the breviary under his arm, as he peruses the letter accompanying the gift for the Abbey larder. A study, this portly prelate. He evidently evinces his great gratitude to his Creator by the hearty zest with which he enjoys His gifts; for while monastic culture and strong qualities are displayed in the broad expressive forehead, the luxurious mouth and the Falstaffian corpulency, betray the *gourmand*. Landseer's Abbot is the ideal of the Friar of Orders Gray.

“And why I'm so plump the reason I'll tell,
 Who lives a good life is sure to live well,
 What Baron or Squire, or Knight of the Shire
 Lives half so well as a Holy Friar?”

After supper of heav'n I dream,
 But that is fat pullets and clouted cream;
 Myself by denial I mortify
 With a dainty bit of a warden pie.

I'm cloth'd with sackcloth for my sin,
 With old sack-wine I'm lined within,
 A chirping cup is my matin song,
 And the vesper bell is my bowl, ding, dong.”

This Abbot is the central figure, but not less studies are the accessories: the attendant Monk, who bears a salver with a wine-glass and flask to refresh the sturdy gamekeeper in charge of the dogs, and the peasant girl offering a basket of speckled trout no doubt fresh from the Wharfe, “the swift Werfe” of Spenser. Unfortunately this modern picture shows signs of deterioration, which are more painfully evident in another of Sir Edwin's masterpieces in the same collection: “Laying Down the Law.” The colouring in this famous conclave of dogs, this canine *Vehmgericht*, painted within years so recent, is sadly cracking and tessellating, leaving black disfigurements underneath. This premature decay is attributed to defective pigments. Close by this picture you will notice a “Jesus,” by Murillo, the tints of which are as pure and as fresh as if laid on but the-day-before-yesterday.

Yes, Sir, you are quite right. The old masters painted for posterity, and their colours stand and defy time. Their colour-grinders must have been artists. In a few years, unless the progress of decay is at once arrested, the Chatsworth masterpieces of Landseer will be dear at the price of the frames in which they are hung. Age adds value to the picture of the old master. The worth of the work of the modern painter deteriorates with time. Turner's pictures at the National Gallery are a melancholy example of the reckless adulterating spirit of the age invading Art, and making the painter's colours fleeting frauds. Decomposed examples, too, of Gainsborough and Wilkie are not wanting to show that our English school of painters has not found that enduring method which was matured centuries ago. Mr. Holman Hunt is, I am glad to know, interesting himself largely in this question in purity of pigments. It is of vital importance. The posthumous fame of the modern artist is bound up in its issues.

Here you will notice the original of Collins' pleasing picture, "Rustic Civility," which a thousand-and-one engravings and woodcuts have made familiar to us. Here is the "Spartan Isidas," by Eastlake, which represents the youthful Grecian with sword and spear engaging the Theban warriors. It is a very spirited picture. Pass we "The Temptation of St. Anthony," by Teniers; and a number of family likenesses by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and other notable portrait painters, to pause before what is, I take it, who, being only "a Guide," and no "art critic," and unable to talk glibly of the corregiosity of Corregio, the most striking picture in the gallery. Here it hangs, and the title is "Monks at Prayer." Observe, if you please, the wonderful lighting of the chapel from the upper window at its extremity. The sombre monkish figures are executed in high relief. Every expression of reverence and attitude of devotion is presented. What humility is shown in that bowed head; what intensity of earnest aspiration in those clasped hands, and what pleading fervour of face; what utter self-abnegation in that prostrate figure! The depth of the dark shadows, and the sharp light piercing the window, and the mellower reflection of the tapers, would suggest that the picture is the subtle inspiration of the joint geniuses of

Rembrandt and Schalken. But the painter was Tranet, and the painting formerly belonged to the collection of the Duchess de Berri. There are other good pictures in this gallery, but I do not wish to give you an "Academy headache," so hie we to the Library, the pride of the Palace of the Peak.

The perfume of Russian binding, sweetest of odours to Charles Lamb, greets us. The room itself, in its structural arrangements and decorations is unique. The circular paintings on the ceiling are the work of a Frenchman of genius, Louis Charon. This Library enshrines, perhaps the most perfect private collection in the country. Here are books and MSS. so rich and rare that it is impossible to reduce their value to money. The growth of this grand collection has been gradual, and has been formed by the successive generations of the Cavendish family.

These four large volumes are the catalogue of the Library. They are the composition of Sir James Lacaite, and the work is one of the most sumptuous of modern contributions to bibliography. A fifth volume—in course of preparation—will be devoted to the Duke of Devonshire's dramatic rarities. The initial letter of each division of this *magnum opus* is, you will perceive, embellished by a choice quartering from the Cavendish arms. The vignettes adorning the head of each section illustrate the scenery of Chatsworth.

Books, books, books; to the right of us, to the left of us, in front of us, behind us. In a library of 25,000 volumes, even the principal works are too many to enumerate or even to epitomize. Among the MSS. is the Anglo-Saxon MS. of Caedmon, a Benedictionale, executed for Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester, from 970 to 984. It is a small folio book of 118 leaves of vellum, and is regarded as being the most important and finest MS. of the Anglo-Saxon period. The pictures, beautifully coloured, are numerous; the borders are illuminated; and gold and silver are introduced in the illuminations, much in the Byzantine manner. There are other valuable relics of illuminated monastic caligraphy. There is the oldest Florentine edition of Homer, printed on vellum. There is the Mazarine Bible, the first Bible ever printed. There are the first quartos of dear Will Shakespeare, and rare impressions of the first productions of Cax-

ton, Wynkyn de Worde, Pynson, and other pioneers of the printing press. But to the artist the most interesting volume is, you will think, the famous *Liber Veritatis* of Claude Lorraine. The extravagant sum of £20,000 was once bid for this unique production. It contains the famous Frenchman's memorandum drawings and sketches of all the pictures that left his easel, and was never intended for the public eye. At his death he left it entailed to his nephews and nieces. Cardinal D'Estrees tried in vain to purchase it for Louis XIV. ; but the house of Cavendish secured the "Koh-i-noor of Art" at the expiration of the entail. There is only one other book in the world to compare with it, and that is the wonderful *Liber Studiorum* of Turner's, intended as a rival companion to Claude's volume. It is, perhaps, even more valuable. The colours on Claude's canvases seem immortal in their soft smoothness ; but Turner's pictures are perishing with pathetic completeness, so adulterated were his pigments ; and before many years have passed we shall have to turn to the pages of his beautiful *Liber Studiorum* as the only abiding memorial of the painter's poetic genius.

The next room is the Ante-Library. The ceiling is enriched with the paintings of Hayter and Charles Landseer. This compartment in turn gives access to the Cabinet Library, smaller than its companion rooms, but, perhaps, you will regard it as the more beautiful. It has, you see, an ornamented, domed ceiling, divided into decorated compartments, and supported by columns of alabaster and marble, surmounted by Corinthian capitals heavy with gold. The doors are painted to resemble the adjoining bookcases. When closed, all the walls in consequence present an apparently unbroken continuity of books. The sham titles of the "dummy" volumes are the droll conceits of Thomas Hood, the Elder. The comic spirit of Momus sports among philosophical tomes, grave histories, and scientific treatises ; tickling theologians under the ribs, and behaving with positive levity before solemn jurists and sententious statesmen. Examine the titles of Hood's merry mock library. How should you like to read "Lamb on the death of Wolf?" Are your tastes scientific? Here is "Boyle on Steam." Are you an epicure? Here is "Cook's Specimens of the Sandwich

Tongue." What do you think of "Recollections of Banister, by Lord Stair?" Imagine the contents of "Cursory Remarks on Swearing;" and how entertaining must be "Barrow on the Common Weal," "Inigo on Secret Entrances," "Chronological Account of the Date Tree," and "John Knox on Death's Door!" Among other odd titles you have a choice of such *bizarre* books as the following:—"On Cutting off Heirs with a Shilling, by Barber Beaumont;" "Percy Vere, in forty volumes;" "Tadpoles, or Tales out of my own Head;" "Malthus' Attack of Infantry;" "The Life of Zimmermann, by Himself;" "Pygmalion, by Lord Bacon;" "Dirge on the Death of Wolfe, by Lamb;" "Haughtycultural Remarks on London Pride;" "Voltaire, Volney, Volta, three volumes;" "Campaigns of the British Army, by one of the German Leg;" "Horn Tooke on Catching Cows;" "Wren's Voyage to the Canaries;" "Dyspepsia and Heartburn, by the Bishop of Sodor;" "Dibdin's Cream of Tar;" "Minto's Coins;" "Merry's Gay;" "Plane Dealings;" "Ray's Light of Reason;" "Egg, by Shelley;" "Skye, by Mc.Cloud;" "Beveridge on the Beer Act;" "D. Cline on Consumption." This library is in itself a picture; but there are other pictures, the design of a Greater Artist, framed, by the gilded windows of the palace, in which the entranced eye wanders over light terrace and graceful lawn, sculptured columns and sunlit fountains, to rest on the green undulations of the glorious park, and the dreamy reaches of the river radiant among the trees, and to the great burly heights, softened with wood, that rise close up all round, like an investing line, to jealously protect the enchanting place from the indignity of the besieger. Nearly every window at Chatsworth affords a picturesque prospect; and it is a relief sometimes to turn from the overwhelming profusion of splendour within to the repose of the fair landscape without.

And now may I ask your company to the Sculpture Gallery, which, if your stock of admiration is not quite exhausted by the repeated demands already made upon it, will call forth your wonder and praise. A fine gallery more than 100 feet in length and 30 feet in width, lit from the roof, and approached from either the Dining Room or the Orangery. Walls of finely-dressed sandstone; doorcases of marble; entablatures supported by Corinthian columns and pilasters

of marble with capitals of gold. We are greeted at the entrance by the marble figures of two heathen deities which Lord Clare sent from Guzerat. There is a statue of Buddha not artistically noteworthy, but remarkable for the exceeding beauty of the material, which is an almost white nephrite, the Jade of the East. At the other end of the Gallery are two colossal lions in Carrara marble. One is the work of Rinaldi, the other is by Benaglia. Both are copied from Canova's monument to Clement the Fourteenth in St. Peter's at Rome. When I mention that the contributors to the sculptures at Chatsworth include Canova, Thorwaldsen, Schadow, Finelli, Trentanove, Kessels, Tadolini, Albacini, Pozzi, Tanerani, Gibson, Wyatt, Gott, R. Westmacott, Bartolini, Barruzzi, Prosalendi, T. Campbell, Rinaldi, Rennie, Wickmann, Nolakens, Bonelli, and Dantan Jeune, you will admit that the collection is thoroughly representative of both the Continental and English schools, and demands careful inspection and study, and especially so in these days when the significant decadence of the noble art is attracting so much attention and regret in art circles.

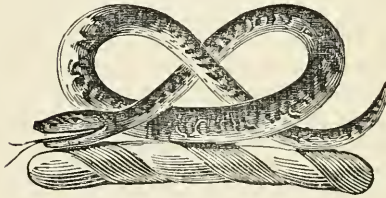
It would be difficult to say which of Canova's pieces commands the most approval: his Endymion sleeping, with his dog watching at his feet, or his statue of the mother of the first Napoleon. The classic shepherd is a very poetical conception, poetically executed, and on the marble face of the young sleeper is that magic beauty that drew Diana to the slopes of Mount Latmos to gaze on its loveliness. The *Mater Napoleonis*, on the other hand, is a masterpiece of pose and expression. The historic Corsican lady is represented in a position half-sitting, half-reclining, an attitude of meditative composure. One arm rests upon the back of an antique chair, and the figure is clothed with drapery that is a study in the natural grace of its lines. The face is beautiful, but intellectual strength and commanding dignity are the leading characteristics of the features. It is a sad, pensive face, that bears no resemblance whatever to that of her son, the Warrior-Emperor, which is close by, a colossal bust also by Canova. This characteristic likeness has also much of the ideal character of ancient Greek sculpture, and invites comparison with Antonio Canova's other conception of "The Little Corporal," the undraped one in the possession of the

Duke of Wellington at Apsley House. Napoleon naked, and yet noble in his nudeness! Such was Canova's power; and it was of this classic craftsman that an empty English aristocrat asked upon his decease "who is going to carry on his business?" Who, indeed?

The same chisel gives us likewise a bust of the late Duke of Devonshire, and a bust of Petrarch's Laura. Now behold "The Filatrice, or Spinning Girl," by Schadow—a young girl diverting herself with a ball of thread and a spindle. Ideal beauty and natural ease are combined in the figure with great success. This Venus is Thorwalsden's; that Wyatt's. Here we come to Gibson's "Mars and Cupid," and here is the "Cymbal Player" by Westmacott; the "Wounded Achilles" is by Albicini, and the "Cupid and Psyche" by Finelli. Full of artistic grace is the group by Tanerani: "Cupid Extracting a Thorn from the Foot of Venus;" and I would particularly invite your attention to the bas-reliefs of surpassing excellence by Thorwalsden, the severe sculptor of the north, the son of a poor ship-carpenter in Copenhagen, representing "Night" and "Morning;" then we will proceed to the Orangery where sculptured marble shines white among the dark and light greens of the plants.

We have now seen all that portion of the house which is thrown open to the public. Other apartments, not less beautiful, are embraced in the Duke of Devonshire's and the Marquis of Hartington's private suites of rooms. These are rich in art glories, and include, among many other treasures, a series of landscapes and sea-pieces by Carmichael, and a wonderfully sculptured fountain-piece representing "Venus at the Bath." But with these rooms we have nothing to do. Still our tour of inspection is not completed. If Chatsworth is delightful indoors, it is none the less charming out-of-doors, with its terraces and lawns, its French Garden: a forest of tall columns crowned with busts and trellised with leaves; its fountains and cascades, and its great conservatory, from which the idea of the Crystal Palace was taken. A visit to Chatsworth would be woefully incomplete without a glance at these, and lo! here is Mr. T. Speed himself, who succeeded Sir Joseph Paxton, as Gardener-in-Chief, and he will take us from the bleak moors of the Peak into sun-fed

palm lands, and we shall wander in a glass-closed world among flowers and fruits and fountains, sweet smells and pleasing colours; and afterwards, if you please, ramble away to the steep woods at the back of "The Palace of the Peak" amid simple wild-flowers and grand old oaks, with far-off views of valley and hill and moor.



CREST OF THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.



Chapter XXX.

BOLSOVER AND HARDWICK.

Architecture is the printing press of all ages, and gives a history of the state of the society in which it was erected, from the cromlech of the Druids to those toy-shops of royal bad taste—Carlton House and the Brighton Pavilion.

LADY MORGAN.



ARCHÆOLOGY is generally regarded as the dull pursuit of Doctor Dryasdust; and Natural History is associated with long Latin nomenclature; while the followers of these studies are popularly supposed to be ponderous pundits, whose depths of erudition fill the average man with an uncomfortable sense of neglected education, wasted opportunities, and dense ignorance. But whoever connects the Derbyshire Archæological and Natural History Society with either dulness or dryness, or with “long-tailed words ending in *osity* and *ation*,” or assumes that its members wear either blue spectacles or “blue stockings,” doth both himself and the Association injustice. There was not, for instance, much dry dust about the Society’s expedition to Bolsover and Hardwick,* except the dust raised on the hilly road as the procession of coaches bowled merrily along; and if the ladies of the party wore blue stockings they also wore too many graceful flounces for the cerulean hose to be discernable; while their talk added a *sauce piquante* to “the

* August 6th, 1881.

dry bones of history." Even our jokes are not antiquated. These summer excursions are a very pleasant feature in connection with the D. A. and N. H. S. In a county so rich in spots of historic interest and scenic charm as Derbyshire, the expeditions of the D. A. and N. H. S. will not readily fall through for want of objective points; but it may be safely asserted that the members could not have had a more interesting and instructive excursion than that to Chesterfield, Bolsover, and Hardwick.

The first item included on the programme was a visit to the fine old Parish Church of Chesterfield. The crooked steeple of Chesterfield Church is familiar to thousands of people who pass it on the swift Midland line, and with whom it excites a derisive smile or an easy comparison with the leaning tower of Pisa. But how few of the great multitude who are familiar with the queer, quaint, crooked steeple, know anything at all of the fine old fane over which it so awkwardly bends? It boots me not here to enlarge upon the noble proportions of this sacred edifice, its rich windows of stained glass, its ancient monuments, its old bits of architecture, or its eventful history. That task has been performed, and performed admirably, by the Rev. J. Charles Cox, in his incomparable *Churches of Derbyshire*. And I do not want to echo what anybody else has said. Unless a writer has something of his own to say he had better avoid "compositions," as if they were those that some people make with their creditors. When Professor Masson wrote that trilogy entitled *Paper, Pens, and Ink*, some caustic critic remarked that they might be useful—with ideas. But this by the way. Two things occurred to me at Chesterfield Parish Church on Saturday morning—one, the beautiful picture a wedding must present with the nuptial party grouped in front of that grand eastern window, with the morning sun throwing a wealth of coloured radiance from the painted panes, and dowering the white bride and her maids with jewels of ruby and gold! What otherwise took my attention were the pews occupied by the Messieurs the Corporation of the Borough of Chesterfield. The prayer books in these pews resemble ledgers. It is like as if Christianity were made attractive to the Town Councillor by its commercial aspect.

While some members of the D. A. and N. H. S. strolled as far as the other Church, which enshrines all that is mortal of George Stephenson, others visited the Memorial Hall, erected to his genius and his fame. The Rev. Mr. Mello was here to show rare minerals and curious fossils that illustrate

“The fairy tales of Science, and the long result of Time;”

while the Natural History passion was appeased by a stuffed baboon that holds intelligent guard over the products of the mines, and suggests nothing so much as a disentombed collier. We could not abuse this defunct caricature of ourselves. How could we be wanting in respect to an aged parent? We could no more do it than Charles Surface, in Sheridan’s comedy, could sell the portrait of his old uncle, Sir Oliver. Was not that cheerful chimpanzee “a man and a brother?” What does poor Mortimer Collin’s write :

There was an *Ape* in the days that were earlier ;
Centuries passed, and his hair became curlier :
Centuries more gave a thumb to his wrist—
Then he was a *Man*, and a Positivist.

A liberal luncheon at the Station Hotel—for even Archæologists have appetites, and chickens and ham are fit subjects of “Natural History”—and then we start, a procession of gay coaches, up the steep and stony road to Bolsover. The clatter of the horses made quite a sensation in the stagnant streets of Chesterfield, and roused echoes in the quaint villages of Calow and Duckmanton. It was like a revival of the old coaching days, this bowling merrily along the country turnpikes, with the lusty horn sounding at the stopping places. It put back the fingers of the clock of Time beyond the hour of what Mr. Tennyson’s villager calls “the kittle o’ steam.” “Life has not many better things than this,” Samuel Johnson said to Boswell, as they swung along in one of the mail coaches ; and I thought of the saying as I was seated with the driver on the box, bowling through the North Midland landscape, with a soft cloudy sky full of changing silvery lights that made the woods that surround Sutton Scarsdale Hall alternately gray and green in sun and shade, and brought out the towers of Bolsover and Hardwick, perched on the same

windy ridge of hill, now in distinct detail, and then only vaguely hinted at their position. Six rough miles of hilly road at present separate Chesterfield from Bolsover; but the distance will soon be abridged by the opening of the Doe Lea Railway, a mineral "feeler" of the Midland system. This short branch-line will carry passengers, and there will be a station under the austere keep of Bolsover Castle.

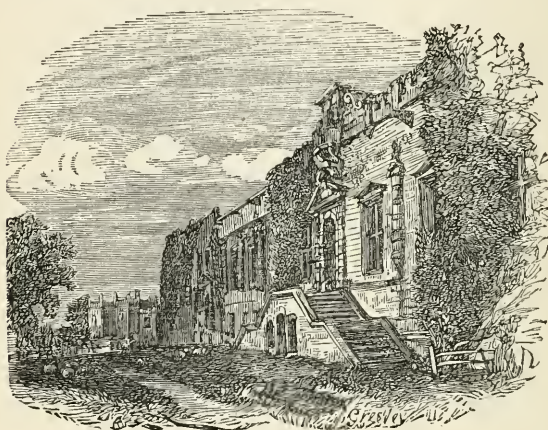
Bolsover Castle and Hardwick Hall being only some three or four miles apart, it is well to visit both on the same day, just as Haddon and Chatsworth are visited together. But it was a wise arrangement on the part of the D. A. and N. H. S. to behold Bolsover first. The rooms of Bolsover are smaller and less imposing, and if we had seen them after the stately splendour of Hardwick, their unique interest would not have impressed us so much, although the views are not, perhaps, so fine as if Bolsover were visited in the first instance. The lesser should always lead up to the larger. But do not imagine that Bolsover is an insignificant place.

The history of Bolsover Castle belongs to the dim, dead centuries. It is bound up with the events of eight hundred years, and with knightly names that are part of our rough island story. The ancient Norman keep, of which the present inhabited part of the Castle is an Elizabethan replica, and on whose actual foundations it rests, was built by William Peveril in the eleventh century. He was the ancestor of Sir Walter's *Peveril of the Peak*. Passing into the hands of the Crown, the grim fortalice was given by Richard of the Lion Heart as a wedding-present to John, his brother. It stood the shocks of the Barons. Subsequent history assigns it to the Howards, then to the Shrewsburys, anon (when in ruins) to the Cavendishes. It was Sir Charles Cavendish, a son of "Bess of Hardwick," who built in 1613 the present Norman fortress: a square, martial mass of sturdy stone, with assertive turrets and a resolute tower at the north-east corner; standing apart, grim, gray and frowning, from all objects far and near. When Sir Charles had completed this restoration, he began to build the stately palace that is now so beautiful in decay. It was completed by his son, the first Duke of Newcastle. Some idea of the

extent of the original edifice may be arrived at from the figures giving the dimensions. The dining-room was 78 ft. by 33 ft.; the drawing-room 39 ft. by 33 ft.; while the picture-gallery was 54 ft. longer than the noble apartment we shall presently inspect at Hardwick, being 220 ft. by 28 ft. When this palace had crowned the terrace, it was thought fit for kings. Charles I. and his consort were twice entertained under its roof. "Rare Ben Jonson" prepared a merry masque for the diversion of the Royal guests. The gray keep looked down upon gay revels; while "Destiny stood by sarcastic with her *dramatis personæ* folded in her hands," for the watchful keep was soon to behold more chequered scenes. Scarcely had the laugh and jest died away, scarcely was the mirth over, than another edition of *Love's Welcome* was on the programme of the historic stage. It was performed by Cromwell's surly cannon. The Castle fell before the Puritans. Part of the grand range of buildings was demolished during the Commonwealth. At the Restoration, the Duke of Newcastle came back from his long exile. He regained the Castle, and built the great Riding House (of which little more than the shell is left) so often mentioned in his book on *Horsemanship*. With the lapse of time, the Castle was allowed to fall into decay. Coming into the possession of the Bentincks, pictures and chattels were removed to Welbeck; and if the sword has not been beaten into the ploughshare, this eventful castle keep has passed from awesome warriors and unsettled times to the care of a clergyman and a peaceful age. The Castle is the Vicarage of Bolsover, and perhaps affords the only example in the country of a castellated stronghold—a menace in masonry—becoming a tranquil parsonage. One of the most suggestive descriptions of Haddon Hall I ever read comes from the pen of that American of genius, Nathaniel Hawthorne. In it he speaks of the fair-haired young girl who acted as his guide. He says: "I never think of the mansion, with all the romantic associations which cluster round it, but the image of this child comes to break my reverie. Silence, desolation, and decay have set their seal upon old Haddon Hall; but chance has set a child over them all, and the lesson her simple presence teaches is worth more to me than all the Idylls of the King." The spiritual governor-

ship of the ghostly castle at Bolsover seems to endorse this tender fancy.

We stroll among the ruins. Dismantled and unroofed, they are enchanting in their pensive grace. The long moss-grown stretch of terrace is a painter's dream of the picturesque. The glossy ivy—"that only parasite which clings faithfully to ruin"—braiding the gray stone with subtle gradations of green, makes natural crosses on the empty windows. Then we pass on to the older and inhabited portion of the Castle, which is occupied by Mrs. Hamilton Gray, the widow of the Rev. John Hamilton Gray, the



BOLSOVER CASTLE, WEST FRONT.

late Vicar of Bolsover. The rooms are small, and the contents are as incongruous as those of an Old Curiosity Shop. There is an incompatibility between some of the furniture and the surroundings. It does not accord with one's sense of æsthetic propriety, for instance, to find a garish and meagre gas-fitting suspended from the arched ceiling of the ancient pillared drawing-room, and modern iron bedsteads in famous bed-chambers such as those with the painted ceilings known as "Heaven" and "Hell." Some of the mantelpieces and fireplaces are superb, particularly the one in the Star

Chamber with its faded ceiling in blue and gold, and its museum-like collection of Etruscan vases, Stuart relics, and curious odds and ends. The view from the roof of the tower is splendid compensation for any disappointment the interior of Bolsover might have given—the country stretching in broad undulations of hill and dale: a vast pictorial map of the greatest projection, embracing the Derbyshire hills in one direction, and the dusky wooded plain of Nottinghamshire in another.

It occurred to me that it was a mistake to visit Bolsover Castle with a large party. An animated crowd of chatting, cheerful people lend a life and movement to the scene, not in keeping with the genius of the place. Bolsover should be visited alone, and on a gray gusty autumnal day, when all the weird desolation, and the ghostly mystery are felt to their most impressive extent. Then you feel the presence of the vanished centuries; then you hear the echo of forgotten years; then you experience the melancholy influence that haunts the place; then you breathe the old-world atmosphere. It is then you can people the moss-grown terrace with the figures of history, with the jesters in Ben Jonson's masque as it is being performed before King Charles I. and his Court; it is then you can hear the shouts of the Puritan troops, as they storm the keep; it is then

“The solemn arches breathe in stone,
Window and wall have lips to tell.”

Wandering alone about Bolsover Castle, stumbling over ruins in the old Riding House; passing down vaulted passages into subterranean chambers; pacing the broad deserted Bailey wall when the wind howls in turret and tree, until it is like so many demonical laughs, is to realize to the full one of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels. But a lively party and a sunny day somewhat change the influences and aspects of the place.

Bolsover appears to be a decayed market town, and was once held in repute for the manufacture of spurs and buckles. But *Ichabod!* seems written over the place, which shares the deserted influence of the Castle. There is, by the way, nothing quainter at the Castle than a fine old oak carving which forms the beam in one of the rooms of the Swan Inn,

an hostel which would have detained Shenstone. The inspection of the Church formed part of the D. A. and N. H. S. programme. This building dates from the days of the Peverils, but it has undergone many structural changes. The arch leading from the nave into the chancel is one of the remaining parts of the old Norman church; other work of an early date is discernible; and the tower was built during the early English period of the 13th century. The archæological appetite was appeased by a stone—not such a stone as astonished some antiquarians in a book called *The Pickwick Papers*, written by one Master Dickens, which bore a cuneiform inscription relating to William Stumps and his mark. The Bolsover stone is really an object of some interest. It was discovered about the year 1704, at the north door of the Church, where, with its face downwards, it had served as a step. Five feet long by three wide, it is rudely carved in high relief, and is fixed against the north wall of the Church. The sculpture on this slab represents the adoration of the infant Saviour by the wise men from the East, but the figures, once coloured, are much mutilated. The stone, no doubt, served as the altar-piece of William Peveril's Church. The Cavendish Chapel, with its costly marble monuments was visited, concerning which I cannot resist repeating a story told by Rhodes in his *Peak Scenery*, for there is a pretty touch of pathos in it not often found in that writer. He says: "My visit was in autumn. . . . A robin at Bolsover had flown into the chancel of the Church, and unable to obtain subsistence, where there was, perhaps, neither a crumb of bread nor a living thing beside himself, he had perched upon this sumptuous monument, chaunted forth his own melancholy requiem, and died amongst the tombs of the noble and the great. When I found him, life seemed to have only just departed; his plumage was fresh and unruffled, and he occupied a situation on the monument as if he had been part of the design of the artist; no red-breast had ever a more splendid sepulchre."

One of the sensations of the day was a visit to the burial vault under the Cavendish Chapel. A stone in the floor had been taken up, and there was just room for a man, not of Falstaffian corpulency, to pay a premature visit to the tomb. You stumbled down a few narrow stone steps, and there

were some figures with a dim light making the clammy darkness visible. The shadows were full of poetic horror. They suggested the genius of Schalken. They were eloquent of Paul Rembrandt. They recalled Dante and Doré. When your eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, you saw vaguely—coffins; coffins on shelves, coffins of lead, coffins of old oak. This box contained a Sir Charles Cavendish; that a Duke of Newcastle; the next a Duke of Portland. I felt just a little too near a Duke to feel comfortable. I prefer *Cavendish on Whist*, or “Cavendish” to smoke, to Cavendish entombed. So I groped my way out of the ghastly gloom, with a horrid suspicion that I had been reading one of Edgar Allen Poe’s morbid romances. The feeling was pleasantly dispelled by the sound of the horn, and in another minute we were driving through the green Scarsdale country, past Palterton, Glapwell, and Rowthorne, to Hardwick Hall, which had been for most of the day one of the landmarks of the district, standing, with flashing eye, more like a Presence than a place on the same hilly ridge as Bolsover, which it seems to challenge.

Bolsover Castle and Hardwick Hall are almost as dissimilar as Haddon and Chatsworth. Hardwick Hall rises from the green breadths of an undulating deer-park, with oaks that carry the eye of memory back to the days of Robin Hood. When the sun flashes upon its glorious glass frontage, the façade looks like a huge diamond glittering in a setting of emeralds. What the eye is to the human countenance, what a lake is to a landscape, what the pearls were to the arm of Scott’s *Ethiope*, so the glass front is to Hardwick. The façade, 280 ft. long, seems nearly all glass: a polished mirror framed in time-stained stone. It is lighted by eighteen colossal windows, each containing 1,500 squares of glass. This gigantic glazing originated the old rhyme,

“Hardwick Hall
More glass than wall,”

and the terse distich is more expressive than expanded description. It has been remarked that the dark designing “Bess, the Builder,” “must have had a passion for light”

when she erected Hardwick ; while Lord Bacon observed in his perplexity that "one cannot tell where to become to be out of sun or cold." This abundance of glass so relieves the hoary stonework that it is difficult to believe that the building is nearly 300 years old. Beautiful for situation, amid its grand old oaks and delicious bits of woodland scenery, the ivy-braided ruins of the older hunting-palace adjoining act as an artistic foil to bring out in bolder relief the modern mansion, with its six lofty towers,—if one can speak of a place that dates from the sixteenth century as "modern."

Hardwick Hall is just the place for a dreamer to spend the longest day of the year. After passing through one of the noblest entrance-halls in this England of patrician palaces, where Westmacott's Mary, Queen of Scots, greets the visitor, and which is hung with armour and trophies of the chase, you at once give yourself up to the past, and live in Elizabethan days. After the stunted, close rooms of Bolsover, the apartments of Hardwick seem incomparable in the grandeur of their area. There are chapel, dining-room, drawing-rooms, state-rooms, blue bed-room and green bed-room, and Marie Stuart's chamber to be inspected ; there is the richest collection of tapestry extant ; there are old carved oak chests ; there are other antiquarian treasures that appeal ; but it is the Picture Gallery that most engrosses intelligent taste. One of the best historical portrait galleries in the kingdom, furnished, as it is, with rare examples of Holbein, Vandyke, Sir Joshua, Lely, Hannerman, and others, its structural proportions afford a liberal education to modern architects. It is an archive of art. Studying the portraits, it is surprising how Nature delights to repeat family faces. She has not broken the Cavendish mould. What a striking resemblance exists, for example, between Sir Wm. Cavendish and the present Marquis of Hartington ; while there is a portrait of a Cavendish of many years ago—a light-haired boy asleep—whose features are the features of Lord Edward Cavendish, as he sits in the House of Commons as Member for North Derbyshire. These are hereditary faces. Thomas Hobbes may be almost said to belong to the Cavendish collection of portraits, seeing how intimate was his associations with the family. But it is scarcely a characteristic



RUINS OF OLD HARDWICK,

FROM THE PARK.

picture. Hobbes is not smoking, nor is there a pipe in the painting. Now his life was shortened by excessive smoking—he lived until he was ninety-two, by the way; and he was wont to have five or six pipes charged with tobacco and laid parallel on the table before him. He held tobacco to be of “rare and singular virtue,” and in the company of the “nicotian nymph” forgot all about Dr. Eachard or Wallis. Acting as tutor to the Devonshire family, he spent many happy days at Hardwick. An inveterate writer of books, he was wont to say “There is nothing so pernicious as reading; it destroys all originality of sentiment.” One of the Cavendishes once said to him, “You are always railing at books, yet always adding to their number.” “I write, my Lord,” retorted the droll old dog, “to show the folly of writing. Were all the books in the world on board one vessel I should feel a greater pleasure than Lucretius speaks of in seeing the wreck. I care for nothing but the *Leviathan*, and that might possibly escape by swimming.” Other portraits bring to the mind the rush of history. Henry the Eighth, Lord Bacon, Mary, Queen of Scots, Sir Walter Raleigh, and “the Beautiful Duchess,” meet in company on these walls. There is in particular one countenance that appeals to you mutely from the canvas: the child face of poor Arabella Stuart, who was educated at Hardwick under a gruff governess: her grandmother, Bess of Hardwick.

Bess of Hardwick is the presiding genius of this old hall, now a great statesman’s retreat from the cares of official life. Her initials “E. S.,” occur all over the building, inside and out. They are even bedded in the turf of the garden in front. Four times married, she is the ancestor of five Dukedoms: Devonshire, Newcastle, Portland, Kingston, and Norfolk. Next to matrimony, her mania was for building. Another Bess, one Elizabeth, Queen of England, said of her: “There is no lady in this land that I better love and like.” The portraits of the two Elizabeths hang in this historic gallery. The Countess is surrounded with the effigies of her four husbands; the Queen wears a gigantic farthingale, and robes in which snakes and lizards are embroidered. They might be sisters. Each is sandy of hair, thin of lip, and stern of mien. Both are masculine women. They resembled each other in character and sympathy. They were mutually

attached. The two Elizabeths, considered as parallel lives, would afford an interesting political study. Elizabeth, daughter of old Harry, I mean, of course, Henry the Eighth, was, it is true, a spinster; while Elizabeth of Hardwick commanded men to marry her. She so hen-pecked the Earl of Shrewsbury that she reduced him as he complains, to the condition of a "Pencyoner." In a letter to the Earl of Leicester he laments that the Queen had taken the part of his wife, and "hathe sett downe this hard sentence agaynst me, to my perpetual infamy and dishonor, to be ruled and overanne by my wief, so bad and wicked a woman." The Bishop of Lichfield offered him comic consolation. He told him that if his wife was accounted "a sharp and bitter shrew," yet that "if shrewdnesse or sharpnesse may be a just cause of sep'a'con betweene a man and his wiefe, I thincke fewe men in Englande woulde keepe their wives longe;" a sentiment which holds good to this day, when Mrs. Caudle nightly gives her caustic Curtain Lectures.

"A little child shall lead them." Thin are the partitions that divide the sublime from the simple. You might almost whisper through them. Here, in this vast chamber, where Sovereigns and Statesmen, Knights and Dowagers, hold court, is a child's service of pots and pans, and cups and saucers. These playthings are of silver: a toy-set presented to Lady Louisa Cavendish, by the late Duke of Devonshire. I hear a charming young married lady remark she would like to become a baby again just to play with them!

Next to "Building Bess," the strongest personality about Hardwick is Mary, Queen of Scots. A chamber in one of the projecting towers that looks towards the setting sun, is called after her. Much of the tapestry is ascribed to her industry. Hardwick is, indeed, a reliquary of the work of the Captive Queen. But it is doubtful whether she ever was at Hardwick. She could never have been in the room identified with her name, as the present hall was not commenced until after her execution; while it is not likely that she was ever at the old hall. The tapestry, as well as the work on the chairs, may have been the product of her busy fingers. Probably it was brought from Chatsworth, where she certainly resided, when Hardwick was ready for occupation. Anyhow, these relics lend to Hardwick a characteristic

charm. The prevailing feature of the place is, indeed, that its appearance has not changed since the days of Queen Elizabeth. Crowded with historical association and reminiscence, Hardwick is one of the most interesting mansions in these realms, and one where we should like to prolong our reveries. But "Art is long, and Time is fleeting." The echoing horn is again sounding; and just as the glass frontage of Hardwick is flashing back the horizontal rays of the westering sun, and the hoary historic hall is suffused with rose colour, our coaches take us back from the age of heroism and religion to Chesterfield and that of coal and iron, by way of Heath and Hasland.





Chapter XX.

FROM WINFIELD MANOR TO LEA HURST.

*I do love these ancient ruins ;
We never tread upon them, but we set
Our foot upon some rev'rend history.*

WEBSTER.

THE close of a November day in North Derbyshire : a day that has set aside the traditions of a much maligned month : a month associated with gray gloom, yellow fog, and nature suffering from dyspepsia. This day, as many November days are, has been crystal in its clearness, blithe in its blueness, electric in its nerving air. Once or twice, perhaps, the bright sky has been cast over with flying rags of windy cloud. Once or twice driving rain and pelting hail have combined to send the last leaves of autumn over the grave of summer. The close of a November day in North Derbyshire. I stand alone on the heathy highlands of Holloway. I overlook the woodland slopes of Alderwasley, climbing above the Derwent valley that curves and wanders from Ambergate to Matlock, from Matlock to Rowsley, and from Rowsley past Chatsworth, to its moorland home in the morose Kinderscout country. The wind and vapour of the previous day have rehearsed a sunset splendour that is spectacular, if not phenomenal, in its fiery wonder. The luminous, lurid upheavals of this wild western sky would frighten superstitious people. When

the sun, a ruddy shield, disappeared, a few minutes since, beneath that dark curved ridge of wooded hill, the sky was opalescent in its white fleecy haze. And now, behold! the entire west is suffused from the south to the north with a colour that is neither gold nor green, orange nor red. It deepens into magical pencillings of crimson and carmine, ruby and roseate. Violet and purple are the hues directly above this vast expanse of pink. Then occurs an interval in the chord of colour. It is a cold, steely blue, changing as it nears the east to a sea-green, and then warming to a rosy radiance in the east: a strong reflection of the conflagration in the west, and spreading, as the sunset blaze does, to north and south. I stand on the wind-swept knoll. The wind stirs with gentle cadence a harp of pines. I try vaguely and vainly to comprehend the sky-picture by the Divine Artist; and pass from speculations of atmospheric rarefaction, cloud conditions, refrangible rays, azure vibrations, and meteorological circumstances,* to contemplate the leafless trees on the hills from Alderwasley to Matlock, which stand outlined twig for twig, bough for bough, bole for bole, in this mystic transfiguration of the zodiacal after-glow. An express train is rushing with a shriek and a rattle and a roar in the deep, devious valley beneath. The steam of the tearing engine is rose-coloured in the sunset transparency. The shivering water of the Derwent, hugging the hanging banks, as if for warmth, is lit up with the fervid scarlets that are now usurping a place in the passionate expanse of sky. Some lights in the valley look like pin-points amid that vehement glow. The colour in the west now deepens into stormy smoky reds. The melodramatic light seems to burn

* I hope this description of a Derbyshire sunset will not be deemed "over-done." The sunsets and sunrises of November, 1883, when the foregoing was written, were phenomenally beautiful. Observed all over the world, they excited a variety of conflicting scientific speculations, many learned leading articles, and much erudite and stupid newspaper correspondence. The Astronomer Royal attributed these bewildering conflagrations in the sky to the volcanic outbreak in Java sending enormous quantities of volcanic dust into the atmosphere. On several evenings the moon was blue, or blue-green, a sort of celadon colour. It rose a pale crescent in the south, and between the blood-reds and oranges in the west and the ghastly reflection of their glow in the misty east, became positively blue.

the hilly ridges. Before its intensity has waned, the stars appear in the zenith. And then over the western sky, a dark cloud, that might be an Alpine range, has shouldered its vapoury mass above the actual hilly ridge. One might think it was a real mountain, did not an intervening furnace of dull, sullen red intervene between it and the tangible uplands below. The red deepens into blood colour. Above these spectral mountains float violet vapours, and then intense opal tints that almost meet the star-sphere above. The glow is as if the gods were burning a world. The white bark of a birch tree reflecting the glare gleams like an opal: the red trunks of a clump of pines are pillars of fire. Gradually the gorgeous pageantry of the sky diminishes. The Derwent loses its warmth of colour in the hollow. It runs gray and chill. The molten furnace in the west cools to purples and dark cobalt blues. But the stars, the diffident planets, that hesitated to show their chastened splendour, now burn low and lustrous. The milky way shows like a carpet of diamond dust. The cycle of moon, knife-like in its sharp lines, shows in an amethyst sky. I trace the chief star-groups. I see Perseus, the Pleiades, and Orion. Andromeda and Cassiopeia look down from the far-away heaven. Other stars, whose names I do not know, throb in the mystic immensity. They light me down-hill to Cromford. In the train homeward I return in memory to the starting point of my brief day's ramble, amid the slanting sunlight, the capricious storms, and the beautiful colours of a November day.

My objective point was Winfield station (in railway parlance "Wingfield"), and my prospective course Crich Cliff, Lea Hurst, Holloway, and Cromford. History at Winfield, geology at Crich, and astronomy from that hilly out-look at Holloway. What more could you wish for in one afternoon's respite from the city? Winfield Manor is seen daily by thousands of people who have never wandered amid its suggestive ruins, for its bold outlines, breaking the sky line on the wooded hill-side, catch the eye of every traveller on the Midland main line as the expresses tear north and south. The Manor is about a mile from the station. The church of South Wingfield is close by the railway. One questions the sagacity of the people who placed this fine old fabric in

such a situation. Down in a valley, and on the banks of the Amber, the churchyard is frequently flooded. The grave-stones do not look down on reverend mounds, but on level sward, for the hillocks of the dead have been washed to a common surface. Some of these upright tombs are not in the acre of God at all, but are left standing outside the wall, which has flood openings, on the footway verging on the high road. Time was when the little river in flood time entered the church itself, which was often nearly a foot deep in water: an inundation that might be pleasing to the sect known as the "Particular Baptists," but scarcely in accordance with episcopal tastes. The church itself is interesting as being re-built in the 15th century by Ralph, Lord Cromwell; and as containing in the chancel one of the funeral garlands that were formerly carried before the funeral procession of maidens, and finally suspended in the church. Miss Seward thus commemorates this beautiful custom:—

Now the low beams with paper garlands hung,
In memory of some village youth or maid,
Draw the soft tear from thrilled remembrance sprung;
How oft my childhood marked that tribute paid.

The gloves suspended by the garland's side,
White as its snowy flowers with ribband tied;
Dear village! long may these wreaths funereal spread—
Simple memorials of the early dead.

The garland is formed of hoops, ornamented with paper rosettes. It was carried at the funeral of a Miss Kendall. She died on the 14th May, 1745. Concerning her end there is an element of pathos, if not of tragedy. The old garland is associated with a girl's too fond trust and a lover's broken vows. The village gossips says that the horse on which rode the unfaithful lover was startled by the muffled church bells that tolled her requiem. It threw its rider, and a man's broken neck paid for a girl's broken heart. Mercenary curiosity-mongers have offered to purchase this memorial garland, but I am glad to say that their overtures have been rejected. Long may the interesting relic be preserved as evidence of a country custom that lingered longer in Derbyshire than in any other county. . . . In the churchwarden's accounts at South Wingfield may be found a curious entry. There is a record that on September the

28th, 1728, the sum of 1s. 8d. was paid to a dog-whipper for his wages. This is an allusion to a quaint office of the Church long obsolete. The functionary, who was thus remunerated for driving curs from the church, usually combined the dual duty of keeping the congregation from snoring, and was called a "Sluggard Waker:" an appointment that might be revived when

"By the preacher perplex'd,
How shall we determine,
'Watch and pray,' says the text—
'Go to sleep,' says the sermon."

This gossip as I leave the church and take the road over which the historic Manor is mounted high. At the verge of the road the Amber, tree-fringed, runs rapidly. Past a gray stone corn-mill, recalling the one painted in a word-picture by Tennyson :

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

Past a large and ornate Board School, whose tiled roof, warm red bricks, latticed windows, and Gothic gables, contrast strangely with the humble gray cottages that cluster near it. A turn in the road through a rocky cutting, whose precipitous sides are draped with ivy, now in flower; and a pause at the ample Manor Hotel, where Mrs. Wragg has a display of old carved oak cabinets, tables, and chairs, hundreds of years old, besides china, tapestry, and other curiosities that would send South Kensington into transports. Another turn in the road, and behold! the ruins of Winfield Manor standing out against the sky, dark and delicate in detail, and delightfully diversified in their irregular outline. It is my good fortune to come across Mr. W. Taylor, the warder of the Manor, which now belongs to a little boy, one Miles Halton Tristram, of Hampshire, (the Manor passed from the Earl of Shrewsbury to the Halton's in 1666, and from them in recent years by marriage to the Tristram

family), and a delightful afternoon I pass with a guide so intelligent and obliging.

The pensive influences of late autumn: the bare trees, the sombre hues, the sad stillness, the absence of the tourist race, harmonize well with the tranquil grace, the stately serenity of Winfield Manor. We are alone. The only sounds are the wash of a little brook taking its tributary wave to the Amber, which wanders in many a curve in the valley beneath, and the note of a confident red-breast. Our footsteps startle no echoes. The floor is carpeted with grass; the walls are cushioned with moss; the arches are curtained with ivy. A group of yew trees sentinels the ruins, and casts gloomy shadows. In harmony with the gray, gaping walls is the bleached and gnarled form of a patriarchal walnut-tree which faces them. It spreads itself out on the ground. The trunk has long been hollow; but the tree bears foliage and fruit. Venerable tree and wrinkled ruin seem to be in artistic sympathy. In the early spring-time a wealth of snowdrops shines white under the feudal frown. These flowers give way, presently, to the fragrance

of the gillyflower, which also grows in abundance. I follow my guide all over the Manor, which is divided into two large enclosed courts, approached by fine archways. It is architecturally interesting as being one of the first examples of the quadrangular mansion. Everywhere we turn there is a picture. The architect must have been a man of elevated imagination. Doorways and windows, towers and chimneys, gables and gateways, charm the eye with their grace and strength, combining beauty with boldness and bravery of style. The Manor suggests a place of revel, as well as one of resist-



BAY-WINDOW, WINFIELD MANOR
HOUSE.

ance. There is a fireplace, with chimney open to the sky, into which you could drive cattle bodily ; while a five-sided tower from the state apartments was inaccessible until the second floor had been reached. An exquisite Gothic doorway frames a view of the Amber wandering in the valley.



"THE GREAT TOWER," WINFIELD MANOR HOUSE.

At the upper end of the banqueting hall is a bay-window of delicate tracery, overlooking the inner court. It is a symphony in stone. We climb the great tower at the western end, whith a "squint" guarding the entrance. The old stone steps are as good to-day as they were when placed in position by the masons under Ralph, Lord Cromwell, when Henry VI. sat on the English throne. The view from the summit of the tower rewards the labour of the ascent. Immediately below, the ruins of the Manor are spread out a

plan and section in historic stone. Beyond, the view of the neighbouring country furnishes a striking panoramic picture. We descend into the great apartment under the banqueting hall. It is christened "the crypt." Monastic in appearance, with its groined roof of vaulting ribs and double row of massive stone columns, with foliated panel-work, yet it is not likely this underground chamber was applied to ecclesiastical purposes. Probably it was the retainers' hall. Perhaps it was a guard-room. It is a structure of immense stability. The window openings are nearly nine feet thick. The oak door, with its massive hangings, would resist a battering-ram. To-day "the crypt" is dank and chill, and the drip of water in the semi-darkness produces an uneasy sensation. Up into the light again, visiting the fine old barn, with ancient oak supports, resting on stone, that contain timber enough for a score houses; and returning to the farm-house that divides the two courts and the walls of which are the original walls roofed over. Here is the Visitors' Book. Among the autographs are those of Charles Dickens and Sir Edwin Landseer. There are various relics picked up from time to time amid the ruins: such as cannon balls of various sizes, which Cromwell's pieces pelted like hail upon the Manor walls when the Puritans dismantled the mansion. There are marks of these shot on the outside walls; but it was not so much to the Roundheads as the Blockheads that the despoilment of Winfield Manor is due. The Blockheads, for instance, wrecked the superb stone-work for materials to build that big, ugly house at the bottom of the hill. Even so late as 1785, the windows of the principal rooms remained glazed.

There is no old building in the country more historically fascinating than this ruined Manor House. Before the battles of the Commonwealth raged round its unyielding walls, the pale, sweet, sad face of Mary, Queen of Scots looked wistfully from its oriel windows. Here she pined in captivity under Bess of Hardwick, and *his* wife, the Earl of Shrewsbury. She was here in 1569 and in 1581. It was when she was confined at Winfield that Anthony Babington, of Dethick, four miles away, hatched that crude conspiracy that cost him his head, and led Mary to Fotheringay.



CELLAR-DOOR, DETHICK
OLD HALL.

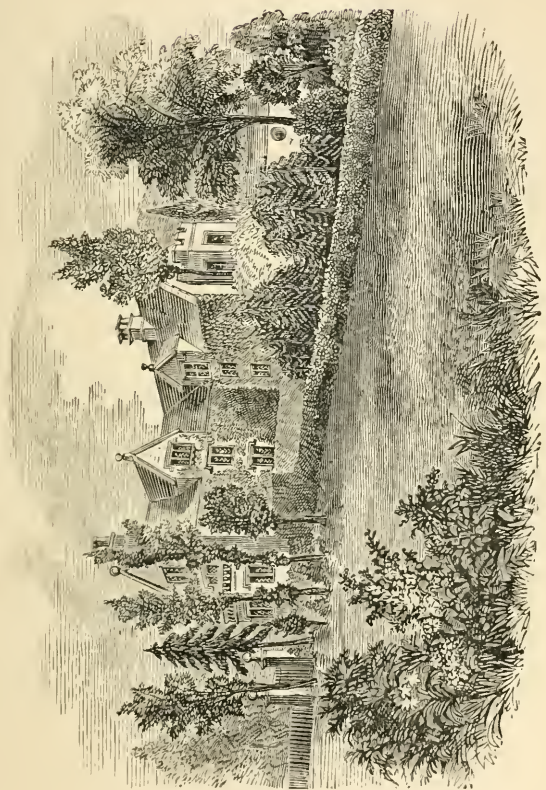
But little is left of Dethick Hall, now a farmhouse, save the kitchen and the cellars. Romantic ruins always suggest the name of the Scottish Queen. Mrs. Jameson has pointed out that every one of the English halls in which Mary Stuart was confined is now dismantled or effaced!

I think of the ill-starred lady, and her influence on history, as I reluctantly leave Winfield, and make my way in the horizontal sunlight across the fields to Crich Stand, perched on the upland ridge to the west. I climb the

tower that now stands unsafely over the glacier-like landslip that occurred in the summer of 1882, when nearly a dozen acres of limestone slipped over the clay-bed beneath, carrying away and destroying a house and furniture in its descent. The tower stands on the verge of this alarming displacement. The ground is broken up into dramatic fissures. Limestone above, clay below, and millstone grit below that, and then, in the heart of the mountain, congealed lava, the remains of volcanic action which lifted the strata into its present steep curves: Crich Cliff is indeed a geological marvel. Apart from its "sermons in stone," its scenic interest is alluring. The view is a revelation, as the eye takes in the diffuse picture of the Derwent valley. Just now the westering sun is bringing out wood and hill in sharp outlines. It is an easy step down the hill from Crich Cliff to Lea Hurst. There is a strange silence and absence of colour in the woods. There are warm tints on some of the blackberry brambles, and silvery are the berries of butcher's bloom. These seem the only berries, save those of the privet. With the exception of the hart's tongue, with its spore masses, fern and bracken are withered and dead.



CRICH STAND.



L. E. A. HURST.

A few red leaves flutter with murmurous movement on the beeches. The sun is sinking behind the hills as I reach Lea Hurst, with its quaint, mullioned windows, clustering chimneys, high-peaked gables, and projecting oriel. The house might be an old Elizabethan mansion, but it is comparatively modern. It is the Derbyshire home of Miss Florence Nightingale. Here she spent her early days. Here she returns once a year to reside and revive her old memories. Says Mrs. Roe in her *Uncrowned Queens*, speaking of the lady of Lea Hurst before she became the "Lady of the Lamp" in the Crimea,—“When at Lea Hurst if any suffered hurt in the lead mines or stone quarries, her gentle hands were the first to offer help and solace. So highly was her skill in dressing wounds appreciated, that the country women said—‘our good young Miss is better than either nurse or doctor.’ Mothers regarded her firm but quiet management of the village children, when sick or refractory, as something like magic.”

The view from the wooded hill-side on which Lea Hurst stands is one of the finest prospects in the Peak. I stand and gaze across the valley of the Derwent in the direction of Cromford and Matlock. The view embraces Alderwasley, Wakebridge, Masson Low, Barrel Edge, Stonnis, the Hag Rocks, and Riber. The setting sun has photographed the scene on my memory. I see it as I write. In the sunset glow I pass on to the stony heights of Holloway. In the west the whole sky is on fire. But I think I have said something already respecting that cloud carnival of colour. It must have been such a conflagration as Longfellow imagined when his *Hiawatha* departed “to the land of the Hereafter,” when

“The evening sun descending
Set the clouds on fire with redness,
Burned the broad sky, like a prairie,
Left upon the level water
One long track and trail of splendour,
Down whose stream, as down a river,
Westward, westward Hiawatha
Sailed into the fiery sunset,
Sailed into the purple vapours,
Sailed into the dusk of evening.”



THE NIGHTINGALE JEWEL.

Derbyshire Spas.

*Yet for her caves and holes, Peake only not excells,
But that I can again produce those wondrous wells
Of Buckston, as I have that most delicious fount,
Which men the second Bath of England do account.*

MICHAEL DRAYTON.



MATLOCK HIGH TOR.



Chapter XXX.

MATLOCK.

*Matlock! amid thy hoary hanging views,
Thy glens that smile sequestered, and thy nooks
Which yon forsaken crag all dark o'erlooks,
Once more I court the long-neglected Muse.*

WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES.



WRITER on Derbyshire scenery somewhere says, that when Nature had completed Switzerland, there was left one romantic fragment for which she had no further use in that country, so she set it in England, and it was called Matlock. The happy conceit hits off Matlock better than many pages of diffuse description. Enthusiastic people, who have never crossed the channel, compare Oban to the Bay of Naples, Grasmere to Lucerne, and Torbay to Nice; the Grand Parade at Cheltenham is to them the Unter der Linden of Berlin, and they bestow upon the Devonshire Dart and the Monmouthshire Wye the designation of "The English Rhine." It is no doubt satisfactory to our insular pride to know that we compare favourably in the matter of beautiful scenery with other countries, though it is somewhat invidious to seek to establish the excellence of the scenery of one country over that of another; but it may fairly be conceded that the comparison of the Peak district with Switzerland is not so far-fetched as such similes generally are. The Peak is Alpine on a re-

duced scale ; it is Switzerland seen through a lessening lens ; its hills are mountains in miniature ; but it is none the less romantic, except to people whose standard of scenery is that of mere size, and who measure the beauty of an eminence by its bulk and height above the level of the sea, and to whom the charm of a river lies in its total length.

There are four Matlocks—Matlock Village or Town as it is generally called, is an old-world place of gray dwellings and ancient Parish Church, built centuries before the other Matlocks were dreamed of ; Matlock Bath, Matlock Bank, and Matlock Bridge, all lying within a radius of a couple of miles. To Matlock Bath belongs the most scenic beauty ; Matlock Bank is on the breast of a hill that overlooks the rocky valley, and is monopolized by hydropathic establishments, the largest of which is Smedley's, who introduced the "cold water cure" into the district ; while the Bridge is the little market town, with its railway station, down near the river.

Matlock Bath has but a modern history. Defoe, who visited the place in the eighteenth century, writes of it : "The Bath would be much more frequented than it is, if a sad stony way which leads to it, and no accommodation when you get there, did not hinder." But when good roads were made, and hotels sprung up, the waters of the Bath were in great request. The "Old Bath Hotel" became an establishment of repute. Gough describes the Matlock of his day as being "much frequented by the neighbouring gentry for health and amusement, without the infection of southern manners." Here Lord Byron met Mary Chaworth, heiress of Annesley, and here the episode happened, recorded by Moore, which was destined to govern the life-history of both the bard and the beauty. Byron's letters abound in allusions to the beauties of Matlock. The original Old Bath Hotel is not in existence. Near its site is erected a new building of large proportions, called the Royal Hotel. In the "Visitors' Book" of the New Bath Hotel, Mr. Ruskin's name occurs more than once. This comfortable caravanserai is one of the institutions in a town of hotels, of which the Temple, Hodgkinson's, the Devonshire, and the Old English at Matlock Bridge, will be recalled by the readers of this page. All lovers of trees should see the

ancient lime tree in the pleasant gardens of the New Bath Hotel. This tree has weathered more than 300 winters, and is a marvel of arboreal growth, its wide-spreading branches covering a space of more than 300 square feet. It is justly considered a wonder among trees.

In 1815, Scarthin Rock was cut through, and the present road made. Then the era of railways came. The Midland line, which at first halted at Ambergate—the very threshold of the Peak country—blasted its way through rocky cuttings and treacherous tunnels to Matlock and Rowsley, where it was arrested, and, after a long pause, forced its civilizing way to Buxton and Manchester. The railway made Matlock. It destroyed the former social splendour of the “Old Bath Hotel,” but it has transformed the chrysalis-grub of a lead-mining hamlet into the gay butterfly of a fashionable watering-place. The wilderness Defoe deplored is now covered with houses, and hotels, and shops. Every old lead-working has become a “natural cavern,” with a showy name, to catch the loose sixpences of the excursionists who come from the mills of Manchester and the stithies of Sheffield, and the lace looms of Nottingham, and the workshops of Birmingham, and from centres of industry even more remote, to breathe the “caller” air of this “English Switzerland,” much to the genteel disgust of the elegant residents of the place. But even excursionists cannot vulgarize Matlock, for her limestone crags are everlasting in their grandeur, and the trees which clothe their sides with garments of green renew their beauty every year.

The Lovers' Walks wind under those cliffs among those trees, with the Derwent making graceful curves by their side. A ferry across the river gives access to this charming locality in which wood, water, and rock are blended with pleasant scenic effect. The Walk leads under a Gothic archway of embracing elms, whose leaves shed a trembling tracery of light and shade on the path. Matlock spreads itself out like a picture on the other side of the river. The Lovers' Walks deserve their amorous title. They are just the place for Strephon and Chloe to pursue their reveries, and exchange their sweet confidences and whispered confessions. The musical river whispers woingly to the hanging greenery of the banks, and the splash of oars is heard in the stream,

as a light skiff shoots past, with a fair Undine giving a dash of picturesque colour at the helm. It is pleasant to sit in the sylvan shade in the spring-time, when the trees behind are jubilant with feathered builders, and the jackdaws are calling to each other in the ivy of the crags, and the leafage is of that luminous, tender, delicate green which the scorching sun soon dims into a dingier hue. Pleasanter still, perhaps, is this retreat in the autumn time, with "the deep colour of the woods and the silence of the birds," when the beech leaves are burnished like bronze, and the sycamore covered with tints of red, and the birch splashed with yellow, and ever and anon a dying leaf falls with an audible sigh of regret at your feet.

Side paths diverge from the main paths of the Lovers' Walks, and climb up the Hag Tors, magnificent pieces of rock scenery, whose gray limestone turrets are trellised with clinging trees, and wild flowers, and glossy ivy, and whose rocky recesses are luxuriant with vegetation. Here and there a retiring bower, at some "coign of vantage," offers a rest and a panoramic prospect, embracing all that is beautiful between Masson and Harp Edge, and the view is one of the finest you can obtain of Matlock. Far away below, the Derwent glances among the trees, as it glides on to the weir, beyond which it lends beauty to the green slopes crowned by Willersley Castle, the mansion of the Arkwrights, first becoming useful at Cromford, "the cradle of the cotton manufacture," where are the mills founded by Sir Richard Arkwright, the Preston barber's apprentice.

Next to the Lovers' Walks, the Heights of Abraham attract the lover of the picturesque. "Why Heights of Abraham?" is the natural query of the visitor to Matlock who climbs up the wooded hill which is really a lower slope of Masson. He may perhaps fancy that the name has some occult connection with the petrifying spring in the street below, which, going into the primitive ages for a patron, is advertised as "Jacob's Well." These heights, however, owe their name to a supposed resemblance they bear to the Heights of Abraham at Quebec. The whole hill-side is a woodland mass of varied shape and diversified hue. A church, Swiss-like cottages, and castellated buildings break the monotony of the billowy mass of green. A prospect

tower, too much like a chimney for picturesque effect, crowns the summit. Much has been done, by winding walks, and the provision of rustic seats at frequent intervals, to modify the difficulty of the ascent; and one is rather surprised when he is informed that the mountain, after the expenditure of the energy required to reach the summit, is only a trifle over a thousand feet high. The



MATLOCK BATH CHURCH.

exertion, however, is rewarded by the panorama, which is a feast to the eye accustomed even to the grandeur of views from more lofty altitudes. The prospect tower hangs over an Avernus-like descent of woodland scenery. Away below is the curve of the Matlock valley, a deep ravine, on one side of which rises the mountain slopes of Masson, and on the other, tall, fantastic crags, draped with green, stretching from Scarthin Nick, past Hag Tors, to the impending precipice of High Tor, which seems less startling and stupendous when viewed from this standpoint, as the Riber hill-side, crowned with the towers of Riber Castle, rises to a greater height immediately behind it.

In each direction the scenery is really charming, whether the eye wanders up the river, where the valley of the Derwent expands into a broad vale of fertile beauty, past the isolated mass of Oker Hill, and past Darley Dale, with



THE DARLEY YEW.

its ancient church and more ancient yew-tree, where Sir Joseph Whitworth's mansion looks down upon a landscape that inspired the poetic pen of Lord John Manners, right away to the green gloom which smothers old Haddon Hall in one direction and princely Chatsworth in the other; or whether the gaze follows the river southward to the black rocks of Stonnis near at hand; to Lea Hurst, in the middle distance, near the waving woods of Whatstandwell and Alderwasley, made classic by its association with

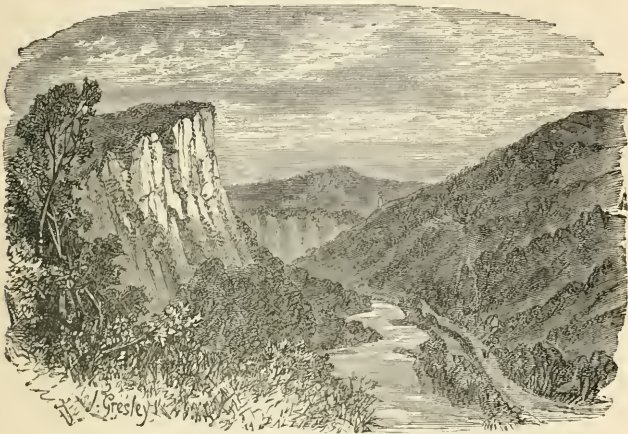
Florence Nightingale; or to the tower on the top of the great limestone shoulder of Crich Cliff overlooking the rich pastoral country beyond.

But the High Tor is really the pride and glory of Matlock. A sheer impending precipice of pale gray, so picturesque as to win admiration, so stupendous as to compel awe; a white wall of rock nearly four hundred feet high, whose broad base is covered with a wild growth of foliage, but whose solemn face, wrinkled with rents and fissures, and stained with coloured lichens, presents a naked front of lifeless limestone; a river shaded by hanging trees, brawling past obstructions of islanded rock; the cliff on the opposite side of the dale corresponding in geological strata and shape, and affording proof that the cliffs have been torn asunder by some past revolution of Nature;—such is the High Tor at Matlock Bath.

Derbyshire is famous for giant "Tors." The word is applied in Derbyshire to any lofty mass of precipitous rock, just as "scar" is used in Yorkshire. Chee Tor in Miller's Dale, Mam Tor at Castleton, and the various limestone pinnacles in Dove Dale, are notable specimens of this romantic rock scenery; but they are less imposing in their grandeur than

the High Tor, which is without an inland rival, or finds a rival in the St. Vincent Rocks at Clifton alone.

The High Tor appeals to every mind, and attracts every taste. It has attractions for the geologist because of the basalt sheet which intervenes between the two limestone strata, and which once flowed from submarine volcanoes, and also because of the natural fissures, whose walls are of dog-tooth crystals, fluor spar, and lead ore. The botanist



MATLOCK DALE, FROM MATLOCK BANK.

finds rare ferns and scarce plants in the wild undergrowth of vegetation that covers the lower part of the rock ; while, to the poet, and painter, and the lover of picturesque, the beauty of the kingly bastion never palls, and never appeals in vain for loyal homage. It is a picture, this great mass of grim, gray limestone, rising with imperious sternness high above the festooning foliage and ferns and braids of ivy that cling and climb round the feet of the flinty-souled giant, as if to soften his frowning face with their beautiful appeal of green ; and above the Derwent, that also seems to try to reach the heart of the majestic monarch with its sympathetic song.

The Midland Railway has forced its iron path through the

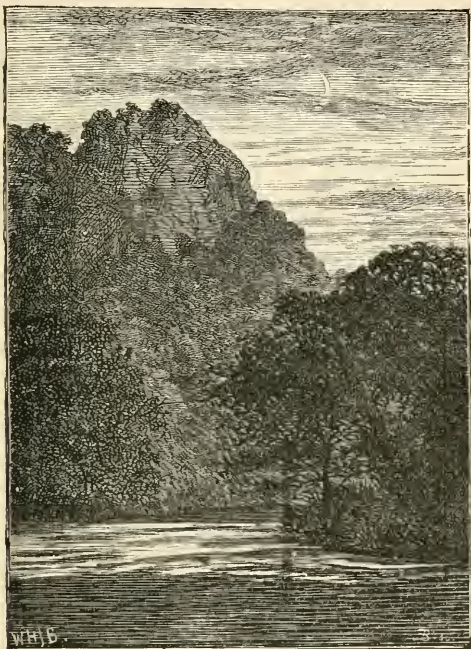
flinty heart of the High Tor, and the rumbling reverberation of the Pullman express reaches the ear like the grumble of subterraneous thunder. The summit of the crag is easy of access. The road leads through ornamental grounds, and the view across the ravine to the Heights of Abraham, and the steep shoulder of Masson, is very striking. Quarrying operations are, however, robbing the answering cliff across the river of its original contour. The edge of the giddy High Tor cliff may be approached without danger. An iron fence protects what would otherwise be a path of peril, and enables you to gaze down the startling wall of rock right away to the river roaring over the stranded rocks with hoarse music. The High Tor Cavern is of surpassing interest to the mineralogist. It abounds in shining crystallizations of calcareous spar, to which the geological guides give jaw-jeopardising Latin names.

There was in the good old days a hermit's cave on the top of the High Tor. *The English Traveller*, a curious book on "Our Native Land," published in 1746, states that—"By being at the Pains to clamber on Hands and Knees almost to the top of it (the High Tor), may be viewed an Hermit's Cell hewn in the Rock, with a most dreary prospect before it. At one end is a Crucifix and a little Nich, where the Anchorite placed his Saint." No trace of the Hermitage is now to be found, and if descried it would be difficult to obtain an inmate for the cell. The spell of seclusion is broken. To-day a recluse would soon be frightened away by satchelled cheap-trippers, and tourists with opera-glasses.

It is a pleasant walk down from the back of the High Tor to the old village of Matlock, a very primitive place compared with Matlock Bath. The church is small, but ancient. The Rev. John Charles Cox places the date of its erection in the reign of Stephen. The tower is the sole surviving portion of the old structure. Inside the church are some interesting relics. Among these is a strong chest. Riveted to it is a chain of about four feet long, to which was formerly secured the Parish Bible, when first deposited there in the sixteenth century.

Matlock, as a pleasure place, appears to be taking a new lease of popularity. Shortly after these lines are printed the Pavilion and Gardens Company will have completed their

picturesque pleasaunce. It is a romantic replica of the Buxton institution, with this difference: while the Buxton pleasure palace is situated almost in the bed of the Wye, its neighbour at Matlock is on a spur of hill above the New Bath Hotel. The site commands a scenic panorama that almost justifies Montgomery's grandiloquent lines. The



THE HIGH TOR—EVENING.

grounds are laid out in terraces and zigzag wooded walks, and include the "Romantic Rocks," which are naturally romantic, and indented with wonderful caverns of rare geological interest. The landscape gardener has been Mr. Speed, brother of the late Mr. Thomas Speed, of Chatsworth, upon whose shoulders descended the mantle of Sir Joseph Paxton. Another instance of this progressive spirit is shown in Mr.

Howe's enterprise, which takes the form of splendid baths, assembly-room, and rendezvous for a rainy day.

One writes of Matlock with mingled feelings. Nature has done so much to make it, and man has done his little utmost to mar it. It is to be hoped that with the new and higher enterprise infused into the place by Mr. Peters, of Gilderoy, a less mean and mercenary spirit will be shown towards the visitor. Why should this pretty Spa be monopolized by showmen with catchpenny petrifying wells? Why should the noble river be parcelled out in detached lengths to boatmen, with competing proprietary lines of demarkation at every few hundred yards? And the cavern guides! My journalistic friend, Mr. H. J. Palmer, best expresses my sentiments when he writes: "At Matlock Bath, the beauties and curiosities of the place, from the 'Heights of Abraham,' the caverns, and the petrifying springs, to the right of boating on the river are held, like a fort, by speculators and guides who have risen to become 'small proprietors.' These parasites make Matlock the embodiment of Savage's lines:

'Where perquisites varlets frequent stand,
At each new walk a new tax to demand;'

and put a barrier against the popularity of the resort. They are not always content with a single payment for their exhibitions. In one cavern at least a compulsory fee for admission is followed by a strong appeal for a voluntary one for exit, a most ingenious device being adopted. When the party, with shivering limbs and bowed heads, have crept through the narrow entrance and traversed the tortuous path into the heart of the cavern, the guide, holding his candle aloft, delivers a rambling address on lead-mining and volcanic upheavals, which he winds up with a few words in quite an altered tone, which have the curious effect of resembling the familiar close of a sermon. With this performance he throws himself against the only means of egress, and coolly blocks the way whilst his quickly doffed hat is going the round of the company. Guides who have any desire to rise in their profession and to learn how to introduce a 'brilliant flash of silence' into their explanations should take a hint from the lady who so gracefully conducts

the public through the Duke of Devonshire's noble treasure-house at Chatsworth. There is no feverish haste or parrot-like harangues in those superb halls. Visitors are allowed to inspect and admire in their own way, and from their own point of view. The attendant conducts them from room to room with a few words of general introduction, but otherwise discreetly and modestly confines herself to answering with clearness and intelligence any inquiries that may be put to her."





Chapter XXX.

ROUND AND ABOUT BUXTON.

*Buxtona, quæ calidæ celebrabere nomine lymphæ,
Forte mihi posthac non adeunda, vale.*

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.



BUXTON may be said to have been born with a silver spoon in its mouth. Man, in the person of different Dukes of Devonshire, has done something for the place, but Nature has done more. Buxton was built before the builders came there. A thousand feet above the level of the sea, it is situated high and clear above the fogs that choke the cities of the plain; and, while so lofty in itself, it is completely surrounded by hilly barriers that break the vindictive east wind, whistling outside for the blood of the young and the old. Buxton is placed where a deep lake might have reflected the hills, and its terraces of shining white houses are built on slopes that might have been the shelving shores of this vast mere. But the Genius of the Glacial Period ordained that a gap should be made in the Pennine Chain, between Axe Edge and Kinderscout, thus liberating the waters that flow through the concave valley. If Buxton presented no other features of interest, it is full of geological curiosities, attractive even to the person who cares least for the *ologies* and the *isms*. Built on the mountain limestone, which forms so distinguishing a characteristic of the Peak of Derbyshire, Buxton is just on

the margin of the millstone-grit. The elevations of Combs Moss, Axe Edge, and Kinderscout are of gritstone, and the splendid water-supply of the town is drawn from this strata. This close contiguity of the two geological orders supplies not only much scenic variety, but interesting geological contrasts. Buxton, now above a thousand feet above the sea, was once a sea-beach, and oysters, thousands of years old, may be picked out of the rock; and while shoals of shell-fish are thus revealed in the limestone, the millstone-grit formation holds fruit in fossil form, and plants that belong to intertropical countries. The stone walls, which divide the fields of Peakland, in hard, gray, cold, rigid lines, so different to the soft, green, shady hedgerows of the south, become "things of beauty and joys for ever" when looked at through the spectacles of science. These dividing walls are rich in fossil shells, and the shapeless rough boulders are covered with lines that are eloquent of the action of glaciers.

But, of course, the most interesting natural phenomena at Buxton are the thermal springs, which have been in repute for their healing qualities since the time of the Romans, and which have made the Spa of the Peak the English Wildbad. Time does not impair the medical value of this tepid water. Summer-drought does not diminish its supply; neither does winter-cold affect its temperature. *Savants* of the laboratory have analysed this water, and tabulated its chemical properties; but there is something in the crystal liquid which cannot be obtained by artificial combinations of chlorides and sulphates and carbonates. The Almighty Chemist has struck the rock from whence issues the healing spring, and human attempts to produce the same results have been impotent. This essay might easily be expanded into an elaborate treatise on the analysis of the water of the thermal springs of Buxton. Briefly summarizing figures which have been often obtained, it may be noted that nitrogen, to the extent of nearly 99 per cent. of the gas of the Buxton water, is assumedly the ingredient on which its remedial power mainly depends, and this, with about one per cent. of carbonic acid, constitutes the gas contained in and given off by the water. There is an utter absence of oxygen. These thermal waters are so potent in their effect upon nervous ailments, that they cannot be taken without medical direction. The springs

gush from fissures of the rock formed at the junction of the mountain limestone and the millstone-grit. They emerge at the foot of the hill locally known as St. Anne's Cliff, or the Terrace walks, at the west end of the Crescent, and under the east corner of the Old Hall Hotel. The supply is at the rate of 150 gallons per minute. The natural temperature is 82 degrees, and this heat is artificially increased at the Hot Baths to suit the diverse cases of rheumatism, gout, etc., which seek relief from the water's healing power. The water is a study of colour, best seen in the swimming bath, where it bubbles up through the white marble floor in an effervescence of liquid azure light. Tinged with a faint blue, this water is a wonder of brilliant transparency, the gas rising in bubbles as large as billiard balls. A plunge in this large bath has the exhilarating effect of champagne upon the system of a healthy person, but, like champagne, it is possible to have too much of it; for, prolonged ablution in the warm, soft, milk-like water is followed by a reactionary influence that is apt to be depressing.

Suffering is alike the heritage of peer and peasant, and the only communism is that of pain. The Buxton waters divide their healing between the princely and the poor. The highest and lowest in the land come to the Spa of the Peak for relief, as to some miraculous spring, even as, of old, the impotent, and halt, and withered came to the Pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, and waited for the angel to move the water; and, just as in the Ancient Book it is recorded that the multitude were made whole of whatsoever disease they had, so the patients who repair to Buxton on crutches leave without them, cured of their infirmity. The rich man bathes in a superb marble bath that Lucullus might have envied. The luxury costs him the sum of half-a-crown. If he is an early riser, and takes his bath between six and eight a.m., the price is only eighteen pence. For the poor who cannot afford to pay for the baths at all, there is one of the most splendid charities in these realms. The Devonshire Hospital is an institution which gives the toiling poor, suffering from rheumatism—the curse of exposed lives in this country—the benefit of the Buxton water, the influence of the Buxton air, and the combined appliances, comforts, diets, and treatment of the hospital. This hospital

does a noble work. Affording accommodation for three hundred patients, it grapples with the most intractable, complicated, and chronic cases, and sends people back into the working world again hale and hearty, whose lives, before their visit to the building, had been a burden almost too great to bear. The Devonshire Hospital and Buxton Bath Charity has recently been enlarged under a grant of £24,000 from the Governors of the Cotton Districts Convalescent Fund, with the sanction of the Charity Commissioners. The extended part was opened by the Duke of Devonshire, amid public rejoicings, in October, 1881. The building is prominent in the local landscape by its dominating dome, which has a larger diameter than any other dome in the world. Five hundred feet in diameter, this dome covers a superficial area of half-an-acre, and its cubic contents exceed a million feet. Six thousand people can meet together under its roof. Viewed from the exterior, this aggressive cupola might have been designed by some architect with a pronounced genius for the perpetration of the exceedingly ugly. A visit, however, to the inside of the building shows the splendid utility of the structure, which now roofs over a hitherto useless circular area, the inner radius of which consists of fine old stone pillars, supporting a continuous gallery. The wards of the institution diverge from this colonnade, which originally consisted of the Duke of Devonshire's grand stables. By this arrangement a hall of unequalled size is afforded for the exercise and recreation of the patients, rendering them independent of all the changing conditions of season or weather. More remarkable than the dome, is the echo that it evokes, as one stands immediately under the lantern. This echo must have a very prejudicial effect upon the acoustic properties of the new building. The echo is so loud and near to you. You speak, and the returning voice might be your *vis à vis* shouting his loudest. You laugh, and a thousand demon voices laugh all round you—not far away, above, nor at the side, but close to your ear, and these invisible voices seem to illustrate every merry phase of the risible faculty, from chuckle to grin, and grin to guffaw, to the Ha-ha! and Hee-hee! of bursting sides.

In addition to the tepid waters, Buxton possesses a very beneficial chalybeate spring, free from alum, which is largely

drunk as a tonic, and is also used with excellent effect in cases of ocular weakness and chronic irritation of the eyes. The apartment in which this chalybeate water is dispensed forms part of the Crescent. It is the least pleasing portion of that splendid range of buildings. The eye-water is served in eye-glasses by uncomfortable-looking old women, and the sight of the patients applying these blue-glass phials to their orbs is not exhilarating. The adjoining apartment, where the St. Anne's water is drunk, looks like a bar of a public-house, the liquid being drawn into tumblers by means of the same sort of pull-handles which decorate the counters of London beer-shops. The present arrangement is a modern innovation which is a change for the worse, and, in comparison with the Pump Room at Bath, even contemptible. Time was, when this water was dispensed by two smiling Naiades in a neat stone-building, which occupied the site of the present dilapidated public pump. The water flowed from the spring through a silvery pipe into a glistening white marble basin, in which the glasses—kept in the water at a proper temperature—were always ready for use. The modern room is often taken for a corner “vaults,” and it has happened that old ladies, with noses somewhat red, and hands rather trembling, have, deceived by the delusive pump-handles, slyly entered these shades and called for a glass of stimulant, “just to warm me, for fear of a chill after my bath, you know.” The public pump outside the Crescent, at its west end, is a disgrace to the institutions of Buxton. Free to the people for all time, it is neglected and dirty, and the sooner something is done to render it at once serviceable and sightly, the better for the reputation of the town authorities.

Superstition mostly lends a pious legend to healing waters, just as the Three Fountains—the Salvian Waters of Rome—derive their supposed virtues from the fact that St. Paul was brought to the *Aquæ Salviæ* and beheaded, the decapitated apostolic head making three successive leaps, and from each spot where it touched the ground, a miraculous fountain at once sprang up, and has continued to flow until the present day. The Buxton springs are not connected with miracles, or martyrdom; but they have, nevertheless, their patron saint in St. Anne, from whom it was supposed

they derived their healing power. In pre-Reformation times, St. Anne's Well was a pilgrim's shrine, and the devotees, ignorant of the 99 per cent. of nitrogen in the Buxton waters, attributed their relief from pain to the grace of St. Anne. Her image was set up over the waters, and the crutches of pilgrims were left in testimony of their gratitude. But when bluff Harry the Eighth overthrew the monastic establishments, the images of the good lady Anne were demolished by the iconoclastic hand of Sir William Basset, and a big Protestant bonfire was made of the litter of crutches. Sir William could not, however, dispel the charm of the Buxton waters, although his seal was set upon the well ; and St. Anne has to-day a worthy shrine to her good qualities in the shape of the St. Anne's Hotel, of which a modern Duke has said that a man never knows what a good dinner is until he has dined at St. Anne's ; while the crutches of the cured are still left behind, as memorials of gratitude, by pilgrims who come to the medical Mecca halt and lame, and who return hale and hearty pedestrians.

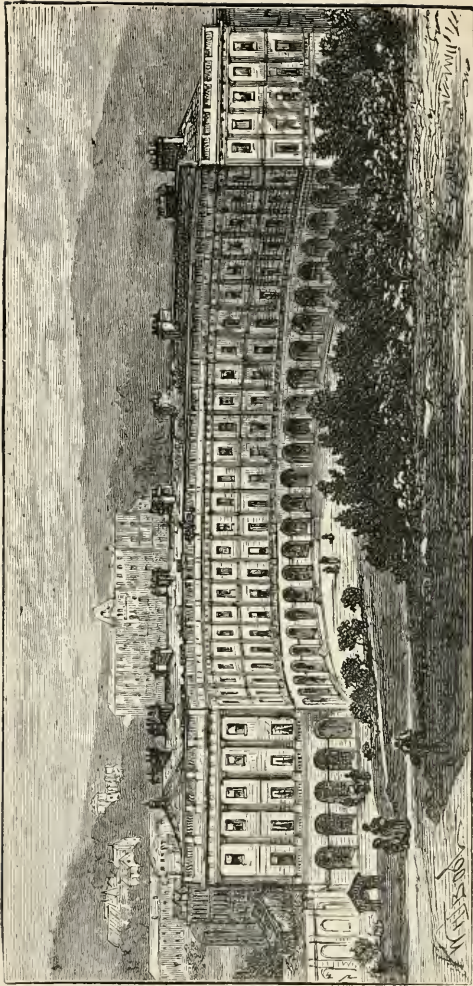
Basset's seal proved but a temporary embargo upon the Buxton waters. We find Hobbes, the philosopher, writing in his *De Mirabilibus Pecci*—

Unto St. Anne the fountain sacred is ;
 With waters hot and cold its sources rise,
 And in its sulphur-veins there medicine lies.
 This cures the palsied members of the old
 And cherishes the nerves grown stiff and cold.
Crutches the lame unto its brink convey,
Returning, the ungrates fling them away.

But long before the monastic Middle Ages, the Buxton waters were famous. Their medicinal qualities were in great request among the Romans, who had important military stations in the Peak, such as the camp at Combs Moss, and the fortified station on Oker Hill, commanding Darley Dale and the Matlock valley. It is not a wild supposition to suppose even, that these springs were familiar to the Druids, for Druidical remains are numerous in the neighbourhood. Skipping over the centuries, we find Buxton, in the time of Elizabeth, holding a high position as a sanatorium in the country. Though shut out from the world by wild, bleak, hilly barriers, and approached only by

bad roads, through moorland and moss, the water was held in such high repute, that the number of visitors was so great as to induce the Earl of Shrewsbury to erect a great hall for their accommodation. Doctor Jones at this time published a treatise on the springs. Mary, Queen of Scots, visited Buxton four times in search of her lost health. She was the prisoner of the Earl of Shrewsbury and his masculine wife, "Bess of Hardwick." Queen Elizabeth's favourite Ministers, Leicester and Burleigh, were also among the visitors of the sixteenth century. Poor Mary was suffering from "chronic rheumatism, and neuralgic pain and indurated liver." St. Anne appears to have alleviated her pains, for we find the Scottish captive writing: "It is incredible how it (the water) has relaxed the tension of the nerves, and relieved my body of the dropsical humours with which, in consequence of my debility, it has been charged." Queen Mary's last visit to Buxton was in 1582. When she left, she wrote the valedictory lines on a window of her room—a kindly farewell, somewhat after the style of Cæsar's verses upon Feltroa. The couplet heads this chapter.

From the time of Mary to Victoria the record of Buxton's progress must be dismissed with brevity, in order to leave space for a slight sketch of the modern aspects of the Derbyshire Spa. Lord Macaulay in his *History* says:—"England, however, was not, in the 17th century, destitute of watering-places. The gentry of Derbyshire and the neighbouring counties repaired to Buxton, where they were crowded into low wooden sheds, and regaled with oat-cake, and with a viand which the hosts called mutton, but which the guests strongly suspected to be dog." The epigrammatic historian gives Thomas Browne's (son of Sir Thomas) *Tour in Derbyshire* as his authority; but the passage cannot be accepted as otherwise than ironical, for at that time Buxton was a place of great note, famous for the excellence of its hostels, and the comfort of its accommodation; while the excellence of the mountain-mutton of the Peak gives the reference to disguised dog a still more burlesque character. We, however, find Mrs. Delany writing to a friend to say that the Duchess of Portland had received great benefit from her visit to Buxton, adding, "But she has gained it dearly, for Buxton is a shocking place; but the blessing of health is worth



THE CRESCENT, BUXTON.

a state of trial." The Crescent, which is a symphony in stone, was built by the Duke of Devonshire in 1784, at a cost of £120,000; and remains to this day the finest crescent-shaped elevation in Europe. Architecturally, it is the pride and glory of the place. Here are concentrated the leading hotels, and each is connected, under cover, with the Hot Baths. The lower story of the Crescent forms an agreeable colonnade, and the limestone hill in front is laid out in terraces cut out of the rock. The Palace Hotel, which stands upon a pleasant elevation, among extensive grounds of its own, is so well known as to need only a passing reference; while prominent among the hotels of the place, for its picturesque situation, is the Lea Wood Hotel.

Among the delusions which Charles Lamb might have effectually exploded in his list of *Popular Fallacies* is that Buxton is a place associated with pain; that the Terrace is a *viâ dolorosa*; that you are not in fashion unless you hobble on crutches, are wheeled in a bath chair, and take the waters for rheumatism or gout. A modern writer, who ought to have known better, in a book recently published by Mr. Murray, dismisses Buxton in a passage from St. Fond, who visited the Peak in 1784, which says, "Its waters may be excellent, but its atmosphere is impregnated with sadness and melancholy." This serves a writer in 1880 to describe the Buxton of to-day. No representation, however, could be more remote from the truth. A visit to the Pavilion and Gardens, morning, afternoon, or evening, when the season is at its height, will at once dispel the slander. The scene presented is one of the most vivacious that can be imagined. The life in the Pavilion—a palace of glass—with its conservatories, its great dome, its fine organ, its concert-room, its impromptu theatre, and its covered promenade; the gaiety, and movement, and music in the Gardens shaded with trees, ablaze with flowers, with the sun shining on the lakelet as upon a shield of silver; the river Wye wandering in wanton cascades under grotto banks; beyond, in the middle distance the white stone mansions of Buxton, sparkling in the lavish light, like pearls; and in the poetic perspective the fir-shaded hills, a constant study of changing colours—these surely do not present a picture of sadness and melancholy! On the sward, enclosed by the ancient elms, rook-haunted, the lawn-

tennisians are holding a gay tournament before a crowd of well-dressed idlers, warm in their partisanship of the rival sides. Everybody is talking to everybody else; there is a ripple of laughter everywhere; Karl Meyder's splendid band is interpreting Gounod's music of love; the dresses of the girls compete with the flowers in radiance of hue; the air is exhilarating in its thin, clear, buoyant purity, and ever and anon, the breeze brings a message of health from the heathery moors. There is still more of this sort of "sadness and melancholy"—on the bowling-green, where the players seem to be having a blithe time of it; the click-click of skaters comes from the rink; the Terrace is a picture of life and character. It is pleasant to take a seat and a cigarette under the elms, and make a mental note of the distinguished people who are mixed up in the careless, incongruous crowd. Let us study the human procession. That wrinkled old man, thin and sharp of feature, led a dauntless regiment "up red Alma's heights" to glory; yonder, laughing most immoderately, with the peach-bloom young lady, toying with his arm—a young lady Millias has painted—is one of Her Majesty's judges; there is a Manchester *parvenu*, disgracefully rich, and looking admiringly at the lord with the listshoe, who limps with hereditary gout; the careless, big-boy-like man in the loose blue jacket and open neck is the Duke of Hamilton, who has long been of opinion that Buxton is better than Baden, and the Peak as picturesque as the Pyrenees; that vivaciously venerable, and gaily gray gentleman, watching the pigeons alight on the shoulders of that dainty vignette in velvet, is Mr. Michael Thomas Bass, who holds the Buxton waters in almost as high regard as his Burton Beer. Richer than Cræsus, kinder than Mæcenas, he is walking about with the elastic gait of youth, with a Free Library in his hat ready to give away to a languishing Borough, and a Public Park in his waistcoat for the asking. Some foreign writer has remarked that the finest combination of beauty he has ever seen is an English lady, on an English horse, under an English tree. Equally charming is the picture of these tame pigeons, with their sunlit wings and pink feet, alighting on this laughing girlette's shoulders, and picking crumbs out of her outstretched palm—a picture framed with tremulous trees, green banks, and whispering

water. An hour's saunter in the Gardens soon convinces you that, while the miraculous efficacy of the springs brings to Buxton grievous cases of rheumatism and gout, the beauty of Peakland, and the fashionable life of its Spa, attract numbers of people whose presence is invited more by the pursuit of pleasure than the pleas of health. Granted that you see bath chairs and crutches in the bowery gardens, where Boccaccio might have wooed and Watteau painted, coming upon the scene as the mummy was brought in at the Egyptian feasts—a *memento mori*. But you must set-off the youthful beauties against the bath chairs, the lawn-tennis against the lumbago, Gounod against the gout, the rinking against rheumatism, and playful promenading against painful paralysis. There is more match-making than malady; and the Pavilion grows its own sprays of orange-blossom for the many brides who become betrothed at Buxton. You come prepared to see Melpomene wheeled about in an invalid's carriage, attended by a fashionable doctor, a nurse, a clergyman, and the undertaker and his assistant; but you find Momus on the bowling-green. You expected to hear the groans of Penseroso, swathed in surgical flannels; and lo! it is L'Allegro you hear carolling with "jest and youthful jollity." Buxton, each season, is becoming more a resort of pleasure-seekers, after the style of the late Duchess of Bedford, who, in her eighty-fifth year, hale and hearty, found herself in the Peak. At Buxton, she gave her horses a rest; and there she met many women of her acquaintance—a few with ruddy cheeks, but more with cheeks pale and sunken. Her grace, after having asked a large number of her friends what had brought them there, and having been answered by almost all of them, "Nervous complaints," was asked, in turn, why she had come. "Bless you!" she cried, merrily, "I came purely for pleasure. I think I must have been born before nerves came into fashion!"

To read the *Visitors' List* of Buxton "in the Season," is like a perusal of Debrett's *Peerage*. There is also *Punch's* Mr. Blades, from Sheffield, and the indignant lord with inherited gout. You remember the *mot*? "*Mr. Blades* (affably to Noble Lord with the hereditary gout): "'Ope your lordship's better this morning; I can just manage to 'op about a bit." *Noble Lord* (severely): "Aw—I was not

aware that people of your class were subject to my complaint !”

It is gratifying to one's self-esteem to rub shoulders with rich old Baron de Bronchitis, and know that you have a considerable advantage over him both in height and personal appearance, and to hear Somebody, whose daintily-gloved digits are touching your arm, say what a nasty-looking man the Duke of Diphtheria is ; while it is equally satisfactory to compare that Somebody, whom you have taken “for better for worse,” with the latest professional beauty with her æsthetic parasol, that even Mr. Cimabue Brown would find it hard to “live up to.” If you don't care for this flutter of frivolity, this *frou frou* of fashion, what can be more refreshing to wearied heart and jaded life than to contrast “the world, the flesh, and the devil” with the fascinating fastnesses of nature ; the green shade and glancing waters of the valley of the Wye ; the sylvan solitude of Corbar's shady woods, where the coral berries of the mountain ash show against the soft brown of ripening nuts, and the first faint yellow of autumnal leaves ; or the wild freedom of the moors, wine-stained now in purple bloom, with the austere hills around, on which the sunlight lies warmly, and where the gods feast and toy and laugh at man ! When the sun has gone down behind the dark masses of Axe Edge, in a wild conflagration of colour, you can return to study Buxton life and character. Instead of finding the evenings dull and stagnant, your only difficulty is that of deciding which of the forms of amusement you will patronize. The difficulty is a great one. What shall you do ? Shall you go to the grand organ recital at the Pavilion ? Or the concert of Karl Meyder's band, with some eminent vocalists strengthening the programme ? Or Rose Leclercq as Galatea ? Or the Firework Fête and Feast of Lanterns in the Gardens ? Or Aptomas at Malvern House, whose harp—more potent than the lyre of Orpheus, whose notes only moved the rocks and trees—can draw people from all parts to his magical music ? Or the Skating Rink, or the Reading Room, or the Whist Club, or the entertaining social circles that make life worth living at the Palace Hotel, St. Anne's, the Old Hall and Lee Wood. If you are in love, and I believe the sentiment has not quite gone out of fashion, you will find out at twilight the Serpentine Walks,

where the wooded banks slope down to the broken waters of the Wye, which tells its secrets in the moonlight to the tremulous trees, and the harvest moon throws leaf shadows on the tangled paths, and shines in a golden radiance on the voiceful river. There are seats under the trees made specially for Youth and Hope and Dreams ; and even if the Dreams are shattered, and the Hope is belied, and Youth turned bitter, still it will be hard to steal the tender grace of that fleeting hour of enchantment from the tenacious embrace of memory : the caress of the cool night wind, the cadence of the current, the light of thrilling brown, brown eyes, the magic of the moon on the murmuring water.

Buxton furnishes certain phases of character indigenous to the place. There are, for instance, the unemotional spinners who sit knitting at the classical concerts at the Pavilion, talking scandal, and stabbing reputations with their knitting needles. It is dangerous to pass this "Needle Row." Like Sir Peter Teazle, in the comedy, if called away, you had better leave your character behind you for Mrs. Candour, Lady Sneerwell and party, to dissect. Then there is the peculiar "limp" that belongs to rheumatism, gout, and Buxton. The "Buxton limp" belongs generally to one list-shoe which picks its way more gingerly than the other. You see it to grotesque perfection in the passages of St. Anne's, or in the entrance hall of the Palace. The Baths soon have a beneficial effect, and the patient attests his progress by taking a "constitutional" on St. Anne's cliff. This pedestrian exercise is accomplished in gentle gradations, increased every day. The patient begins with the lower terrace, and ends at the last with the topmost ridge, after which "breather" he is, no doubt, prepared to walk to the "Cat and Fiddle," on the shoulders of Axe Edge, at an altitude of some two thousand feet, amid wild undulations of moorland.

Mention of Axe Edge reminds me that if Buxton were a town which had nothing interesting in itself, it would still be attractive as being the key to ever so many doors of diverse scenery. Buxton is surrounded by places of scenic charm, and not soon are the "beauty-spots" of the neighbourhood exhausted. There are picturesque pedestrian rambles over "delectable mountains," like Kinderscout and Millstone Edge ; memorable fishing and painting days at Derwent

Dale and Dove Dale, Edale and Darley Dale, Miller's Dale and Monsal Dale, where voiceful trout-streams, make musical deep devious valleys, whose green-wooded walls are broken with the gleaming white of limestone crags and tors; leisurely drives by chaise or coach to the natural wonders of Castleton, to the romance of Haddon Hall, to the splendours of Chatsworth, and to the beauties of Matlock. The Buxton "season" is indeed, all too bustling and brief for Derbyshire, with the many romantic nooks that lie hidden off the beaten track, to be appreciated. Fashion, by some mysterious mandate, has decreed that the so-called "season" should end with the early days of October, and Fashion is an autocrat whom Society is bound to blindly obey. Only the eccentric people who refuse to bow the knee to this Baal know what a charming place Buxton is in mid-winter. How clear the daffodil sky, how balmy the air, how sharp the outlines and delicate the colouring of the hills. There is a rich, golden mellowness in the wintry air that seems to swim under the wide, round, sphere of sky; the wind comes with a sweet caress to the cheeks; the houses shine white in the light; there is no smoke; the sunsets burn themselves into one's memory. But the streets are deserted. Buxton is supposed to be so bleak and so dreary "out of the season." It happens, however, as a matter of fact, that these lines are being written on a December day, at an open window overlooking Buxton Gardens, with the wooded hill-side of Corbar showing the vivid silver-and-blue of the sky behind the tracery of trees, whose lace-like outlines are not seen when the forest wears its livery of green. Mr. Adam Hogg, the zealous Curator, has just gathered a Christmas nosegay of flowers grown in the open gardens, pleasant flowers, whose meek eyes seem to ask why you are reading about the ice and snow, the yule-logs and wassail-bowl, in the special "Christmas numbers."

* * * * *

When staying at Buxton for two or three months, I met the "oldest inhabitant," and he could give me a fresh walk to a fresh place every day. Not long tiring trips, mark you; but short, easy strolls, and every morning a new walk. My friend has done more, perhaps, for Buxton, more for her

progress and public improvements than any man, or any body of men, in the neighbourhood. He has been the Haussmann of the Peak. We—that is a small coterie of congenial spirits who know something of the delights of the *noctes cœnæque deorum*, knighted him out of respect, “Sir John.” He isn’t “Sir” John, save for the hearty heraldry of friendship; but he ought to be; there are, on the other hand, a great number of Sir John’s who oughtn’t to be; matters are thus balanced. I have a rough diary of one or two of the “tiny travels” that Sir John took me in those days, mere strolls to arouse the *fames endendi*, or evening saunters before turning in for whist.

We generally met in the gardens. He took such an interest in the birds that he could summon round him by a low whistle all the ducks, the water-hens, the Chinese geese, the coot, the swan, and what not, off the water from a considerable distance. The peacock, too, would come and peer wistfully for Indian corn from his coat pocket; the trout would receive broken bread from his open palm; and as for the glossy pigeons I have seen their pretty pink feet alight all over him, perch on his hat, fight for a place on his shoulder, and stand in rows along his outstretched arms. Sir John showed me a chaffinch’s nest which he found in the graft of a weeping willow in Buxton Gardens. So cunningly was it concealed, that it would never have been detected but for a little bit of lace which the vanity of Mrs. Chaffinch had left dangling in ostentatious display outside, with the usual vanity of her sex. The nest is composed of moss and feathers, together with shreds and patches, cut off from their work by the scandal-loving ladies who are ever “tating” and chatting at the Pavilion. The builders of this nest availed themselves of the *debris* of this feminine fancy-work. But the little bit of lace was too rare an acquisition to be hidden from their neighbours. So Mrs. Chaffinch decided to hang it out on her outer-walls to excite the envy of Mrs. Starling, of The Limes, to provoke the jealousy of the Misses Linnet, of the Larches, and to take the pride out of the Rev. Mr. Rook and family, of the Elms, who were coarse with conceit. But that little bit of vanity ruined their home, as vanity ere this has ruined less aerial mansions.

He took me first and showed me Higher Buxton, which is the old town. He showed me the old church in that neglected nook of the fashionable Spa. At the present time I believe it is used only as a mortuary chapel, but years ago it was the free school of the town, and the boys and girls of Buxton were educated in the same room. My friend, looking back along the highway of life to that "lost youth," which Longfellow so pathetically laments, told me how they used to learn the multiplication tables. The boys stood in a line down one side of the room, the girls standing in an opposing line on the other side. The master's desk was placed in the centre, at one end, and commanded both ranks. The questions and answers were sung. The girls, linked together arm-in-arm, and gently swaying themselves to and fro to the time, would begin in a sweet cadence

"Twice two?"

Then the boys, with much gruffness, responded: "Are four. Twice three?"

The girls, in gentle treble, replied: "Are six. Twice four?"

Boys (more gruffly): "Are eight. Twice five?"

And so on to

Boys: "Twelve elevens?"

Girls: "Are a hundred and thirty-two. Twelve times twelve?"

Boys: (double-double forte): "*Are a hundred and forty-four.*"

The Board Schools don't teach arithmetic in such a picturesque manner now-a-days, I imagine.

The Corbar Woods, I mind me, was one of the first spots to which I was introduced. Dear green old Corbar! First impressions go a long way and last a long time; and my early experience of the deep peace, the secluded beauty, and the picturesque charm of Corbar is only endorsed by each subsequent visit. The wooded slope was, I thought, very steep and sheer that morning, in the early summer time, when first I clomb its sides; but I was anxious to "get up in the world" then; and what an ample reward of far-stretching scenery did the wind-swept summit bestow. Now I can find easy serpentine paths under the labyrinth of leaves, and rustic seats at intervals, where I can sit and

listen to the tuneful whisperings of the tremulous trees. Sir John did not take the spirit of romance out of Corbar when he told me that these plantations are laid over the remains of an old gritstone quarry, which give the rugged gorges that add to the wild charm of the place. Corbar seems to have been invented by Pan himself specially for lovers. Those narrow winding walks beneath Gothic arches of green, with leaves of lambent light above, shedding a tracery of chequered shadow on the grass below, are just the paths for whispered confidences and confessions; for protests and promises; for youth and hope and love and dreams. The foliage this early summer time is unbudding; there is a gentle hesitancy as to colour; in other trees there is that first translucent tint of delicate green, as transient as it is tender. The undergrowth is thick with uncurling ferns, and is starred with primroses and forget-me-nots.

Leave we Armida's Garden, Celia's Arbour, and the fateful Bower of Proserpine, for another of Sir John's short strolls. Solomon's Temple! A place you would naturally associate with Oriental magnificence, with wealth and wisdom, and the beautiful Queen of Sheba. But, as Mr. Longfellow remarks, "things are not what they seem." There is plenty of the "east" about Solomon's Temple, but it is the "east wind;" and the bare mountain ridge overlooks miles of wild moss and moor, and the shoulders of bleak, misty, hungry hills. Still it is a lovable spot for all that, and seems to bid you come and climb its easy eminence and breathe the fluent blue air that bathes its head. We are sure to meet and chat with two or three pleasant people we know as we pass along the Broad Walk. Having run this social blockade, we take the path through the fields which brings us to Grin Low, softly shaded with dark pine and fir. It is grateful to saunter with pipe and a novel of James Payn's through these deep wooded paths, to rest on a felled tree, or a couch of rock cushioned with moss. The shade of pine and fir makes a "dim religious light;" straight red columnar trunks suggest cathedral pillars; the branches arch in retreating avenues; there is a roof of green, with patches of blue sky for window-panes; ever and anon the tremor of the wind is as the soft music of a far-off choir.

A huge mass of stones on the top of the massy hill, once

forming a rude tower, is called Solomon's Temple. The title is, of course, a ridiculous one. It was built during the agency of the late Philip Heacock, as an "object" tower; but the real "object" was to give employment to a number of poor men in a very severe winter. The tenant of the land at the time was "Solomon" Mycock. Hence, with that quaint humour characteristic of the Peak, it became known as "Solomon's" Temple! Built with "rubble" limestone, without mortar, it has long since succumbed to frosts and storms. The view from the eminence of the Peaks of Axe Edge, Kinderscout, Mam Tor, Lord's Seat, and Chelmorton Low, is a dream of wild scenery; while the thin buoyant air acts upon brain and nerve with instantaneous zest. "Op'n thee mahth, Meary; op'n thee mahth, an' get aw't air tha con!" is the advice attributed to be given by a poor woman to her daughter in these parts; and Solomon's Temple is just the place for such a lung bath.

Another walk, far less known than the others I have indicated, Sir John once took me in May time. Threading the Serpentine Grounds, we then struck along a path across the undulation of meadow land that divides the Manchester and Burbage Roads. A white farm-house shines amid a gloomy belt of firs on the hill right in front, known as Watford. Past this farm, and by the side of the steep wood beyond, from which you can see Buxton lying white and radiant in the sun, locked in with the encroaching hills. One is in no hurry to leave the sylvan seclusion of that deep old wood, fragrant with fresh resinous odours. The lullaby of leaves is music to the weary mind and the jaded nerve. The gentle wind stirs a harp of pines, and it responds in a sweetly sympathetic strain. The sun is warm overhead; there is the trill of birds in the branches; all around is the scent and colour of wild-flowers. Turn your head which way you will there is a green glade, a woody vista, ready made for the artist. The walk is through a long, lonely country road, called Bishop's Lane, since a by-gone Colonial bishop once lived in yon house smothered in the trees. And it is one of the most deviously pretty lanes in the Peak. Hawthorn trees line the path. Now they are in full white flower. The air is heavy with their sweet intoxication. Just an ideal lane; a lane to loiter in and listen to the

birds, and pick up wild-flowers, and imagine you are young again.

“The primrose takes a deeper hue,
The dewy grass a greener look ;
The violet wears a deeper blue,
And lighter music leads the brook.”

I am very sorry when the lane leads me out on to the dusty highroad against Burbage Church, about a mile from Buxton. Suppose we return the same way. Come hawthorn fragrance ! come again deep bowery wood !

There is no place I can call to instant memory which is more immediately surrounded with “beauty spots” than Buxton. It is the key to a hundred picturesque places ; the threshold of ever so many scenic charms ; the centre of a number of natural attractions. Belted with forest, wooded walks are afforded in every direction. What a charming “bit” of wood that is leading out of Ashwood Dale on the left, and climbing, thickly carpeted with wild-flowers, up to Pig Tor. Here is a view worth coming many miles to behold. You look sheer down from this limestone scar on five distinct converging vales : a startling *coup d’œil* in landscape of exquisite beauty. Close by here is Deep Dale, another favourite *petit pelerinage* of Sir John’s. Deep Dale branches off the Ashwood Dale road on the opposite side and near to Pig Tor. It is a deep, treeless, lifeless valley, whose opposing sides dip sheer into the path that winds at the bottom. Rugged and romantic throughout, two or three curious caverns, without the inevitable “guide,” add to its attractions. I have walked along its riven sides several times and never met a human being. A capital carriage drive might be made through it without much expense. . . . Here you can gain access to Sterndale, a glorious walk, knee-deep in ferns and flowers. Few visitors in Buxton ever discover it, yet it is close at hand, steeped in poetry, a lyric of leafy loveliness. . . . There are walks, too, round Fairfield not to be despised. Seen under certain lights—the golden mellowness of an October sunset, or the red tinted mist of a December afternoon—the undulating common assumes a strange vastness and sense of distance, that only a Turner, with his trick of atmospheric glamour, and power of aerial perspective, could hope to reproduce.

I remember it in the tempestuous twilight of a Christmas afternoon, when I had been skating on the pond there. Fog was struggling with frost; the plain then appeared like a vast and billowy sea, whose waves were breaking over a faint line of weird light reflected in the eastern edge of the far horizon. The shadowy church seemed like a spectral beacon tower; the white-washed houses on the edge of the common became phantom fishermen's huts on the sounding beach. In the gray dimness was a yellow speck of light that might have been a ship's lamp. Everything was in mysterious shadow. I never saw a more suggestive, subdued, sad landscape. But for strange atmospheric effects let me commend you, Mr. Cobalt Blue, to the "Cat and Fiddle"* on the moors round Axe Edge. It is about six miles from Buxton, this lonely hostelry among the hills; but there is a somewhat shorter cut by the lower road, which has the added charm of a savage wilderness. The purple world below seems more distant than the fleecy clouds above. You often get a sea of pearly cloud below you, shrouding in soft fleeces of white mountain cone, rounded knoll, and pointed peak, while the sky is blue and bright above. It is pleasant to walk out to these western moors in the waning sunset light, and to see the fading fire sink again and again behind the hilly ridges to re-appear as soon as you gain their summits, thus giving you a succession of sunsets and sunrises; and then as you turn back and see the moon rising over the yellow lights of Buxton, a mere hint of a town in the hollow, the return journey is full of artistic charm. The "Cat" is just one mile in Cheshire; so it is a Cheshire cat, and grins in the most approved Cheshire cat style. The "Cat" stands low-spreading and four-square against the winds. No wider or wilder moors could surround a human dwelling. Hills rise above hills; rocks oppose rocks; moors mingle in moors. There are valleys within valleys: hollows hide hollows. The prevailing tint is gray; but in the conflagration of a stormy sunset there is a study of intense tints—a spread of fiery

* It is claimed that the inn at the top of Kirkstone Pass, in the Lake district (1,468 feet above sea-level), is "the highest inhabited house in England;" but both the "Cat" at Axe Edge, and the "Snake," on the Glossop road, are each at a considerably higher elevation.

splendour—that the boldest artist would hesitate to attempt. Nature stretches a vast pictorial map beneath. Seven counties are embraced in this expansive chart—this matchless “Mercator’s projection.” Regarded as a mountain, Axe Edge is of itself disappointing; but to those who love a moorland wilderness of gritstone, heath, peat, moss, miry bog, and inky rill, this mountain waste has ineffable charms. As Mr. Ruskin decisively says: “The whole view from Richmond Hill or Windsor Terrace,—nay, the gardens of Alcinous, with their perpetual summer, or of the Hesperides, golden apples and all, I would give away in an instant for one mossy granite stone a foot broad, and two leaves of lady fern.”

From the Edge of the Axe it is said that the Ordnance Survey Engineers saw signals exhibited on Lincoln Cathedral, Bardon Hill in Leicestershire, and the top of Snowdon at the same time. It must have been one of those conditionally “clear days” which invariably qualify all Munchausenisms as to the distance to be seen from cathedral towers and mountain heights. What can you not see from the top of Gloucester Cathedral on a “clear day.” What a prospect from Nelson’s Monument on Calton Hill, Edinburgh, if the morning is “clear.” What a view from Helvellyn, if the afternoon should be “clear.” But the radius of vision from the crest of Axe Edge is, without praiseful exaggeration, very imposing. It is a view that sun and shadow love to play with. Now retiring behind a cloud for shadows of black and gray to rest on the landscape; then bursting forth and sending tidal waves of light travelling over hill and vale until the sombre colours change to emerald and turquoise and gold. From Axe Edge rise four rivers, which flow in opposite directions: the Dane, starting westward to join the Mersey near Liverpool; the Goyt, passing northward towards Whaley Bridge and Lyme Hall to meet the Etherow; the Wye, to be born again in Poole’s Cavern, and the Dove to divide Derbyshire and Staffordshire.

Sir Walter Scott, by the way, places the “Cat and Fiddle” miles away from its site. The author of *Peeveril of the Peak* never was in the Peak, and it is difficult to trace Castleton at all by his description of the place. But no matter. The

northern Ariosto, in dealing with his own country, made of Roseneath an island. It is consoling to know that "Homer sometimes nods," since it allows the humble scribbler to take his "forty winks."

Poole's Cavern, perhaps, hardly belongs to "Undiscovered Derbyshire." The cheap-tripper is its greatest patron; but it is, indeed, worthy of more intellectual visitors. Some time ago, the present writer was staying at a little hostelry in Miller's Dale, with Christopher Kenrick, the popular novelist, better known as the "King of Bohemia." His gifted artistic daughter was stealing away each day on her sympathetic canvas (to take away to the great city) such cool suggestive glimpses of rock and river, hidden clough and hanging cliff, dreamy "bits" of water-wheel and little studies of cottage life. His scientific son was out among the ravines with his geological hammer, and coming in laden with so much indifferent building material, which he turned over with the gentle love which one might spend upon sapphires and diamonds. A chip of old millstone grit gave him a feverish felicity; a genuine bit of Blue John was as a foretaste of heaven; while an atom of dirty bitumen was bliss ineffable.* Handsome Mrs. Christopher Kenrick, was, I think, pining for Piccadilly Circus; for the cooking at our inn was not the most dainty, and there was another drawback to our delight. It was a picturesque spot. But angels have faults, and there was one discordant note in the sweet harmony of Miller's Dale, one bar sinister in the

* This careless allusion is, alas! to poor Frank Hatton, who was killed by the accidental discharge of his rifle in the spring of 1883, when elephant-hunting in North Borneo, where he had gone to explore the mineral resources of the new colony in the tropical seas. He taught me to look at the stone walls of the Derbyshire Peak, that rule off its roads and fields in hard lines of gray, with an interest that such prosaic things do not usually inspire. He found in them "the fairy tales of science and the long result of time." He showed me the legacies the pre-historic age had left in these limestone boulders; glacial action, volcanic disturbances, the shells of the sea-bed on the tops of the hills. He carried his geologist's hammer, his botanist's satchel, and his sketch-book with him everywhere we tramped; to the caverns at Castleton, the quarries at Burbage, the lead mines at Youlgreave, the dales watered by the Wye, the moorland wilderness of Kinderscout. I looked at Nature with new eyes in his company. His life was full of promise, as his death was full of pathos.—E. B., 1883.



MILLER'S DALE.

glorious heraldry, one blot upon the pretty picture, one disfiguring cloud in the bright sunshine, one bitter flavour in the way of our happiness. Bang! Bang! Bang! and a noise of falling rock that reverberates like sullen thunder. They are at it again those utilitarian limestone quarrying men. They are despoiling the grand old cliff opposite, robbing the hills of their Alpine beauty. All day long the bombardment continues. All day long there is the smoke from the lime-kilns. Night brings no cessation of the din. One can surely now appreciate John Ruskin's righteous wrath against all these Limestone Quarry Companies (Limited) who are defrauding the scenery of its greatest charm, tearing the graceful rocks in twain, and filling the air with smoke and explosion. If you want to see Miller's Dale, come at once, before it is gone. It is perilous now to venture up to Chee Dale by the Wye side. A new quarrying Company have commenced operations in the midst of Arcadia itself, and a warning in white paint on a black board tells you of the danger of proceeding up the river path. Miller's Dale will soon be destroyed, its sylvan seclusion murdered. Topley Pike is being reduced day by day to something closely resembling a rammel heap. Where will these despoilers stop? Chee Tor, now, contains many cubic feet of magnificent limestone. So does the High Tor at Matlock Bath. Fortunately, Mam Tor at Castleton is not limestone; but Pickering Tor at Dove Dale would prove a lucrative "working." The next generation will, peradventure, see these old glories of our Derbyshire Dales measured out for destruction. Their names, perhaps, will soon become a mere tradition. Oh, yes, it is good for trade I grant you, gentlemen, and Capital is power. Peg away, Mr. Gradgrind. Yes, Sir, Facts, Sir. Away with sentiment. Sentiment is, of course, a mistake. Hurry up your trucks, Mr. Alderman Cute. These "tors" must be "put down." It is all for the good of the country; and are we not a "nation of shopkeepers?"

It was, I remark, a picturesque spot. I revive the picture. A weedy old waterwheel mixed up among the trees on the banks of the Wye, just where a landscape painter would have placed it. Limestone cliffs rise from the water in a curve of gray and green. The little reckless river is run-

ning away to sea, like a truant schoolboy, as fast as it can, past weeping trees and obstructing rocks. Everything outside is fresh and green. The trees wear their first tender bridal sheen of green. There are spring flowers on the river margin. A blue moth sails past like a hare-bell with wings. The flowers in the tangled bank are like butterflies; the butterflies are like flowers. A mayfly came sailing into the room just now. It came in with a breeze that had just kissed the swathes of new-mown hay. A river keeper drops in to gossip about the trout, and to tell us how the hard winter had killed the fish. He says the melted snow from the mountains afflicted them with a strange disease. They sickened and died, and the speckled beauties were brought up from the river-bed in buckets full.

The river shines through the trees. Its music comes through the open window. Sun and shadow change the valley into a thousand different pictures during the day. In the early morning, Christopher Kenrick and myself find a secluded pool by a moss-grown bridge that invites us to plunge into the heart of its cool depths.

“Those brilliant sunny mornings when we tumbled out of bed,
And hurried on a few rough clothes, and to the river sped!
What laughing joyaunce hung about those merry days agone,
We clove the rushing torrent at the early flush of dawn!
‘Tremendous headers’ took we in the waters bright and clear,
And splashed and dashed, and dived and swam, just off old Blankton
Weir.

* * * * *

Was ever indolence so sweet, were ever days so fine,
As when we lounged in that old punt and played with rod and line?
'Tis true few fish we caught there, but the good old ale we quaffed,
As we chatted, too, and smoked there, and idled, dreamed, and laughed:
Then thought we only of to-day, of morrow had no fear,
For sorrow scarce had tinged the stream, that flowed through Blankton
Weir.

* * * * *

And I mind me of one even, so calm and clear and bright,
What songs we sang—whose voices rang—that lovely summer night.
Where are the hearty voices now who trolled these good old lays?
And where the silvery laughter that rang in bygone days?
Come back, that night of long ago! Come back, the moonlight clear!
When hearts beat light, and eyes were bright, about old Blankton
Weir.”

But touching Poole's Hole. Sir John found us out and we were inveigled over to Buxton. Christopher Kenrick insisted on seeing Poole's Hole. It was his first visit to this really wonderful cave. The gas-light robs the scene of some of its romance, but there is still much in its sharp lights and gloomy shadows that works upon the imagination like a page of Dantè, or a picture by Dorè, something that reminds one of Schalken's tricks of shade and Rembrandt's weird effects. Pending the arrival of that ship of mine, which has been so long overdue, and which has so frequently been delayed by the "trade-winds," and so often "sprung a leak," I should not object to lease a cavern like this Poole's Hole. It must be quite a mine of wealth to Mr. Redfern, who rents the interesting excavation from the Duke of Devonshire. Men may come, and men may go, but the sixpences come to Mr. Redfern's turnstile for ever. Outside the Hole are some tea-garden trumperies,—white figure-heads of ships from Liverpool, and two-penny-half-penny horrors in statuary—whose precise connection with geology it would be difficult to determine. But the whole is good change for the entrance fee. There is a curious Museum of odd, out-of-the-way prints and pictures, and a collection of fossils, coins, and relics of the Stone Age, the Roman Occupation, and the Saxon Period, dug up from one time to another in the cavern by Mr. Redfern, who is an intelligent curator. The latter are suggestive commentaries upon history. They make a reflective man think. What a rush of history occurs when you pick up that little stone lamp, which once, perhaps, lit a Roman maiden to bed, but which was extinguished for ever before the birth of Christ! And what are your speculations, my friend, as you look with curious eye upon that jaw of white shining masculine teeth, imbedded in that piece of limestone rock? Here are human bones of all periods and ages. There is some black old furniture, too, dating back some hundreds of years. Here is the original Old Grandfather's Clock, still going "tick, tack, tick, tack," although it is three hundred years since its rude wheels were first set in motion. Here, moreover, is an old bedstead, ancient enough to be the bed of Procrustes. A heavy over-hanging canopy is suspended over the head, like the threatening sword of Damocles. A date of the six-

teenth century is carved on the bed, together with grinning cartoon faces that are enough to frighten you out of your sleep by their Satanic leer. Here, too, is an old oak desk, whose worm-eaten drawers must have contained many an old family secret, and enshrined many a sturdy yeoman's "last will and testament."

But the greatest curiosity Mr. Redfern produces is the guide, who is waiting to escort us to the cavern. Button up your coat, I beg of you. How cold it is! We seem to have stepped at once from the torrid zone to the glacial mean. The *cicerone* is a small boy with a big voice. A fierce *false* voice. The basest treble voice I ever heard.

"Whose Hole is this?" asks Christopher Kenrick with solemn curiosity.

"Poole's Hole," says the small boy.

"Fool's Hole?" remarks Christopher gravely.

"*Poole's Hole*," exclaims the big voice pitched to a shriek.

"Ah, yes, Poole's Hole. His 'den,' in fact. Is it Mr. Poole, the author of *Paul Pry*; or Mr. Poole, the tailor of Saville Row? Are you Mr. Poole's son, my boy?"

The juvenile stares.

"Where is Mr. Poole? Is he at home?"

Another stare that reaches over the boy's face and spreads itself all over Buxton.

"Is he dead?" asks our friend sorrowfully.

"Yes, mony a year. He wor a bandit, 'undreds o' years ago."

"What did he die of?"

"Dunno."

"'Derbyshire throat,' maybe?"

This banter was continued until the Small Boy gave Christopher Kenrick over as a monster of crass ignorance. Then we proceeded to explore the weird darkness and spectral formations of the curious cavern, with its Rembrandt-like shadows and Dantè horrors. But the demon of unbelieving levity had been aroused in Christopher Kenrick's bosom, and would not be still. The guide began the description which I had heard a dozen times before. He gave it without the variation of a word, or the change of a gesture. He showed us stalactites and stalagmites, encrinites and ammonites.

"Have you any Adullamites? They hide themselves in caves," said Christopher Kenrick in a voice of innocent enquiry.

"Here are some," said the boy, pointing out a cluster of fossils that bore no flattering likeness to Mr. Lowe and Mr. Horsman: that "party of two," which bore so striking a resemblance to the young lady's terrier, "which was so covered with hair that you could not tell which was the head and which was the tail of it," to quote John Bright's irresistible description.

"Here you will see the resemblance to a dome," said the shrill voice, as its owner pointed a species of lamplighter's stick to the wet roof.

"Where? I cannot see it," said C. K., earnestly.

"There!" responded the boy with furious emphasis, astonished at finding his oft-repeated descriptions for once challenged. The most excruciatingly ridiculous names have been bestowed upon the stalactite and stalagmite petrifications. "Here you see the resemblance to a poached egg." Again we objected to the comparison. We could not discern the similitude. A serious crisis was reached when we stopped at another winding in the wet vault, and the little boy with the large voice turned on a jet of economical gas, and said:

"Here you see the resemblance to the hind part of an elephant."

Christopher Kenrick adjusted his eye-glass and scrutinized the petrification critically.

"No, my boy, this will not do. You are too rude. Trot the animal round and show us his tusks. You are positively indecent."

Presently came "Mary Queen of Scots' Pillar."

"What was that?" asked Mr. Kenrick, as if he had missed an important announcement.

The guide repeated the description.

"And what"—indignantly—"did Mary Queen of Scots do here, boy?"

"She came to Buxton to get cured of rheumatism."

"Yes, yes. We know all about that," Christopher Kenrick rejoined. "But what was this Queen's particular business with regard to this pillar?"

"She leaned agen, it, sur."

“Leaned against that damp, dirty stone! Impossible! Did she wear a mackintosh? Perhaps not. How imprudent. She might well have rheumatism.”

The boy regarded it as a really serious question. But we could not preserve our gravity any longer; and when next the shrill voice announced:

“Here you see the resemblance, &c.,” Christopher Kenrick put his hand in his pocket, and imitating the boy’s falsetto voice, said:

“Here you see a remarkable resemblance to a shilling;” and the juvenile Troglodyte at once saw the likeness, and as he pocketed the coin, we left the cavern and entered the waves of warm air outside, now apparently parched as the atmosphere of a Turkish bath.

The dark rushing water that lends such poetic horror to Poole’s Cavern is the River Wye. Its baby life is one of trouble. It only runs away from the grim Axe Edge, to get lost in the mysterious gloom of this great cavern. Nearly frightened to death, it escapes from this gruesome vault to be tortured in the Buxton Gardens into unnatural leaps and windings. The dirty coal-measures of Burbage then take the shining colour from its young face, and daub it with a sickly ochre. Then it is inveigled under the town of Buxton through slimy holes where sewage poison takes away its health. Strange that it should outlive all this ill-treatment to make of Miller’s Dale a romance, and of Monsal Dale a dream, where one could almost sigh for the revival of the classic days, so that one might turn river-god, or naiad, to revel in the crystal current as it makes music under the crags, and mirrors fern and foliage and flower bending low and lovingly to see their reflected beauty in its liquid light.



Railway Readings.

*Is this the power that has transformed the world?
This fainting thing the tenderest grassy blade
Can pierce, torn by each bramble in the glade;
Or as it floats in thinnest wreaths uncurled,
Caught in the little ashen palms empearled,
That chafe and fret it in their babbling shade
To nothing; this that is and is not, swayed
Lighter than thistle-down by light airs whirled;
A momentary breath that scarce in May
The bedded gold can tarnish by the brook;
That yet bound in by strong necessities
Nor at its wayward will left free to stray,
The earth beneath its flying thunder shook,
And poured behind it streaming vales and skies.*

ELLICE HOPKINS' "Railway Steam."



Chapter XXXIII.

THROUGH THE PEAK ON THE ENGINE OF THE EXPRESS.

Let no one say that Reality lacks Poetical Interest.

GOETHE.



HIS is the Age of Annihilation. If we cannot be said to actually possess the magic Arabian carpet, which transported you wherever you would be at a wish, we have, at least, electric telegraphs, telephones, Atlantic cables, Cunard steamers, and Flying Scotchmen. We go "round the world" in a few weeks. We "do" Europe in a mere matter of days. We journey from London to Paris in a few hours. The mighty Atlantic is reduced to "the ferry," and we "run over" to New York as if we were dropping down to old York. I expect shortly to see our mural literature enriched with advertisements announcing Cook's "cheap trips" to the North Pole, and Gaze's "circular tours" to the sources of the Nile. The oft-mooted railway to the moon may yet turn out something more

substantial than moonshine. We may live to see a pneumatic tube bored through the earth to the Antipodes, with a service of admirably appointed trains running to and from Australasia every few hours. Fancy our hoardings being placarded with "Saturday to Monday at Kangaroo Island," or "Four Days at Tasmania at Excursion Fares!"

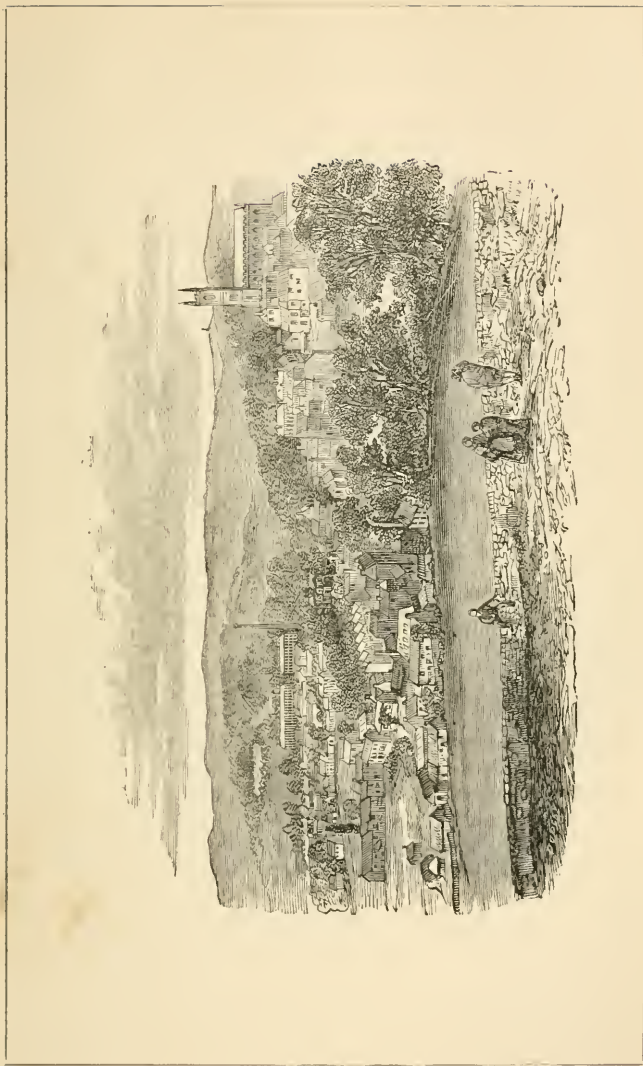
Pending the approach of that consummated epoch, we can content ourselves with doing Derbyshire in sixty minutes. This is by no means an insignificant achievement of the Annihilation Age. In those "good old days," to whose memory we are so ardently attached, and for whose return we sometimes sentimentally sigh, the journey from Derby to Manchester was a very serious business indeed, and one which included saying farewell to your friends, and making your last will and testament. But in these high-pressure times, these rapid days of telephones, microphones, and electric lights, the express accomplishes the distance in an hour-and-a-half. The Midland Company justly claim for their route that it "passes though the most picturesque portions of the Peak of Derbyshire and the Vale of Matlock;" but this description tremendously understates the charms of the ride. The windows of the "bogie" carriage, or the Pullman car, form an ever-changing panorama; but the scenery regarded from the footplate of the speeding engine is a railway romance. The courteous kindness of the Chief of the Locomotive Department of the Midland Railway provided me with a place on the engine of the Manchester express, and my only regret is that I had not John Ruskin for company, to have shown him sentiment in steam, romance in realism, fancy in fact, poetry in points and crossings, sermons in sleepers, songs in steel rails, books in signal-boxes, tongues in trenails, and good in all railway things.

Here she comes tearing into Derby station this June afternoon, after a three hours' burst from St. Pancras. The snake-like hiss is the action of the Westinghouse brake. The train is pulled up within its own length. Five minutes. The driver, who scrutinizes my credentials, is like Toodles, and necessarily wears a very dirty face, and a butcher's blouse, blue-black; and is "besmeared with coal-dust and oil, and has cinders in his whiskers, and a smell of half-slaked ashes

all over him." He is also a short, stout man. All engine-drivers are short, stout men. His "mate," the fireman, is a thin, wiry man. All firemen are thin, wiry men. Fat drivers and thin firemen are the rule, and the very moment a fireman is promoted to be a driver he develops a constitution. "Toodles" is oiling the shining sinews of the Iron Horse with an evil-smelling emulsion from a tin vessel which, like some politicians, runs to "spout;" while the snorting ardour of the steed of steel is being cooled by some gallons of cold water, which, however, only increases his impatience, and might be some inflammatory liquid, instead of pure "crystal spring." A hasty shutting of carriage doors, the guard's shrill whistle, a shriek of acknowledgment from the engine, and then a full-throated "fluff-fluff," followed by a faster "chay! chay! chay!" each individual blast coming faster and faster, and faster, until they emerge in a continuous dither. The hard, hot foot-board quivers with motion. One would think that the superior heaviness of the locomotive, the seventy tons of gliding weight, would make it run steady, far more steady than the comparatively light carriages. A mistake, the shaking on the engine, is largely increased. Everything is adamant and unyielding. Just as a "land-lubber" has to find his "sea-legs" on ship-board, so an embryo engineer riding on an express locomotive has difficulty in keeping his feet, and has to "hold on." To move without support is a difficult operation. I have often in my childish ignorance wondered why enginemen are always eating when they stand at stations. The enigma is solved. It is surely because the engine shakes down their cold lunches, leaving that vacuum which nature abhors. The noise, too, is increased a hundredfold. I make an observation to "Toodles," standing with hand on the regulator, with engrossed eye on the glass disc before him. His lips move in comic pantomimic helplessness in reply, the rushing wind has caught his words, and they are carried off after the telegraph poles, which are chasing each other in an endless race. Before we left Derby the dazzling dog-day heat was oppressive to perspiring-point. A burning pulsation was the only suspicion of air. But now a very whirlwind is rushing past, and if it were not for the gridiron which is frying my feet to a turn, the sensation of riding on

the engine would be one of cucumbrian coolness. A healthy and long life is supposed to be ensured by keeping the feet warm and the head cool, and enginemmen should live to become centenarians, since they always observe these medical conditions. But while I have been relating these experiences, Darley Church has looked down upon us from its wooded knoll by the river; the knob of moorland from Little Eaton, and the coloured hill-side at Duffield Bank, with its houses smothered in trees, are passed. A gray old pile, with the noisy railway rushing in front, and the quiet river stealing behind, and black yew trees brooding over the dead, slips by in a cloud of steam. It is Duffield Church. There, on the other side of the line, come the houses of Duffield itself. Flitting through the fields. The cud-chewing cattle contemplate us with philosophic calmness.

Now, half-a-mile of darkness, as Milford Tunnel receives us into its gloom. Wet walls, folds of red smoke flying along the roof, and the face of the driver, reflected in the glass in front of which he peers with strained eye, make a fire-picture in which the artist souls of Rembrandt or Dorè would revel. The white light radiates from the opened door of the furnace which the fireman is stirring with long fingers, like a Salamander; a crack, crack, crack, as of boyish fireworks, is being discharged; then a startling scream, answered by unearthly echoes, a flying furnace of smoke and flame, and an electric flight of lighted windows, tell of the passage of the "up" express. A "hurrygraph" of Milford, with its cottages climbing up the steep slopes of the river. A long steep cutting, between monotonous walls of ponderous masonry, built by George Stephenson, and Belper station tears past. Soon we cross the Derwent at Weir Lane Bridge, where the river is broadened into a lake, with a green island here meeting the swirl of the stream, and white houses with garden beds sloping down to the water's edge, and the many-windowed mills of Messrs. Strutt's mirrored near the weir. It is a picture not a place. A fleeting picture, for there are other views now as we play hide and seek with the river for two picturesque miles. There is something singularly inspiring in this rapid rush through charming scenic surroundings. One enjoys what De Quincy calls "the glory of motion." Stay: This sudden shutting off of the



VIEW OF BELPER, FROM CHIEVIN.



steam, and the prompt application of the brake, is alarming ; but the precaution, it appears, is only taken for the safe rounding of the severe curve at Ambergate junction. Behind is our train winding round the curve like a gliding serpent, a train of long twelve-wheeled "bogie" carriages, and a Pullman Palace Car. Before us opens out one of the most beautiful vales of the Derwent. A sylvan spot, this valley at Ambergate, with its radiant river rippling under the tinted trees ; its wonderful wealth of foliage, rising tier above tier in banks of leafy loveliness ; and its background of Derbyshire hills swelling in the sunlit perspective. Onward we urge at sensational speed, shooting bridges, whisking over the river here, booming through a tunnel there ; now darting through a deep cutting, whose scarped and rugged sides are diversified with feathery ferns and golden gorse ; then dashing through the forest growth which skirts the park of Alderwasley, with tall trees casting soothing shadows on either side, and forming an archway of luminous leaves overhead. To our right is the tall, tower-crowned hill, Crich Cliff. Yonder, nestling among the trees on the wooded height is Lea Hurst, the Derbyshire home of Florence Nightingale. Whatstandwell, in all its wooded beauty, is left behind. Cromford, with its gray church communing with the whispering river—with its Willersley Castle, the residence of the Arkwrights, on the hill-side—and with its naked rocks, like my Lady Godiva, "clothed on with chastity," in the shape of waving flounces of graceful green—is reached, and now Wra-a-a-ah!—a long tunnel puts a tantalizing termination to the scene, a provoking full-stop to the sentence. But don't protest, my friend, against the tunnel robbing us, like a Scotch mist, of a fresh gleam of Fairyland. It will give us a splendid compensation in a minute. Out into the sunlight again ; a brief cutting ; and then Matlock Bath bursts upon us with startling abruptness, an enchanting surprise in scenery. It is like the dazzling glory of the home of the fairies, which was wont to succeed the goblin scene in the old-fashioned pantomime of our boyhood. One is almost tempted to call, like a gallery-god, for "Scene Painter,"—after the manner of that enthusiastic tourist, who, beholding the Bay of Naples, exclaimed, "Bravo, Beverley!" Matlock Bath looks like an exquisite

Swiss miniature, a Neufchatel in a nutshell. But we have not time for even a note of admiration. Another tunnel obliterates the pleasing prospect. The High Tor towers above us; a momentary glance at rock and river; and then the yawning darkness of yet another tunnel receives the train. Out again, and Matlock Bridge flies past with lightning-like velocity. Quick! and you will discern the aboriginal parish church, and Matlock Bank, with its temples sacred to hydropathic horrors. Now comes the isolated peak of Oker Hill; then Darley, with its tranquil old church, sheltered with a yew tree which was contemporaneous with Homer's heroes. What a maze of sidings there are at Rowsley; at Rowsley, the threshold of Haddon Hall and Chatsworth. Here the Wye and Derwent fall into each other's arms; there is the "Peacock," with its ivied mullioned windows, and quaint gables, and clustered chimneys and old-fashioned garden. Presently we are at the portals of the long tunnel which burrows under the time-hallowed towers of Haddon Hall. The Midland system was arrested at Rowsley for some time because His Grace the Duke of Rutland was opposed to the railway running in the valley past Haddon Hall, and so the line passes under the wooded hill-side upon which the feudal walls are reared. Perhaps it is best that it should be so. The baronial palace should be read slowly and studiously, like a book, room after room, from basement to battlements, not hurried past at the sensation pace of a mile a minute. We are in the tunnel now with a swift procession of black goods trucks passing, which "covered with palls, and gliding on like a weird funeral, convey themselves guiltily away, as if their freight had come to a secret and unlawful end." Out into the genial light of day again, with the scent of meadow-sweet, instead of the smell of the damp mould. The Wye wanders in the fields in a hundred serpentine paths of its own choosing. There are views on either side—before, behind, to the right and to the left. The signal stands against us at Bakewell. The hiss of the "Westinghouse" checks the speeding train. Tinkle! Tinkle! sounds the electric block-bell in the pointsman's box; down drops the horizontal arm of the tall semaphore; the steam is put on, and soon Bakewell, with its heaven-pointing spire, tucked in among

the hills of the Peak, sinks behind. It is collar-work for the Iron Horse now. Up hill, and no mistake. Past Has-sop and Longstone, with far-stretching dark moors climbing to the sky-line. Chay! chay! chay! again with distinct pants. The regulator is pushed on at the full. Curves and gradient. More coal, if you please. The locomotive, like the fat boy in the *Pickwick Papers*, is always demanding refreshment. The coal-laden shovel is scarcely ever absent from its hungry mouth, while its consumption of water shows a thirsty weakness for *aqua pura*, which ought to induce the Good Templars to make the Iron Horse their patron saint. But do not let us malign the active animal. A steam-pressure which runs up to 150 pounds to the square inch needs some support, you know. Monsal Dale carries us into a region of romantic enchantment. The Wye, winding under wooded bank and jutting cliff, is one of Nature's daintiest water-colour sketches. At Cressbrook the scenery reaches a climax of poetic beauty. But tunnel after tunnel robs us of its charms; and it is, moreover, tormenting to rush through this scenery and not to be able to pause and enjoy it. One is inclined to bribe the engine-driver to "pull up," and to superannuate the stoker and guards into silence. Tantalus was placed in a provoking position when he was surrounded with every variety of luscious fruits which always eluded his grasp. It was "hard lines" for Sisyphus to be for ever condemned to roll a huge stone up to the top of a mountain, and for the stone to break away from him just as it was gaining the mountain summit. It was unsatisfactory for the daughters of Danaus to be compelled to fill with water a vessel full of holes. It is maddening for a starved wretch to behold the savoury bounty of eating-house windows, and not to be able to purchase a single crumb. It is exasperating to receive a barrel of oysters, and yet have no knife wherewith to open the toothsome bivalves. But more teasing than all these is to rush through the panorama of the Peak and not be able to stop and drink in the scenic beauties at your leisure—to linger in the secluded glen where the greenery of the banks woos the glancing stream, to climb the stubborn hill and receive the guerdon with which nature rewards the arduous ascent.

A pause, if it please you, at Miller's Dale, where a little

crowd of passengers awaits the train. Here Mr. Salford, from Manchester, who has left his rheumatism and crutches behind at Buxton, gets nimbly in the express along with Mrs. Salford, and the two Miss Salfords, one a charming symphony in silk, the other a dainty vignette in velvet. Mr. Saltley, of Birmingham, very gouty and bound for Buxton, gets out, and there is an interchange of several other passengers. Now the guard blows the whistle to proceed again, and the engine answers with a scream. A stout gentleman, who carries a red nose and a fishing-rod, pants pathetically up the platform in a perspiration and a hurry. But he is just one puff too late, and in waiting for the next train he will have time to moralize on the evils of unpunctuality. We are now running by the side of the Wye, on a terrace on the hill-side. The tunnel robs us of many charming pictures, but the ride is remarkable for sweet surprises in scenery. The train rushing from the mouth of one limestone tunnel, crosses the river bridge thrown high up above the wild beauty of Chee Dale, only to plunge into another vault. But that transitory flash of Chee Dale is one of the most remarkable "bits" of the journey. The ravine along which we now thunder is Blackwell Mill Junction. That lonely cluster of houses is a row of isolated platelayers' cottages; that heap of ruined stone is Blackwell Mill; to the left is the loop line that runs round the rock side to Buxton. Now we are climbing up the steep gradient along Great Rocks Dale. Peak Forest now, whose woods were once the refuge of wolves, and whose church—a sort of Gretna Green in the Peak—was the haven of runaway lovers. Soon Dove Holes is reached, and the line drops down towards Manchester through a tunnel two miles in length. The black obscurity now envelopes us—a detonating signal explodes with a loud report under the wheels, and the iron monster gives an unnatural scream, as though it had received a death-wound, and with palpitating heart and quivering sides pulls up in the Stygian vault. A caution signal sends us on at slackened speed, then a white light waved in the darkness puts the steam on again. That scream has sent strange echoes flying. Ten thousand and one noises seem to compete in a clattering chorus of deafening, deadening din. The darkness may be felt. Sulphur fumes are added to the damp earthly smell.

The circle of white light, thrown out by the furnace-fire, makes ghastly the faces of the enginemen at their post, peering through the gloom. A reverberating rumble is heard quite near. Two red ogre-eyes are burning their way through the darkness. In another second an avalanche of thunder and lightning is hurled past on the "up-line" with awful velocity. With a shriek, and a rattle, and a roar, on and still on. Fantastic flakes of fire flutter from the engine chimney, and fly fitfully overhead. Now and again an air-shaft in the tunnel-roof sends down a delusive glimmer of day. Right in front is the tunnel-mouth, in size looking like a threepenny bit: it gets larger: now it assumes the dimensions of a sixpence: it grows into a shilling: soon it appears like a florin, and presently resembles a five shilling piece. Another half-minute in this vile vault, and then we burst into the summer sunshine again. Viaducts carry us over Chapel-en-le-Frith, and give us Admodeus-like privileges with regard to peeping down cottage chimneys and into bed-room windows.

Down the hill-side now as if the Iron Horse were a frightened Pegasus and were running away altogether. The steam is shut off; ever and anon the sibilant sound of the air brake is heard. That station I think was New Mills; but the pace is so rapid that the letters on the platform name-board were running into each other. The rivulet running by the line is the Kinderbrook. To the right, Kinderscout—the king of the Peak mountains—sets his shoulders against the sky.

At Marple the charm of the scenery diminishes. We have passed through the Peak. The Rubicon is crossed, and the poetry of Derbyshire gives way to Cheshire and Lancashire prose. God's country is forsaken for man's town, and presently the engine, breathless and palpitating, pants into the Cottonopolis terminus. Good-day Toodles, may we meet again!





Chapter XXX.

OVER THE HIGH PEAK RAILWAY.

*No poetry in railways! foolish thought
Of a dull brain to no fine music wrought.*

MACKAY.

“**ONCE** upon a time,” in the pages of a popular art magazine, the present writer, with a presumption that must have been regarded as a literary impertinence by the æsthetic exquisites who are full of Mr. Matthew Arnold’s vague gospel of “sweetness and light,” and share Mr. John Ruskin’s honest contempt for “kettles on wheels,” endeavoured to depict the romantic side of railways. He tried to show that a railway—unyielding, noisy, repellent, and dirty—had in its hard reality an intimate connection with poetry, music, tenderness, sentiment, and art; that pictures are to be seen in trains; that aching tragedies and diverting comedies are ever to be beheld on busy railway platforms, and at little wayside country stations. He was wishful to find poetry in points and crossings, sermons in steel rails, songs in sleepers, books in block signal-boxes, tongues in tunnels, and romance in all railway things. There can be no doubt that the Present Writer ought to have been punished for so flagrant a piece of printed audacity by being suitably maimed in a railway collision, or sent over the Tay Bridge with that awful “flash

of light" on that tragic December night at the close of 1879. "Prisoner at the Bar"—is reported to have said a famous Justice of the Peace—"Providence has blessed you with health, strength, and fair abilities, instead of which you go about the country stealing ducks." The railway Juggernaut has not yet called upon me to pay the sacrifice for my sins, "instead of which" I find myself at Whaley Bridge, on Saturday, July 10th, 1880, still pursuing the romance of railways, and about to take a trip on the engine over the High Peak Line, a privilege for which I am indebted to the Engineer of the London and North-Western Company.

Most tourists in Derbyshire have, I take it, encountered, at some point or another, the acute curves, and sensational gradients of the Cromford and High Peak Railway, and have wondered what the mysterious trackway was, how it got there, from whence it started, and to whither it was directed, and were glad to think that their route did not include the adventure of those Avernus-like declines and those sharp bends. For the information of these good ladies and gentlemen, the present paper should be prefaced by the remark that the High Peak Railway is purely used for goods and mineral traffic, and that passengers are not conveyed by it, although some years ago the guard was allowed to take a few people between local stations, but an accident occurred which closed the privilege. Thirty-two-and-a-half miles long, this mountain line connects the Cromford Canal and the Midland Railway at Whatstandwell, in Derbyshire, with the Peak Forest Canal and the London and North-Western system at Whaley Bridge, Cheshire. It was constructed at a cost of £200,000 as a private enterprise; but the undertaking did not prove profitable, and the line was leased eventually to the London and North-Western Railway Company in perpetuity. This morning I am to traverse the whole extent of the line on the engine, or rather engines, for the railway is divided for working purposes into eight sections, viz. :—High Peak Junction to Cromford; Summit of Sheep Pasture to Foot of Middleton; Summit of Middleton to Foot of Hopton; Summit of Hurdlow to Hurdlow; Hurdlow to Harpur Hill; Harpur Hill to Grin Branch Junction; Colliery Junction to Bunsall; and Foot of Bunsall to Summit of Shallcross. Some of these names will sound strange to

the ear of even the reader who prides himself on his close acquaintance with the Peak district. Off the beaten track, they are like hamlets that have got lost among the hills, and need a special exploring party to discover them. The High Peak Railway, it may be further advanced in the way of preface, is a single line. It is of the same width of gauge, and of the same character of permanent way, as the lines belonging to the London and North-Western Company's ordinary branches. Like all single lines, the traffic is worked by what in railway parlance is known as the "staff system." The staff is a truncheon painted and lettered specially for the division of line over which it acts as the *open sesame*. It is suspended on the weather-board of the engine, and no train or engine may enter any section without being in possession of the engine-staff belonging to that section. The driver cannot start without this staff, which he receives from the official in charge of the staff station; and on arriving at the station to which the staff extends, the talisman is given up to the person conducting that place. Through or local, "up" or "down," "fly" or "slow," there are twenty-two trains a day on the High Peak Railway, and the fastest trains occupy a space of over five hours in performing the entire journey. All this I candidly concede, my dear Madam, is very dry and uninteresting, and I apologize for being so tediously technical. The only extenuation I can urge is that the High Peak Railway is in itself a solid fact of such dimensions that a discursive description of it should also be "ballasted" with facts and figures, *data* and detail, to carry even my special light locomotive safely.

I am at Whaley Bridge this July morning; and before half the world has breakfasted, and while housemaids, drowsy and slovenly, are yawningly lighting the fire to prepare the matutinal meal, the through "up" train to Whatstandwell is off and away. Due out at ten minutes past seven o'clock, we are timed to arrive at the Cromford terminus at a quarter-past twelve, according to the current time-table, which is dated "December, 1876, and until further notice;" an arrangement which is primitive and simple, and makes one wish that the hours of departure and arrival of all trains in "Bradshaw" savoured equally of the unvarying constancy of the Medes and Persians. One leaves Whaley Bridge,

with its factories and colliery gins and slag heaps, without regret. The first mile or so of the ride is achieved in the guard's brake, and is up the Shallcross gradient, a straight rise of 1 in $8\frac{1}{2}$. The line is here double, and is worked by an endless chain. Presently we are among the bold features of the Derbyshire moorland hills; and the Goyt on our right is running innocently away between the banks of lichened rock, coy fern, and hanging trees. A locomotive meets us at the summit of the incline, and working tender first, is taking on our train of some twenty waggons; a cargo which is a curious *olla podrida* of grains, barrels of beer, bags of beans, sewing machines, flour, lime, coal, cans of paint, boxes of tea, and agricultural implements. To one accustomed to the swift, smooth, motionless motion of a Pullman palace car, or a Midland bogie carriage, the jerking, jolting, jig-dancing of the engine of the High Peak Railway is an experience to remember as a certain specific for the cure of indigestion. The seven o'clock breakfast is already shaken down; and no wonder that Toodles, the stoker, is feeding himself as well as the engine. Toodles is a grotesque combination of grit and grease, and might have been carved out of a column of coal and then roughly oiled and toned down; while his "mate," the driver, an older man, is suggestive of an impossible partnership between a butcher and a chimney sweep, wearing—as he does—the blue blouse of the one, and the mosaic of soot of the other.

We are now in full swing; and everything about the train strikes me as being mechanically malevolent, discordant, and out of temper. The engine has not the mellow "fluff, fluff," and the full-voiced, deep-throated "chay-chay," of its superior locomotive brethren, the race horses of the main line. It spits its way along spitefully, and starts with a jerk, and stops with a jump, and goes with an irregular lurch throughout that is trying to one who has not acquired his "sea-legs." The waggons, through not being so closely united in the tightness of "coupling" as they might be, batter away at each other as if each individual truck had quarrelled with its partner, and was settling its grievances in blows. The curves are so sharp and frequent that ever and anon the train seems intent on the study of Euclid's Elements, and describes every denomination of geometrical

outline, the favourite one being an acute crescent, when the van at the rear of the train comes up at angles with the engine just to allow the driver and guard to shake hands, and show that if the engine is ill-tempered, and the waggons are emphatic in their contempt for each other, they, at least, are friends. Now the whole train seems bent on going a trip over the low stone walls into the neighbouring moors to the right; then it evinces that it has changed its mind and has a disposition for toppling over to the left. Between walls of woodbine and ivy now; then to the right, the deep wooded shade of Errwood Hall, as the line runs along a terrace of rock, high over the wild, green, glen beauty of the Goyt Valley. Presently Bunsall is reached. Here the engine leaves us, and the train is pulled in instalments up the steepest gradient of the line, varying from one in seven to one in eight. It is a double one, the first straight, the second on the curve. The operation is a long and tedious one; but at last the whole train is marshalled on the summit. Another locomotive is waiting to take us on, and I am making friends with the two fresh engine men, greasier and grittier than the last, and am learning to balance myself on another quivering foot-board, as we pant through a wild, bleak, hilly country. We seem to be moving along the top of the world; there are deep hollows in the hills below; and every variety of peak and rounded knoll. The journey is a scamper across savage and solitary moors. The heather grows to the verge of the line. The rarefied air blows about you like a fresh sea breeze. The train is the only moving thing in sight, save when a wild grouse, or a curlew, rises with a sharp startled cry. Then, just as Buxton is seen, with its white houses lying in the hollow, and shining like a pearl in a setting of emerald, a sudden scream from the engine takes the startled air and darkness shrouds the speeding train. "Burbage Tunnel," yells Toodles in my ear, as he opens the firebox, and stands like a Salamander in a white dazzling circle of heat. But the wind has hurried away with his words. A thousand echoes are fighting with each other; the wet walls fly past like a rushing river; there is a furious whirlwind of tumult, and a damp chill that might belong to the Styx. The train, indeed, might be Charon's boat; and the driver, standing so statuesque and silent in

the broad, blinding circle of white light, with his eye strained in earnest watchfulness, and his hand fixed with decisive hold on the cold glistening regulator, might be Dante's infernal ferryman. In the distance, however, there is hope. A glimpse of light, looking as big as half-a-crown, widens. It grows larger and larger, until, with a wild shriek of exultation from the snorting engine, we emerge from the confined vault, with its darkness and damp, and strange unearthly noises, into the glad blue light and freedom again, and see the windows of Buxton flashing back the sunlight far away below our breezy table-land. Half-a-mile long, the Burbage tunnel is the only one on the High Peak Railway of any importance, and it is dirty enough and wet enough for them all.

"This is Ladmanlow," ventures the driver, shutting off the steam. The information anticipates my query, for there are no name-boards on any of the stations to indicate your whereabouts. The stations, indeed, are but sheds; and they sometimes seem to be the only erections within miles of anywhere. Some little time is now occupied in the operation known as "shunting," the dropping of one waggon off, and the coupling of another on; sending this truck down that siding, and fetching that truck from another. After thus playing at a species of truck-tennis with the entire train for some time, we rattle along again. Past Diamond Hill; past the stony slopes of Solomon's Temple; past Harpur Hill, with the tall, insolent, ugly, ubiquitous chimney which threatens the vision of the Buxton visitor wherever he may be, whether on the top of Corbar, or on the slopes of Axe Edge, or at the Cat and Fiddle, or at Fairfield. And now the landmarks are lost, and we are running with a rattle and a roar over the moors. Steep are the gradients, and "a caution" are the curves. The engineman treats his iron-horse as if he were driving a living animal. He knows her faults and her good points. He can tell at what part of the road she wants whip and loose rein, and when he must hold her in with tight hand. And the iron Bucephalus responds as if sensitive to his will, and the slightest movement of the regulator is as a touch of spur, and makes her spring on like a creature of blood and nerves. Now a hare starts by the side of the line; now some grouse rise with noisy "cluck-

cluck ;” again, a flight of crows, making for some feeding place, is the only sign of life in the lofty loneliness. Here there are fields on either side of the rough track ; but what the unsophisticated eye takes for sheep grazing are really so many obtruding blocks of gray limestone. Hindlow is the next stopping place. “Low” in the Peak district means “high ;” and the quaint old Derbyshire people describe a residence in these exposed altitudes as “living out of doors.” Hurdlow is the succeeding station (“low” again, you see), and this is the highest point of the High Peak Line. To get here there was formerly a third incline, but the gradient has been rendered workable by locomotive. A change of guard, and transfer to a third engine, with driver and fireman who can hold their own in grease and grit with their ebony colleagues. There is no water supply at this *depôt*, and to assuage the Iron Horse’s thirst, water is brought in large tanks from Ladmanlow. More truck tennis ; and then we bump along again ; now upon a terrace of rocky embankment ; now in a steep cutting, with the naked limestone rocks clothed in flounces of green which you can gather as you pass, so scanty is the clearing ; now a sharp whistle of warning from the engine to announce our approach to some platelayers, who leap aside with pick and shovel just in time as we whisk past in a cloud of steam. Anon we rush under a bridge carrying a road that seems to lead nowhere ; then we pause at a little one-horse kind of a station called Parsley Hay, which looks just like a wayside shed on an American prairie line. The guard seems to combine the duties of station-master, shunter, clerk, signalman, porter, and inspector. Indeed, he seems to be the only element of existence about the place. One misses that pleasant aspect of life, that intensely human interest, which belongs to English country-side stations. There is an omission of healthy, unkempt children to see the train pass through. Nobody gets in or out. Where is the stout old lady who is always so anxious about her luggage : three boxes, a portmanteau, and a basket, all with a bit of red flannel tied to the handles ? And where is the crimson apoplectic person, with umbrella and carpet-bag, who rushes up to the train just in time to behold it pass away without him ? There are none of those little lyrics, those charming pastorals and delicious idylls,

one can always observe on village platforms ; where lovers meet lovers, and friends say the sad word farewell ; where there are kisses at the carriage doors as honeyed as Eros sucked from the lips of Psyche, and tears as scalding as those which dimmed the eyes of Eurydice when Orpheus was snatched from her side. There is not even the stumpy church tower to be seen mixed up in trees, and rising above gray old gabled farm-buildings, at these High Peak out-of-the-world stations.

Between Friden and Minninglow is the great Gotham Curve, which describes a rectangular square ; and then—quick, if you please !—and you will see, on the left hand, the Arbor Low rocks : hoary Druidical stones. And then, after this glory of the rocks, Toodles screws on his brake, and we stop at Bloore's Siding. Who is Bloore that he should have a siding ? He is evidently a man of bricks. But the subject is not one that is likely to throw the world into convulsions of controversy ; and the engine is panting away again. The scenery, truth to tell, has not been specially attractive during the last few miles. There have been none of those poetic vignettes of green valley and gray crag, gleaming water and glowing wood, that make the ride in a Midland carriage from Derby to Marple such a rich railway romance. Rather a monotonous table-land, where niggard fields and stubborn heath are ruled off with bleak stone walls, and the perspective is unbroken save here and there by a clump of storm-rent ragged pines. At Longcliffe, however, the views are more diversified ; and we get in a pleasant country of hill and dale, with glimpses of wood and water, rendered all the more pleasing to the artistic eye by the sudden lighting up of the picture by the sun, which has been sulking behind gray clouds all day. As Hopton is approached there is some bold rock scenery ; and the limestone cuttings show engineering works of great difficulty. Another engine is harnessed to ours here, and with both brakes screwed down, we slide down the incline to Middleton. To think that I have for a moment allowed myself to charge the High Peak Railway with being unpicturesque ! *Peccavi*, as the droll commander said when he announced to the First Lord his capture of Scinde, contrary to instructions. Picturesque enough to make me wish to enchant hither the

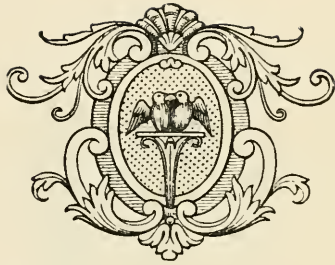
painters by whom it would be most appreciated is the view now, with the Black Rocks of Stonnis, pointing over the Matlock Valley, and Barrel Edge rising in serried ranks of pine and fir above them, and the filmy smoke of peaceful Wirksworth rising lazily from the green-wooded hollow beyond. That Sleepy Hollow is Adam Bede's country; and in the churchyard yonder Dinah Morris awaits the Resurrection bidding. Do you recognize the scene from "the preaching" chapter of George Eliot's first, freshest, and most famous work?

But there is something else to think about besides George Eliot now, oh dreamer. There is the Middleton Incline to go down. The locomotive leaves us; and down below drops the shining track of steel, its diminishing lines a study of perspective. The gradient is 1 in $8\frac{1}{2}$; and the train is let down two waggons at a time by a coiled wire rope from a stationary engine. You must be quite prepared to hazard the risk of the run down. Sometimes a waggon *does* break loose, and it will not stop to be reasoned with, but goes to swift destruction. Ride across the buffer, my friend, and be prepared to jump off at once if anything gives way. The hook is coupled to the waggons. Off we glide. The cable swings and clangs ominously as it strikes the steel rollers, which seem to say "Caution!" in a metallic voice that keeps repeating itself all the way down. Steeplehouse is the next station; and here *the* view of the line is beheld as, riding on yet another locomotive, we pass directly under the Black Rocks and see through the green veil of the sunlit wood that vision of Matlock, with the deep crags of the Derwent valley, which is like a piece of sublime theatrical scene-painting from a romantic opera. There is another of those creepy, dithery inclines at Sheep Pasture, with a gradient on the curve of 1 in 8 down to Cromford; but one forgets the risk of riding on buffers, in the green beauty of the scene, for the rocky cutting through which the line winds is a fern paradise that is a revelation of loveliness.

Another locomotive to take the train to High Peak Junction at Whatstandwell. The unique "Oozly bird" came over to this country, it is well known, in two ships; but to get over the High Peak Line involves at least half-a-dozen locomotives. No thank you very much, Toodles.

I will not ride down to the Junction. My bones have been sufficiently dissected ; and "The Greyhound" at Cromford is eloquent of a refreshing bath, and of a well-cooked dish of plump trout that were rising at flies in the cool Derwent an hour or so ago.





Random Readings.

*A green field is a sight which makes us pardon
The absence of that more sublime construction
Which mixes up vines, olives, precipices,
Glaciers, volcanoes, oranges, and ices.*

LORD BYRON.




Chapter XXV.

AT CHANTREY'S GRAVE.

Hillsborough, though built on one of the loveliest sites in England, is perhaps the most hideous town in creation . . . The city is pock-marked with public-houses, and bristles with high, round chimneys . . .

They defy the law, and belch forth massy volumes of black smoke, that hang like acres of crape over the place, and veil the sun and the blue sky even on the brightest day; but in a fog—why, the air of Hillsborough looks a thing to plough, if you want a dirty job. More than one crystal stream runs sparkling down the valleys, and enters the town; but they soon get defiled, and creep through it heavily charged with dyes, clogged with putridity, and bubbling with poisonous gases, till at last they turn to mere ink, stink, and malaria, and people the churchyards as they crawl. This infernal city, whose water is blacking, and whose air is coal, lies in a basin of delight and beauty: noble slopes, broad valleys, watered by rivers and brooks of singular beauty, and fringed by fair woods in places.

CHARLES READE.

“HE foulest town in the fairest country I have ever seen.” Such was Horace Walpole’s terse description of Sheffield. It hits off the cutlery capital more happily, perhaps, at the present time than when it was first written. Sheffield itself only grows bigger and blacker, duller and dirtier, and its sordid streets only bring out in stronger relief its romantic suburbs.

A blurred, blotted, seamed, smoked, disfigured picture in an attractive frame; the ill-conditioned daub only draws attention to its beautiful enclosure. Sheffield supplies a humiliating illustration of man's town and God's Country. No town had a finer site given to it for effective architecture. One sighs to think to what picturesque purpose a Norman Shaw might have turned such natural advantages. Sheffield itself is a hill surrounded by investing lines of nobler hills, with three rivers, forming three sides of a peninsulated area, upon which spreads the town, and there is not a street in the place from which a glimpse of the country may not be seen. The town is as hideous as positive genius for the perverse perpetration of deformed ugliness can make it; but the hilly suburbs, with their wooded valleys, possess a scenic charm which it is difficult to imagine existing in such close contact with so much that is revolting and contaminating. There are the valleys of the Sheaf and the Don, the glens of quiet beauty such as the Eden, the Loxley, and the Rivelin.

“ Five rivers like the fingers on a hand,
Flung from black mountains, mingle and are one
Where sweetest valleys quit the wild and grand.”

The Rivelin ravine, with its bold hills stretching westward to the Derbyshire moors, is a romance; and here Mr. Ruskin has placed his St. George's Museum, just where the comparison between God and man is seen in the most vivid contrast. Then there is the valley of the Don, with the warbling woodlands of Wharnccliffe, the view from which Lady Mary Montague, writing from Avignon, placed before the landscape at the junction of the Rhone and Durance, the beauty of which she was describing. “Last summer,” she says, “in the hot evenings, I walked often thither, where I always found a fresh breeze, and the most beautiful land prospects I ever saw, *except Wharnccliffe*, being a view of the windings of two great rivers, and overlooking the whole country, with part of Languedoc and Provence.” But the most attractive part of Hallamshire lies in Derbyshire. Sheffield, indeed, had a narrow escape to get into Yorkshire at all. Part of the town is in Derbyshire; and the valley of the Sheaf belongs to the Peake Countrie entirely. Beauchieff Abbey (*beau chef*: “beautiful head”) lies in this fair

vale, with shady woods encompassing it, and the great space and solitude of the Derbyshire moors beyond. And overlooking the Sheaf valley, perched like an eyrie on the hill, is Norton ; classic Norton : the rugged Derbyshire village where Sir Francis Chantrey was born, where he toiled an obscure milk-boy, where he cherished his earliest artistic dreams, where his widowed mother always lived, and where her fond and famous son lies buried.

I have often been struck with the antipodean contrast between the brutal uncouthness of Sheffield, and the romantic comeliness of its natural surroundings. The antithesis, however, has never impressed me so forcibly as it does as I leave Sheffield with Kalmat this sunny morning at the end of May, to stroll as far as the Church associated with Chantrey's immortality. It is a pleasant walk of four or five miles from Sheffield High Street to Norton. When we have left Heeley we are away from the low tenements suffering from a brick-and-mortar erysipelas, the arid workshops, seamed with a scrofula of dirt, the foul chimneys that vomit at the sun, the vitiated rivers that once were trout-haunted streams, and were kissed by hanging greenery, and leapt with joy in the sunshine, but now crawl wearily, heavy with pestilence. Now the glad green country is all around us. A great breadth of transparent blue is in the sky ; the pure thin air is full of exhilarating light ; the outward aspect of Nature is one that would have inspired pæans of praise from Sheffield's native singers, Montgomery and Elliott. Yet it is but a step from this earthly Heaven to that mercantile, metallic Hades : to the Styx, the Cocytus, and the Acheron ; to the heavy atmosphere of Pluto's Kingdom, where the one-eyed Cyclops, with the flaming foreheads, are beating molten metal till it wails and moans in the very agony of torture.

We turn through the fields to the left as we approach Ecclesall. That gray village on the wooded hill overlooking the valley is Norton. Norton itself is a scattered place. Here is a collection of old rustic houses, with one or two modern villas, painfully new and largely little, that reach the height of their paltry architectural ambition when they throw out a self-assertive bow window, almost as big as the house itself ; together with a little post-office, and a public-

house that is styled "The Chantrey Arms," and combines the sale of both bread and beer, grog and groceries. At this establishment we learn that the actual Norton is "aw gud moil frum 'ere," and that we shall have to "go thru' th' jennel and then thru' th' wood." "Th' jennel" turns out to be a passage between two houses. This funnel gives access to open fields. Now comes a stiff climb up to a glorious old wood, bright with blue-bells. The view from here is a revelation in landscape. Far away below lies the foul blot of Sheffield in a fair country where hills rise on hills and valleys meet in valleys. A pall of smoke broods mournfully over the town. Right across are the moors of the Peak, breaking in waves of heather to the horizon; to Hathersage and Grindleford Bridge, to Froggatt Edge and Baslow. Fortunate, indeed, are the Sheffield toilers in having the best part of the Peak of Derbyshire at their very doors. What the Clyde is to the Glasgow man of business, seeking a respite from his work, the Peak Country is to the people of Steelopolis. In place of the pleasure steamers of the Scotch sea-way, the Sheffielders have an admirable coach-service, cheap and regular. Kalmat denotes for my delectation the different localities in the borough of Sheffield that now is stretched like a map below. That smoky smudge, a dusky yellow in the sunshine, is Attercliffe; that black place is with cruel irony named Brightside; yonder is pleasant Nether Edge; there Sharrow; there Crooks; there hilly Steel Bank and Walkley.

Through the wood, and on to a pleasant country road, where more of the village of Norton is scattered. Entirely old this part. Mr. Buggins, the builder, has not yet put down any of his bricklaying barbarisms, his architectural atrocities. Here is a gray old farmhouse where little boy Chantrey probably played with other milk-boys; and I believe there still exists, though in an altered form, outside the village, at Jordanthorpe, the low-roofed humble house where the great sculptor was born. Presently comes Norton Hall—there are splendid prospects in the Park—then, on the roadside to the left, an old-fashioned English mansion which you associate with a fine old Tory; then more antique houses, mixed up in the deep shade of woods, a poet's fancy of gray roof, green tree, and filmy smoke. Then the vener-

able church itself. On the village green, which at first seems part and parcel of the churchyard, so closely does the plot of grass adjoin the sacred enclosure, is a commanding obelisk. It is a single shaft of unpolished Cheesewring granite. There is no carved design. The only inscription is the boldly cut word,

CHAN TREY.

Yet plain as the obelisk is, it occurs to us that the very plainness is Art itself, and far better in its severe simplicity than any sculptured piece that would have only challenged comparison with the masterwork of the English Phidias whose genius it aspired to commemorate. We have only to step across the little patch of sward to gain access to the churchyard. Moss-grown and still is this secluded God's acre, shut in with the trees of Norton Park. The old church looks like a tradition in stone, so old and shadowy does it appear in the green shade. There is the light translucent tender tint of May on the trees, mingled with the yellow of the opening oak leaves, and the dark red of the copper beech, and shaded with the gloomy hue of yews, which have kept sombre vigil over the dead for centuries. A country churchyard is always an interesting study, even to minds less tinged with melancholy than a Blair's or a Hervey's. The silence has an eloquence of its own. As Doctor Raleigh in a fine passage puts it, "Nature seems to concentrate her pathos and her stillness in such a spot. Quiet is the dust below; quiet the scarcely moving grass of the graves; quiet the shadows of the tombstones; quiet the over-arching sky; and he who sits there on the mouldering stone, looking at the graves of his kindred, is thinking: 'It is a quiet resting-place; I shall not be sorry when the toils of this life are over, and wearied I come in hither to lay me down among the rest. I shall be glad rather when the sowing and the reaping are done, and I am brought here like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.'"

Norton churchyard is especially attractive to one who derives a quiet pleasure in studying quaint verses, and deciphering old country-side names. Here is a portion of an old cross, a shattered shaft rising from four circular steps;

here is a newly-made grave, with the fresh soil yet wet with weepers' tears ; and here, tree-shaded and unobtrusive, is the grave of Chantrey. Two flat granite slabs in a railed enclosure, plain but polished, and with the lettering boldly and deeply cut. The slabs are of unequal size. The larger covers all that is mortal of the great sculptor. Thus reads the inscription :—

SIR FRANCIS CHANTREY,
Sculptor,
R.A. F.R.S.
Born in this Parish VII. April, MVCCLXXXI.
Died in London, Nov. XXV., MVCCCXXXI.

The smaller slab covers the ashes of his grandfather, his father, and his mother, and the lettering reads :—

M.
FRANCIS CHANTREY,
Died MVCCLXVI., aged LVI.
FRANCIS CHANTREY,
Died MVCCXCIII., aged XXXV.
SARAH, His Wife,
Died MVCCCXXVI., aged LXXXI.

Sir Francis might have reposed among the honoured dead in the historic Abbey ; or beside Reynolds and Barry in the Cathedral ; but he elected that his ashes should rest with his country-side kith and kin in the simple old-world village, where he, a poor fatherless boy, worked on a humble farm and trudged with his milk-cans to Sheffield. The story of his life is a romance. The Norton milk-boy's first inspirations were sketched on a grinder's wall. Then the milk-boy became a carver and gilder's apprentice in Sheffield—the dolorous town which I have said is the grave rather than the cradle of artistic hopes, and where fact—hard, grinding, and repellent—crushes out fancy, beautiful, ennobling, and graceful. He had previously suffered a short, but uncongenial, probation behind a grocer's counter. In the leisure hours of his apprenticeship the boy Chantrey drew and modelled in a room which he hired weekly for a few pence. Then he left to struggle with difficulties in Dublin, and push on

endeavours at Edinburgh. Then London, where he met Nollekins, who smoothed for him the steep and stony chequered path. Then he "struck for honest fame," and after vain effort came victory, after trial triumph. Then surfeited with fame, came the desire to slumber, not amid the mighty great ones in the national Walhalla, but to rest amid the repose and silence and soothing shadows of this sequestered village churchyard of his boyhood. Dying, like his compeers Nollekins and Flaxman, without issue, he devoted his fortune, something like a hundred thousand pounds, to the Royal Academy. The "Chantrey Bequest" has secured that institution many fine works, and the money has been of service to not a few young painters climbing the steep and chequered paths of art.

We find the church old and interesting. Part of it dates from the late Norman period, being built by one Robert Fitz Ranulph, in the time of Henry II. ; the rest of the building belongs to the Perpendicular Period ; but everything about the place is quaint and mediæval, and carries the mind back hundreds of years to when the monks fasted and feasted in the adjacent abbey of Beauchieff. The pews are high and old-fashioned ; the sun falls gently on the recumbent alabaster effigies of William Blythe and his wife, dressed in the habit of the fifteenth century ; there are more mouldering monuments of this Blythe family, one of whom, Geoffrey, was, in 1503, Bishop of Lichfield ; all around the dead speak to you through the eye ; while there is a curious font of early English art, standing upon four groups of pillars, with a strange carving, with a bird's body, a reptile's tail, and a human face, the latter wearing an expression of extreme mortification, which is supposed to symbolize Satan and his dislike to the sacrament of Christian baptism. The weight of centuries seems to rest upon the church ; and there is the solemnity of years about the walls, even though the May sunshine streams down the aisles, and the new leaves tap at the windows and tell of Spring, and Hope and Promise.

We wander amid the shadowy nooks and corners of the somnolent, moss-grown village. Its soothing quiet acts like a charm. Its hush and repose, and the gentle beauty of its deep wooded ways, invite the jaded mind, the vexed heart,

and the disappointed life. Before long we must rest in its sweet shelter again, and thank God that there is still left in the very heart of industrial England a spot where man may bury the memory of vain ambitions and bitter failures and futile successes, may forget the illusions of life and the fallacies of hope, and may rebuild with surer foundation those castles in the air which have fallen down with such a pitiless crash and wellnigh buried their builder in the ruin.





Chapter XXV.

FERNS AND FISHES.

The speech of flowers exceeds all flowers of speech.

MOTTO AT ALTON TOWERS.

Trust in His providence, and be quiet, and go a-angling.

IZAACK WALTON.

IT was a morning of brilliant promise on which we set forth on a fern-gathering expedition. The sun lay in a soft dreamy haze over Ashwood Dale, as we drove along the valley of the Wye. Near Litton we alighted. Lady Augusta had promised to sacrifice the day to Mrs. Priscilla Grundy, a widow accompanying her brother, Major MacPhlirter, who had left his liver in India and had come to Buxton to obtain "virtue" from the waters. So she drove back again alone, and we were pledged to return before the dressing-bell for dinner rang.

We dug from their coy hiding-places among the humid rocks such fine specimens of lady-fern, such captivating maiden-hair, while feather mosses—velvety browns, and grays and greens—found their way into our basket. It was somewhat off the beaten track where we found our "fern-paradise." It would be difficult to give an itinerary to the hiding-place. Perhaps the Aborigines would call it the upper part of Cressbrook Dale, but he who would find the

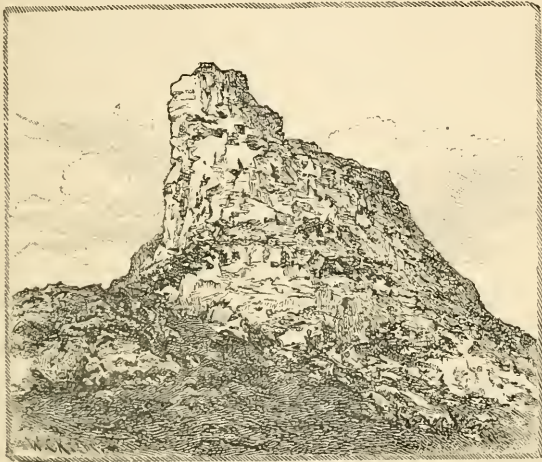
Arcadia, should lose himself near those distressing mills that disfigure the Alpine beauty of Cressbrook, where a mountain stream races down a steep and deeply-wooded glen to find the Wye. We followed up the course of this tributary brook from its confluence. It had a winning individuality of its own, a pleasing personality. The baby river rioted in a wooded paradise. It rippled with a childish laugh. Its cry of gladness was the only sound, save when at intervals, as we suspended our conversation and listened, the thrush sent its message of melody across the wooded ravine, or a jay screamed in the clefts of a gray rock that overhung the effervescing water, while the trees confessed their secrets in a confidential whisper to each other. The path was slippery and broken. A less courageous girl than Wildflower would have hesitated to follow its hazardous chances; but the Madcap was our leader. The voice of a waterfall lured us on. What a beautiful cascade it was, with the sun touching the water as it plunged into a deep, crystalline pool, mirroring fern-tangle and mosses of silver and green, and raced past an island strand of white sand, to break against the lichen-stained rocks beyond. Looking down this lonely, lovely glen from the waterfall was to behold a painter's dream of poetic scenery. Here the sun fell on the running stream in patches of shining white, there broken by foliage and falling in splinters of light; beyond, the rivulet was lost in the green gloom of arching trees that bathed their hanging boughs in the winding water. Trout darted from underneath gnarled roots. Bright insects sported in the sunlight. We had a transitory vision of a patch of rainbow on the bank. It was a kingfisher's plumage. A water-ouzel dropped into the stream like a stone. Wildflower says that if she were a bird, she should build her nest in this enchanted region. In places, we stood breast-high in an undergrowth of brambles, creepers, and wild-flowers. There was a forest of ferns. The sylvan spot was like the Fairy Glen in North Wales—without the tourists; like the upper passages of Dove Dale. It was a dream in scenery that seemed to belong to another earth than this mundane world of ours. It was a transcript of Nature that recalled the story told of Turner. Quoth a critic: "I never saw such landscapes in nature as you paint." "No," said Turner,

“Don't you wish you had?” This was to us ideal landscape. It might have been brought down to us from the Golden Age. We were almost afraid of startling the revels of woodland nymphs, and half expected coming across the grotto of the Dryades.

The path by the rivulet terminated at the waterfall. We ascended the steep side of the glen, assisted Wildflower over a rough wall of loose stone, and found ourselves on a road which we pursued in the belief that we should come out somewhere near Miller's Dale. Oh, the fallacies of Hope, and the vanity of Human Wishes! The road resembled nothing so much as those roads in America, drolly described by Emerson, which start fair and stately between broad avenues of branching maple and pine, but which gradually narrow as they proceed, and finally end in a squirrel track and run up a tree! The road, which in our topographical ignorance we had chosen, diminished into a deceptive path between gaunt and lonely limestone hills that seem to shut out the world. A mere bridle-path; then a simple sheep-track—anon we were off the track altogether. This is not a sensational romance; *but we were lost*. Yes, utterly lost in a wild track of moorland guarded by grim investing lines of limestone crag. Guide-posts there were none. Silent and desolate hills. No trees. No vestige of human habitation. We shouted; half in fun, half in earnest. The only response was the plaintive “pee-wit—pee-wit,” of a plover that rose from a recess in the rocks and lured us from the nest of its young. What we took to be browsing sheep, proved only blocks of limestone protruding from the scanty herbage of the hill-side. Duart sat down on a soft grassy knoll that offered a seat, but rose sharply with an indictable exclamation of pain, for which he was reprov'd by Wildflower, who said, “Naughty!” This led to an anecdote from him about a Highland wife, who was suffering severely from the toothache. Her husband's recipe was: “Curse and swear, my tear; curse and swear; it will do you a power o' goot.” The relief that women derive from “a good cry,” men obtain through “a good swear.” Both agencies are safety-valves of the soul. There is wonderful comfort, when one is put out, to go in a corner quietly and swear by one's self. But swear not at all.

The delusive seat upon which Duart had placed the sphere of his vertebræ was an ant-hill. We were in a mountain-range of these insect mounds. A stick thrust into one of the grass-covered heaps of loose earth revealed myriads of the brown, busy, stinging creatures. There were mole-hills, too ; although we did not unearth "the little gentleman in black velvet," whose health Messieurs the Jacobites were wont to enthusiastically propose,—meaning the mole-hill over which the horse of William of Orange stumbled, dislocating William's collar-bone, and causing William's death. To make matters worse, a few spots falling on our faces told of rain. Wildflower was neither embarrassed with water-proof nor umbrella. The light fleecy cloudlets of the morning were changed to inky clouds ; the sun sulked ; a veil of vapour trailed along the hill-sides. Wildflower was, however, very merry. As the barometer fell, her spirits rose. She said there was a jolly dash of adventure in the day. The Derbyshire sheep-track had led nowhere, after exhausting a considerable distance in the effort, just as aldermanic orators in after-dinner speeches say nothing, after talking for half-an-hour. We made the very welkin ring. The only response came from the echoing limestone crags, sardonic witnesses of our pathetic plight. One of us proposed to climb the shoulders of a tall hill to our right and reconnoitre. He received his commission. It was a steep scramble up the steep slope, with the loose limestone slipping down at every step ; but the summit was at last reached, and with eager eye was the country of the enemy on the other side scrutinized. Then a voice shouted from the height far down to two young people, diminished to the size of small children, who were comforting each other in the valley : "I can see a public-house !" Wildflower and Duart were soon storming the hostile hill-side, starting a fine hare that bolted from under their very feet. The threatening clouds luckily blew over, and the sun came out with a watery wink that soon softened into a smile. Far below us lay a white turnpike amid a hungry, hilly country, intersected by stone walls ; and so bare that an American would have irreverently guessed it had been made very late on the sixth day. On this road was a toll-gate and a substantial house with a sign. We passed at the foot of a great rounded mass of solid lime-

stone, rising like an island-rock from a sea of green. In its commanding height, and circular shape, and isolated situation, it suggested an impregnable fort, a bastion, a battery. We expected to see a sentinel pacing the ramparts, and were half afraid of a gun pointing out to open fire on the unhappy adventurers. Duart found afterwards from the Ordnance Maps that this strange detached rock is named St. Peter's Stone.* As to how it got in that field, and what the



ST. PETER'S STONE, CRESSBROOK DALE.

farmer said, and its precise connection with the Apostle, deponent is dumb.

We found that when we got to the lonely tavern, that instead of being at Ultima Thule we were at Wardlow Mires. Such was the name given by the landlady to a hamlet consisting of her hostelry, a reduced-in-circumstances toll-gate adjacent, a farmhouse a short distance off, a powerful manure-heap close by, and two or three cottages that had lost themselves among the bleak hills. We had placed before us delicious brown bread and Derbyshire cheese, and

* Locally known as "Pitterson Pike."

the home-brewed was as champagne-cup to our sharpened appetites. We were the only customers, and Wildflower had all to herself the high-backed settle,

“Where village statesmen talk’d with looks profound,
While news much older than their ale went round,”

and she positively drank the home-brewed out of an earthenware mug. The landlady was a very intelligent and chatty dame, an octogenarian in broad-rimmed spectacles. She told us so much concerning the *terra incognita* into which we had strayed, that we felt quite ashamed of our former ignorance of the place. The adjoining toll-gate had, when she was a girl, and the century was young too, been the scene of a melodramatic midnight murder. The murderer swung for his crime on a ghostly gibbet on the uncanny hill-side for many years, and his spirit still haunted the neighbourhood on wild wintry nights when the wind came raving across the moors. His name was Anthony Lingard. On the same night the murdered woman’s sister met her end in a similar manner at a lonely Yorkshire toll-gate. How “creepy” and “dithery” was the story! Wardlow had figured, too, in the Law Courts, after the toll-gate tragedy, for a neighbouring farmhouse became associated with a horrid poisoning case. Indeed, the bright oasis in the desert of the old landlady’s life had, it transpired, been a visit to the Derby Assizes. She was a witness at a trial. Her wrinkled face lit up with animation as she described with much inconsequential circumstance, and tedious collateral detail, how she journeyed to the busy county town by a particular train, and what particular people were her companions; how she lodged on the London Road at a house opposite a postal pillar-box; what she thought of his solemn Lordship, and the sheriff’s showy horses, and the murderous javelin men; and how when she was spared to return to the Wardlow wilds, she promised her son ten shillings to go to Derby to see the next Assizes, for there would be *so* much for the lad to see and hear and learn, that it would be a sort of finish to his education, and the half-sovereign would be very wisely invested.

We were three miles from anywhere. Anywhere to us was Tideswell, although we were near Eyam, and the hills

of Castleton were to be seen, drawn sharp, clear, and distinct against the sky. To Tideswell, then, we tramped along the dusty, white turnpike, one of us a sort of agent-in-advance, with fern-basket and cherry-wood pipe; while a certain young lady and gentleman, who shall be nameless, lagged a little distance behind. The wind now and again brought the agent-in-advance fragments of their conversation—snatches about Staffa and Iona, and the Crinan Canal, and Oban, and the Kyles of Bute, and something about a run up to Skye, with a certain old Captain Adam MacNab. We reached Tideswell all in good time, and even had leisure to enter its fine old church and inspect its famous monumental brasses. Next door to the church was an hotel, from whence we found a public conveyance was about to leave for Miller's Dale Station. It was a pleasant picturesque drive, and we caught the Buxton train.

It is heresy to say it, blank treason to divulge the secret. Let the fact then be whispered confidentially in your ear; let it be written on a scrap of paper and then incontinently destroyed; let it be regarded as strictly *entre nous* that *not the least enjoyable hours of that pleasant week were spent away from the ladies*. We had the privilege of a day's fishing in the preserved reaches of the sparkling little river Lathkill, and Lady Augusta and Miss Wildflower insisted that we should avail ourselves of such an opportunity. They could spend the time profitably enough without us. Had they no shopping to do? Had they no promised calls to make?

Duart we knew to be a crack angler, who could throw a fly on any given spot. Had we not seen him wield a mighty double-handed rod in the brawling, brown salmon streams of the beloved northern land? He looked with something almost like contempt on the slender whips for striking the Derbyshire trout. On the other hand, his companion was no rodster. He had, indeed, been on many fishing expeditions where pigeon-pie was included in the "ground-bait;" but had never been known to bring back a fin. He had been heard to remark that angling used to be a snare to the fish, but that now it was a delusion only to the angler. It

was rumoured that he was engaged on a great work, to be called *The Mis-Adventures of a Fisherman*, but people will talk. He had, however, boasted of once having "a bite," and the mild excitement of "a bite" is gratifying to the angler who catches nothing save a cold. So, duly equipped with rods and creel, we took the morning train to Bakewell. Rowsley would have been, no doubt, the nearest point to the Duke of Rutland's water; but we wished to saunter down the entire course of the enchanting valley of the Lathkill, following the little river all the way from its source near One Ash to its embouchure with the Wye at Fillyford Bridge. The bewitching walk has few rivals in Derbyshire.

From Bakewell to One Ash is a three or four miles tramp along a bleak, uninteresting turnpike. When we get to One Ash Grange a draught of milk was not to be despised. It is a substantial old farm-house, in the occupation of a ruddy yeoman, a Quaker, one Mr. Bowman, in whose family, he told us, the Grange had remained for three hundred years. There is a romance associated with the house. Mrs. Gaskell told the story in one of the earlier numbers of *Household Words*. In this narrative "Derbyshire" is "Dolbyshire;" Bowman appears under the thin disguise of "Arrowman;" the Duke of Devonshire is the "Duke of Anyshire." The house and its lands have descended from father to son as uninterruptedly as if they belonged to the family instead of to the Cavendishes. A peacock was unfolding the rainbow splendour of its tail upon the garden wall. Sunning himself in the yard was a shaggy shepherd-dog, who took advantage of our satchel being left at the door, and soon helped himself to a packet of our sandwiches. Mr. Bowman had a young fox in a sack to show us. It was one of several cubs which had been snared by his men. A badger had been caught in the dale the same week.

At the head of Lathkill Dale, too, lived and died the valiant old Derbyshire Quaker, John Gratton, a great uncle of Mr. John Bright. He travelled over the greater part of England, Scotland, and Ireland, proclaiming the truth he held as a member of the Society of Friends. He preached in the face of the Conventicle Act of Charles the II.'s time, and suffered imprisonment for his religious opinions. Those

were the days when it demanded some moral back-bone
“to dare to be a Daniel.”

The wild secluded glen known as the Lathkill Valley abruptly opens at the end of a field near One Ash, and from this point the river Lathkill starts out of a mossy rock, like the water from the rock which Moses struck at Horeb. We followed the streamlet as it broadened from rill to rivulet, and from rivulet to river, down a deep valley, which is one of the most romantic of Derbyshire Dales. How can these poor pen scratches hope to do justice to that bewilderingly beautiful, but comparatively unknown valley? On the right bank precipitous cliffs, steep, bare, and savage, impend over a stream that is the clearest in England. On the opposite side a curving line of bluffs rise from the water, too, but these are thick with trees. Here are forest glades, vistas of green, and tangled brakes. Overhead an emerald roof; underfoot mossy paths. The sun streamed through that roof of luminous leafage, and threw a trembling tracery, a filagree work of foliage on the winding walk. Lower down the stream the opposite bank lost its morose disposition and smiled in green, too, with white crags, like blocks of alabaster, breaking through the trees. Here and there the river had been dammed up in trout pools, and the water tumbled over a succession of weirs that lent much variety and movement to the scene. If we had been in the forest primeval, we could not have been more alone. We seemed intruders in that fair wilderness. We might, indeed, have penetrated a hidden retreat in some far-off continent, where Nature assumes her wildest garb—the crumbling works of some disused lead mines, and a great ruined aqueduct, increased the spirit of solitude. It was like a scene from Joaquin Miller's *Far Away Lands*:—

“’Tis the new finish’d world; how silent with wonder
Stand all things around you. You wander on under
The broad gnarly boughs. You breathe not a word.
You inhale the sweet balsam where boughs break asunder.
While, fragrant with newness, earth waits for her lord.
The place is scarce finish’d. Yon footfall retreating,
It might be the Maker disturb’d at His task,
The footfall of God on the far pheasant beating.
It is one and the same whatever the mask
It may wear unto man. The woods keep repeating
The old sacred sermon, whatever you ask.”

The cadence of the current, and the singing of the birds, made the silence melodious. The tangle blushed with red and white roses, and with woodbine and convolvulus climbing, as they ever do, from left to right, with blue harebells, and tall red foxgloves. There was the soft cooing of the wood-pigeon; the notes of the thrush loud and jubilant; the linnet's gentler song; the tapping of the woodpecker at the trunk of a felled tree; the twitter of starlings, and the deep call of the cuckoo coming at stated intervals, like the roll of a drum in the concert. Now a startled rabbit pricked her pretty ears, stared with blank curiosity at our intrusion, and bolted into the bank; then a squirrel leaped—a patch of red among the green of a great beech; and once a pheasant showed his bronzed breast and disappeared to tell his wife that two strange and ugly creatures had come into the Happy Valley. Another mile of this paradise of pleasing colours, sweet scents, musical sounds, and scenic combinations of wood and water, rock and river, and then the dale opened and we passed through the level meadows, upon which the sun came at intervals through a clouded sky. The wind brought us messages of perfume from hawthorn and clover, and snowy elder-tree; sometimes in individual odours, sometimes combined in one overpowering sweetness.

Past the first bridge, and then we began to unpack our fishing equipments. Here some of the best trout fishing in these islands begins. There had been big trout, bless you, all the way down the stream. In the dams we might have counted them by the hundred, but Duart was of opinion that no fishermen could catch them in honest sport. The banks rise high above the water, which is so crystal in its clearness that you see every fish, and the fish in their turn see you. The Upper Lathkill is rented by the Duke of Devonshire from Earl Cowper, and the fish are netted from the dams to supply the ducal table. When Mr. Gladstone was visiting Chatsworth not long ago, among the trout sent from these ponds to the House was a fish weighing two ounces above eight pounds, and six and seven pounders are still common. The Lower Lathkill is the preserved water of His Grace the Duke of Rutland, and, the fishing being

limited to his personal friends, the reaches are not over-run with anglers.

Trout? The river was clouded with them. Trout everywhere. In the pools, deep as wells, where the water was confined, and so clear that the fish seemed to float in air, and we could count the pebbles at the bottom; in the sandy shallows; at the weirs, over which the river rushed in effervescent fury into quiet refuges beyond, where loving greenery hung over its breast, and soothed it until it was limpid and still, with only the foam-bells remaining on its cheek to tell of the feverish agitation it had suffered. Duart produced quite an entomological collection of flies. March-browns, blue-duns, big domestic sugar-basin-and-cream-jug-looking flies, red-spinners, governors, coachmen, quill-gnats, with red hackle, dark and light flies, small and large, fine cast and coarse cast. Orestes made such an elaborate display that his cynical Pylades thought that we should return with baskets exasperatingly empty, defeated, may be, by a Bakewell urchin's stick and string, bent pin and wriggling worm. But our performance, without boasting, nearly came up to our profession. We kept well out of sight, the fish never saw our rods, and we had our reward. A fine fellow, lying with his head to the current, just lazily moving his pretty tail to poise his plump body, was Duart's first victim. He responded to the invitation of a sweetly seductive mayfly. Once or twice the fish looked dubiously at the tackle, thin as a single hair, then darted round in nervous undecision, consented, repented, consented again, and — succumbed. He sucked the fly as gently as Cupid sipped the lips of Psyche; a jerk of the rod, and then he lay in all his speckled beauty in the grass on the bank. Presently a restless bolder fellow glided valorously from under the bank to the next bait. He felt the prick of the barb, and leapt up, and in his flight released himself. He actually came up to Duart's next fly, but a dexterous lowering of the point of the rod deprived him of the success of another ascent. Then the deceptive insect of art—an alder-fly this time—was dropped over a great three-pounder that positively winked at us. There was a jerk on the gut, a tension of the line, and the fish made for the reeds and water-lilies.

The stoppage of the strain told us that he had made fools of us, and was probably looking at us at that moment and derisively asking: "Don't you wish you may get it?"

We fished down the river away past the little village of Alport, where the Bradford, another limpid trout-stream, joins the Lathkill. Bradford Dale, which is, really, a continuation of Middleton Dale at its upper end, is one of the least known of the Derbyshire Dales. Watered by the Bradford Brook, clouded with trout, with wooded paths, this hidden nook comes upon you with a pleased surprise. A fissure in a detached mass of limestone in the dale is known as "Fulwood's Cave," which is associated with a tragic episode of the Civil Wars.

The Bradford Brook has also a modern history. In the early months of 1881, the newspapers were exercised with "the disappearance of a river in Derbyshire." This phenomenal occurrence related to the Bradford, which at that time instead of joining the Lathkill at Alport, elected to pursue a subterranean course of five or six miles, terminating its darksome adventures by merging its waters with those of the Derwent near Darley. Alport was alarmed. The little river had hitherto been noted for the sweetness of its disposition and the even tenor of its way. But so disgusted, apparently, had the Bradford Brook become with things in general, and the weather in particular, that it quietly stole out of its bed one night, and resolved to run away. Whether—like a good many farmers in the neighbourhood—its affairs were growing insolvent, deponent sayeth not. All that was known was that the rash determination was deliberately carried out, and that the river had absconded. Fishermen, who were fortunate enough to try the fly on the Bradford water, heard the news with some concern, for the Bradford was one of the best trout-streams in the Peak. The Ebbing and Flowing Springs in the Castleton country provoked much suspicion and wonder years ago; but their action is easily accounted for by modern science and sense. The conduct of the well-behaved Bradford—never before guilty of an unseemly irregularity—was more difficult of reconciliation. The little river "bolted" down a disused mine near Alport, and pursued an underground career for some five or six miles, appearing again to discolour the Derwent near the

residence of Sir Joseph Whitworth at Darley. "Why is this thus?" as Artemus Ward asked in amazement on a critical occasion. Had the Bradford quarrelled with the Lathkill, and was there a "separation" between it and the Wye? The matter was one of moment. The example of this wayward Derbyshire river was nationally demoralizing. Suppose it should become fashionable for rivers to thus go on the rampage. Imagine the Mersey leaving Liverpool—or old Father Thames objecting to pass the Houses of Parliament during an Irish Debate! But this was not all. The water was persuading the land to leave, too. Some occult dread of the Land Question affecting Derbyshire may have assisted in the departure. Anyhow, a slice of the Duke of Rutland's land, leading through Middleton Dale, emigrated, and farmers and others were for a time busily occupied in filling up the gap with timber and stone. "Things have come to a bonny cripus," as the small boy sobbed in the tale.

After some little time the renegade river was persuaded to return to its native home. The reason of its truancy was traceable to no natural convulsion, but to purely artificial temptations. To be matter of fact, a flood of some magnitude, caused by a sudden thaw of snow, accompanied by continuous rain, caused the Bradford to overflow its banks and sweep down the dale with a fury that dismayed the villagers. When the water had subsided somewhat, the ground in the immediate neighbourhood of the disused lead mines was observed to have sunk. It was next remarked that the bed of the river and a portion of the right bank had disappeared, leaving a great chasm into which the water was engulfed, carrying with it rock, timber, and other material. This *debris* was observed to discharge itself into the Derwent, where a sough from the Alport mines debouches upon the estate of Sir Joseph Whitworth at Darley Dale, a distance of some miles, which illustrated the extraordinary force of the current. It was thus obvious that the Bradford was rushing into the workings of the Alport mine, and making its way into a branch of what is known as the "Hill Car Sough," then into the sough itself, and anon into the Derwent. Efforts of an extensive character were made to repair the breach in the bank of the Bradford, but the material

employed to fill up the rent was swallowed up almost as rapidly as it was poured in. In the course of a week some thousands of tons of rock and timber were deposited in the river, and the chasm gradually grew less until it was finally successfully filled up. It measured some 50 feet wide by some 20 feet deep, and the surrounding ground sank and cracked in an alarming manner.

Full of picturesque prospects was the somnolent hamlet Alport, with its cottage eaves peeping out of the sequestered trees, its gray farm-houses, its old-fashioned gardens, its quaint, little-arched river bridge. A typical English village in the early summer time, and what picture can the world furnish fuller of quiet charm than that? Some swarthy gipsies had taken up a position for the night under an overhanging tor hard by the village. Their horses were feeding by the green roadside. A child and a dog were playing under a caravan. A kettle hung over a green-wood fire. Through the blue smoke there was a group of idle men and red-shawled women. They were making a curious pie. Cookery-books do not give the receipt for this primitive *pâté*. The crust is formed of clay. The inside is a hedgehog, bristles and all. The ball of clay, with its corpse enclosure, is put into the wood-fire, until the clay is burnt into brick. The brick is then cracked, and inside is a dainty portion of white meat. The bristles, being imbedded in the brick, have dragged the skin off with them, and the hedgehog is ready for the table, if gipsies have a table. The flavour of the toothsome morsel might have aroused the epicurean enthusiasm of Brillat-Savarin, and given a fresh chapter to *La Physiologie du Goût*.

As the day grew shorter the trout rose more freely. The sky became clouded. There was a moderate wind. We fished down the stream in the direction of Fillyford Bridge, and although we used only the fly, did no wading, and returned every fish to the water measuring less than ten inches in length, we obtained a respectable creel. At Fillyford Bridge the Lathkill loses its individuality in the Wye. The water thence is well-thrashed by the holders of the half-crown tickets procurable at the "Peacock" at Rowsley, and the "Rutland" at Bakewell.

All too soon the pleasant day passed, and the Midland

time-table put a stop to our angling idyll. Lady Augusta and Wildflower were on the platform at Buxton Station, when our train steamed in, and by the reception given to Duart by the latter lady, the unsophisticated stranger might have thought that the two young people had met for the first time after the weary lapse of long years.



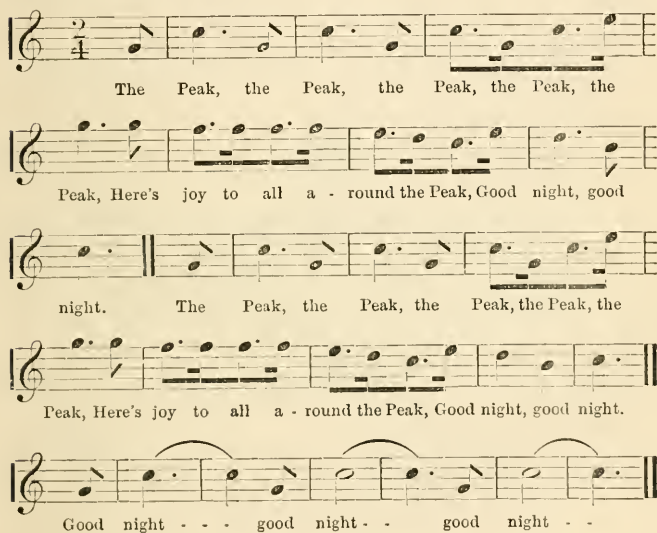


Chapter XXVII.

L' ENVOI.

*I*T is the last day of a holiday in the High Peak. We are driving to Buxton in the sunset glow. The evening air is full of sweet odours. A soothing tranquillity prevails. The westering sun is burning the sharp ridges of the moorland hills with his fading fire, and embroidering the edges of a great black bank of rain-charged clouds above with an edging of gold, which spreads until the dark vapoury mass is a billow of smoky red. In the east is a pale metallic sky, blue-green, with tinges of reflected crimson. At Ashford, the Wye has caught patches of the radiance in the west. At Miller's Dale the green hills have darkened to purple, and stand out black against the pale amber of the sky. We are strangely silent. Everything around us is so calm and still that we seem touched with the serene and solemn spirit of the hour, and might have mutually agreed not to disturb each other's reverie. It is not until we have reached Ashwood Dale, with the rocks shining white and weird in the ethereal twilight, and the Wye plashing coldly under dark misty banks, and see people walking about, that we realize that we are within a mile of our destination. When we dismount at the Old Hall,

nine o'clock has struck. Presently we hear Harry Newbold's bugle call come over from the terrace at the Gardens. It seems to address itself to each of us as a special personal message at that moment. Our holiday is over. In the morning we shall be taking the early train home, and now we must say good-bye to the Peak. The clarion voice sounds again from the terrace:



The Peak, the Peak, the Peak, the Peak, the Peak, the Peak, Here's joy to all a - round the Peak, Good night, good night. The Peak, the Peak, the Peak, the Peak, the Peak, Here's joy to all a - round the Peak, Good night, good night. Good night - - - good night - - good night - -







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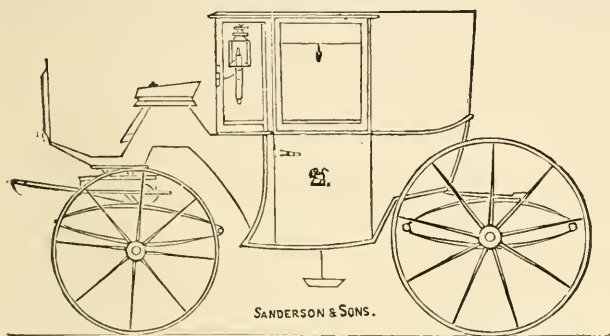
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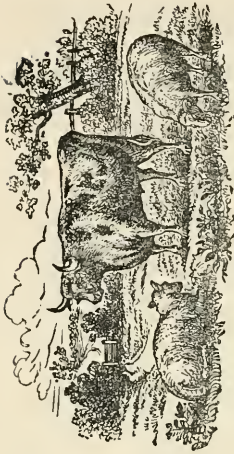
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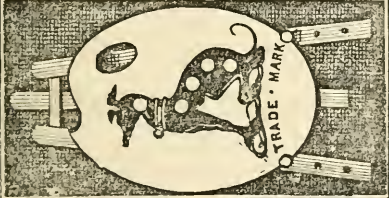
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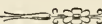
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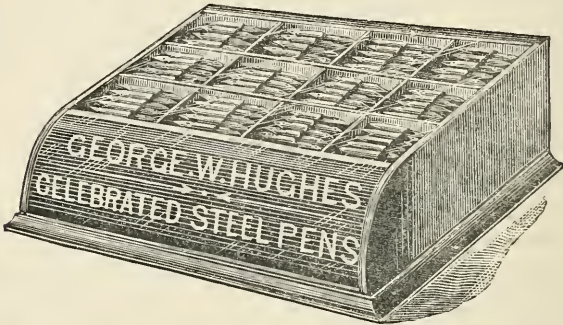
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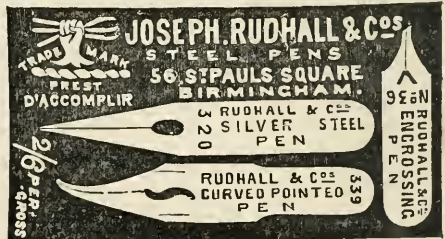


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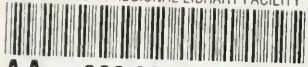
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