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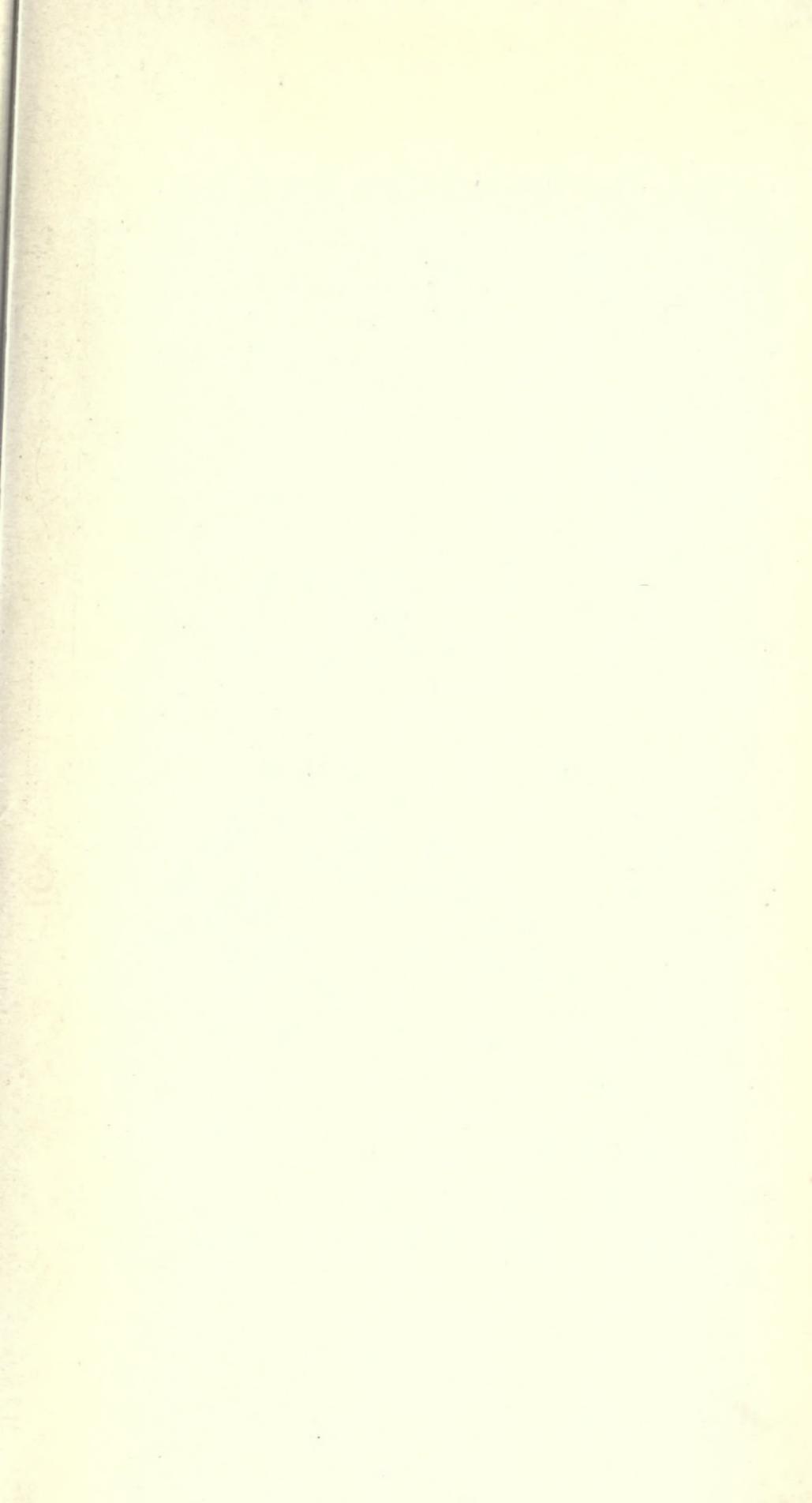
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THE SOUTH DEVON COAST

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*[In the Press.]*





*Frontispiece*

THE MEWSTONE.

*(After J. M. W. Turner)*

LEG  
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RARY

# THE SOUTH DEVON COAST

G.B.  
900

BY  
CHARLES G. HARPER

*“Devonshire is the country of red earth,  
ruddy apples, rosy cheeks, and honest men.”*  
RALEIGH.

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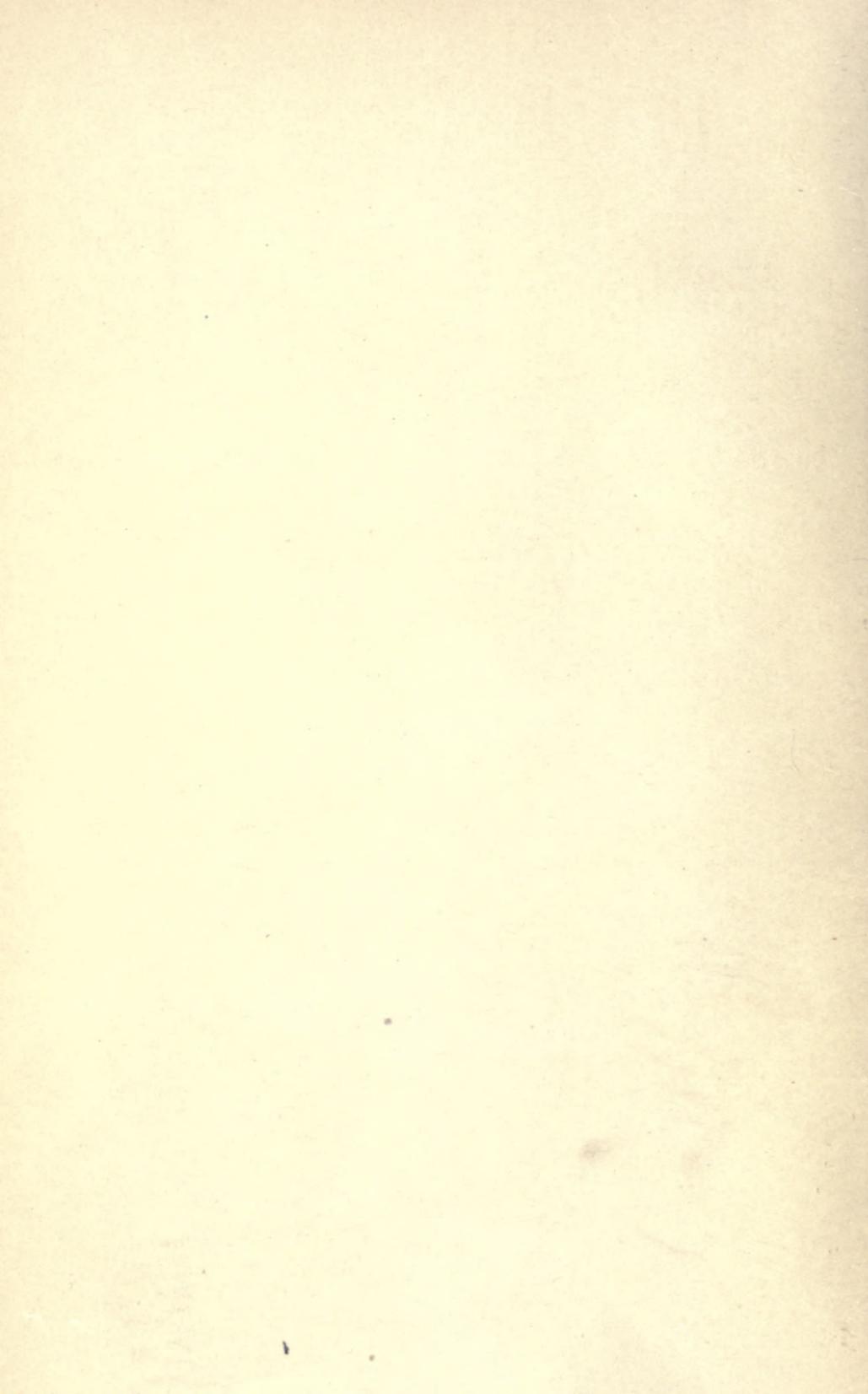
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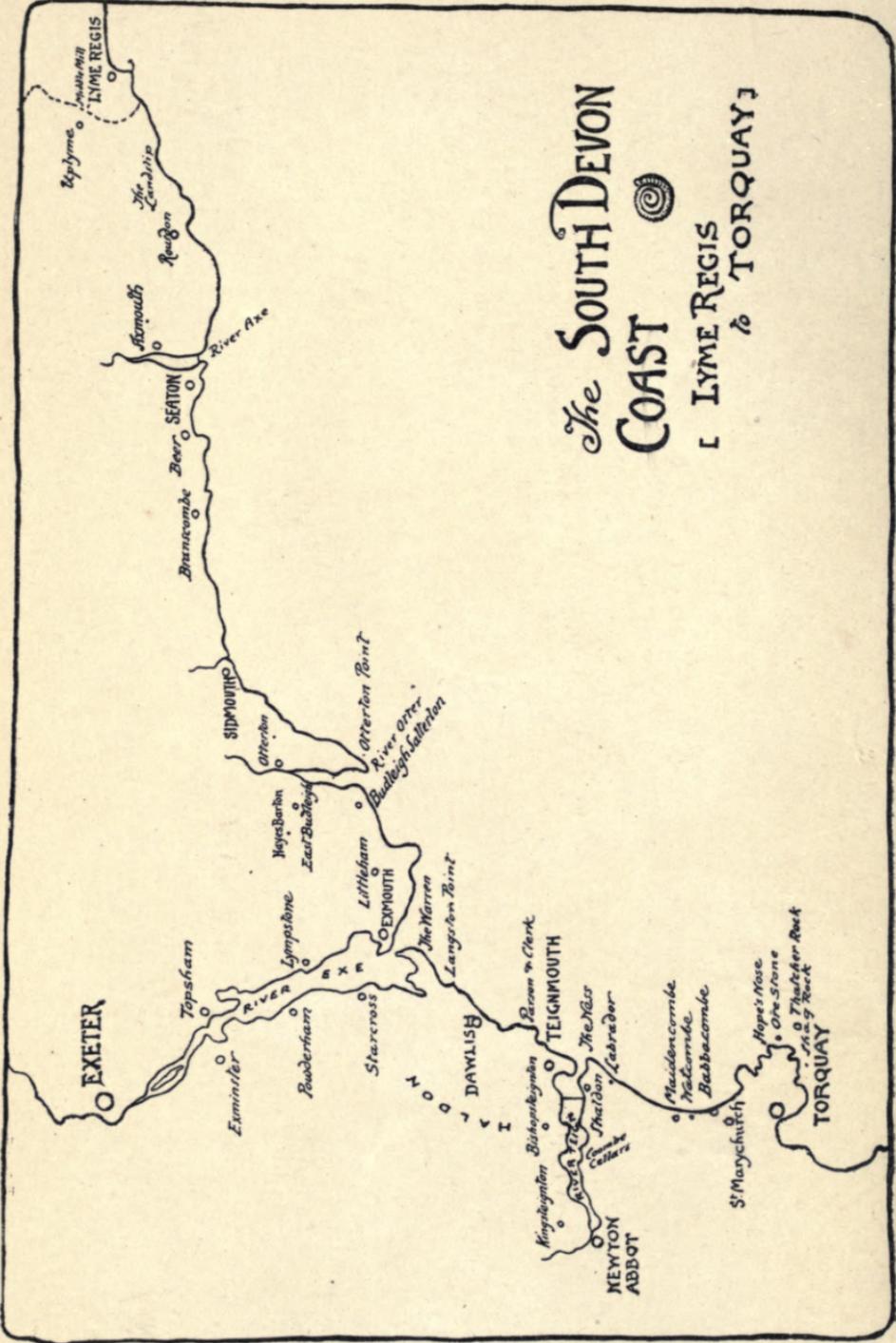
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# The SOUTH DEVON COAST

[ L Y M E R E G I S  
& TORQUAY ]

EXETER

L Y M E R E G I S

TORQUAY

NEWTON  
ABBOT

TEIGNMOUTH

SIPMOUTH

SEATON

Rampoth

Newton

The Curdip

Epilyme

Keye Barton

East Budleigh

Lymington

Powderham

Starcross

Littleham

Okehampton

Atterton Point

River Otter

Budleigh Salterton

The Warren

Lampton Point

Parson & Clerk

Bishopscleeve

Newton

Teign

St. Mary's

St. Andrew

Maidencombe

Walscombe

Babbacombe

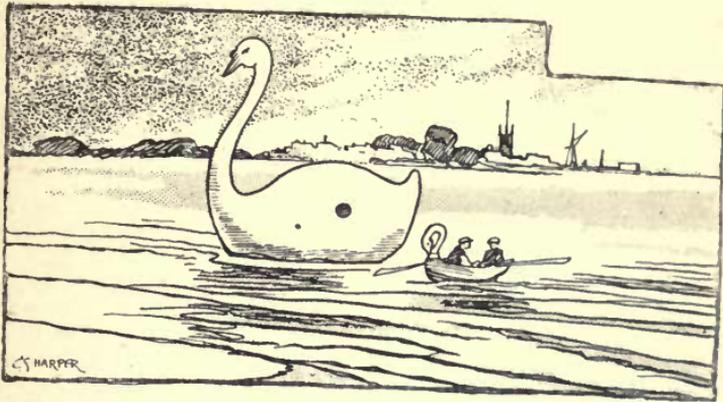
St. Marychurch

Hope's Nose

One Stone

Thatcher Rock

May Rock



## *The South Devon Coast*

### CHAPTER I

#### INTRODUCTORY

IF the map of Devon be measured across in a straight line, it will be found that, from Lyme Regis, where it joins Dorsetshire, to King's Tamerton on the River Tamar, where Devonshire at its westernmost extremity looks across to Saltash, in Cornwall, South Devon is fifty-five miles across. That line, however, would miss quite two-thirds of the coast, and would pass so far inland as Ashburton, on the borders of Dartmoor; the profile of the South Devon Coast exhibiting a remarkably bold and rugged south-westerly trend out of a straight line, westward of the Exe, and an almost equally bold north-westerly

direction after passing Prawle Point. The actual coast-line is therefore very much greater, and is prolonged by the many important estuaries and their subsidiary arms; such, for example, as that of the Exe, which is navigable as far as the port of Exeter, nine miles from the open sea; the Teign, four miles; the Dart, nine miles; Kingsbridge River, seven miles; the Avon, three miles; the Erme, two miles; the Yealm, four miles; and the Hamoaze and Tamar, from Devonport to Calstock, ten miles. In one way and another, the South Devon Coast, tracing the creeks and the coastguard-paths, is not less than one hundred and eighty-nine miles in length.

It is a historic coast, and plentifully marked with towns and villages; with this result, that it is by no means to be treated of shortly. Devon has produced fully her share of great men, and many of them have been born within sight and sound of the sea; while the mere mention of Torquay, Brixham, Dartmouth, and Plymouth, recalls, not merely local annals, but prominent events in the history of England.

As the South Devon Coast is the most beautiful of coasts, so is it also among the most hilly. One hesitates to say that it is not the coast for exploring by means of a cycle, but certainly those who perform their touring in that sort must expect severe gradients, and must not anticipate, even so, an uninterrupted view of the actual coast; for there are many and considerable stretches along which you come to the sea only by unrideable

footpaths. The pedestrian alone can explore this seaboard thoroughly, and he will find, in the tourist season, at least, that his progress is limited by the climate, which not infrequently in the months of July and August, resembles the moist and enervating heat of the great Palm House in Kew Gardens.

Lyme Regis, whence this exploration starts, is at the very door of Devonshire, and was, indeed, in recent years within an ace of being transferred from Dorset. At Lyme, which lies, as it were, at the bottom of a cup, you perceive at once the sort of thing in store for those who would fare westward: exquisite scenery combined with extravagantly steep roads.

## CHAPTER II

### ROUSDON—THE DOWLANDS LANDSLIP

CLOSE by the border-line of the two counties, as you make from Lyme Regis, across the pleasant upland meadows to Uplyme, which is in Devonshire, is Middle Mill. The mill has seen its best days and no longer grinds corn, and the great wheel is idle, for the very excellent reason that the stream that once sent it ponderously revolving has been diverted. The thatched mill-house and its adjoining cottage, together with the silent wheel are, in short, in that condition of picturesque decay which spells romance to artists, who, discovering it, cannot resist a sketch. It appealed irresistibly, some years ago, to an artist in another craft; to none other, in short, than that distinguished novelist, Sir Walter Besant, who laid the scenes of his eighteenth-century story, *'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay*, chiefly here and at Rousdon.

He describes Middle Mill just as it is situated: "At the back of the mill was an orchard, where the pink and red cider apples looked pleasant—they could not look sweet. Beyond the orchard was a piggery, and then you came to the bed of a stream, which was dry in summer, save for a

little green damp among the stones, by the side of which was a coppice of alder-trees, and behind the alders a dark, deep wood, into which you might peer all a summer's day and dream boundless things."

The only objection that can be taken to the verisimilitude of this description is the reference



MIDDLE MILL.

to the cider apples. As a matter of fact, they do look sweet—and are not. The novelist refers to the richly ruddy "Devonshire reds," whose beautiful colour presupposes in the mind of strangers to cider-apples a fruit luxuriously sweet and juicy. Devonshire farmers take little care to fence their cider-apples from the stranger, who steals and tastes as a rule only one, finding with

the first bite that sweetness is by no means necessarily housed within that captivating exterior.

The story is one of smuggling and of rival loves. At Middle Mill lived the miserly Joshua Meech, whose unrequited affection for Pleasance Noel, and whose revengeful jealousy, bring about all the trouble. To punish him for his betrayal of his friends to the Revenue Officers, Pleasance by night steals eight bags of his hoarded wealth from under the hearthstone, where Joshua kept his domestic bank, and hides them under the mill-wheel. The wheel "stood there, under a broad, sloping penthouse of heavy thatch, which made it dark in the brightest day"; and so you may find it, exactly as described, except that the penthouse is tiled, and not thatched.

The actual coast, for the six miles between Lyme Regis and Seaton is a roadless, and in parts an almost trackless, stretch of strenuous clambering among rocks and tangled thickets; among landslips old and new, and undercliffs overgrown with such a wilderness of trees and shrubs and bracken, and blackberry brakes as only Devon can produce. But for all these difficulties, perhaps because of them, the way is preferable to the hard high road that goes, a little way inland. Here, at least, "exploration" is no straining after effect, no misuse of the word.

When you have left the Cobb at Lyme Regis behind and passed the coastguard station, you have come to sheer wildness; the deserted cement works, standing amid a waste of wrecked

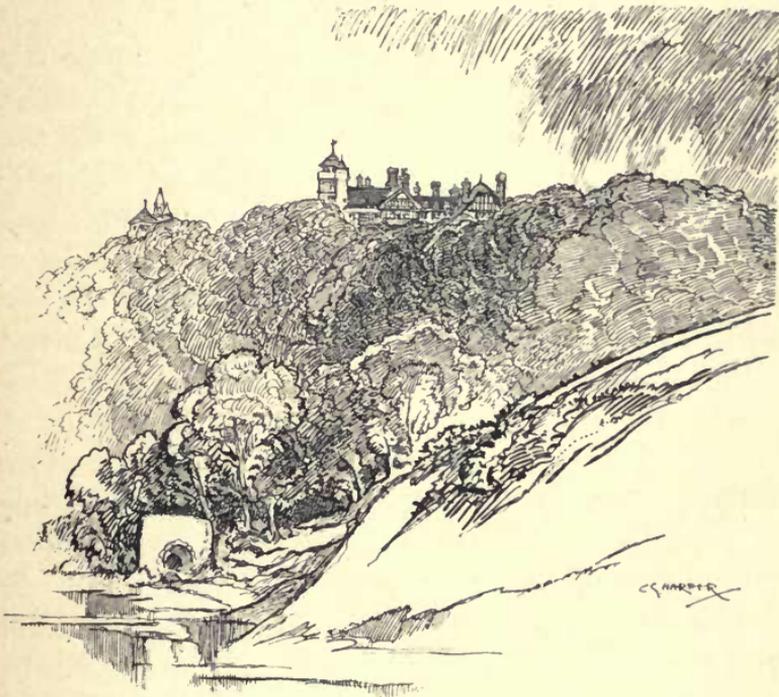
earthy cliffs, themselves forming a not inappropriate prelude to the perfect abandonment of nature. Here the low promontory of Devonshire Point ends the Ware Cliffs ; and the tangle, with the gaping fissures between the rock and earth half hidden by grass and bushes, becomes so nearly impenetrable as to render a retreat up along the boulders into Holmbush Fields absolutely necessary ; Holmbush Fields, with their rustic stiles and hedgerow timber, and the winding foot-path across, giving a sober and graceful interlude ; and then you come upon a mile or so of wonderful pathway, roughly shaped amid the wild jungle that here has overgrown a tract of oozy and boggy undercliff, formed by a century or more of continual landslides. There surely is no more beautiful wilderness of the particular type in England, than this : a very great deal of its beauty being due to the happy circumstance that neither Lyme Regis nor Seaton are as yet large enough to admit of it being overrun. Hardy pioneers have beaten out the devious pathway, and the few who have followed in their footsteps have kept it from being again overgrown. Spring—the month of May—is the ideal time for this part of the coast ; when the birds have again wakened to song, and the young foliage is tender and the land-springs have not been dried up.

Even the pioneers have not made all the way easy ; for you come at last to what Devonshire people call “zoggy plaaces,” where the willow and hazel bushes stand in mossy ground, and the

primroses grow an unwonted size, by reason of the excessive moisture. Here you must calculate every step and nicely test the mossy hummocks before fully trusting them ; finally emerging upon an open plain midway between the sea below and tall cliffs above ; a plain where rocks of every shape and size have been hurled down in extraordinary confusion. Here the explorer requires not a little of the suppleness and agility of the chamois, and growing at last weary of bounding hazardously from crag to crag, climbs with extraordinary labour, past monstrous grey, ivy-grown spires and pinnacles of limestone, up a winding footpath in the face of the cliff, to where the Whitlands Coastguard station looks down upon the tumbled scene. From this point the coastguard-path lies along the cliffs' edge, to where the cliffs die down to the waterside in the deep coombe in whose woods the sea comes lapping at Charton Bay. Here a limekiln, that looks romantic enough for a castle, stands on the beach, with the dense woods climbing backwards, and on the skyline the roofs and tower and chimneys of Rousdon.

Rousdon is a remarkable place. It shows you what may be done in the wholesale grocery way of business, for the estate was enclosed, and the great mansion built by Sir Henry Peek, between 1871 and 1883. When that wealthy baronet set about becoming a landed proprietor here, he found a wild expanse stretching down from the high land by the main road between

Lyme and Seaton, toward the sea, and he enclosed some two hundred and fifty acres, and on the upper part built a magnificent house, whose beauties we will not stop to describe in this place, because, if a beginning were made with it, and



ROUSDON.

the collections of various sorts within, it would be no easy task to conclude. He found here, amid these solitudes, the ruinous little church of St. Pancras, of Rousdon, used as the outhouse of a farm. Its rector was an absentee, not greatly needed, for the entire parish numbered but sixteen persons, all employed on the farm itself. A new church

was built in the grounds, and a member of the Peek family appointed rector ; and thus we see the remarkable spectacle of a parish as self-contained as any box of sardines ; with the whole of the inhabitants employed upon the estate, and free trade in religion abolished. I think no monarchy is quite so absolute.

A remarkable feature of Rousdon mansion is the extensive use, internally, of Sicilian marble. The great staircase, and other portions of the house are built of it, and a beautiful dairy is wholly decorated with this material. It came here in a romantic and wholly unexpected way ; having been the cargo of a ship wrecked on the rocks off Rousdon at the time when plans for the building were being made.

By more undercliff footpaths you come at length, through the steamy hollows of Rousdon, to that " lion " of this district, the great Dowlands landslip, an immense wedge of cliff and agricultural land that on the Christmas night of 1839 suddenly parted its moorings with the mainland and made for the sea, halting before quite immersing itself, and ever since presenting the extraordinary spectacle of a jagged gorge winding between two sheer walls of cliff, with weird isolated limestone pillars, from one to two hundred feet in height, thrusting up here and there. It is the Landscape of Dream, and only saved from being that of nightmare by the soft beauty of the enshrouding verdure that has clothed the place since then. The well-known landslip in the Isle of Wight is

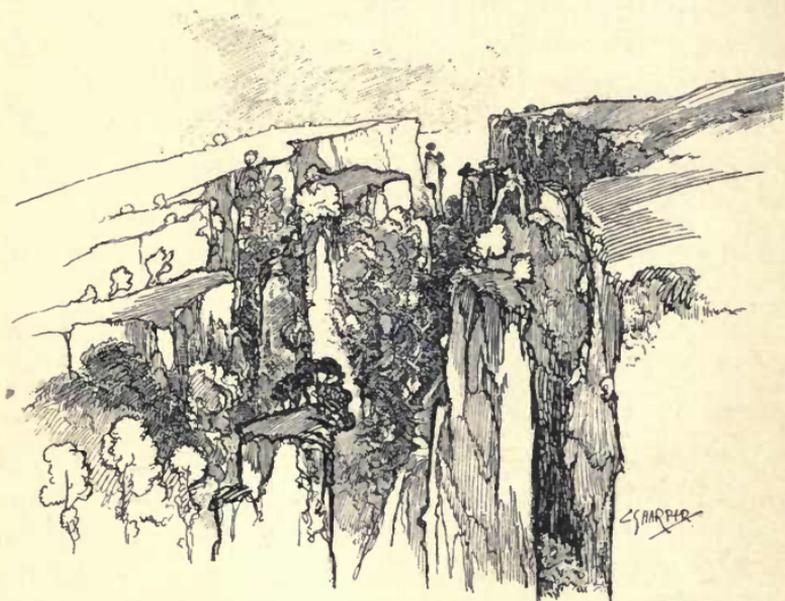
altogether smaller and inferior to this : and more hackneyed.

The cause of this extraordinary happening is found in the geological features of this immediate neighbourhood ; the limestone and other rock resting on a deep stratum of sand, which in its turn was based on blue clay. Springs percolating through the sand were probably obstructed, and the water found its way in unusual quantities to the blue clay, which in course of time became one vast butterslide, and thus brought about a landslip that engulfed fields and orchards, and sunk two cottages, unharmed fortunately, to a level one hundred and seventy feet lower than they had before occupied.

A charge of sixpence is attempted at a farm at the Seaton end, to view this remarkable place, and it is worth an entrance-fee ; but explorers coming from Lyme Regis are not unlikely to stumble into the place, unaware ; and in any case the attempt is an impudent and illegal imposition, for the question of free access was fought out successfully some years ago by the Lyme Regis corporation.

Word-painting is all very well as a pastime, but the result makes poor reading. We will, therefore, not emulate the local guide-books ; which, to be sure, transcend the descriptive art so greatly as to come out at the other end, as works of unconscious humour. Thus, when in those pages we read of " Dame Nature," and " Old Father Time," working these miracles of landslides,

we get a mental picture of a stupendous old couple that fairly takes the breath away. Moreover, the scene is compared with "the island home of Robinson Crusoe," and likened to "the wildness of Salvator Rosa or the fairy scenes of Claude," while "the huge boulders you can convert into sphinxes," and find "deep and thickly wooded



THE LANDSLIP.

dingles, in which lions and tigers could lurk unseen." Still more, we read: "If you give full scope to your imagination, you may fancy that the pale moonlight would inhabit the ruins with the spirits of those who lived in the ages of mythology." In short, if these directions are faithfully followed, and these lions and tigers and these spirits of mythological creatures—the

“Mrs. Harrises” of ancient times—are duly conjured up, the too-imaginative explorer is likely to emerge fully qualified for a lunatic asylum.

The exceptional beauty of the scene does not require any of these fantastical aids to appreciation, and the hoar ivied rocks, the fairy glades, the brakes and willow woods are sufficient in themselves.

The mile-long beauty of the great Dowlands Landslip having been traversed, the way lies across the down over Haven Cliff, the striking headland that shuts in Seaton from the east.

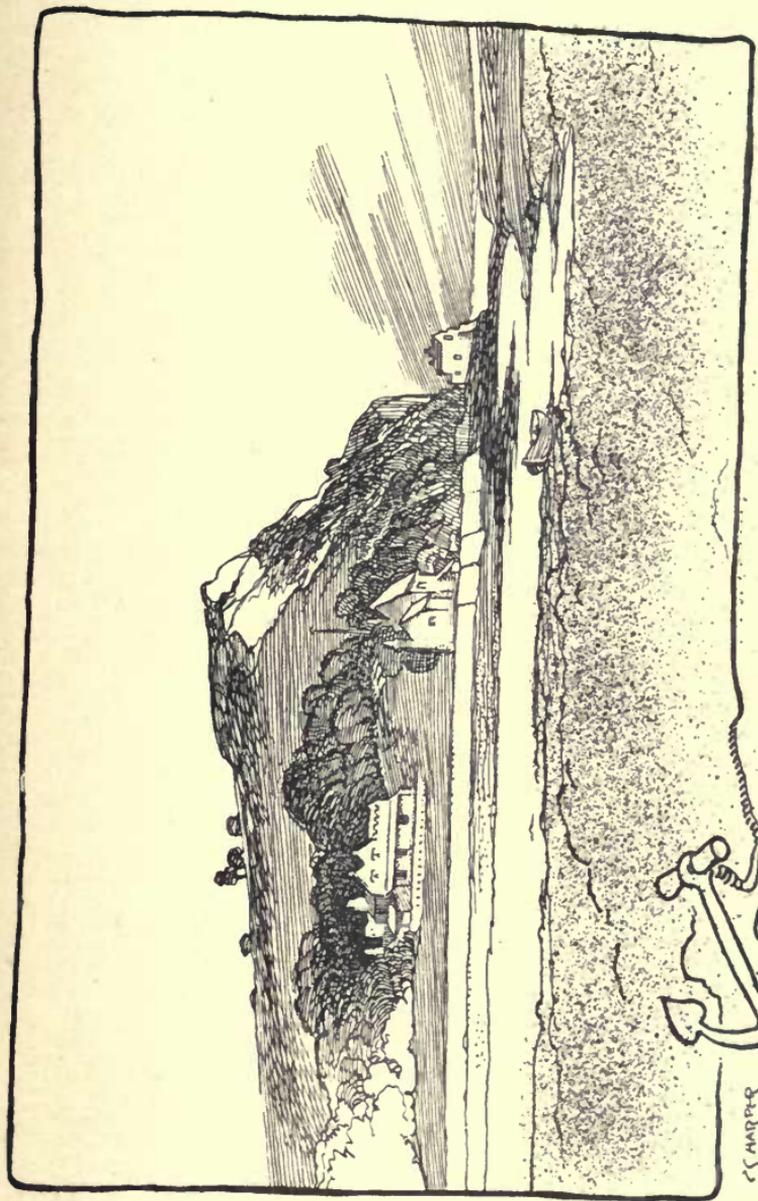
## CHAPTER III

### SEATON

DOWN there lies Seaton, looking very new, along the inner side of a shingly beach, with the strath of the river Axe running, flat and green, up inland to the distant hills, and the silvery Axe itself looping and twisting away, as far as eye can reach.

But Seaton is not so new as might be supposed. Down there, on the wall that runs along the crest of the beach, is painted in huge black letters the one word MORIDUNUM, which to passengers coming in by steamboat seems the most prominent feature in the place, and at first sight is generally taken to be the impudent advertisement of some new quack electuary, tooth-paste, hair-wash, or what not? "Use Moridunum," you unconsciously say, "and be sure you get it"; or "Moridunum for the hair," "Moridunum: won't wash clothes," and so forth. Seaton claims—and, it is evident, claims it boldly—to be the *Moridunum* of Roman Britain; but is it? In short, seeking it here, *have* you got it?

That is a question which various warring schools of antiquaries would dearly like settled. The Roman grip upon Britain weakened greatly



SEATON MOUTH OF THE  
AXE

SS AMPTON



as it came westward, and Roman roads in Devon are few and uncertain. The famous *Antonine Itinerary*—that most classic of all road-books—gives but one station between *Durnovaria*, Dorchester, and *Isca Damnoniorum*, Exeter. That is *Moridunum*, this ancient and well-gnawed bone of contention. The name was a Roman adaptation, either of the British *Mor-y-dun* or sea-town, or *Mawr-y-dun*, “great hill-fort”; which, it is impossible to say. All depends upon which of two routes was selected to Exeter. If it was the inland route, the likelihood rests with the great hill-top Roman camp at Hembury, near Honiton; while if it was the way by Axminster and Sidmouth, then Seaton or High Peak, Sidmouth, is the site.

Whatever may some day prove to be the solution of the mystery, it is certain, from remains of Roman villas discovered near Seaton, that it was a favourite place of residence; and therefore it is not so new as it looks. Indeed, in days long gone by, before the mouth of the River Axe had been well-nigh choked with shingle, Seaton and the now tiny village of Axmouth, a mile up-stream, were ports. “Ther hath beene,” said Leland, writing in the reign of Henry the Eighth, “a very notable haven at Seton. But now ther lyith between the two pointes of the old haven a mighty rigge and barre of pible stones in the very mouth of it.”

The mighty ridge is still here, and has acquired so permanent a character that part of modern

Seaton is built on it, while cattle graze on the pastures that grow where the ships used to ride at anchor.

The place was become in Leland's time a "mene fisschar town." "It hath," he continued, "beene far larger when the haven was good;" and so, looking at the ancient church, away back from the sea, it would seem.

Many attempts were made to cut a passage through the shingle, but what the labourers removed, the sea replaced with other. The last attempt was about 1830, when John Hallett of Stedcombe dug a channel and built a quay at the very mouth of the river, under the towering mass of Haven Cliff. Modern Seaton should gratefully erect a statue to this endeavourer, for thus he kept the tiny port going, and the coals and timber that would have then been so costly by land carriage came cheaply to his quays. Then, after a while, came the railway, and his wharves were deserted. There, under the cliff, they remain to this day, and the little custom-house has been converted into a kind of seashore bathing-place and belvedere, attached to the beautiful residence of Stedcombe, nestling on the bosom of the down.

When a branch railway was opened to Seaton, in 1868, the town began to grow. A very slow growth at first, but in the last few years it has expanded suddenly into a thriving town, and the astonished visitor in these latter days perceives such amazing developments as a giant hotel and

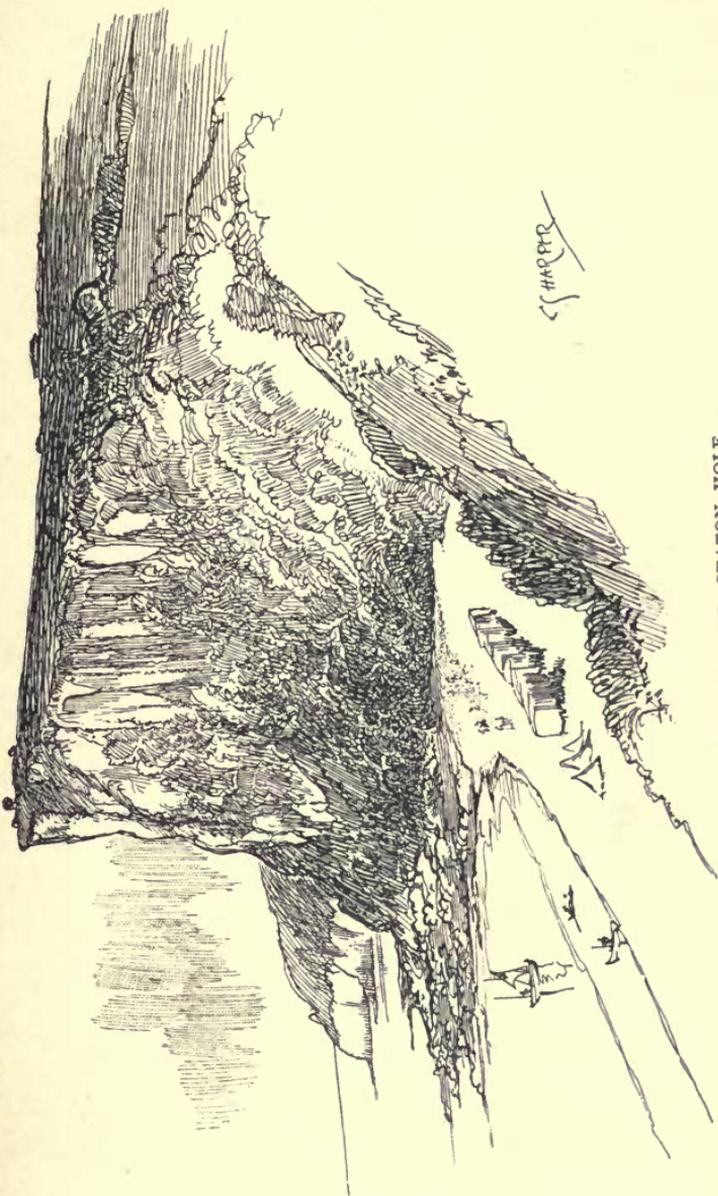
a theatre ; and if he be a visitor over Sunday, will observe the might and majesty of railways exercised in the bringing down from London of day trippers, who set out from Waterloo at an unimaginably early hour and are dumped down upon Seaton beach at midday. He will witness scrambling hordes, indecently thirsty, besieging the refreshment-places of the town, and if he be a Superior Person, will, with tumultuous feelings of relief, see the crowded train-load depart as the summer evening draws in and the church-bells begin to chime. The sheer Average Man, however, who witnesses this Sunday irruption, will merely wonder how any one can find it worth while to expend six shillings on an excursion ticket, entitling him to make a double journey of three hundred and four miles and fourteen hours, solely for the fleeting pleasure of five hours on a shingly beach.

What renders that excursion so popular ? Well, partly a love of nature, and very greatly that love of a bargain which makes many keen people purchase what they do not want. It is quite conceivable that there are many people who would want to be *paid* a great deal more than six shillings for the discomfort of fourteen hours railway travel on a Sunday.

The dominant note of Seaton is its apparent newness. From the golf links and the club-house on the down by Haven Cliff on the east, to Seaton Hole on the west, it looks a creation of yesterday, and the casual visitor is incredulous when told

of a fourteenth-century parish church. But such a building exists, nearly a mile inland, with a hoary tower and curious monuments; among them one to "Abraham Sydenham, Salt Officer for 40 years": an inscription reminiscent of the old salt-pans industry in the levels by the Axe, and of the long-forgotten salt-tax. That most famous smuggler of the West of England, Jack Rattenbury, lies in Seaton churchyard, but no stone marks the spot.

Seaton Hole, just mentioned, is the innermost nook of Seaton Bay, just under the great mass of White Cliff; called white only relatively to the surrounding cliffs, which are red. White Cliff, in fact, is rather light browns and greys, with masses of green vegetation, and incidental whitish streaks. Here is the exclusive part of Seaton, with a fine bathing-beach, and numbers of very fine new residences—not merely houses, mark you—cresting the best view-points. And up-along and over the hill, ever so steeply, and then down, still more steeply, and you are at Beer.



WHITE CLIFF, SEATON HOLE.



## CHAPTER IV

### JACK RATTENBURY, SMUGGLER—BEER

THE name of Beer is famous in smuggling annals, for it was in the then rather desperate little fisher-village that Jack Rattenbury, smuggler, who lies in Seaton churchyard was born, in 1778. Smugglers and highwaymen in general are figures that loom dimly in the pages of history, and, like figures seen in a fog, bulk a good deal larger than they ought. But the famous Jack Rattenbury is an exception. He does not, when we come to close quarters with him, diminish into an undersized, overrated breaker of laws. Instead, he grows bigger, the more you learn: and a great deal may be learned of him, for he printed and published the story of his life in 1837.

It seems that he was the son of a Beer shoemaker, who, by going for a sailor and never being heard of again, vindicated the wisdom of that proverb which advises the cobbler to stick to his last. Young Jack Rattenbury never knew his father. He began his adventures at nine years of age, as boy on a fishing-smack, and then became one of the crew of a privateer which set out from Brixham during the war with France and Spain,

to prey upon the enemy: meeting instead, at the very outset, with a French frigate, with the unexpected result that privateer and crew were speedily taken, as prize and prisoners, to Bordeaux. Escaping on an American ship, he at last reached home again, and engaged for a time in fishing. But fishing was poor employment for an adventurous spirit, and Rattenbury soon found his way into smuggling. He first took part in the exploits of a Lyme Regis boat, trading in that illegitimate way to the Channel Islands, and then found more lawful employment on a brig called *The Friends*, of Beer and Seaton. But the very first trip was disastrous. Sailing from Bridport to Tenby, for culm, he again experienced capture: by a French privateer on this occasion. The privateer put a prize-crew of four men on the brig, with orders to take her to the nearest French port. "Then," says Rattenbury, "when the privateer was gone, the prize-master ordered me to go aloft and loose the main-topgallant sail. When I came down, I perceived that he was steering very wildly, through ignorance of the coast, and I offered to take the helm, to which he consented, and directed me to steer south-east by north. He then went below, and was engaged in drinking and carousing with his companions. They likewise sent me up a glass of grog occasionally, which animated my spirits, and I began to conceive a hope, not only of escaping, but also of being revenged on the enemy."

The artful Rattenbury then steered up to

Portland, and when the master asked what land it was, replied "Alderney." Presently they came off St. Aldhelm's Head, and were distinctly suspicious when told it was Cape La Hogue.

"We were now within a league of Swanage, and I persuaded them to go on shore to get a pilot. They then hoisted out a boat, into which I got with three of them. We now came so near shore that people hailed us. My companions began to swear, and said the people spoke English. This I denied, and urged them to hail again; but as they were rising to do so, I plunged overboard, and came up the other side of the boat. They then struck at me with their oars, and snapped a pistol at me, but it missed fire. The boat in which they were now took water, and finding they were engaged in a vain pursuit, they rowed away as fast as possible, to regain the vessel."

Rattenbury swam ashore and sent messengers, with the result that the *Nancy*, revenue cutter, went in pursuit of the brig and, recapturing her, brought her into Cowes the same night.

He was then forcibly enlisted in the Navy by the Press Gang, and, escaping from His Majesty's service, went cod-fishing off Newfoundland. Returning, the ship he was on was captured by a Spanish privateer and taken into Vigo. Escaping with his usual dexterity, he reached home and added another thrilling item to his hazardous career by getting married, April 17th, 1801. After a quiet interval of piloting, he resumed smuggling, in earnest; with the usual ups

and downs of fortune incidental to that shy trade.

Having made several successful voyages, and feeling pretty confident, he went ashore to carouse with some friends in one of the old taverns of Beer. In the same room were a sergeant and several privates of the South Devon Militia, among others. "After drinking two or three pots of beer," he says, "the sergeant, whose name was Hill, having heard my name mentioned by some of my companions, went out with his men, and soon they returned again, having armed themselves with swords and muskets. The sergeant then advanced towards me and said, 'You are my prisoner. You are a deserter, and must go along with me.' For a moment I was much terrified, knowing that if I was taken I should, in all probability, be obliged to go aboard the fleet; and this wrought up my mind to a pitch of desperation. I endeavoured, however, to keep as cool as possible, and in answer to his charge, I said, 'Sergeant, you are surely labouring under an error; I have done nothing that can authorise you in taking me up or detaining me. You must certainly have mistaken me for some other person.'"

This shows us, pretty clearly, that some one must have written Rattenbury's reminiscences for him. He probably was incapable of such book-English, and certainly would not have spoken anything else than the broadest of Devonshire speech. However, he describes how he

drew the sergeant into a parley and how, while it was going on, he jumped through a trap-door into the cellar. "I then threw off my jacket and shirt, to prevent any one from holding me, and having armed myself with a reaping-hook and a knife, which I had in my pocket, I threw myself into an attitude of defence at the entrance, which was a half-hatch door, the lower part of which I shut, and then declared that I would kill the first man that came near me, and that I would not be taken from the spot alive. At this the sergeant was evidently terrified ; but he said to his men, 'Soldiers, do your duty ; advance and seize him.' To which they replied, 'Sergeant, you proposed it ; take the lead and set us an example, and we will follow.' No one offered to advance, and I remained in the position I have described for four hours, holding them at bay."

The sergeant sent for aid, but before that arrived the women of Beer rushed in with an artful story of shipwreck, attracting the soldiers' attention. Rattenbury, seizing the opportunity, dashed among them, half-naked, and escaped to the beach, where he hastily took boat and went off to his own vessel, and safety.

In 1806 he, his crew, and his cargo of spirit-tubs were captured by the *Duke of York* cutter, when returning from Alderney. He was fined £100, and with his companions was sentenced to the alternative of imprisonment or service on board a man-o'-war. They chose the sea, and were accordingly shipped aboard the brig *Kate*, in the

Downs ; but soon, while the officers were all more or less drunk, he found an opportunity of escaping, and was presently home again.

The smuggling exploits of this master of the art were endless. Perhaps the most amusing—to the reader, at any rate—is that incident at Seaton Hole, where, one dark night, going up the cliff with a keg on his back, one of a cargo he had just landed, he was so unfortunate as to stumble over a donkey, which began to bray so horribly that, what with his trumpeting and the noise of the smuggler's fall, a Revenue officer, sleeping at the post of duty, was aroused, and seized forty kegs, nearly the whole of that run.

After serving three terms of imprisonment for smuggling, and for being unable to pay a fine of £4,500, Rattenbury's many adventures came to an end in 1833. His later years were devoted to fishing and piloting, and between whiles, to composing his reminiscences. In those pages you read this rather pitiful little note : "The smuggler gratefully acknowledges the kindness of the Right Honourable Lord Rolle, who now allows him one shilling per week for life." What lavish generosity !

That was a picturesque village in which this Old Master and prime exponent of smuggling lived. The one street led steeply down to the sea, with a clear rivulet purling along the gutter, with quaint pumps at intervals and bordered by cob cottages. The peasant women sat at the doors making the pillow-lace of Devonshire, and the

children, for lack of better toys, played the great game of "shop" with the fish-offal in the kennel.

But the old Beer of this picture has vanished, and a new and smart village has arisen in its stead, with just two or three of these characteristic



BEER.

survivals, to make us the more bitterly regret that which we have lost. The place that was so inspiring for the artist has become an impossibility for him, except, at the cost of veracity, he dodges the Philistine surroundings of those surviving "bits." One little circumstance shall show you how artificial this sometime unconventional and

simple village has become. When it was the haunt of painters, there was none who loved Beer so much as, or visited it more constantly than, Hamilton Macallum, who died here, aged fifty-five, in 1896. He had endeared himself to the people, and they and some of his brother artists combined to set up the bronze tablet to his memory that stands in the tiny pleasure-ground or public garden in the village street. And here is the sorry humour of it, that shows the damnable artificiality of the times, which has spoiled so much of Old England. The "public garden" is kept locked through the winter and the spring, lest the children go in and spoil it; and only thrown open when the brief visitors' season begins. There could be no more bitter indictment.

There was once a humble little church in this same street of Beer. A very humble church, but in keeping with the place. And now? Why a large and highly ornate building, infinitely pretentious and big enough for a cathedral, has arisen on the site of it. It is, however, still in keeping with Beer, for as deep calls unto deep, so across this narrow street pretentiousness bids "how d'ye do" to pretence.

There are polished marble pillars in this new church of Beer, where there should be rough-axed masonry, and a suburban high finish in place of a rustic rudeness; and the sole relics of what had once been are the two memorial tablets, themselves sufficiently rural. One is to "John, the

fifth sonn of William Starr of Bere, Gent., and Dorothy his wife, which died in the plauge was here Bvried 1646." John Starr was one of a family which, about a century earlier, had become owners of a moiety of the manor. The house he built in Beer street bears on one chimney the initials "J. S." and on another a star, in punning allusion to his name.

The other memorial in the church is to "Edward Good, late an Industrious fisherman, who left to the Vicar and Churchwardens for the time being and their succesors for ever TWENTY POUNDS in TRUST for the Poor of this Parith. The intereft to be Distributed at Christmas in the proportion of two thirds at BEER and one at SEATON. He died November 7, 1804, in the sixty-seventh year of his Age."

Of the four industries of Beer—stone-quarrying smuggling, fishing, and lace-making—the shy business of smuggling has alone disappeared. Those who do not carry their explorations beyond the village street will see nothing of the stone-getting, for the quarries lie away off the road between Beer and Branscombe, where, in a cliff-like scar in the hillside they are still busily being worked.

It must be close upon two thousand years since building-stone was first won from this hillside, for the quarries originated in Roman times. Since then they have been more or less continually worked, and although the ancient caves formed by the old quarrymen in their industry have long

been abandoned for the open working, they exist, dark and damp, and not altogether safe for a stranger, running hundreds of yards in labyrinthine passages into the earth. It is of Beer stone that the vaulting and the arches of the nave in Exeter Cathedral were built, 600 years ago; it was used, even earlier in the crypt of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster; in Winchester Cathedral, and many other places; and to-day is as well appreciated as ever, huge eight and ten-ton blocks being a feature in the trucks on the railway sidings down at Seaton. It greatly resembles Bath stone in its fine texture, but is of a more creamy colour and, while softer and more easily worked when newly quarried, dries harder.

In ancient times the stone was shipped from the little cove of Beer, which was thus no inconsiderable place. To improve it, in the words of Leland: "Ther was begon a fair pere for socour of shippelettes, but ther cam such a tempest a three years sins as never in mynd of man had before bene seene in that shore"; and so the pier was washed away, and the fragments of it are all that is to be seen in the unsheltered cove at this day.

The fishermen of Beer are a swarthy race, descended, according to tradition, from the crew of a shipwrecked Spanish vessel, who found the place almost depopulated by that plague of which John Starr was a victim. They and their trawlers, which you see laboriously hauled up on the

beach, are in the jurisdiction of the port of Exeter.

Here, in the semicircular cove, the summer sea laps softly among the white pebbles, as innocently as though it had never drowned a poor fisherman ; and the white of the chalk cliffs, the equal whiteness of the sea-floor and the clearness of the water itself give deep glimpses down to where the seaweed unfurls its banners from rock and cranny, where the crabs are seen walking about, hesitatingly, like octogenarians, and jelly-fish float midway, lumps of transparency, like marine ghosts. The sea is green here : a light translucent ghostly green, very beautiful and at the same time, back of one's consciousness—if you examine your feelings—a little mysterious and repellent, suggesting not merely crabs and jelly-fish, but inimical unknown things and infinite perils of the deep, sly, malignant, patiently biding their time. The green sea has not the bluff heartiness of the joyous blue.

The little cove, enclosed as it is by steep cliffs, looks for all the world like a little scene in a little theatre. You almost expect a chorus of fishermen to enter and hold forth musically on the delights of seine-fishing, but they only suggest to the contemplative stranger that it is "a fine day for a row," and ask, in their rich Devonian tones, if you want a "bwoat."

The white cliffs of Beer are crannied with honeycombings and fissures, banded with black flints, and here and there patterned with ochreous

pockets of earth, where the wild flowers grow as though Dame Nature had been making the workaday place gay with bedding-out plants for the delight of the summer visitors. The visitors are just that second string to their old one-stringed bow of fishing the deep blue sea, which the fishermen sorely need to carry them through the twelve months that—although most things that existed in the nineteenth century have been changed—still make a year ; and the visitors who are taken out boating beyond the cove to see the smugglers' caves are never tired of hearing of Jack Rattenbury, whose tale I have already told.

## CHAPTER V

### BRANSCOMBE

It is, of course, up-hill out of Beer. One has not been long, or far, in Devonshire before recognising that almost immutable law of the West, by which you descend steeply into every town or village and climb laboriously out. Here it is Beer Head to which you ascend. Beer Head is white, so exceptionally and isolatedly white on this red coast that when, far westward, down Teignmouth and Brixham way, you look back and see along the vaguely defined shore a misty whiteness, you will know it, for none other than this headland.

Beyond it and its chalky spires and pinnacles the coast becomes a mere traveller's bag of samples for awhile ; finally, coming to the opening of Branscombe, deciding upon "a good line" of red sandstone, mixed with red marl.

A very serious drawback incidental to the exploration of districts that grow increasingly beautiful as you proceed is that all the available stock of admiratory adjectives is likely to be expended long before the journey's end. They must be carefully husbanded, or you come at last

to a nonplus. Therefore, please at this point to assume beauties that—in the Early Victorian phrasing—can be “more easily imagined than described.” For the rest, conceive a wedge-like opening in the cliffs, cleft to permit the egress to the sea of a little stream, at all times too tiny for such a magnificent portal, and often in summer altogether dried up. On the western side plant a coastguard station, built like a fort and walled like a defensive stockade; and there you have the seaward aspect of Branscombe.

The landward look of it is entirely different. Looking from the sea, and walking away from it, three valleys converging seaward are discovered; each one profound, each richly wooded and fertile, and in each little instalments of Branscombe village, dropped casually, as it were, here and there. I had at first assumed the name “Branscombe” (which is pronounced with a broad “a,” like “ar”) to be derived in part from the British *brân*, a crow, and “Crowcombe” it might well be; but it seems, by the dedication of the church to SS. Winifred and Bradwalladr, that it is really St. Brannoc’s Combe, for “Brannoc” is an alias of Bradwalladr.

Away up the valley road are little groups of the quaintest cottages, with tiny strips of gardens scarce more than two feet wide, forming, as it were, a fringe or hem to the walls, and merging directly, without fence, into the roadway. But no gardens anywhere can show greater fertility or a more pleasing variety of flowers. Among

them are to be seen spoils of the neighbouring cliffs, in the shape of petrified vegetation from the coast between Branscombe and Weston Mouth.

Where the roadway climbs round the most impressive bend, and the great wooded hills look down on the other side of the valley, with almost



BRANSCOMBE.

equidistant notches in their skyline, like the embrasures of cyclopean fortifications, stands the ancient church of Branscombe. It is oddly placed, considerably below the level of the road, and is so old and rugged, and has been so long untouched, that it looks more like some silver-grey and lichened rocky outcrop, rudely fashioned in the form of a church, than the work of builder and

architect. And it is in such entire accord with the rocks and trees, the ferns and grasses, the spouting rivulets and moist skies of this secluded valley, that the dedication of it should more appropriately be to the sylvan gods of the classic age. There have been those scribbling tourists who, passing by and looking upon the time-worn building, have acted the part of *agent provocateur* to "restoring" zealots by dwelling upon the dampness of it, and the "meanness" of the box-like deal pews of the interior; but not yet have their instigations to crime against the picturesque been acted upon, and the ferns and mosses still sprout from the time-worn tower and the interior is still, in its whitewash, its pews, and its wooden pulpit, an example of the simple sway of the churchwarden and the village carpenter of a simpler age.

One highly elaborate monument redeems the church from a charge of emptiness. It is the interesting memorial of Joan Tregarthin, her husbands, John Kellaway and John Wadham, and her twenty children; all of them duly sculptured in effigy. The Wadhams were the great landowners of Branscombe, away back to the fourteenth century. Among those twenty children is Nicholas Wadham, the last of his race, who died in 1609, and with his wife Dorothy founded Wadham College, Oxford.

The churchyard of Branscombe is a well-stored repository of unusual epitaphs, ranging from the sentimental to the unconsciously humorous and

the terrifying. Of the last sort the following is a good example :

“Stay, passenger, a while and read  
Your doome I am  
You must bee dead.”

The uncertainty as to what this malignant gentleman really intends to convey does by no means lessen his impressiveness.

The lengthiest of them all is the following, on a time-worn altar-tomb outside the porch :

“PRO. x. 7. The memory of the ivst is blessed.

“An epitaph on WILLIAM LEE, the Father, and ROBERT LEE, the son: both buryed together in one grave. October the 2 : 1658.

“Reader aske not who lyes here  
Vnlesse thou meanst to drop a tear.  
Father and son heere joyntly have  
One life, one death, one tombe, one grave.  
Impartial hand that durst to slay  
The root and branch both in a day.  
Our comfort in there death is this,  
That both are gone to joy and bliss ;  
The wine that in these earthen vessels lay  
The hand of death hath lately drawn away,  
And, as a present, served it up on high,  
Whilst heere the vessels with the lees doe lye.”

Another records the end of a labourer accidentally shot on his returning home from work, and yet another is to an exciseman, “who fell from the cliff between Beer and Seaton, as he was extinguishing a fire which was a signal to a smuggling boat.” The verse on Joseph Braddick,

a farmer, who died suddenly at sheep-shearing, hesitates between flippancy and exhortation :

“Strong and at labour suddenly he reels,  
Death came behind him and struck up his heels,  
Such sudden strokes, surviving mortals, bid ye  
Stand on your watch, and to be allso ready.”

This collection is ended with the touching record of a French sailor-lad :

Sacred to the Memory of  
JEAN JACQUES WATTEZ, Mariner,  
of Boulogne-sur-Mer.  
Drowned at Torbay, 29th March, 1897.  
Buried here 30th June, 1897.  
Aged 17 years.

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“The only son of his mother, and she a widow.”  
St. Luke vii. 12.

There is fine, rough walking up over the cliffs past the coastguard station of Branscombe, or down by the sandy shingle to Littlecombe Shoot and Weston Mouth, where the landsprings well out of the marly cliff-sides and petrify everything within reach. At the cost of scaling some of the buttery slides of red mud, and becoming more or less smothered with an ochreous mess resembling anchovy paste, it is possible to find most interesting examples of petrified moss and blackberry brambles ; but the weaker brethren and those “righteous men” (as defined by Mrs. Poyser), who are “keerful of their clothes,” purchase such specimens as they may at Branscombe, and on

their return home, yarn about the Alpine difficulties of discovering them.

On the summit to the western side of Weston Mouth, away back from the beetling edge of Dunscombe Cliff, 350 feet above the sea, stands the picturesque group of Dunscombe Farm and the ruined, ivy-mantled walls of what seems to have been an old manor-house. To this succeeds the valley of Salcombe, with the village of Salcombe Regis, away a mile inland.

It is a long, long way into Sidmouth, through Salcombe Regis, whose "Regis" was added so long ago as the time of Athelstan, who owned the manor and the salt-pans down in the combe by the sea. When you have come to the houses and think this is Sidmouth, it is only Landpart, and there is very near another mile to go; which, if you have acquired what the Devon people call a "kibbed"—that is to say a rubbed—heel by dint of much walking, is a distressing thing.

## CHAPTER VI

### SIDMOUTH

COMING into Sidmouth, you see at once that you are arrived in a Superior Place, and, before you are perceived, make haste to brush the dust off your boots, put your headgear straight, and, in general making yourself look as respectable as may be possible to a rambler in the byways, step forth with a jaunty air ; just as the postboys in the old days, driving my lord home, although their horses might be exhausted, always "kept a gallop for the avenue."

Sidmouth was the first of Devonshire seaside resorts, and had arrived at that condition long before Thackeray wrote of it as "Baymouth," in *Pendennis*. Do you remember how "Pen flung stones into the sea, but it still kept coming on" ? It seems hardly worth while to have said as much, but having been said, let it be put on record that it has lost none of its ancient courage in the meanwhile, and in spite of every intimidation, will still "come on" if you follow Pen's example ; unless, indeed, you choose the ebb, when, strange to say, it will retreat. It is believed that this odd phenomenon has been observed elsewhere.

Before Torquay, Teignmouth, Exmouth, and other places had begun to develop, Sidmouth was a place of fashion, and the signs of that early favour are still abundantly evident in the town, which is largely a place of those prim-frontaged, white-faced houses we associate with the early years of the nineteenth century. It belongs, in fact, to the next period following that of Lyme Regis, and has just reached the point of being very quaint and old-world and interesting, as we and ours will have become in the course of another century. The stucco of Sidmouth is not as the plaster of Torquay, any more than that of Park Lane is like the plaster of Notting Hill. It is of the more suave, kid-glove texture we associate with Park Lane, is white-painted, and is only a distant cousin of the later plaster of Notting Hill and Torquay, which is grey, and painted in wholly immoral shades of drab and dun, green, pink, and red; in anything, indeed, but the virginal white of Sidmouth.

And now, in this town which ought to be jealously preserved as a precious specimen of what the watering place of close upon a century ago was like, the restless evidences of our own time are becoming plentiful; older houses giving way to new, of the pretentious character so well suited to the age, and in red brick and terra-cotta; the inevitable architectural reach-me-downs that have obtained ever since Bedford Park set the vogue.

Why, confound the purblind, batlike stupidity

of it ! red brick is not wanted at Sidmouth, where the cliffs are the very reddest of all Devon. We need not give the old builders of white-faced Sidmouth any credit for artistic perceptions, for they could not choose but build in the fashion of their age, and everywhere alike, after our own use and wont ; but, by chance, they did exactly the right thing here, and in midst of this richest red of the cliffs, this emerald green of the exquisite foliage, this yellow of the beach, deep blue of the sea, and cerulean blue above, planted their terraces and isolated squares of cool, contrasting whiteness. It was a white period, if you come to consider it, a time of book-muslin and simplicity, both natural and affected, and although Sidmouth was fashionable it was not flamboyant.

To this place, for health and quiet, on account of their embarrassed finances, and for the sake of their infant daughter, the Princess Victoria, then only a few months old, the Duke and Duchess of Kent came in the autumn of 1819, and took up their residence at the pretty cottage in Woolacombe Glen, still standing at the western extremity of the town. Here, quite unexpectedly, for he was a robust man, and but fifty-three years of age, the Duke died, January 23rd, 1820, from inflammation of the lungs, the result of a chill. Croker wrote of the event : " You will be surprised at the Duke of Kent's death. He was the strongest of the strong. Never before ill in all his life, and now to die of a cold when half the kingdom have colds with impunity. It was very bad luck indeed. It

reminds me of Æsop's fable of the oak and the reed."

Sidmouth continued to grow in favour for years afterwards, and only began to experience neglect when the opening of the railways to the West discovered other beautiful spots in Devonshire. Next to the Royal association already recounted, Sidmouth most prides itself on the fact that in 1831 the Grand Duchess Helene of Russia for three months resided at Fortfield Terrace. Without recourse to a book of reference I do not quite know who exactly was this Grand Duchess, and am not so impressed as I doubtless ought to be. Nor do I think any one else is impressed; but the local historian will never forget the circumstance, and indeed it is devoutly kept in remembrance by the black effigy of a double-headed eagle on the frontage of the terrace.

The railway that took away the prosperity of Sidmouth is now instrumental in keeping it prosperously select, for it is something of a business to arrive in Sidmouth by train, and a great deterrent to trippers to have to change at Sidmouth Junction and, journeying by a branch line, to be deposited on the platform of Sidmouth station, one mile from the town.

Sidmouth is in these days recovering something of its own. Not perhaps precisely in the same way, for the days of early nineteenth-century aristocratic fashion can never again be repeated on this earth. But a new vogue has come to it, and it is as exclusive in its new way as it was in

the old ; if not, indeed, more exclusive. More exclusive, more moneyed, not at all well-born, jewelled up to the eyes, and only wanting the final touch of being ringed through the nose. Oddly enough, it is a world quite apart from the little town ; hidden from it, for the most part, in the hotels of the place. Most gorgeous and expensive hotels, standing in extensive grounds of their own, and all linked together in a business amalgamation, with the object of keeping up prices and shutting out competition.

It is not easy to see for what purpose the patrons of these places come to Sidmouth, unless to come down to breakfast dressed as though one were going to a ball, and dressing thrice a day and sitting in the grounds all day long be objects sufficient. From this point of view, Sidmouth town is a kind of *dependence* to the hotels, an accidental, little known, unessential hem or fringe, where one cannot wear ball-dresses and tiaras without exciting unpleasant criticism.

Bullion without birth, money without manners are in process of revolutionising some aspects of Sidmouth, and it is quite in accord with the general trend of things that the newest, the largest, the reddest, and the most insistent of the hotels should have shoved a great hulking shoulder up against the pretty, rambling, white-faced cottage in Woolacombe Glen, where some earliest infant months of Queen Victoria were passed, and that it should have exploited the association by calling itself the "Victoria."

There is no river mouth at all at Sidmouth, and the Sid, which so plentifully christens places on its banks, has not water enough to force its way to sea, as a river should. Instead, it abjectly crawls through the pebbles of the beach, as though wishful of escaping observation ; but when storms



WOOLACOMBE GLEN.

heap up sand and shingle and the Sid is denied even this humble outlet, then it becomes an urgent matter to hire labour for the speedy digging out a passage, lest the low-lying town should be flooded.

The sea-front of Sidmouth is, indeed, yet an unsolved problem. Many centuries ago, there seems to have been a harbour where the beach

and the walk of the Esplanade now stand, the constant easterly drift of shingle being kept well out to sea by a cliff projecting from the Western end of the town, where its last remains, the Chit Rock, stood until 1824. But that protecting headland was gradually worn away and by sure degrees the river mouth was choked with shingle. It is much the same story as that which belongs to the Axe and to other rivers and obliterated harbours of South Devon.

Many projects have from time to time been set afoot to remedy this state of affairs, but without success. A plan to excavate the river mouth and form a harbour was mooted in 1811, and another in 1825. Again, in 1836, an attempt was made to construct a harbour pier on the site of the Chit Rock, but was soon abandoned. Even the more modest attempt made in 1876, to build a pier on either side of the river mouth—or rather, where the river mouth should be—failed; and it seems as though what was long ago written of Sidmouth will long continue to be true of it: “In times past a port of some account, now choaked with chisel and sands by the vicissitudes of the tides.”

At present, Sidmouth beach is open and exposed, like that of Seaton, but even when Turner made his drawing for the projected work on the “Harbours of England,” although there was certainly nothing even remotely like a harbour here, the Chit Rock remained, to afford some slight protection.

But the Chit Rock itself has disappeared. It vanished in that terrible November storm of 1824, of whose traces there seems to be no end on the southern coasts. With the rock went a number of cottages, and with the cottages almost went the inhabitants, among them the real original



“THE OLD CHANCEL.”

Dame Partington, who was rash enough to attempt to mop up the waves.

Mrs. Partington might never have attained immortality, had it not been for Sydney Smith, who in 1831 compared the House of Lords, rejecting the Reform Bill, with her. Reform, he said, *would* come. The Lords were like Dame Partington at Sidmouth, who attempted to keep out the

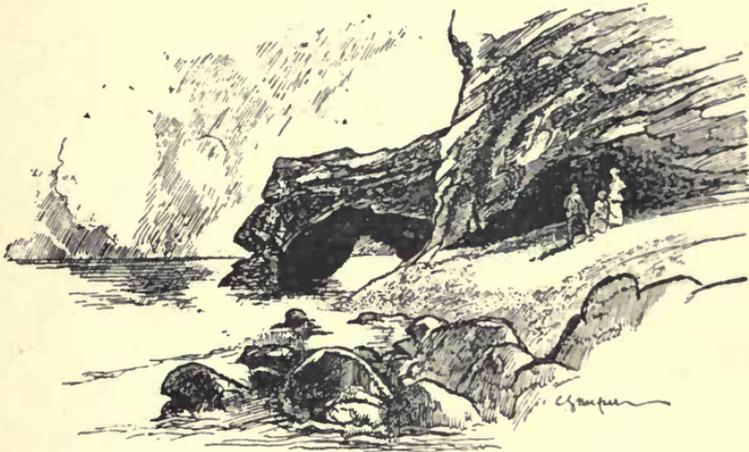
Atlantic with a mop, and failed. "She was excellent at a slop or puddle, but should never have meddled with a tempest."

The old parish church was rebuilt, except the tower, in 1859. It was a rather wanton work, and to some minds the purely secular use made of a portion of its stones may be shocking. Those of the most sacred part of the building, the chancel, were sold and used in the erection of a singular-looking villa close at hand, named from this circumstance, "The Old Chancel."

There can be few more charming nooks than that of Woolacombe Glen, where the cottage of Princess Victoria's early infancy still stands; a white-fronted, long, low, rambling building set in midst of the most cool and delightful lawns and overhung by trees. But, charming though it be, the Glen is not what it was at that time, for the broad road leading down to the Esplanade is a modern innovation constructed on the site of other lawns, through which a little stream flowed to the sea. Alas! for that clear-running Woolabrook. It has been compelled into an underground pipe. And—a last little irritating pin-prick—the "Woolacombe" in the name of the glen is now shorn of the peculiarly Devonian connecting and softening *a* between the syllables, and has become merely "Woolcombe." How horrid the deed, and how excruciating the thought that, if the same amputating process were extended throughout the county, we should exchange Babbacombe for "Babbcombe," Lannacombe for "Lanncombe,"

Ellacombe for "Ellcombe," and the less lovely like of them!

High Peak, the tremendous hill and cliff that shuts in Sidmouth on the west, is well named. The road up to the top of it is a mile of exhausting gradients, with fortunately a little grassy ledge on the way, whence you look down on to a distant beach and along the pebbly coast to Ladram



LADRAM BAY.

Bay and Otterton Point. Ladram Bay is reached either by cliff-top or along that tiring beach; or, greatly to be recommended above all other courses, by boat from Sidmouth, one of whose boatmen, with the pachydermatous hands that would scarce feel any effect from rowing fifty miles, will take you there if you give him a chance.

Ladram Bay was undoubtedly made expressly for picnics. There cannot be the least question of it. Geologists write profound things about

the raised beach and the pebbles—Triassic, Silurian, or what not jargon—that compose it, but Nature most certainly in prophetic mood designed beach, natural arch, and caves for lunch and laughter, and as a romantic background for flirtations.

## CHAPTER VII

OTTERTON—EAST BUDLEIGH—SIR WALTER  
RALEIGH

At the summit of High Peak is the common of Muttersmoor, whence the way goes steeply down into the valley of the River Otter, at length reaching the village of Otterton, down the sides of whose one quaint street, of a rustic, straw-littered, farm-like untidiness, flow streamlets bridged by little brick and timber spans.

Otterton is thoroughly Devonian. What it is to be so will, perhaps, not be understood by those unfamiliar with rustic Devon; but here is the recipe for such a characteristic place. Take an Irish, a Welsh, a Highland, and a Breton village, stir them up well in a fine, confused Celtic medley, add abundance of flowers, wild and cultivated, and then leave in the sun.

On a rise, above the river and the village street, stands the "fayre howse" built by Richard Duke, who in 1539 bought the Otterton property of Sion Abbey, and set up for lord of the manor. His shield-of-arms, sculptured over the door, is still visible, but his fair house has come down in the world, and the line of Duke of Otterton ended

in 1775, when the Rolles acquired their belongings. The traveller in South East Devon very soon has a surfeit of Rolles, who seem to be pervading the land and rebuilding the interesting churches, and generally occulting everything. Here again the old church has been replaced by a new.

Below church and manor-house runs the lovely Otter to the sea. The Otter is twin brother to the Axe, and the Exe is the big brother of both. The strath—that is to say the verdant, low-lying meadowland—of the Otter is of that quiet, wooded, pastoral beauty which makes the nearness of the sea seem strange. But the speciality of the Otter seems to be its pebbles, or “popples,” as the name is, locally. There are more pebbles on the Chesil Beach; but then, that is one of the two greatest repositories for them in the world, and the popples of the Otter and of the seashore at Budleigh Salterton, where they are not only numerous, but very fine and large as well, are a class to themselves. Little beaches of them skirt the course of the river, and the matter of two and a half miles up-stream from Otterton is a village, as one may say, dedicated to them, in its name of Newton Popleford; and there the popples muster as strongly as ever by the ford, which is now superseded by a bridge.

But now, crossing the Otter, we come to East Budleigh, by threading the mazes of two or three byways.

East Budleigh is a pretty village, with a little stream, clear-running, down one side of its street

and a great church on the rise at the end ; but, for all that, I should not have come out of the way to see it, were it not that a landmark of more than common interest lies half a mile on the other side. That landmark is Hayes Barton, the still extant farmstead that was the birthplace of Sir Walter Raleigh.

The first part of the name of Hayes Barton



EAST BUDLEIGH.

derives from the Anglo-Saxon *haga*, a hedge, or cultivated enclosure from surrounding wastes, and there are, to this day, "hayes," and "hays," in abundance in this shire of Devon. Even in the urban circumstances of Exeter we find them, in the enclosed public pleasure-ground of Northernhay, and the square of Southernhay. "Barton" has a variety of meanings, from granary, rickyard, farmyard, and cattle-shed, to a large farm ; a

small farm being generally, in Devon, styled a "living." In the time of Sir Walter Raleigh's father, Hayes Barton was sold to the Duke family, of Otterton, and from its old name of Poerhayes, or Power's Heys, it became known as Dukesheyes. In the eighteenth century, as we have already seen, it passed to the Rolles, whose paws have comprehended so much of the land between Seaton and Exmouth.

The old farm-house, smartened up with a facing of that stucco which is so beloved by Devon folk that it is almost a wonder they don't make it an article of diet, stands now as ever in a hollow of the hills, remote; for although Budleigh Salterton has expanded into a townlet, I do not suppose the village of East Budleigh has grown appreciably in all these centuries. Bating that stucco, and the sixty-year-old brick outhouses, the farm must be much the same, and you may still see the old woodwork and the old stone flags of the lower rooms, and may even, by courtesy, peep into the bedroom—that is the window of it, the upper window in the left-hand gable—where that gallant soul first saw the light of day.

Here, in this modest farmstead, that great Elizabethan was born, in 1552, son of Walter Raleigh and his wife Katherine, who came of that old Devon family, the Champernownes of Modbury. She had first married Otto Gilbert, who died leaving her with two sons, themselves to grow up explorers and colonists. She would

seem, therefore, to have been a woman of remarkable character.

The Raleighs seem to have been gentlefolk of long descent, of many relationships among the storied names of Devon—the Carews, the Grenvilles, Gilberts, and others—but of only modest worldly possessions. The Raleigh genealogy is fragmentary, and the early history of the family vague, but that they had once been locally rich



HAYES BARTON : BIRTHPLACE OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

and powerful, before the famous Sir Walter's day, seems evident enough in the names of the two neighbouring parishes of Withercombe Raleigh and Colaton Raleigh, which show that in more prosperous times his forbears had been lords of those manors. In common with many of their contemporaries, the Raleighs seem to have spelt their name according to individual taste and fancy ; nor even did the same individual

always select, and adhere to, one method. Thus we find the father of the greatest of all Raleighs signing himself "Ralegh," his eldest son, Carew, affecting "Rawlegh," and the future Sir Walter, in his first known signature, writing "Rauleygh," and afterwards adopting "Ralegh," and the form "Raleigh," which posterity has finally decided to accept. Queen Elizabeth herself spelled the name "Rawley."

Sentimentalists have united to draw a wholly imaginary picture of the boy, Walter Raleigh, ranging from the inland valley in which his birthplace stands, climbing the intermediate woody hill, and straying down to the margin of the sea at Budleigh Saltern, as Budleigh Salterton was then styled. They have drawn fanciful pictures of him among the amazing pebbles of that beach, listening wide-eyed, to the yarns of sailor-folk telling of strange histories from the Spanish Main ; and they have pictured him exploring away down to Exmouth, which was in those times a port of considerable commerce. I have no doubt he did all these things, and for my part can readily envisage them ; can see, too, the little, crisp-haired, ruddy-cheeked Walter, in russet doublet and stockings of the same, being taken to church on Sundays at East Budleigh, half a mile away, where you may still see the family pew with the heraldic "fusils" of Raleigh impaling the "rests" of Grenville, boldly sculptured in heart of oak on a massive bench-end.

But while we can picture all these things,

with sufficient readiness, it yet remains certain that we know nothing of the hero's earlier years, and but vaguely gather that from Oxford, whither he was sent, he went to the wars on the Continent, between the Protestants and the Catholics, and then, by some occult family influence, became attached to the brilliant Court of our own astounding virginal Gloriana. They were a coruscating Renaissance group, who circled round Elizabeth, and were gifted in a singular variety of ways. They were noblemen and gentlemen who could, and did, turn their hands to anything, from captaining some desperate enterprise, negotiating treaties, steering frail flotillas through unknown seas into unheard-of lands, buccaneering, and filibustering, down to duelling, intriguing and backbiting among each other; practising literature and the liberal art of sonneteering, and dallying in the dangerous pastime of flirting with that too towardly Queen herself. One thing only they could not do; they could not be commonplace. None may say how much of truth, or how much legend there may be in the famous story of how Raleigh first attracted the Queen's notice by flinging down his velvet cloak over a muddy place, so that she might pass, clean-footed; but the story was current, in the time of those contemporary with both, and being possible at all, shows us the spirit of the time and of the Queen's surroundings.

Raleigh's excellent early services in Ireland, where he broke down the rebellion in the south,

recommended him to the Queen, his youthfulness interested her middle-aged sentimentalism, and his dark, florid manhood enslaved her. For this was a very hero in look, as in deed ; standing six feet high, with black hair, full-bearded, ruddy-cheeked, like the apples of his native shire ; and Elizabeth loaded him with gifts and grants. Meanwhile he had begun the colonising schemes and the exploratory enterprises by which his name is largely known. He equipped, and was at the cost of, the expedition which in 1584 discovered that shore of North America he christened, in honour of the "Eternal Maiden Queen," "Virginia." At the close of that year a knighthood rewarded his flattery.

Already he was become a man of vast wealth, the holder of highly remunerative grants and monopolies, and was keenly desirous of refounding the house of Raleigh in visible form in Devon. To this end he wrote in July, 1584, to Mr. Duke of Otterton, into whose possession this farm of Hayes Barton had by some unexplained means come, desiring to repurchase it. The letter is still in existence, and runs :

"MR. DUKE,

"I wrote to Mr. Prideux to move yow for the purchase of hayes a farme som tyme in my fathers possession. I will most willingly give yow what so : ever in your conscience yow shall deeme it worthe, and if yow shall att any tyme have occasion to vse mee yow Shall find mee a thanckfull frind

to yow and youres. I have dealt w<sup>th</sup> Mr. Sprint for suche things as he hathe att colliton and ther abouts and he hath pmised mee to dept w<sup>th</sup> ye moety of otertowne vnto yow in consideration of hayes accordinge to ye valew and yow shall not find mee an ill neighbore vnto yow here after. I am resolved if I cannot intreat yow to build at colliton but for the naturall dispositio' I have to that place being borne in that howse I had rather seat my sealf ther than any wher els this leving the mattr att large vnto Mr. Sprint I take my leve resting. redy to countervaile all your courteses to ye uttermost of my power.

“ Court the xxvj of July 1584

“ Your very willing frinde

“ in all I shall be able ”

“ W. RALEGH.”

It is surely no unamiable trait in a man, that he should wish to purchase the house in which he was born ; but Mr. Duke, “ from that jealous disposition which can bear no brother near the throne,” did not choose to sell or to have so great a man for so near a neighbour, and so the Raleighs never again entered into possession of Hayes Barton.

## CHAPTER VIII

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON—LITTLEHAM—EXMOUTH  
—TOPSHAM—ESTUARY OF THE AXE

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON lies at the foot of a steep descent. Only within quite recent years has it been connected by railway with the outer world, and so has not yet quite woke up and found itself, and become self-conscious ; although there are plenteous evidences that attempts will be made to convert it into a small modern watering-place, pitifully emulative of its betters. It is not fulsome to say that up to the present it has had no betters, for it has been an individual place, without its fellow anywhere. Conceive a brook running in a deep bed down one side of a village street, and bridged at close upon half a hundred intervals with brick and plank footbridges, leading across into cottages and cottage-gardens ; and conceive those cottages, partly the humble homes of fishermen, and partly the simple villas of an Early Victorian, or even a Regency, seaside, and midway down the street imagine that stream crossing under the road, taking the little beach diagonally, and there percolating through the giant "popples." That is Budleigh Salterton.

The Otter flows out to sea farther to the east, along that beach, obscurely, but still one speculates idly—no help for it but to do *anything* “idly” in South Devon—by what strange and exceptional chance Budleigh Salterton is not “Ottermouth” in this county of Axmouth, Sidmouth, Exmouth, Teignmouth, and other places which own rivers as their godfathers and godmothers. Yet one is not too idle to discover that East Budleigh and this Budleigh “Saltern,” as it was originally named, *do*, after all, in a way, follow the general rule, for they are named after the contributory streamlet, the Buddle, on which they stand and the “leas,” or meadows, that border it.

It is the same old story, with regard to the haven at the mouth of the Otter, that has already been told of other places. Leland, writing close upon four hundred years ago, tells us that: “Less than an hunderith yeres sins shippes usid this haven, but it is now clean barred,” and so it remains. Salterton and its neighbourhood are therefore without the convenience of a port.

The front of the townlet is, as an Irishman might say, at the back, for in times before the invention of the seaside as a place of holiday, the inhabitants seem to have had a surfeit of the sea by which they got their living, and built their houses on the low crumbly cliff, not only with the faces turned away from it, but in many cases with high dead walls, enclosing back-gardens, entirely excluding any sight of the water. And so the “front” remains; nor is it clear how,

without a wholesale rebuilding, it will ever be otherwise. It is a curious spot for a seaside resort, and in places more resembles an allotment-garden, or the side of one of those railway embankments, where frugal porters and platelayers cultivate vegetables ; for between the pathway and the sea, on the fringe of that beach where the gigantic popples lie, ranging in size from a soup-plate down to a saucer, and forming the raw material of the local paving, there are rows of potatoes, cabbages, peas, and scarlet runners ! The effect is a good deal more funny than the humour of a professional humourist, for it has that essential ingredient of real humour, unexpectedness ; and he who does not laugh at first sight of the peas among those amazing popples, and the boats amid the beans, must be a dull dog.

The explorer who does not wish to martyr himself on the way from Salterton to Exmouth may be recommended to take steamer, for it is six miles of anti-climax by shore and cliff, and four by uninteresting hard high road, passing the wickednesses of suburban expansion at Littleham, in whose churchyard is the neglected grave of Frances, Viscountess Nelson, who died in 1831, the deeply wronged wife of the naval hero.

A marble monument to her in the church does, however, make some amends for the neglect outside. There, in that interior, are memorials to Peels, relatives of the statesman, and others to those ubiquitous Drakes who, like the Courtenays and recurring decimals, repeat themselves indefinitely.

Leaving Littleham behind, there presently begins the long-drawn approach to Exmouth itself, looking as though all Ladbroke Grove and Putney Hill had moved down, *en bloc*, for a sea-change. And, oh, how blue and refreshing and lovely looks that peep of the sea over towards Dawlish that you get at the end of this long, hot and dry perspective!

And as you think thus, you remember the pungent saying of Dr. Temple, who once, while still Bishop of Exeter, stood upon the steps of the vicarage of Exmouth and remarked that "Exmouth was a good place to look—from."

He was absolutely correct, for Exmouth, facing directly into the west, is especially famed for its sunsets. To peruse the local guide-books one might even think Exmouth had entered into arrangements with the solar system for a supply of the best displays.

But there was, as you have already suspected, a sting behind the bishop's remark. What a waspishness beyond the ordinary these high-placed clerics do develop! The beauties of Exmouth are external, extrinsic, a minus quantity; but it is placed in the loveliest situation at the seaward end of the long and beautiful estuary of the Exe. The beauty of the views across sea and river are unspeakable. To me it is an Avalon, a Gilead, where the balm is; a country in the likeness of the Land of the Blest, you see over there, where the red cliffs dip down in fantastic shapes to the sea, and where the heights of Great

Haldon and Mamhead, clothed with clumps of trees of a richness only Devon can show, rise to the glowing sky. I yearn ever to be over yonder in that Land of Heart's Desire, as the good Christian should yearn for Paradise ; and the little hamlets dwarfed by the two miles of water, and even the little trains that seem to go so slowly, trailing their long trails of steam, are things of poetry and romance.

If I were to say that Exmouth was the Margate of Devonshire, I should please neither Exmouth nor Margate ; for all Devon does not contain a purely seaside resort of the size of that favourite place in Kent. But it is, like Margate, popular with trippers ; it has sands ; and is, in short a place where the crowd spends a happy day : the crowd in this instance hailing, as a rule, from no further than Exeter.

Exeter is an interesting city, and its citizens, in their own streets and in their everyday garb are sufficiently amiable, but when Exmouth on Sundays and other holiday-times is overrun with Exeter's young men, tradesmen's assistants, clad in the impossible clothes pictured on provincial advertisement hoardings, laughing horse-laughs, singing London's last season's comic songs, wearing flashy jewellery, and smoking bad cigars, Exeter's reputation, and Exmouth's suffer alike. If you can imagine such a curious hybrid as a provincial cockney—the type really exists, although it has not yet been noticed by men of science—you may picture something of Exmouth's week-end patrons.

The provincial cockney, poor thing, imagines himself in the forefront of style, but he is merely a caricature of the London cockney plus his own accent, which, wedded to cockney slang, is peculiarly offensive.

But Exmouth, when its week-end patrons are behind their counters, in their aprons, is a vastly-different place. It is cheap, and has always been, and always will be, but it is at last sloughing off that air of impending bankruptcy that once sat so dolefully upon the scene ; and the shops that were once mere apologies are now for the most part real shops, and stocked with articles less than ten years old. Moreover, the tennis lawns and gardens have grown by lapse of time into things of beauty : the lawns becoming something else than bald patches of red earth, and the gardens luxuriant indeed. But cheap railway trips from Exeter, only ten miles distant, by South Western Railway, have determined the character of Exmouth for ever, and grey stucco, only on the outskirts occasionally varied with red brick, or rough-cast, has clothed it in a sad shabbiness until its ninety-nine years building-leases shall have lapsed.

Modern times, however, are making themselves felt in other directions. In early days, when the town of Exmouth was merely a longshore settlement called "Pratteshythe," situated where the docks now are, the mouth of the river was largely obstructed by an immense sandbank stretching from this shore. At some unnamed period this

geographical feature of the place changed sides, and has for centuries past been that delightfully wild, nearly two-miles long wilderness, "the Warren," which extends a sandy arm from Langston Cliff; leaving something less than half-a-mile of fairway at the mouth of Exe. Until quite recently the Warren has remained the haunt of the wild-fowler and the naturalist, but now the red roofs of bungalows are beginning to plentifully dot the wastes; and to play at Robinson Crusoe, with twentieth-century embellishments and more or less luxurious fringes, has become a favourite summer pastime on this once solitary haunt of the heron, the wild duck, and the sea-mew.

The salt estuary of the Exe runs up boldly from Exmouth, a mile broad, past Lympstone; and then, suddenly contracting, reaches Topsham, which was in other days a place of considerable importance, where ships were built and a great deal done in the Newfoundland trade; and in the smuggling trade too. Now the old shipyards are forgotten, and Topsham, which, among other things, was formerly the port of Exeter, is merely a relic, in course of being submerged by Exeter's suburbs. Yet still odd nooks may be found, with that curious alien air belonging to all such out-of-date seaports, and in shy old houses Topsham is peculiarly rich in old blue-and-white Dutch tiles.

Topsham ceased from being a port when the present Exe Canal was made, in 1827, from Turf

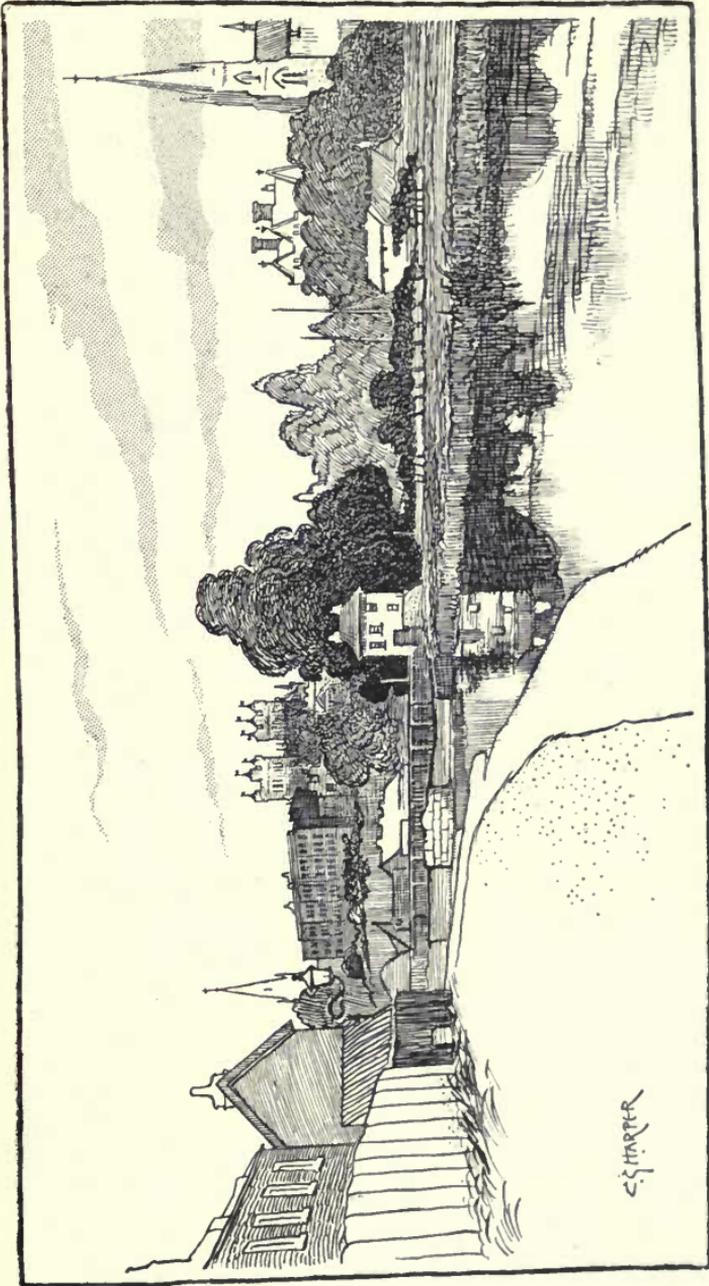
up to the very streets of the city : the first ship canal that ever was. It is five miles in length, and thirty feet wide, and it cost £125,000. Anciently, however, the tide flowed the whole way to Exeter, until, in the old high-handed mediæval days, the imperious Isabella de Redvers wrought



TOPSHAM.

her vengeance against the city by causing the stream to be dammed with felled trees, thus obstructing the navigation. Doubtless, in their turn, the citizens damned the countess, so far as they safely could, but there the obstruction remained, and thus the still-existing "Countess Weir" came into being.

The enterprising citizens of Exeter cut a small canal, so early as 1554. This was afterwards enlarged, and the present undertaking is the still more enlarged successor of those early waterways. It is a pleasant and clear canal, with none of those evil associations the word "canal" generally implies, and the walk along the broad towing-paths into Exeter yields one of the most striking views of that picturesque city.



EXETER, FROM THE SHIP CANAL.



## CHAPTER IX

### POWDERHAM AND THE COURTENAYS—STARCROSS

BUT the coast really does not reach to Exeter. Let us take boat across from the picturesque waterside of Topsham, and then follow the western bank of Exe down to the sea. It is by far the prettier and more rural side, but, perversely enough, all the eastern shore, including Lypstone and Exmouth, looks in the distance exceptionally beautiful; and no one who only knows the west is content until he has crossed and explored the east. But it is the better part to remain so far untravelled, and to keep the illusion.

The South Western Railway has exploited the eastern shore of Exe, and the Great Western runs its main line along the west, and each is characteristic: the South Western peculiarly suburban, bustling and commonplace, the Great Western sweeping on in noble curves, with a wayside station, at which trains rarely halt, planted here and there. It skirts the water on one hand, and Powderham Park, seat of the Earls of Devon, on the other.

Romance, as well as beauty, belongs to Powder-

ham, for it has been for over five hundred years the seat of the Courtenays, a younger branch of the family which was settled at Courtenay, fifty-six miles south of Paris, in the ninth century. They married into the royal family of France, and three in succession were Emperors of Constantinople in the last days of Christian rule there. It seems a proud thing to have numbered emperors among one's ancestors, but those imperial Courtenays of old Byzantium were, it must be owned, put to many indignities and miserable shifts, and the imperial purple was more than a thought moth-eaten. They were reduced to selling and mortgaging their property, to scouring half Europe for alms, and in the end the Turks captured their sorry empire. Then the elder Courtenays returned to the rank of French nobles, and although they had an admixture of royal blood, sank gradually throughout the centuries until at length they became simple peasants. The last of them died towards the middle of the eighteenth century.

The English Courtenays appear to derive from Reginald de Courtenay, who relinquished his French nationality and properties, and in the reign of Henry the Second came to England. He acquired honours and manors, and was the ancestor of Hugh de Courtenay, Baron of Okehamp-ton, created Earl of Devon as heir in right of his mother, to the lands and titles of the De Redvers family, who had previously held the earldom. Powderham came to the Courtenays with the

second earl, to whom it was brought by his wife, Margaret, daughter of the Earl of Hereford. He gave it to his sixth son, Philip, who was the builder of the castle. Here his descendants, members of the younger of the branches into which the English Courtenays spread, have ever since resided, and might have been merely squires or knights yet, but for the misfortunes that befell the members of the elder branch, who in the wars of rival York and Lancaster took the losing side, with the result that three brothers in succession, the sixth, seventh and eighth earls, sealed with their blood, on scaffold or in stricken field, their devotion to the Red Rose. With those gallant, but ill-fated partisans of a just cause the elder line became extinct, and when the family honours were revived under the Lancastrian Henry the Seventh, they went to the next branch in order of seniority, represented by Sir Edward Courtenay of Haccombe, the first earl of a new creation. To him succeeded his grandson, son of Sir William Courtenay and the Lady Katherine Plantagenet daughter of Edward the Fourth; second earl, and later advanced to be Marquis of Exeter. The fortunes of the Courtenays now seemed to be again improving, but those were the times of Henry the Eighth, when quick changes and dramatic reverses of fortune were the rule. The same king who had created the earl a marquis later capriciously sent him to the block, confiscated his property, and annulled the family honours. A strange romance sheds a mysterious glamour

over the story of his son Edward, who is said to have been loved by Queen Mary and slighted by him for her sister, Elizabeth. The queen made him earl of yet another new creation, but later threw him into prison on an absurd charge of aiding the rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt, which he had really been largely instrumental in quelling. It was ill consorting with the Tudors, or even living in their times, for they were tigerish alike in their affections and their hatreds. This ill-used young earl—"this beautiful youth," Gibbon calls him—was released, but died mysteriously, it is supposed of poison—at Padua, in 1556. With him that branch of the Courtenays, and it was long supposed the title also, became extinct.

Meanwhile the junior branch, the Courtenays of Powderham, continued unmolested. "He that is low need fear no foe," says the old proverb; and those plain knights and, later, baronets excited the jealousy of no one. So they continued until the era of beheadings and forfeitures ended, when Sir William Courtenay was created Viscount Courtenay in 1762. And viscounts they might be yet, only in 1851 an accomplished genealogist, looking over the patent of nobility granted by Queen Mary, discovered the all-important fact that the usual words "*de corpore*," limiting the title to direct descendants, were not included. The succession was thus extended to collaterals, and the curious fact was revealed that for two hundred and seventy-five years the Courtenays of Powderham had been earls unknown to them-

selves, and had gratefully accepted inferior honours while legally possessed of greater.

The claim being proved before the House of Lords, the third viscount in this manner, became the tenth earl. It was he who, regaining the title, plunged the Courtenays again into embarrassments and alienated much of the family property, and it was Viscount Courtenay, son of the venerable eleventh earl, who still further wrecked their fortunes by his losses upon the Turf, which were partly liquidated during his short tenure of the title. The thirteenth earl, who died in 1904, ninety-three years of age, was uncle of the twelfth, and rector of Powderham. He resided at the rectory; for, of the 50,000 acres and the yearly rent-roll of £40,000, mentioned in the New Domesday Book, only an inconsiderable residue is left. Gibbon says of the French Courtenays and their old home: "The Castle of Courtenay was profaned by a plebeian owner," and here we see the strange spectacle of the seat of the English Courtenays being let to a stranger, and the titled owner of it, a clergyman, living obscurely on the fringe of his own encumbered domain. The reverses of fortune experienced by this ancient race may well seem to render their old motto, adopted in the sixteenth century, still applicable: *Ubi lapsus? Quid feci?*—"Where have I fallen? What have I done?" It is, at any rate, better than their sentiment of later years: *Quod verum tutum*—"What is true is safe." That is indeed a hard saying.

There is no other family so constantly met with in Devon. Villages—like Sampford Courtenay—bear their name : their monuments are in Exeter Cathedral, and in many a town and village church, and in the majority of ancient Devon churches you will at least see their easily distinguished arms sculptured somewhere—the three golden torteaux, roundels, or bezants, supposed by some to have originated in the family association with the Byzantine crown, or flippantly thought by others to typify their last three sovereigns.

The old church of Powderham, built of the rich, red sandstone, stands quite close to the railway, amid the trees of the noble deer-haunted park. The railway then, following the shore along a low sea-wall, comes to the wooden station of Starcross, through which most of the trains rush without stopping. From its crazy timber platforms, standing with their feet in the water, you look across nearly two miles of salt water to Exmouth, transfigured by distance ; its dreadful make-believe Gothic church, built in the architectural dark ages of the opening years of the nineteenth century, bulking like a cathedral. A steam launch plies between Starcross and Exmouth in these days, instead of the row-boat that once gave such tremendous rowing to get across ; so the sundered shores of Exe are become less foreign and speculative to one another than they were of old. But, as the reader will have already perceived, these increased facilities have destroyed illusions. Exmouth we have already revealed

for what it is, rather than what it seems, across the shining water, and Lympstone, yonder, looks better from Starcross than close at hand.

To those given to grotesque phonetic affinities, Lympstone suggests cripples ; for myself, looking here across the pale blue and opalesque estuary, where the seagulls ride the still waters, waiting for the tide to ebb and the small sprats and the cockles to become revealed as meals, Lympstone suggests a limpid stream and refreshing breezes. There it nestles ; a little strand with little houses and a little church, set down in the opening between two little cliffs of red, red sandstone ; but when you arrive there Lympstone is modern, the church has been rebuilt, with the exception of the tower, and an ornate clock-tower, Jubilee or other, flaunts it insolently.

Starcross itself has been described as "a melancholy attempt at a watering-place,"—probably by some person who regards Exmouth as a cheerful and successful effort in that direction ; but "There's no accounting for tastes," as the old woman said when she kissed her cow. As sheer matter of fact, Starcross never attempted anything in that way, but just—like Topsy—"grew," and so became what it is ; a large village of one long, single-sided street, looking once uninterruptedly upon the shore and the water, but since the railway came, commanding first-class views of expresses, locals, and goods-trains ; and more or less identified by strangers with a singular Italianate tall red tower, sole relic of the atmospheric system with

which the then South Devon Railway was opened in 1846. This survival of one of the old engine-houses completes a conspicuously beautiful view along the Exe, raised thereby to the likeness of an Italian lake. The one other remarkable feature of Starcross is the curious little steamship, modelled like a swan, that for some fifty or more years past has been moored off Starcross jetty; to the huge amazement of travellers coming this way for the first time.

For the rest, Starcross is merely a more or less modern development of a very ancient little fisher hamlet of the inland parish of Kenton, close upon two miles inland, and is said to have been originally "Stair-cross"; a crossing, or passage, to Exmouth. Maps, showing how the road from Exeter only approaches the coast at this point and then immediately turns away again, support this view.

The high road, leaving Starcross, winds around Cockwood Creek, and passing for a while over level ground ascends, steep and narrow and between high banks, past the old-time smugglers' haunt, "Mount Pleasant Inn," and so over the cliff top to Dawlish. But the coastwise path by the Warren, and so over the railway to Langston Cliff and the sea-wall, is the only way for beauty. Over the cliffs, by the high road, you come dispirited into Dawlish, with the latest greedy proceedings of speculative builders very much in evidence before the town itself is seen. Such a manner of approach is highly injurious. It is

as though a guest bidden to a country house were admitted through the back door. One had rather enter Dawlish by train, for the railway runs along a sea-wall under the cliffs, and the station is built on the edge of the sands.

## CHAPTER X

### DAWLISH—ASHCOMBE—THE PARSON AND CLERK

DAWLISH looks its very best from the railway station ; not the least doubt of it, and looks best of all to passengers bound elsewhere. From the train you have on one side the blue sea, the red rocks, the yellow-brown sands ; and on the other the lovely lawns and gardens in midst of the town, with the little stream called "Dawlish Water," tamed and trimmed, and made to tumble over half a hundred little cascades, in between. In short, like any tradesman, Dawlish displays its best goods—nay, more, its entire stock-in-trade—in the shop window.

The name of Dawlish is rather by way of being a calamity. Antiquaries declare it derives from the Celtic *dol isc* ; that is to say, "the meadow by the water"—and as we have seen, the stream and the gardens are the chief feature of the place—but the modern form of the name is fatally attractive for cheap wits. Even great minds have declined to the remark that "Dawlish is dawlicious" ; and as the excursion trains in summer draw up to the platform and strangers step out from the carriages, to stretch their legs for a

moment before going on, the idiot jape trips off a hundred tongues.

At Dawlish, however, the traveller first realises himself fully in the West. The view, the colour, the speech, all proclaim it.

Ah! the old familiar cries of the West, they warm the heart with the fires of remembrance. As the traveller comes down the line, so insensibly he comes into the districts where the soft slurring burr of the West of England prevails. You first notice it, if you are travelling by a stopping train, at Swindon, on whose platforms the newspapers—in the speech of the bookstall imps—become “Londun pay-purr”; and when the train draws up to the seaside platforms of Dawlish, the shibboleth has become “Lundee pay.” Long, too, may the fishwives of Teignmouth continue their rounds, with their endearing “Any nice fresh whiting to-day, my dear?” to old and young, gentle or simple.

There are wild and beautiful valleys away behind Dawlish; in especial that vale down whose leafy gullies flows the clear stream of Dawlish Water, which, rising out of the green bosom of Great Haldon, up Harcombe way, comes down by Ashcombe and, reaching Dawlish, is made to perform quite a number of parlour tricks before it is allowed to straggle out over the sands and pebbles of the beach, and find a well-earned rest in the sea.

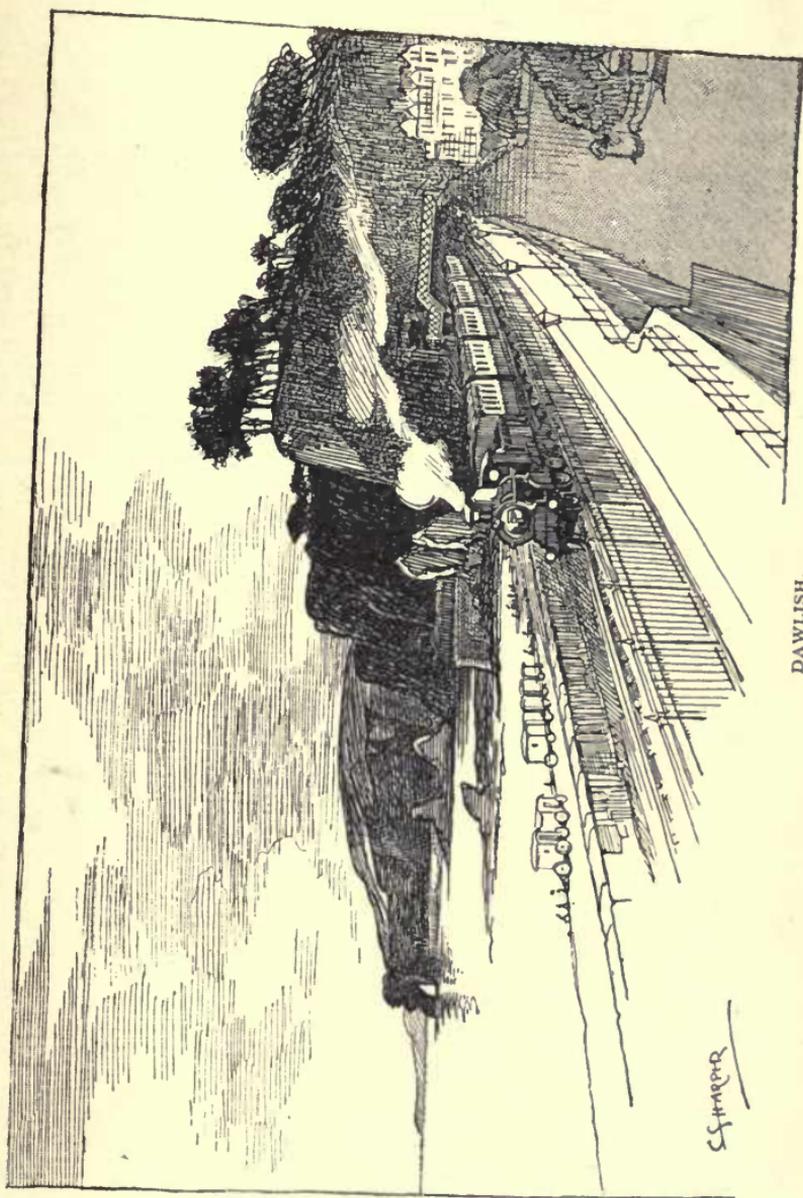
There are folk of primitive ways of thought and rugged speech up the valley of Dawlish Water,

and their characteristics are those of old Devon, of whose peasantry it has been truly said : " They work hard, live hard, hold hard, and die hard."

" My tongue has two sides to et, like a bull's ; a rough an' a smuthe," said a sharp-spoken woman up at Harcombe—or I should say, " up tu Harcume"—and up tu Ashcombe they talk in a way that no mortal man coming fresh to Devon can understand. There is a picturesque rustic church high up on a knoll in the dwindling village of Ashcombe, and there is a quaint old smithy with an equally quaint old couple of bachelor brothers, the smiths of it, who have the simplicity of children, the richest brogue in all Devon, and the unaffected courtesy we associate with great nobles. " We'm plazed tu zee 'ee, ye knaw, ye bain't a stranger tu Ashcume, they tell me"; while their housekeeper says, " Zittee down, do 'ee," and with her apron vigorously dusts a chair which, like all else in this spotless interior, is absolutely innocent of dust. It is the rustic way of showing politeness.

As for their speech, all Devonians have that characteristic rich twist of the tongue which one cannot well convey in all its richness in paper and print, and for " stranger " say " strangurr." Similarly, when, during a conversation with them, an insect of sorts bites you painfully, they inform you it is a " hoss-stingurr."

There is a prized possession at the smithy, in the shape of an old bureau, which has been in the family for goodness knows how many generations,



DAWLISH.

S. H. M. 1892



and the visitor will probably be invited to see the "sacred" drawer they discovered. Here, in the cold medium of print it is obvious enough that a "secret" drawer is meant, but I assure you it is by no means so immediately obvious on the spot, and you quite expect an introduction to some holy of holies.

Dawlish is shut in on the west by the great cliff of Lea Mount, which forms, both in colour and shape, an unforgettable feature.

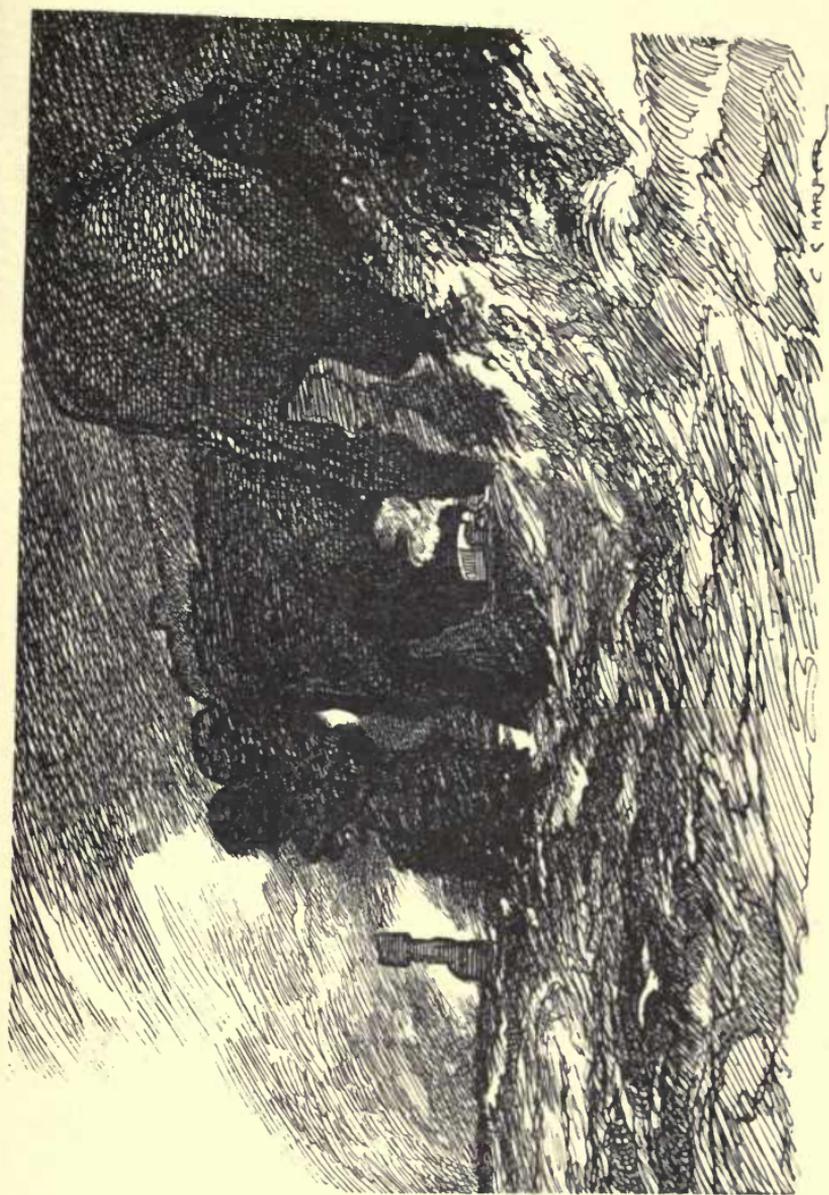
Lea Mount owes its formal, straight-cut outline to the anxieties that followed the falling of a portion of the cliff on August 29th, 1885, when over fifty tons of rock buried a party of seven women and children, killing three of them. To prevent further accidents, all overhanging portions were cut away.

Through this vivid red mass plunges the main line of the Great Western Railway, in a series of five longer or shorter tunnels, emerging through Parson Tunnel upon the long sea wall that brings it into Teignmouth. From Dawlish sands the long and bold range of cliffs ending in Hole Head and the Parson and Clerk rocks is distinctly seen, but there has ever been some considerable doubt as to which of these rocks of Hole Head is the Clerk. Commonly the solitary wave-washed pillar standing out to sea has been given the name, but there are certainly the likenesses of two faces on the cliff itself, one immediately under the other; and there have always been those who have pointed them out as the unworthy pair.

From one of the little coves that notch the cliffs between Dawlish and Teignmouth, those giant profiles are seen with advantage. They are impressive at a distance and even in calm weather, but near at hand, and when the clouds lower and the screaming winds tear off the crests of the waves and dash them in clouds of flying spume over the hurrying trains, they are not a little awesome. The Parson, with round, bullet-like head, looks sternly out, with calm, inscrutable face, and all the dignity of a colossal Rameses, upon the whirl of wind and water. The Clerk, beneath him, a senile, doddering countenance, with wide-open mouth and thick, pendulous lips, seems to laugh and gibber maniacally at the racket of the elements, and is a little dreadful to behold.

There is no way round Hole Head to Teignmouth. Sheer walls of rock and a stark descent into the sea forbid; but some day, when local authorities take the hints that nature and latter-day circumstances have thrown out, a road will be made under those cliffs, and the sundered towns made neighbours.

Meanwhile, there are two prime ways of getting to Teignmouth: the one a threepenny journey by train from Dawlish station, the loveliest threepenny railway ride in the kingdom; the other a shockingly hilly climb up by the high road that goes over Lea Mount, and so, in a series of sharp rises and falls brings you, at one mile from Teignmouth, to a breakneck descent into the town, usually ending, for cyclists some few years



THE PARSON AND CLERK ROCKS.

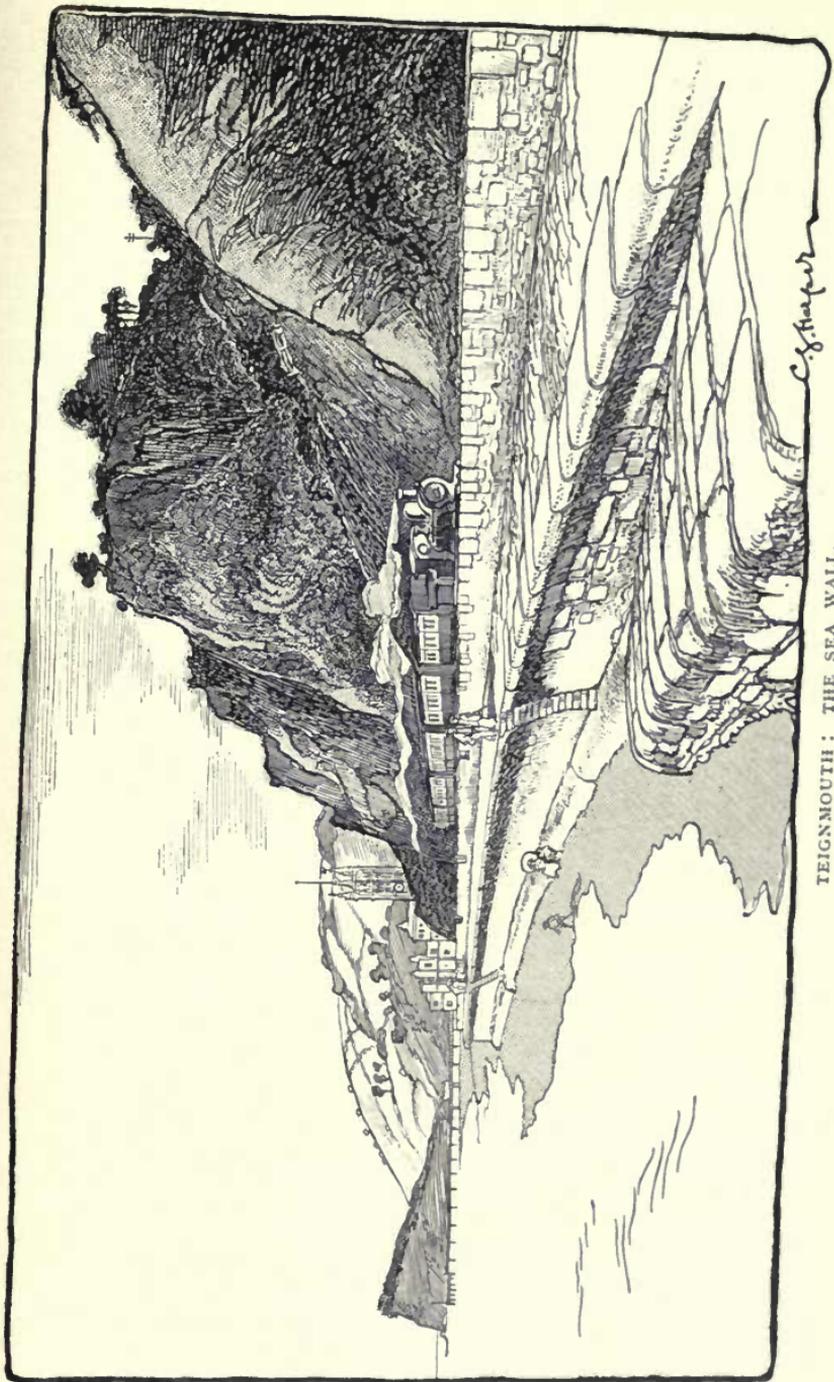


ago, in a pantomime-trick disappearance through the window of the "Dawlish Inn" and a removal, as the case might be, to the hospital or the cemetery. But more scientific brakes have happily neutralised these dangers.

There is, however, a delightful variant of this road journey that cannot too greatly be praised. This is found when coming to the cross-lanes in the hollow at Holcombe, one mile from Lea Mount, by turning to the left down a tree-shaded way known as "Smugglers' Lane." A short distance brings the explorer to a sight of the sea again, glimpsed between the stone arches of a railway-bridge spanning a tiny cove or inlet. A walk through the arches on to the sands, if the tide be out, or the ascent of a dozen steps up to the sea-wall, if it be in, brings the stranger into the best and easiest, and certainly, into the most beautiful, approach to Teignmouth, by the sea the whole way and under the shadow of the tremendous red cliffs, at whose foot the railway, by the daring of Brunel, is made to run along the most massive of sea-walls. The engineer here wrought more picturesquely than he knew, and performed an inestimable service to the public by providing a ten-foot wide masonry pathway nearly two miles and a half long, where the contemplative visitor has the trains on one side and the sea on the other ; and where he may, when it blows great guns off the sea, witness such a spouting and a buffeting of furious waves against the wall as scarce to be equalled around the coast.

The railway has here, at any rate, left the shore more picturesque than it found it, and the trains themselves give a last touch of romance. You see them, in summer, coming down from London, a wondering and expectant face thrust from every window : the faces of holiday-makers enraptured with the scene. You see the holiday-makers again, a little later, with a deep tan colour, but with expressions wistful and melancholy ; returning home, and taking a long lingering glance before the Parson Tunnel finally occults the view.

There is an added majesty to the sea-wall and the railway when night is come. The red cliffs become black and minatory, the trees and shrubs against the skyline assuming weird shapes ; and stillness reigns ; for mankind is gregarious and congregates in the town, leaving the sea-wall to shy lovers ; and the contemplative crickets chirp in the ballast and on the sleepers, and the wash of the waves sounds in a restful undertone until a red eye in the darkness along the line changes to green and, with a rush and a scream, the express thunders by.



TEIGNMOUTH: THE SEA WALL.



## CHAPTER XI

### TEIGNMOUTH

TEIGNMOUTH is the "second largest watering-place in South Devon" and the most entirely delightful. It was more delightful when it was smaller ; but that is a fact known only to people old enough to have acquired memories of the Has Been and to drag the clanking chains of reminiscence and unavailing regret at their heels. In the Teignmouth of yesterday there were no pavements but those made of pebbles gleaned off the beach, of the size and shape—and considerably more than the hardness—of kidney potatoes. It was a picturesque time, but painful for people with tender feet and thin shoes, for the pavements thus constructed were excruciatingly knobbly, and were only worn down to the level after some two generations and a half of wayfarers had progressed over them. To-day you shall find those old-style pavements only in the back streets and alleyways of the town : in the main thoroughfares you have paving-stones worthy of London itself.

There was doubtless a time when these kidney-potato pavements were looked upon as concessions

to a growing spirit of luxury, and it is conceivable that, from the time when Teignmouth first arose beside the azure main (somewhere about the time of Edward the Confessor) until the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the place did very well without pavings or sidewalks of any description. Sea-boots and shore-going footgear an inch thick in the sole, and well hobnailed, overcame any little difficulties with water, mud, or shingle ; and it was only when seaside holidays first came into fashion and "visitors" appeared that any fine distinctions were drawn between roads and paths.

When the railway came to Teignmouth in 1846, it found a quiet, rather out-of-the-way little town and port, of narrow and winding streets, lined with rustic Devonian cob-built cottages, alternating with what had been modish little plaster-fronted villas with skimpy little balconies and bow fronts. Many of them still remain in the older part of the town, in French Street and Hollands Road. If they were larger, they would remind one of Brighton and the Regency, but, in the miniature sort, they are oddly reminiscent of Jane Austen and Mrs. Gaskell and their ringleted heroines.

In pre-railway days Teignmouth lay, as it were, in an eddy of traffic. The mail coaches went from Exeter to Plymouth far inland, and only strictly local stages hugged the coastwise roads ; but with the opening of the South Devon Railway, as it then was, Teignmouth at once

was placed on the main route from London to the West. There should certainly be a statue of Brunel on the Den at Teignmouth, for by planning



APPROACH TO TEIGNMOUTH.

the railway to run along the coast he not only made the fortune of the town, but added magnificently to the picturesqueness of the shore, in building that two and a half miles of massive

sea-wall on which the railway comes into the town.

Teignmouth is one of those very few places the railway does not vulgarise, by bringing you in at the back door, so to speak, and through the kitchen and the scullery. You are brought along that sea wall, in full view of a gorgeously-coloured coast, into a fine airy station, expectant of the best, and are not disappointed in that expectation ; if, indeed, a little mystified as to your bearings. To acquire those bearings, the proper way, after all, here as elsewhere, is to enter the town by road, whether by the extravagantly hilly high road along the cliff tops, or along the sea wall. That is the geographically educative way, by which you shall see how the original Teignmouth was built on a flat sandy spit at the mouth of the Teign estuary, and how by degrees it has grown upwards and backwards, away from river and sea, even to the lower slopes of the lofty moorland of Haldon.

The most outstanding peculiarity, and one of the finest features of Teignmouth is "the Den," the wide sweep of lawn that ornaments the whole of the seaward side of the town and at once stamps Teignmouth as something wholly out of the ordinary. "The Den," properly "dene," was originally a flat sandy waste where the fishermen of the old fishing town dried their nets, and when the town suddenly was made to take on the appearance of a fashionable resort, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and a formal front was built, looking upon the sea, the houses were

planned in a huge crescent, following the lines of that open space. Whether this was done from choice or necessity does not appear, but it would certainly seem that the builders of what was then "modern" Teignmouth were offered no alternative, and that they dared not lay hands upon what was really common land.

Within the memory of many visitors to Teignmouth the grassy Den has wonderfully improved. A comparatively few years ago it was still scrubby and common-like, and its bordering flower-beds and rockeries were rich only in rocks, but the grass now grows green, the flowers flourish, and sheltering shrubs have grown phenomenally. The fishermen still exercise their ancient prescriptive right of spreading their seine nets out to dry on the grass, but, for some reason or another, not so greatly as before.

The sea-front of Teignmouth, following the semi-circle of the Den, is decoratively imposing when viewed at a little distance, for there is much virtue, architecturally, in a crescent, however little there may be in the houses individually. They are ambitious buildings, chiefly in these times boarding-houses, but with the "Royal Hotel" and the ugly East Devon and Teignmouth Club prominent among them. According to intention and to the description given of the Club-house in local literature, it is in the Ionic style, but seeing that it is of brick and rubble, faced with plaster masquerading as stone, we shall not be far wrong in declaring that, in spite of—nay, because of—its

colonnade of squatty columns pretending to be Greek, its style is more fitly to be described as "ironic."

There is, indeed, a great deal of very bad architecture in Teignmouth, of the pretentious kind; very solid, stolid and ugly, and the newer houses, although more pleasing to the eye, are generally of an incredible flimsiness. If the natural scenery of sea, land, and river were not so surprisingly beautiful, the builders' handiwork would long ago have ruined Teignmouth, and it says much for the natural advantages of the place that, although there are less than half a dozen decent bits of architecture, ancient or modern, in the town, it is voted delightful by thousands of holiday-makers.

It is because I love Teignmouth so well that I criticise it so closely. For the sake of the place that nature has endowed so richly, one must needs protest against the things that have been done, the blunders and the vulgarities that have been perpetrated. Was ever there a place where advertisements could look more offensive? Yet the entrance to the pier is smothered with them. They stand boldly out against the scenery, and your view across to Torbay or to Exmouth is obliterated by the pushful poster and the enamelled iron sign. Frankly, they are grievous mistakes. One does not always want to be playing Rogers' pianos, nor even, for that matter, Paish's; and there are times—incredible though it may seem—when Fry's Cocoa and Dunville's Whisky are distinctly *de trop*. But enough!

Coming into Teignmouth by the sea-wall, almost the first building met with is East Teignmouth Church, almost wholly rebuilt in recent years, from the 1887 Jubilee Tower downwards. It is one of Teignmouth's two parish churches that once formed a couple owning the unenviable distinction of being pre-eminently the ugliest churches in all Devon, but now that the Jubilee and later activities have utterly altered the aspect of this church of St. Michael, East Teignmouth, that unlovely brotherhood has been dissolved, and St. James's, West Teignmouth, reigns supreme in the kingdom of the grotesque.

Not by any means that these much-criticised buildings were offensively ugly. Their ugliness was of that supreme and old-fashioned kind so greatly prized in (for example) old china. It transcended the merely ugly and rose into the realms of the hideously quaint. St. Michael's tower, for instance, was a very gem of misbegotten early nineteenth-century "Saxon" architecture, done in grim grey stucco, and looking like the architectural monstrosities of nightmare-land. It would have genuinely astonished any Saxon privileged to revisit the earth after a thousand years and seeking the original Saxon building he had known on this site. The present tower, in the Perpendicular style, is ornately pinnacled and windowed, and although so very florid, is a beautiful and entirely successful feature. The almost wave-washed position of St. Michael's is a startling surprise to the stranger, although the inhabitants

and the congregation take it soberly enough ; as well they may, considering that, although it stands so little removed from high-water mark, and although the salt sea spray of winter's storms flecks its walls, the sea does not appear to have gained the fraction of an inch since the first church arose on this site, in the tenth century. On a wall of this peculiarly seaside place of worship the stranger may read a pathetic story of the sea, in the epitaph to John and Richard Westlake, lost in the foundering of the brig *Isla*, in the storm of October 29th, 1823, "within sight of this church."

St. James's church, the surviving ugly brother, stands commandingly at the crest of the steep rise through the town, at the entrance to Bitton. It is often known as the "round church" because of its central lantern tower, which is octagonal. It is only with a difference I endorse the received opinion among architectural critics that this church of West Teignmouth is so ugly. Architecturally, the lantern-tower and the odd octangular interior additions made nearly a century ago are enormities, but looked at from the lay point of view, the whole mass of the building, while singular, is imposing—and I am afraid the uninstructed public rather like it.

This is almost enough about churches, save for the fact that we are here come, in this beautiful West country, into a deeply religious land, where the Church of England weakens and Dissent takes firm hold.

## CHAPTER XII

### TEIGNMOUTH—THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN—THE TEIGN—LITERARY ASSOCIATIONS

THE further West you go, the more distinctly religious you find the people, and the stronger you find the hold of Dissent upon them. Religion is a very real thing in the West, and the more real it is, the weaker is the hold of the Established Church. Peculiarly strong, among other forms of Dissent, are the Plymouth Brethren in Devonshire, and the Bible Christians in Cornwall.

It should be said at once that "Plymouth Brethren" is only the name by which the world at large knows that body of Christians, who, like the "Friends," whom the world styles "Quakers," do by no means label themselves with any specific title. They are among themselves just "Brethren," and their places of worship are merely the "Brethren's" meeting-rooms. The "Plymouth Brethren," who more closely than any other sect resemble the Quakers, follow the practice of the early Christians, insomuch that all are brothers in Christ; and no dogma made of man, nor any official hierarchy or pastorate, has yet been suffered to obscure that essential fraternity.

The "Plymouth Brethren"—to speak of them by the style which the world has agreed to use—took their origin about 1827, in the workings of conscience of John Nelson Darby and A. N. Groves, who, independently of one another, had arrived at the conclusion that no existing church was firmly based upon the Gospel. Darby, who was at that time twenty-seven years of age, had been educated for the law, but had entered the Church, and was a curate in Ireland when the light that came to him led to his resigning. He was brought into communication with Groves, and in 1830 the first meeting of the "Brethren" was opened, in Dublin. That same year, on a visit to Oxford, Darby was asked to open a meeting at Plymouth, whither he forthwith proceeded and took "Providence Chapel," thus, with the spread of the movement from that town, unwittingly giving a topographical name to the new religious body.

The tenets of the "Brethren" are simple. They rely upon the teaching and the promises of the Gospel, and reject all ecclesiastical forms. Like the Quakers, they have no ministers and no prayer-books. Prayer at meeting is extempore, and offered up when the Spirit moves, by members of the meeting. It is thus, it will be seen, essentially a democratic body, but in practice those whose natural vocation is preaching, missioning and district-visiting become more prominent, and, if they feel they have a call, will obey that call by giving up all worldly occupations. Those with a sufficiency of means of their own, will give them-

selves and their wealth to the work of the Master, and those others who have nothing will devote their lives to the work of spreading the Gospel, visiting the sick, and in general performing the salaried work of a clergyman of the Endowed Church ; all without stipend, without fee or reward asked, suggested, or hinted, except in secret

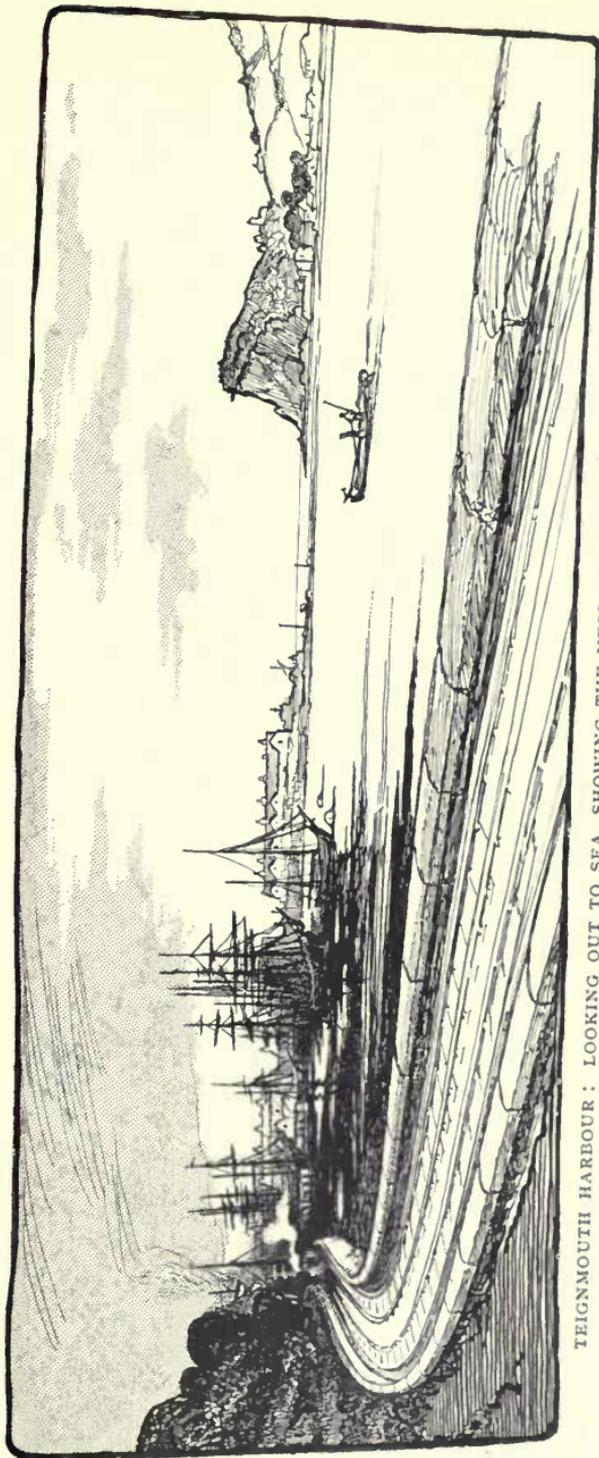


IN THE HARBOUR.

to that One whose work they do. This it is to "live by faith," as they term it. Nor is that faith misplaced. Shall I not, although a sinner, speak of that which I know, and testify to the miracles I have seen wrought in my own generation, by which I am assured of the love of the living God for His servants ?

Those who have once fallen under the spell of Teignmouth are never likely to be freed from it.

You leave, after perhaps the fifth or sixth visit, declaring you have exhausted the place, but you inevitably return, if not next year, in the near future. There is, in fact, something in Teignmouth to please all tastes, and custom never stales it. It enjoys that inestimable advantage in a seaside resort, a tidal estuary ; and round by the sandspit, over against the bold red cliff of the Ness, you come from the somewhat artificial front and its pier and its seats for visitors, to the harbour, where the Teign flows out at the ebb and the sea comes swirling in at the flood, across the shifting sand-bar that from time immemorial has afforded a living for Teignmouth pilots and tug-boats, bringing the craft of strange skippers, ignorant of the state of the channel, safely into the haven. There are no seats, or other such concessions to visitors, in the harbour, but there are boats innumerable for sailing or rowing upon the Teign, and in the deep midstream anchorage to one side of the sandbank called "the Salty," there is generally a tier of foreign barques that have brought deals from Norway, or are to take china-clay to the uttermost parts of the earth. And there are ropes and anchors and much waterside litter, and a fragrant scent of what the sailors call "Stockhollum" tar about the harbour ; and if the visitor does not promptly succeed in tripping over the ropes and chains and anchors, why then he is an exceptional visitor indeed. Fragrant sail-lofts look down upon the water, and old superannuated buoys and other



TEIGNMOUTH HARBOUR : LOOKING OUT TO SEA, SHOWING THE NESS AND SHALDON, AND THE MAIN LINE OF THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

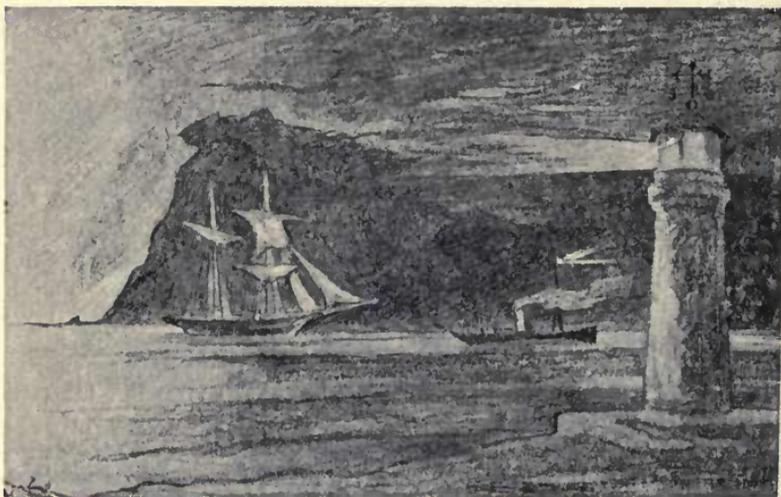


buoys that only want a lick of paint, are drawn up on the sand, and from the open windows of sailors' homes come the voices of parrots, mingled not unmusically with a midstream yo-hoing.

The trade of Teignmouth harbour, after a long period of decay, is in these times looking up, for the South Devon Trading Company has built new quays and sheds, which, like all new things, do not add to the picturesqueness of the spot; but the casual lanes and odd slips remain, with the old quay, and that unconventional inn, "Newbery's Old Quay Hotel," that with every flood-tide dabbles its feet in the water, and with every ebb stands once more upon dry ground, much to the amazement and delight of children. Did I not myself once think the "Old Quay" inn the most desirable of all possible homes!

There is a homeliness in the harbour that draws the visitor away from the exotic front, and it is to the harbour he first resorts when he revisits Teignmouth, for it seems almost to welcome him back. There, up stream, is that hoary old landmark, the long bridge that spans the Teign, which is 1,671 feet in length, and was built in 1827, and is the longest wooden bridge in England. "Further on," as the guide-book says, "are the gas-works." It is only too true, and they might, with advantage to the scenery, be still further on; but in that case they would not get their coal barged cheaply up to the very walls, which everybody knows to be a greater consideration than the preservation of mere scenic amenities.

Away in the misty distance are the tors of Dartmoor, prominent among them Rippon Tor and Heytor Rocks, grey-bearded—as you know when you have visited them—with sage-green lichen, and altogether very reverend and inscrutable. They seem with a grave benevolence to welcome you back.



THE NESS : ENTRANCE TO THE TEIGN.

Above Teignmouth is Haldon, that vast expanse of tableland whose heights we first saw from Exmouth, and whose range—marked on maps “Great Haldon” and “Little”—extends across the whole of the back country between Exe and Teign. He who, in search of fresh air and vigour on some stewing day in the Teign valley, essays to climb from Teignmouth to Little Haldon, comes, very soon after he has set out, and very

long before he has arrived, to the conclusion that the "littleness" of Little Haldon is a misnomer; for the way is long and the road steep. But once there, you are in another and more bracing climate, where the air is keen and charged with the scent of the bracken and the heather that clothe the wild moorland. From Haldon you look one way to the Exe and the other to the Teign, and, standing in one and the selfsame spot, can see both, for it is an exceeding high place. The solitude of it is perhaps intensified to some by the fact of Teignmouth's cemetery being here; but it is a large and a populous place, and to those of us who knew in life many who lie here, this is no solitude. God rest them. The summer sun that shines on Haldon shines no more for them, nor winter storms blow.

Although Teignmouth has its literary and artistic associations, it does by no means obtrude them upon the stranger, who, indeed, only discovers them after some considerable pains, and is perhaps regarded as a little eccentric, for his trouble. Two poets—Winthrop Mackworth Praed, and John Keats—have described the town, and although Praed was not actually born here, the connection with the family was close, the Bitton property belonging to his father, who lies in the churchyard of West Teignmouth. Bitton, in fact, only passed from the Praeds in 1863. The poet was born in 1802 and died in 1839, when member of Parliament for Aylesbury.

There are reasons all-sufficient why Teign-

mouth's poetic associations should not be flaunted. Too great insistence upon Praed would advertise more fully the brutal vandalism permitted of late years at Bitton, when no finger was stirred to save that lovely wooded riverside park from being cut up and demolished, to build cheap houses upon. Bitton was one of the loveliest places upon the Teign. In the words of Praed himself :

"There beamed upon the river side  
 A shady dwelling-place  
 Most beautiful! Upon that spot,  
 Beside the echoing wave,  
 A fairy might have built her grot,  
 An anchorite his grave.  
 The river with its constant fall  
 Came close up to the garden wall,  
 As if it longed, but thought it sin,  
 To look into the charms within.  
 Behind majestic mountains frowned  
 And dark, rich groves were all around."

The "dark, rich groves," were no mere poetic imagery. They were largely ilex, or "evergreen oak," for which streets of the flimsiest houses in close-packed ranks are the sorriest exchange.

Keats, of course, no self-respecting Devonian would mention. He came, himself consumptive, to Teignmouth in 1818, to cheer the last hours of his brother Tom, dying of that disease. Here, lodging at No. 35, Strand, he completed *Endymion* and wrote *Isabella* ; but it was winter and spring at the time of his sojourn, and although spring



KINGSTEIGNTON.

and winter in South Devon are preferable to those seasons elsewhere, he found the moist humours of the rainy West anything but pleasant :

“ You may say what you will of Devonshire : the truth is, it is a splashy, rainy, misty, snowy, foggy, haily, floody, muddy, slipshod county. The hills are very beautiful, when you get a sight of 'em ; the primroses are out, but you are in ; the cliffs are of a fine deep colour, but then the clouds are continually vieing with them. . . . The flowers here wait as naturally for the rain twice a day as mussels do for the tide. This Devonshire is like Lydia Languish, very entertaining when it smiles, but cursedly subject to sympathetic moisture.”

But occasionally the weather was kinder. It does not rain all day and every day in Devon, even in winter ; and during these dry interludes

Keats discovered some of those amazingly many villages that owe their name to the Teign :

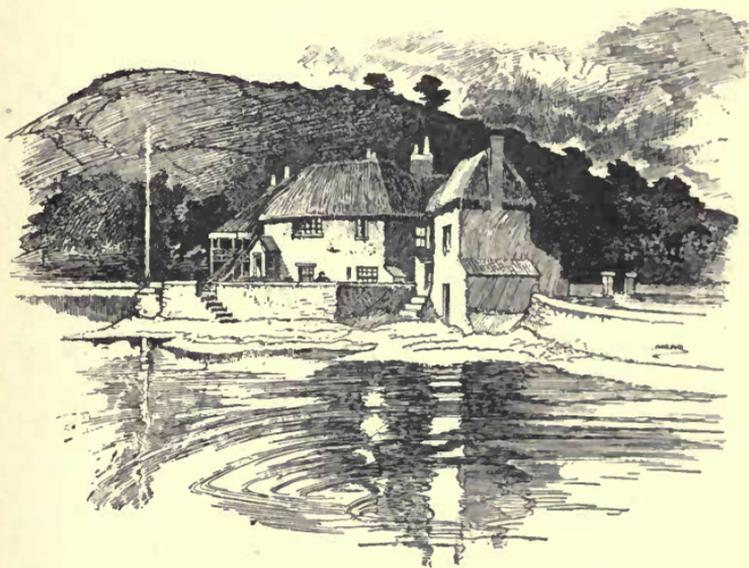
“ There’s Bishop’s Teign,  
 And King’s Teign,  
 And Coombe at the clear Teignhead—  
 Where close by the stream  
 You may have your cream  
 All spread upon barley bread.  
 There is Newton Marsh,  
 With its spear-grass harsh,  
 A pleasant summer level  
 Where the maidens sweet  
 Of the Market Street  
 Do meet in the dusk to revel.”

A poet *en deshabille*. Reduced from poetry to the matter-of-fact nomenclature of the ordnance maps, those places are Bishopsteignton, Kings-teignton, and Coombe-in-Teignhead—the “ Cume-intinny ” of local speech. The poet who might wish to know all the “ Teign ” villages and hamlets, would need to make acquaintance with Teignharvey and Stokeinteignhead, on the salt estuary ; and thence find his way inland, to the back of Newton Abbot, where, beside the fresh-water stream that comes prattling down from Dartmoor he shall find Teigngrace, Canonteign, and Drewsteignton.

For six miles above Teignmouth the Teign runs up salt : a broad estuary at high water : above the bridge an oozy expanse of mingled sand and mud flats at low ; and “ Newton Marsh,” the water-logged meadows just below the market

town and important railway junction of Newton Abbot. Midway is Coombe Cellars, a waterside offshoot of Coombe-in-Teignhead; a place, you perceive, even in Keats' time, it was the recognised thing to visit and—

“ . . . have your cream  
All spread upon barley bread.”



COOMBE CELLARS.

It was then a highly rustic spot; the oddest little promontory jutting out into the stream, and on it the “Ferry Boat” inn, built behind stout sea walls, and itself built of whitewashed cob, and heavily thatched. The “Cellars” were fish cellars, and the place was, and is, oddly amphibious; the inn being half farmhouse and half fisherman’s tavern, the landlord himself a

farmer down to the waist, and a fisherman as to the legs and the sea-boots. At night you would find him out with the trawl-nets, to sea ; at low tide in the morning cockling on the mud-flats off his inn ; and in the afternoon milking the cows or urging the plough in his hillside fields. To take boat from Teignmouth Harbour, and row up on the flood to tea at Coombe Cellars, returning with the ebb, was once a delightful thing, and, with a difference, is so still ; but you must not expect to be the only party there—no, not by a very long way, and you must by no means expect to get your tea, with or without Devonshire junket, strawberries and cream, or cockles, in quite so rustica fashion or at such moderate prices as once obtained. And, although the house remains very much the same as of yore, the thatch has given place to a something less rural.

## CHAPTER XIII

SHALDON—LABRADOR—WATCOMBE—ST. MARY-  
CHURCH—BABBACOMBE

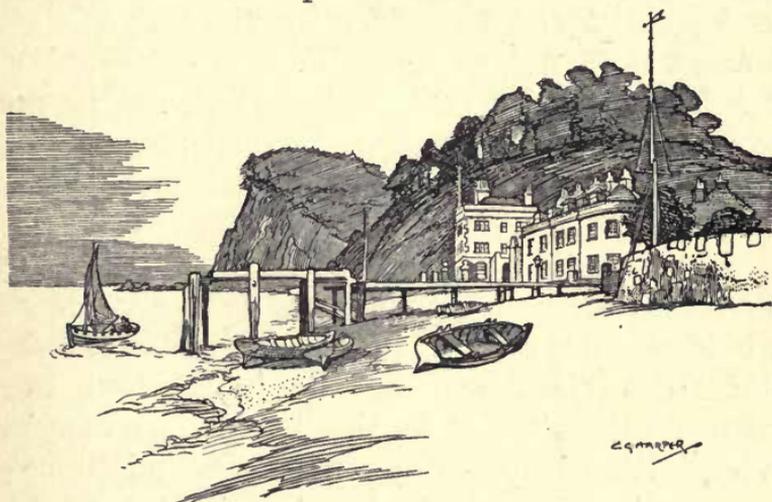
AT the point, just where the river and the sea meet, off the toy lighthouse, is the noblest view of the Ness, the great red bluff that turns a jagged front to the sea, and lifts a shaggy head of firs to the sky. With a dark and oily smoothness that betokens depth and strength of current, the estuary of the Teign empties itself at the ebb, and fills again with feathered spray on yonder rocks. Above Shaldon, opposite, rise the great hills, up whose sides climbs the road to Torquay: hills fertile to their very summits, and remarkable for their subdivision by hedgerows all the way up those staggering gradients. From nowhere better than from Teignmouth can this beautiful and characteristic feature of a Devonshire landscape be seen.

Let us leave Teignmouth here by the ferry-boat, in preference to walking over the long bridge. Both bridge and ferry belong to one company, and the toll each way, by either of them is the same modest penny. The ferry goes from one sandy beach to another, touching the

opposite shore immediately under the roadway, the little forecourt gardens, and the bow-windowed houses of Shaldon, which seems to the stranger the oddest, brightest, cleanest and most quiet of townlets, and for a while puts Teignmouth in the shade. Shaldon, however, is very much of a "dead end," a backwater, or still pool of life, and when the visitors are gone, when the children have deserted the warm sands, and the half-dozen ferry boats that are required in summer are reduced to two; and when nature, with autumn past, frugally turns the lights down until next spring, Shaldon is apt to be dull. But there is always the harbour to look out upon, and Teignmouth across the river; although, to be sure, there is the reverse view of the harbour and of Shaldon from Teignmouth. For myself, I incline to think the outlook upon the harbour and Shaldon and the hills from Teignmouth the best, especially since the appearance on the Bitton estate of those houses you wot of. But this is certain, while human nature remains true to itself: wherever you are not, there you would be, just as, whatever you are doing, you look forward to the doing of something quite different; or else, doing nothing, yearn to be busy, and being busy, long for idleness.

It is a rocky scramble round beyond the Ness to the open sea and Labrador, and no one, fortunately, has yet engineered a neat path that way. For one thing, it would be scarce worth the trouble of doing so while great fragments of rock come hurtling down from the cliff, thrust out by

the frosts and thaws of winter. The way is strewn with these immense pieces of red conglomerate, weighing anything from five to twenty tons ; and those who wear india-rubber shoes and can best imitate the chamois in rock-leaping are those who like best the exploration of the Ness. For others there is that "harvest of the quiet eye" down in the rock-pools that the tide has left,



AT SHALDON.

where, among the trailing seaweeds, the limpet clings with the tightness of a moribund government clinging to power, and only to be removed in the same way ; by the sudden, unexpected blow, like the Parliamentary snap-division ; where transparent things, showing their inwards in the most indelicate way, flit about unconcerned at that publicity, and the hermit-crab justifies his sponsors by hurrying, presto, to some rocky cell when you disturb this little *mare clausum*.

Tumbled rock-heaps, alternating with beaches, lead to the foot of the cliff by whose up-on-end path you breathlessly reach Labrador, a place known to every one who has visited Teignmouth. Local traditions tell how this cottage and garden, half-way up the four hundred feet of cliff, were the work of a retired sea-captain who, settling here from a long career in the Newfoundland trade, christened the place by the name it still bears. I do not suppose he ever contemplated it being converted into a picnic inn, but he *may* have had an eye to a snug little traffic in smuggling, for which in his time it must have been especially adapted.

However that may be, there is no questioning the popularity of Labrador, where teas are provided and swings tempt the giddy-minded, and roses clamber over the house-front in a manner suggestive of Persia and Omar Khayyàm. Why, with leisure—and genius—one might compose another *Rabaiyat* when the tea-takers were gone.

“I reckon,” says one of the soil, whom we meet here and exchange remarks with, “Twize up and down es a gude day’s work,” and it really is a leg-aching job to climb to the top of the cliff, which must be done to gain the Torquay road. South Devon is sleepy, and, experiencing this steepest of paths and hottest of hot corners, the stranger is not surprised. At any time it is possible to sit down and drop into a “bit of a zog”—which is Devonian for a nap.

The Torquay road is inexorably hilly and white and hot, but it looks inland down on to samples of Canaan, where, amid a blue haze of fertility, you see trees and grass more nearly blue than green, among the freshly turned fields that are red. It is a land of fatness. There, down in those folded valleys, is a distant glimpse of the Teign, with the white-faced, yellow-thatched cottages of "Stokeintinny" and "Cumeintinny" enwrapped in an air of prosperity; and here is the ridge-road, like an oven. "Aw! my dear sawls, 'tes tar'ble hot."

Here stands the old toll-house the country folk call "Solomon's Post"; but why? Ah! he who pervades the country asking for the reasons of things is not to be envied. For my part, the likeliest reason of this name is that the tolls on this turnpike-trust may have been farmed by one of those numerous Jews who took up that class of business.

Lanes on the left-hand presently lead down to Minnicombe and Maidencombe, where there are embowered hamlets giving upon the sea; and in another mile yet another leads down to Watcombe. Watcombe is not what it was fifteen years ago. Then a countryfied lane opened out upon a grassy valley dropping to the sea. From the turf there soared aloft the ruddiest of all the ruddy cliffs of South Devon, seamed and seared with the weathering of ages, and as thickly pocketed with holes as a Post Office *poste-restante* rack. The cliff is there, as ever, and the holes,

and the pigeons and jackdaws that inhabit them, but the undergrowth has grown up in dense and tangled masses everywhere, the hedges of the rustic lane have given place to stone walls, and all the pleasant approaches are enclosed in the grounds of somebody's private domain. Confound Somebody, say I: may the dogs defile the grave of his great-great-grandmother. But let us take these outrages as calmly as we may, or not seek to further explore; for the approach to Torquay through Babbacombe and Marychurch is a perfect orgie of Wall. It must have been a difficult and an expensive matter to so successfully shut out the scenery, but it has been so thoroughly done that when you do at last come to the cliff-top of Babbacombe Downs, the lovely clear outlook there over the sea and down to the beach seems, by contrast, like a hole in the wall.

But we anticipate, as the authors of Early Victorian novels were accustomed to remark, and have not finished with Watcombe, which is remarkable for having supplied the Romans with potters'-clay and for providing us moderns with the same material. The Watcombe Terracotta Works, that stand by the high road, were established somewhere about 1875. Their products of statuettes for advertising purposes are sufficiently well-known, and I dare not hazard a guess how many of that famous group, "You Dirty Boy!" the works produced for an eminent firm of soap-makers. When what has been called the "Æsthetic Craze" set in, and all manner of

weird wares, alleged to have some "Art" quality, were thrust upon the public, the Watcombe terracottas were fashioned in the most awkward and "artistic" shapes, and painted with sunflowers and the most abhorrent colours, and in them that good, long-suffering public for a time found artistic salvation. But that was long ago, and the sunflower has wilted and the lily faded away. To-day, rustic humour and Old English models combined, capture the tourist. Puzzle-jugs and scraps of country talk find the readiest sale, and many a holiday-maker takes home with him butter-dishes, jugs, and plates with such legends as "Go aisy with the butter," "Help yo'self to some Demsher crayme," or that noble triolet—

" Du zummat,  
Du gude ef yo can,  
Du zummat."

Beyond Watcombe begins St. Marychurch. At the threshold of that suburb a long lane leads to the left, down to Pettitor, where there are busy quarries of Devon Marble, so greatly in favour with church-furnishers that specimens of it are nowadays to be found in use, not in England only, but in remote parts of the world.

You would not for a moment suspect the Domesday antiquity of St. Marychurch, but it appears in that remarkable work—as a church—the earliest, it is said, in Devon. Rebuilt in 1861, it is now merely one of the many ornate places of worship in which Torquay, with its large, rich

and idle residential classes, greatly priest-ridden, abounds. Only the ancient font, sculptured with a number of engaging devils, remains.

St. Marychurch would probably not produce so much disfavour in the beholder were it not for its natural surroundings. This is a parable, but one easily resolved into a plain statement. The place is, in short, a bad nightmare of plaster. *Quâ* plaster, not so very shocking, but taken in conjunction with the exceptionally lovely nature of the scenery, nothing less than a crime. A wanton, indefensible crime, too, for the neighbourhood abounds with excellent limestone, most suitable for building. I conceive there must be something radically wrong—beyond a mere error of taste—with the generations that will go out of their way to use a short-lived pretence like plaster, when limestone, calculated to last until the universe shall again be thrown into the melting-pot, offers. But there, it is done, and not unless all Torquay itself were razed to the ground, and the place begun anew, could it be remedied. Oddly enough, the first signs of enlightenment in this direction are shown by the various banks, which are being substantially and tastefully built of honest materials.

The long, long streets lead past Furrow Cross, where, turning to the left, along the Babbacombe Down Road, that lovely opening, looking out upon the sea, is disclosed. Here, from the carefully railed-in cliff-edge, one looks sheer down on to the white pebble beaches of Oddicombe

and Babbacombe, with winding walks through luxuriant greenery, leading hundreds of feet down to them. Red cliffs, white beaches, dark blue sea, light blue sky, and the cool green of the vegetation; what a feast of colour is the South Devon Coast! And the abounding growth of flowers and shrubs in the gardens on these heights! Geraniums, putting to shame the best efforts of ivy a-clinging and climbing: fuchsias, making growth like trees, with substantial trunks; veronica shrubs in hedges, the lovely blue masses of the heliotrope-like ceanothus, and others of the acclimatised beauties of the Southern Hemisphere: all these glories are rendered possible by the soft climate, which laps you as in cotton wool, and takes all the energy out of you, and has rendered the folk of Devon the kindly lotus-eaters they are.

## CHAPTER XIV

BABBACOMBE—THE PEASANT SPEECH OF DEVON—  
ANSTEY'S COVE—KENT'S CAVERN

THERE are winding walks as I have said, down to Babbacombe, but for all their circumbendability (what a lovely word that is!) they are so steep that by far the easiest way to descend would be to get down on to your hinder parts, and slide. To those who are not so young as they were, the view down upon the beach of Babbacombe, and upon the roof-tops of its few houses is the better part, for the walking down jolts the internal machinery most confoundedly. Why, there are few more pitiful sights on this earth—which we know, on eminent authority, to be a “wale”—than that of a middle-aged *and* stout gentleman gingerly descending these walks, and sighing with envy as a troop of children dash, whooping, past him. *Their* actions have not yet begun to be regulated by their digestive apparatus!

But for all that indiarubber-like infantile irrepressibility, I have seen a little childish disaster here. It was a fall and a bruise and a scratched face that meant little, after all; but the howls of that child were worthy of an occasion infinitely

more tragical. It were not worth dwelling upon, except that it opened out some rustic Devon talk, when a son of the soil set that injured innocent upon his feet again and said: "Well done! My eymers: 'av 'ee valled down?"

With so much sympathy on tap, my young martyr began to pity himself infinitely, and sobbed



BABBACOMBE.

the more. "Did 'ur, then?" said that kindly comforter: "puir liddle bye, puir liddle bleed. You 'm proper 'urted yo'self, have 'ee. Where's his mammy, then? Where do 'ee live tu? Coom 'ee up-along an' zitte on this zeat," and much else.

The neighbourhood of these exploited seaside towns are, however, not the places, as a general rule, in which to look for such fine sur-

vivals of old Devon talk. The villages and the hamlets are the last homes of it, and, generally speaking, the only times when an indweller hears the Doric is when a servant, fresh-caught from "Dartymoor" or other remote district, comes into residence. Then, indeed, one hears strange phrases. *Then* you learn, if you did not know it before, that in Devon all girls are "maads" and all boys "byes," large or small; or I should say, in the Devon tongue, "gert" or "liddle." In Devon most things that are thorough, or difficult, or to be expressed in terms of bigness or admiration are "proper," and this expression, among some others, is not, like much else of the rustic talk, obsolescent. It is, indeed, common in towns, and seems, like the Devonian soft burring inflection, to be, after a period of disuse, coming back again.

Anything very large is thus said to be "proper gert"; a difficult task is still a "proper chore"; and—although to one not used to the West the propriety of it is not evident—a person helplessly intoxicated is "proper drunk," or "durnk" may even be said; for (as in "gert" for "great") your true West countryman will always, whenever humanly possible, depose the letter "r" from its proper place. He will overcome majestic difficulties in this linguistic way, and will even "urn" instead of "run."

A Devonian never lives "at" a place, only "tu" it; baskets to him are either "flaskets" or "maunds"; he has a staggering way of saying "Well done!" as an exclamation of surprise,

even on the most tragical occasions, so that he has seemed sometimes, to strangers who are not acquainted with this peculiarity, to be callously superhuman or less than human ; which is a libel on the kindly race.

Babbacombe—the real Babbacombe of the beach, not the strange new thing on the cliff-top—is the tiniest of places, with the “Cary Arms” inn, a little stone fishing-pier, a few boats, a fortuitous concourse of lobster-pots, a windlass or two, and a general air of being a natural growth, as indeed it is. It seems remote from the evil passions of the world, but for all that seeming, it was the scene of a dreadful tragedy in 1884, when Miss Keyse, an elderly lady who lived in a picturesquely thatched cottage on the very margin of the beach, was murdered by John Lee, her manservant. He was a young footman, a native of Kingskerswell. The motive was said to have been revenge for the reduction of his wages by sixpence a week. The whole thing is sordid, and one had rather not mention it at all ; only the notoriety of the case compels. Lee saturated the rooms with petroleum and set fire to the house, in the hope of concealing the evidence of his crime, but fortunately the fire was extinguished before it had made sufficient progress, and the marks on the body were discovered and Lee arrested. He was tried, found guilty, sentenced to death, and actually brought to the scaffold at Exeter Gaol ; but there the strange and unparalleled circumstances occurred which saved

him from execution and condemned him to life-long imprisonment instead. Three several times the trap-door on which the condemned man stood refused to fall when the bolt was drawn, although each time, when he was led away, and it was tried, it worked properly. After the third attempt, it was decided, in the interest of the official spectators and of the wretched criminal himself, to prolong the harrowing scene no longer, and Lee was removed to his cell and a report sent to the Home Secretary who first respited him and then commuted the sentence to imprisonment for life.

These are supposed to be materialistic times, when everything is held to have some discoverable natural cause, and the failure of the trap is explained by the wood of it being swollen, and jamming every time a weight was placed upon it. But the affair was so remarkable, that very naturally the whole country was deeply stirred. Those who were present never lightly dismissed the subject, and for one's self, it seems very like God's protest against man's injustice. But we, who were not present and are not thrown off our balance by the dreadful experience, *must* consider that in the long history of the world many innocent persons have been hanged, and Providence stirred no finger on their behalf, while many assassins have escaped the Avenger of Blood. It should be said that local opinion has always been strong in the belief of Lee's guilt.

The house, one is glad to say, exists no longer. Only an outhouse which belonged to it remains,

and the rest of the site is dense with trees and undergrowth. In spite of repeated rumours of his release, Lee is still in prison, nor does it appear likely that he will ever be permitted to go at liberty again.

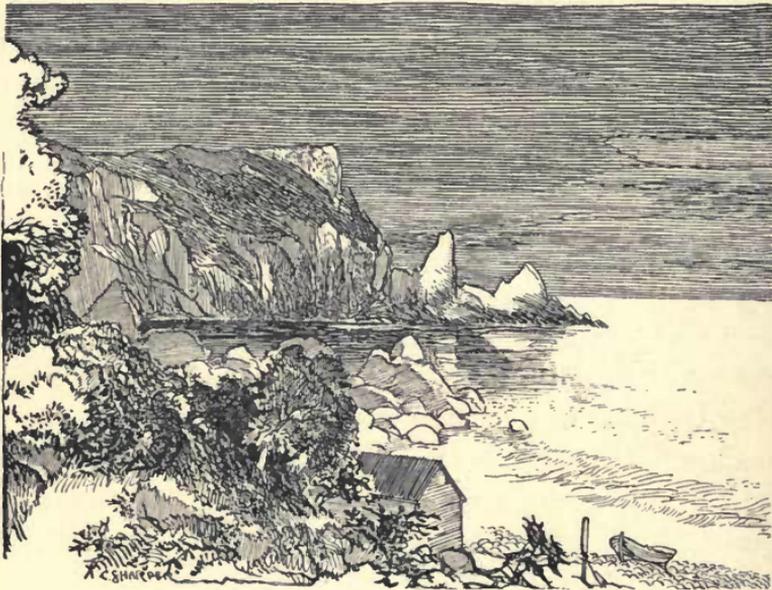
One of the most famous spots on this coast is that to which we now come. Anstey's Cove has been described and pictured times innumerable, and I—ah! me—am going to do it again. The way to the Cove lies in between the inevitable dead walls of the district: *these* the high and solid ones built by Bishop Phillpotts of Exeter some fifty years since, to enclose the grounds of his villa of "Bishopstowe" and keep the public out of all possible glimpses of this paradise: highly characteristic of a bishop.

These walls must have been extremely ugly when newly built, but nature, more kindly than the dignified clergy, has toned down the rawness, assuaged the harsh lines and set a green mantle over the bishop's walls, so that they are now stony cliffs, lichened and moss-grown, rich in tiny ferns, and overhung by tall trees.

The bishop was, like many of the cloth, a man of sarcastic wit; for when a lady, visiting him at Bishopstowe, gushingly exclaimed how like Torquay was to Switzerland, he retorted very neatly with, "Yes, only *there* you have mountains and no sea, and here we have sea and no mountains."

Anstey's Cove is the same as ever: one of the few places that have not changed of late years. Still the path leads down ruggedly to the little

beach of big white marble pebbles, still the hollow is filled with a wild ferny brake and with old thorn-trees, hung, like the liana-choked forest trees of South America, with tangled strands of wild clematis. And although the original Thomas, who, half a century ago supplied picnics with necessaries, has long since assumed his crown



ANSTEY'S COVE.

and robe of white up above, the poetic notice-board written for him still survives, and Thomases of a later generation are to be found in their wooden shanty on the beach, where they continue the traditions—or some of them—of :

“ Picnics supplied with hot water and tea  
At a nice little house down by the sea ;  
Fresh Crabs and Lobsters every day,  
Salmon Peel sometimes, Red Mullet and Grey ;

The neatest of pleasure-boats let out on hire ;  
Fishing Tackle as good as you can desire ;  
Bathing Machines for Ladies are kept,  
With Towels and Gowns, all quite correct.  
Thomas is the man who provides everything :  
And also teaches Young People to swim."

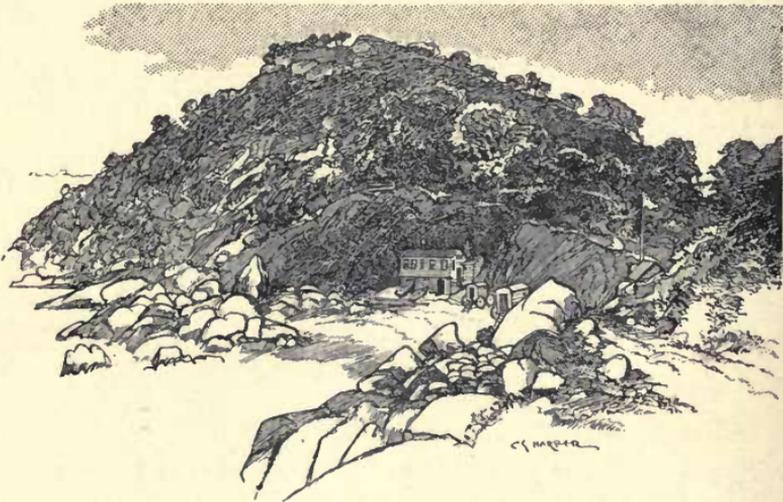
Some enthusiastic scholar has even done this into Latin, and the result is seen on the wooden walls of the shanty.

White limestone pinnacles shut in the eastern side of the Cove, and shade off into pink and red and grey. On the western side a cliff path goes winding round the headland of Hope's Nose and Daddy Hole Plain. The Hole there is a rift in the plateau, and "Daddy," the affectionate name bestowed upon the Devil by local folk, who perhaps did not stop to consider when they did it that they thus proclaimed themselves children of Satan.

On the inland road to Torquay is that famous place, Kent's Cavern, whose prehistoric contents led men of science to wholly revise their ideas of the world's history.

The situation of Kent's Cavern, although only a mile from the centre of Torquay and in the Wellswood suburb, is still semi-rural. A limestone bluff, shaggy with bushes, trees and ivy, rises abruptly to the right of the road, and in the side of it is a locked wooden door, upon which you bang and kick for the guide, who is guide, proprietor, and explorer in one. When he is not guiding, he is engaged in digging and turning over the wet red

earth, alone in the dank lonesomeness with the spirits of prehistoric man and the bones of the extinct animals that ranged the valleys of Torquay when the world was young. The freehold of the famous cavern which ever since 1824 has been the theme of more or less learned geological treatises was recently sold at auction for a trifling sum ; not to an institution or a scientific society but



ANSTEY'S COVE.

to the guide, who has conducted many geological pundits over it, and by consequence has acquired an air of greater omniscience than the most completely all-knowing of those not remarkably modest men of science.

No one really knows who was that Kent whose name the cavern bears. The popular notion that the place was only discovered in modern times is an error, for evidences exist of its being known

through the Middle Ages, down to our own time. The prehistoric remains, and not the cavern itself, are the modern finds, and that there were visitors and curiosity-hunters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is evident in the names scratched on the rocky walls, and still visible through the slowly growing film of stalactite. Thus "William Petre, 1571," writes himself, by the mere fact of his scribbling here, ancestor of the 'Arries of to-day, and of the same glorious company is one who boldly inscribes himself "Robert Hedges of Ireland, Feb. 20, 1688." This was no Irishman, but a Devonshire yeoman from a farm or hamlet called "Ireland," on the other side of Dartmouth.

It remained for modern times to thoroughly explore this natural rift in the limestone. There were several very potent reasons why this should not have been done before. Perhaps a little dread of the unknown was partly the cause; geological science was in its infancy, and in this then solitary neighbourhood there was no one leisured enough, or sufficiently interested, to investigate.

It was in 1824 that Mr. Northmoore first broke into the stalagmite floor which to a depth of three inches formed a continuous covering, like concrete, to the red clay and its deposits of flint implements, charred bones, and relics of the hyæna, mammoth, reindeer, bison, bear, wild cat, and a host of other animals utterly extinct.

Above these relics of an almost incredible antiquity was a layer of black earth containing remains of the British and Roman periods, odds and

ends of whetstones, spindle-wheels, bone awls and chisels, amber beads, bronze rings, pieces of Samian pottery, and cakes of smelted copper, intermingled with shells of sea-fish and bones of pigs, sheep, rats, rabbits, and birds ; the discarded things of periods of occupation ranging from two thousand years ago ; but, compared with the deposits of from ten to twenty thousand years earlier, beneath the stalagmite flooring, things merely of yester-year.

Northmoore's discoveries, however, were few in comparison with those of the Rev. J. MacEnery, who, as Roman Catholic chaplain at Tor Abbey, had abundant leisure, and devoted three years, from 1825, to explorations here. He saw a sight that would have doubtless roused a dentist to wildest enthusiasm. Nothing less than "the finest fossil teeth I had ever seen." He was followed by Pengelly, and by the long series of researches by the British Association, extending from 1864 to 1880, which resulted in the almost complete stripping of the cavern ; so that we who explore Kent's Cavern, the home of Prehistoric Man, to-day are very much in the position of visitors to a house that has had the brokers in, or a museum whose exhibits have been nearly all removed.

But there are still remains discovered which recall Pengelly's description of the cave being tenanted at the same period both by men and wild animals ; the cave-men going forth to fish or hunt and the hyænas looking in during their absence for anything worth picking up. And there are things

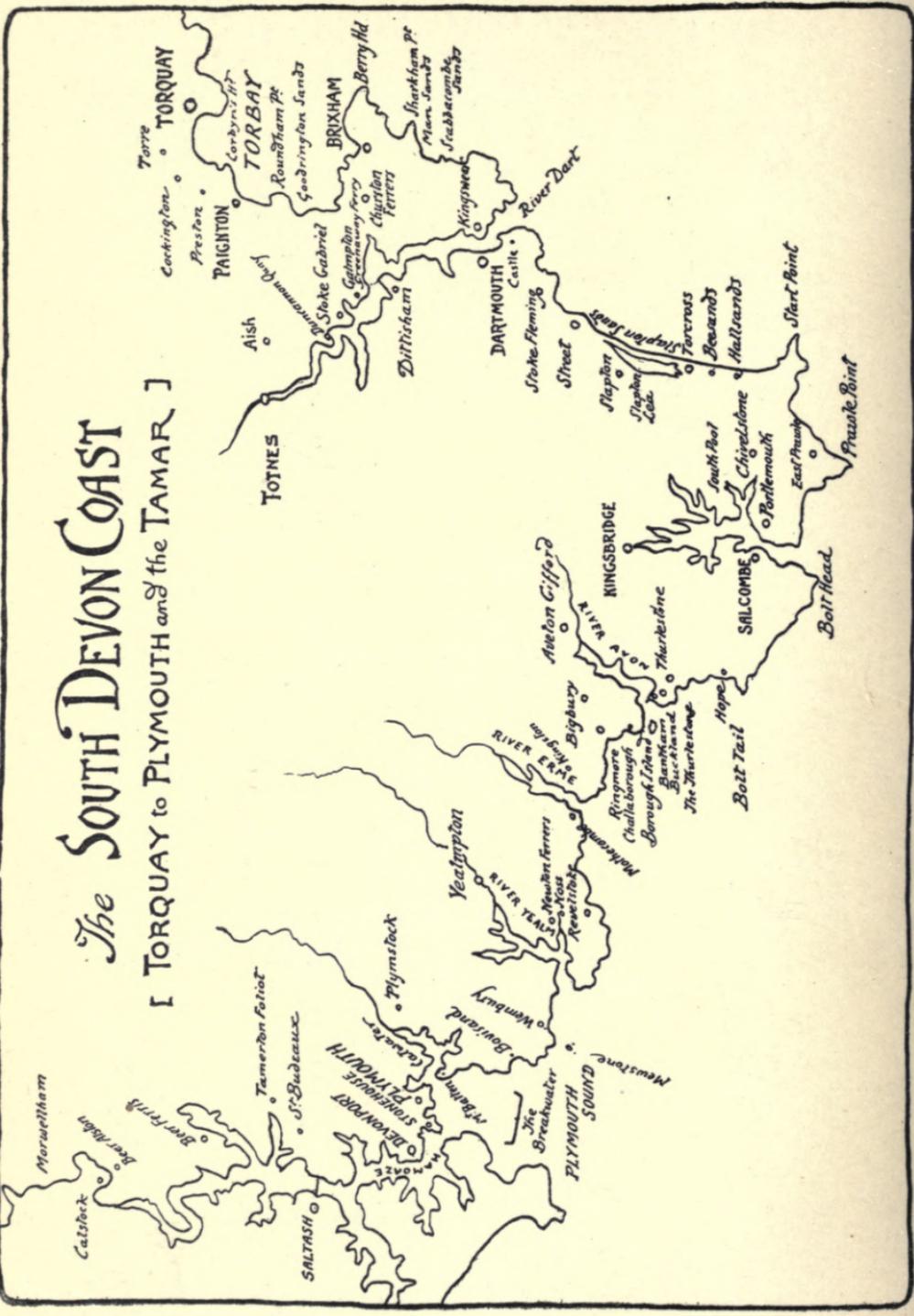
belonging to remote geological periods which are of those discoveries that first upset the chronology of the Book of Genesis and gave staggering shocks to believers in the absolute literal accuracy of the Bible : teeth of wild animals, not merely in the deposits of the floor, but embedded in the limestone rock overhead. Who shall put a date to these ?

And here, at our elbow all the while, is the guide, complacently pointing to all these things ; lighting flares which disclose the roof, and playing scales with sticks on metallic-sounding stalactites that have been forming with incredible slowness, perhaps an inch in a thousand years, just to be made a show of. The best of all the stalactites is broken. It began to be formed when the world was young. It grew and grew with the drops of water, charged with lime, percolating from the roof, and being met by its fellow stalagmite with equal slowness rising from the floor. And stalactite and stalagmite had nearly met, and only wanted another three or four centuries to bridge the remaining interval of an eighth of an inch, when a visitor, falling accidentally against them, broke them off !

“ What did you say ? ” one, with pardonable curiosity, asks the guide, and “ What *could* you say ? ” says he ; and when you consider it, *what* is there that would be equal to that tremendous occasion ?

# The SOUTH DEVON COAST

[ TORQUAY to PLYMOUTH and the TAMAR ]



Torre  
Cockington  
PAIGNTON  
Aish  
Totnes

TORBAY  
Roundham Pt  
Goodrington Sands  
BRIXHAM

Berry Id  
Shoekham Pt  
Mear Sands  
Stabbacombe Sands  
Kingsweat  
River Dart

DARTMOUTH  
Castle  
Stoke Fleming  
Street

Slapton  
Slapton Lea  
Torrus  
Beacandy  
Haltwards

Start Point  
Praske Point  
East Prusky

KINGSBRIDGE

South Pool  
Chigelsione

SALCOMBE  
Bolt Head

Aveton Gifford  
RIVER AVON

Thurkstone  
The Thurkstone

Bolt Tail  
Nope

Bigbury  
RIVER ERME

Ringmore  
Chaliborough  
Borough Island  
Buckham

Yeaston  
RIVER TAMAR

Newton Ferris  
New-Koss  
Newtish

Plymstock

Wembury  
Bourton

The Breakwater  
PLYMOUTH SOUND

PLYMOUTH

STANHOPE

DEENPORT

Tamerdon Foliot  
St-Budeaux

SALTASH

Catslock

Murwellham  
Bierston

## CHAPTER XV

### ILSHAM GRANGE—MEADFOOT—TORQUAY

IN this quiet and wooded nook near Kent's Cavern, tucked away from the octopus arms of Torquay, is Ilsham Grange, a chance survival of those old times when Tor Abbey ruled the roast in these parts. Everything here was then agricultural. Not even a village, only the monks' farm, relieved the solitude. Traces of those old farmers remain in the grey turret in the farmyard, where the pigeons flutter and the pigs grunt contentedly, blissfully unconscious of what pork, ham, and bacon mean. In this turret, now with the floors gone, Brother this, that, or t'other, sent over from the Abbey round the headland, lodged, and ruled from it the *conversi*, or lay-brothers, whose business it was to conduct the practical farming and to be as the Children of Gibeon, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the community.

From Ilsham you come, over the hill, to Meadfoot, a particularly noble bay, where the road is protected from the sea by a wall calculated to make a builder of cheap houses and nine-inch party-walls faint with horror at so prodigal a use of material. I do not know exactly *how* thick the

Meadfoot sea-wall is, but a wheeled conveyance could be driven along it, if it were not so rough. And the roughness of these rudely quarried, undressed rocky boulders is just the fitting character for the spot ; which is, as I have said, a very noble piece of coast-scenery indeed, rough-hewed by nature in the large, and coloured by her in the rich and sober hues of the rocks, alternating with the brighter tints of sea and grass. Great islanded rocks stand off-shore, glooming over the blue sea like ogreish strongholds : the black monstrous forms of the Ore Stone and the Thatcher Rock, with the smaller Shag Rock close in, and a scatter of reefs just off the sands.

Near by, but hidden from view by its enclosing grounds, is that semicircular group of villa residences, Hesketh Crescent, built, some forty years ago, on the model of the classic terraces of Bath and Buxton. Little postern gates lead from the grounds on to the road at Meadfoot, and from them the early riser on summer mornings may observe strange figures, clad in gorgeous dressing-gowns, shuffling in bath slippers to the sea, the bright sunshine making heliographs of their bald and shining pates. It all looks like some newer version of *Robinson Crusoe*, or the *Swiss Family Robinson* ; but these old gentlemen are only the retired generals and colonels of Hesketh Crescent, out for their morning dip, and are so little like marooned inhabitants of uncivilised isles that they will presently enter their postern-gates again, and go home to breakfast and the morning paper, over



MEADFOOT, AND THE ORE STONE AND THATCHER ROCK.



which they will with fervour and unction damn the War Office and the Army from head to foot—a valued privilege denied to Robinson Crusoe.

The entrance to the awful sanctities of Hesketh Crescent is passed on the ascent from Meadfoot into Torquay ; but the Crescent is not what it was, and boards, actually proclaiming houses to let, disfigure the proprieties of its threshold. As a matter of fact, the taste—or rather, the fashion—which obtained when Hesketh Crescent was built has wholly changed, and residents by the seaside are no longer content to live in a continuous row of houses. It is an unavoidable condition in great towns, but most undesirable for a place like Torquay, whose ideal is detachment, and whose chief feature, in the residential districts, away from the business centre, is the multitude of discreet villas, each enclosed in its grounds, behind masonry walls and shrubberies. If these villas were situated near the Regent's Park district of London, the discretion of encompassing walls and screening shrubberies would be referred to motives not here to be discussed, but Torquay being what it is, these features are but marks of the strictly proper seclusion that is an essential feature of its existence ; an emotionless existence punctuated by the visits of gibbering curates and the meetings of Dorcas Societies.

Nothing is more remarkable in the later history of Torquay than the number of " literary landmarks " and associations it has gathered to itself ; more particularly associations connected

with the spinster lady authors of improving stories. Torquay, of course, is not merely the place for invalid visitors in the winter, but a place of residence for many delicate persons to whom its genial warmth is the very breath of life. It would seem that when contemplative persons of a certain fragility seek a permanent home, they come to Torquay and write stories like *Christy's Old Organ* and *Jessica's First Prayer*. At any rate, the remarkable little shilling book, *Literary Landmarks of Torquay*, by Mr. W. J. Roberts, discovers an amazing number of literary associations, with Charles Kingsley, P. H. Gosse, W. E. Norris, and Eden Phillpotts at their head, and a regiment of ladies bringing up the rear.

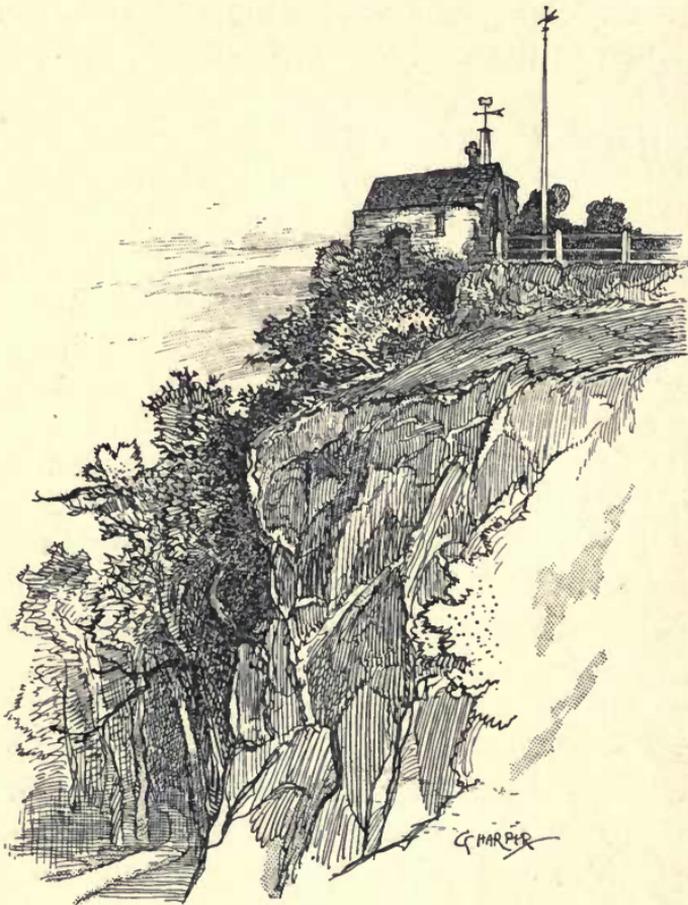
The seven hills—or more—on which Torquay is built are dotted plentifully with the largest and finest of these quiet villas, and the hollows in between are cut up into winding roads, where the stranger may speedily lose his bearings. If you consult a plan of Torquay, it will be perceived that the roads of its residential districts are like so many vermiculations, returning upon one another and intertwining almost with the intricacy of whorls in a Celtic design. It must have been far easier to find one's way about the site of Torquay a century ago than now, and in many respects it was surely a more desirable place. From existing records one may form a very exact picture of it, say in 1815, when the long-dreaded "Boney," for many years a figure of terror to hundreds of thousands of Englishmen, was brought captive

on the *Bellerophon* into Tor Bay, to be revealed to the gaping hundreds who put off in boats to see him, as merely a little fat man, clean-shaven, melancholy, and obviously unwell, mildly pacing the quarter-deck, and saying unexpectedly complimentary things about the scenery and the climate.

Its inhabitants then numbered about fifteen hundred, chiefly fishermen and the wives and families of naval officers, who, anchoring from time to time in the safe and roomy anchorage of Tor Bay, had first "discovered" the place. It was then still little more than that Quay at the foot of the hills (or "Tors") it had been when William of Orange landed at Brixham, in 1688; and the fine old residence of Tor Abbey, seat then as now of the Carys, was the only considerable place in the neighbourhood. The hill-tops were yet in a state of nature, except the crest of Chapel Hill, where the little chapel of St. Michael formed a notable landmark for sailors. This was, according to legend, the offering of some ancient mariner, and displayed a beacon-light at night, to guide shipping safely into the bay. The ancient chapel, one of the smallest in England, measuring only thirty-six feet in length, remains to this day, two hundred and seventy feet above the sea, at the modern suburb of Torre, and is part of the borough meteorological station.

The Carys had so long been seated by the shores of Tor Bay, in the halls of the discredited and dispossessed monks, that they had lost all

sense of the trend of affairs, and were utterly unimaginative; and accordingly when in 1786 Sir Robert Palk, retiring wondrously enriched



THE ANCIENT CHAPEL OF ST. MICHAEL, TORRE.

from the governorship of Madras, and with an £80,000 legacy into the bargain, purchased Tormoham Manor, they made no attempt to outbid him. To the changed times and to the

Palk family Torquay owes its growth. Tor Bay had in all those bygone centuries been a lovely solitude, for in the warlike ages, when fire and sword swept even sheltered spots like Dartmouth, snugly hidden behind a difficult entrance, an open strand was too dangerous a place to settle upon; but Sir Robert Palk early perceived changed conditions and made his account with them, and in due time his son, Sir Lawrence Palk, succeeded him and built the first harbour. The inevitable consequence of the Palk activities and of the changed condition of affairs was that the town of Torquay sprang into vigorous existence, and the further and equally obvious consequence of the Palks becoming great as ground-landlords was that in the fulness of time they were raised from baronets to be barons; Sir Lawrence Hesketh Palk, fifth baronet, being in 1880, in his thirty-fourth year, raised to the peerage as Baron Haldon. I can quite distinctly hear gnashings of teeth and imprecations at lost opportunities from the direction of Tor Abbey, echoing down the alleys of the years.

Torquay was built when the Italian villa fashion prevailed in the land. It was a favourable spot for such an experiment. Look back upon those terraced and rock-girt hills from this kindly distance of the harbour, and the Italianate character of the scenery, in its brilliant colouring and bold and picturesque outline, is obvious, and from this remove quite a number of those villas deceptively resemble in outline the marble palazzos

of Florence, of Venice or Bologna. But close at hand they are no more Italian than an Italian warehouse," which we all know to be a parabolic description of an oil and colour shop.

And now Torquay has acquired a Mayor and Corporation, with town arms and a crest and the advertising motto, *Salus et Felicitas*, and ought to *be* happy as well as healthful, as per motto: even though that motto does, when spoken, suggest "sailors and solicitors." But no! Torquay has since learned that these luxuries are expensive; in the facts that while, when the town was incorporated, in 1892, there were then but twenty-one officials, whose salaries amounted to £2,413, there are now thirty-nine, who draw £5,495.

Presently there will be electric tramways at Torquay! Conceive it, all ye who know the town. Could there be anything more suicidal than to introduce such hustling methods into Lotos-land?

I observe that, according to a handbook advertising the attractions of Torquay, while its winters are mild, its summers are cool, and that "the maximum mean annual temperature is 56·7°, and the minimum 45°." Also it appears that "the thermometer in the shade seldom rises to 70°." I must, therefore, be mistaken in supposing that in August I have frequently observed it, in the Strand, and on the spot eloquently known as "the Gridiron," to be twenty degrees higher, and the Lord only knows what

phenomenal heights in the sun. Under the same extraordinary illusion, yucca, bamboo, palms, eucalyptus, and other tropical plants flourish in the beautiful rock-walks along the Torbay road, and the fuchsia grows in the likeness of trees.

There are many who think Torquay looks its best on moonlit summer nights, when the lights in hill-top villas seem to vie with the stars, and the search-lights of naval leviathans in the bay send inquisitive beams along the shore or, adventuring higher, surprise fair maids in their bedrooms and make them blush.

## CHAPTER XVI

### BRIXHAM—LANDING OF WILLIAM OF ORANGE

ALONG the curving shores you come, past Tor Abbey Sands, Livermead, and the little red knob of Corbyn's Head, with a hole in the rock like an eye, to Paignton. The reason for Paignton's modern existence as a populous seaside town is found in its excellent sands and safe bathing, Torquay itself lacking any but the most meagre foreshore, and the tides coming up to its sea-walls. The best feature of Paignton is, after all, an extraneous thing: the lovely view from it of Torquay. In the old days, when Paignton was merely a village of cob-built and thatched cottages, grouped at hazard round the large, ancient and beautiful church, it must have been well worthy an artist's attention—but that day was long since done, and Paignton is now merely a modern town, built on a flat site, with a conventional pier, public gardens, and band stand, and a weird freak building on the edge of the sands, known as Redcliffe Towers, or sometimes as "Smith's Folly"; the Colonel Smith who built it many years ago apparently taking as models for his eccentric residence the round

tower of Windsor Castle and the would-be Oriental monstrosities of the Pavilion at Brighton. The result is that it looks a kind of poor relation of both.

Being a good deal more recent than Torquay, Paignton is not so stucco-smothered; and its villas and the buildings of its very busy and smart chief street are largely in brick and terracotta.

The exceptionally beautiful church, which, however, is sadly hidden away amid these later developments, is due to Paignton having been the site of a Bishop's palace. A few ruins only of that palace remain, with a romantic-looking tower, in which according to a picturesque legend, Miles Coverdale translated the Bible.

At the secluded sands of Goodrington and Elbury Cove, that look perhaps their best from the trains that hurry by, the traveller bids farewell to the red rocks of Devon, and comes into the regions of limestone and slate. The way leads on to Brixham: the railway itself proceeding to Kingswear, opposite Dartmouth, and throwing off at "Churston Junction" a little two-mile branch to the heights above Brixham town. All day and every day a short train shuttlecocks those two miles, the engine pulling one way and pushing another. If there be any three persons better qualified above their fellows to speak of monotony, they must surely be the engine-driver, stoker, and guard of this train.

The little terminus, so high above the town,

smells like a fish-shop, for Brixham is pre-eminently in Devon the place of fish, and great



MILES COVERDALE'S TOWER, PAIGNTON.

trainloads go forth every day. You look astonishingly down upon roof-tops from this place.

Down there is Brixham, perched with seeming precariousness along the steeply sloping sides of the hills overlooking the pool that forms its

crowded harbour. To those who have never seen the fisher towns of Cornwall it is an amazing place : those who know the Cornish coast realise that this is the first of the true West Country fishing harbours, and it seems to them to have strayed over into Devon by mistake. To speak by the card, the "Brixham" of modern speech is strictly "Brixham Quay," and Higher Brixham, away up-along, on the high table-land, is the real original Brixham ; but Brixham Quay long since supplanted the original place in importance. It is by far the largest and busiest fishing-port in Devon, and as different from Torquay in character as chalk proverbially is from cheese, marching-boots from patent-leathers, salt from sugar, or any other picturesque and striking antithesis you can think of. In Torquay you commonly hear Brixham spoken of as a "dirty, stinking hole" and by similar terms, the reverse of endearing, but while we may not deny it to be that, it is that and something more. It is natural, and characteristic of the real old seafaring and fishing life of this coast, and Torquay, however delightful, is not. Torquay and all "seaside resorts" are excrescences, and utterly uncharacteristic of the real indigenous life. No artist would choose to paint or sketch Torquay and its delightful but pictorially impossible villas, and smart but artistically desolating visitors ; but Brixham is an artistic paradise. It is dirty but natural, smelly but picturesque at every turn. An excellent opportunity offers here, had we the leisure, for a

philosophic disquisition on the delightfully picturesque qualities of dirt and untidiness, and the negation, artistically, of order and sanitation. Because of its wallowing in fish-offal and its generally rough-and-ready ways, Brixham is no place for the visitor, as generally understood; but artists rejoice in it and its ways.

It must by no means be understood that the houses of Brixham are picturesque. They are nothing of the kind, being simply gaunt, stark unlovely structures of cob, or stone, or lath and plaster, as the case may be, generally stuccoed and slate-roofed; with a resultant effect of grey-ness. But they are arrayed in such amazing tiers of terraces, one above the other, and are huddled so nearly together, and hang so closely over the harbour that the general effect is highly picturesque.

Brixham changes little, and appears to be very much as P. H. Gosse, visiting it in 1853, found it; "close, mean and dirty," with "refinements of filth" which he had never seen paralleled. One feels quite sorry for that distinguished naturalist; but on the shore, at low water, under the stones, he found *Trochus ziziphinus* numerously, which seems to have been some consolation. One feels irresistibly tempted to suggest that, had he stayed at Brixham the night, he might also have found *pulex irritans*, at the least of it, which would not have been so satisfactory.

It was to this fishy place that William, Prince of

Orange, came on November 5th, 1688, intent upon saving the liberties of England from extinction at the hands of his bigoted father-in-law, James the Second. The "Protestant Deliverer" came invited and welcomed by the majority of Englishmen, for the country was so shiftless that it could not make out to save itself; and, because of the mutual jealousies that would have forbidden the success of any rising headed by one of our own, must needs call in the cold, silent Dutchman, whom none loved. One's sympathies are distinctly with the debonnair Duke of Monmouth, whose rebellion had ended so disastrously, three years earlier.

The Hollander preparations for this invasion were great, and spread over a considerable period of time; and there was, moreover, no secret made of them. The flotilla gathered together for the enterprise consisted of fifty men-o'-war, and over five hundred transports, carrying an army of fourteen thousand men. It was thus not very much the inferior in strength to that of the great Armada itself. It waited long in the harbour of Helvoetsluys, attendant upon the wind, which had been blowing steadily in an unfavourable direction. At last, October 16th, it changed from west to east, and the hour seemed to have come. The prince took leave of the States-General, which wept copiously over him; while he remained, as was his wont, grave and phlegmatic, only recommending the princess to their care, should anything happen to him.

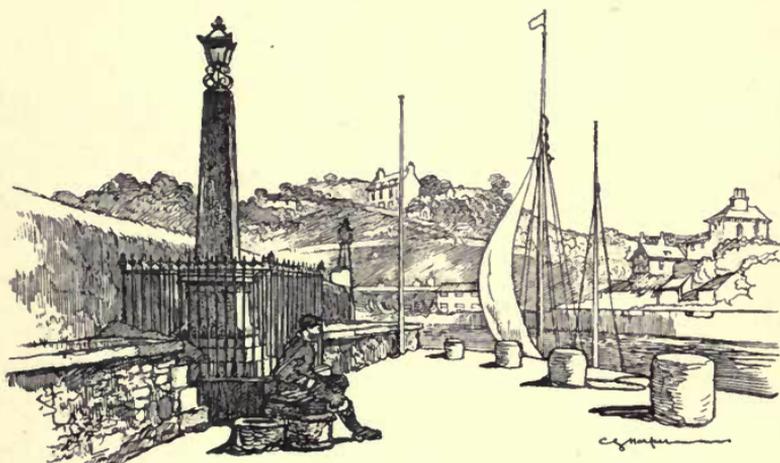
The great fleet sailed on the 19th, but the next day the wind changed to north, and then worked round with violent gales from the west, so that, in distress, they were obliged to put back to port. No vessels were lost, and only one man was drowned, but five hundred horses died.

The States at once gave orders for the replenishing of all stores, the princess, for her part, ordered prayers four times daily, and at last, on the evening of November 1st, the fleet again put forth, with an east wind. The original idea was to have landed in the mouth of the Humber, and it must have seemed, to many of the Englishmen who accompanied the expedition, an ill-omen that they were carried down channel into that identical West Country which had proved so fatal to Monmouth.

The English fleet was assembled, watchful, at the mouth of the Thames, but unable, in the teeth of the east wind, to emerge; and saw, with helplessness, the great concourse of ships go, full sail, down channel. Despite the fears of those who looked upon the west as ominous of ill, the elements were thus working for the success of William, who thus, unchallenged, arrived off the coast of Devon. Arrived there, the more timorous began to fear being carried too far west to Plymouth, or beyond, from which the intended march to the capital, along the heavy roads of autumn, would be a toilsome and hazardous undertaking.

But all things made for success, and, arrived in

Torbay on the night of November 4th, the easterly wind ceased and changed to soft breezes from the south. The next morning the landing began, in this harbour of Brixham. It was November 5th, the auspicious anniversary of the famous failure of the Popish "Gunpowder Treason and Plot," and the bells of Brixham rang out joyously, to celebrate History made, and History in the making.



OBELISK MARKING THE SPOT WHERE WILLIAM OF ORANGE LANDED.

Brixham Quay was then just a quay, and little else. The crowded houses of this later age were represented only by a few scattered fishcellars and sheds, and in place of the stone piers and artificial harbour we now see was merely a pool formed by nature, unassisted by art.

Many legends of this landing survive at Brixham. One tells how the prince, standing in the boat that brought him towards the shore, exclaimed in the best English he could command,

to the people who crowded the quay, " Mine goot beoble, I mean you goot, I am come here for your goot—for all your goots " ; but I think that is suspiciously like one of the famous Ben Trovato's stories, and it certainly has been told of other aliens coming to these shores. The legends then go on to tell how the prince asked if he were welcome, and being assured of the fact replied that, if he were really welcome, they should come and fetch him ; which means no more than that there were then no stairs to the water, and that, if a fine gentleman wished to land dry and clean, he must needs be carried ashore.

One Peter Varwell, a fisherman, described as a short, thick-set little man, then jumped into the water and carried the Deliverer to land. We are not told how the Duke of Schomberg and Bishop Burnet, among other great ones, came ashore ; I am afraid they had to hoof it through the water and the fish-offal. But when Burnet *did* set foot upon the quay, the prince, turning to him and taking his hand, asked if he did not believe now, more than ever, in predestination. This was by way of a gentle rebuke to that distinguished Churchman's want of faith during the preparations for the expedition, when at every mischance he had dejectedly said the enterprise seemed to be predestined to failure.

## CHAPTER XVII

### LANDING OF WILLIAM OF ORANGE

THE landing was completed in three hours, without a hitch and was followed by divine service on the beach, concluded by all the troops singing the 118th Psalm, which is at once a psalm of thanksgiving for mercies received, and a bidding for others. Reading it, you conceive the Psalmist as timorously thankful, buoyed up by faith to a certain degree, and yet horribly frightened; and thus, there can be no doubt, it was highly appropriate to the situation in which all at that moment found themselves. We may, perhaps, suspect that the eighth verse, which deprecates confidence being put in princes, was omitted for this occasion.

An absurd story tells us that the inhabitants of Brixham (or "Broxholme," as the Dutch called it), presented an address to the prince, in this form :

"And please your majesty, King William,  
You're welcome to Brixham Quay,  
To eat buckhorn, and drink bohea  
Along with we  
And please your majesty, King William."

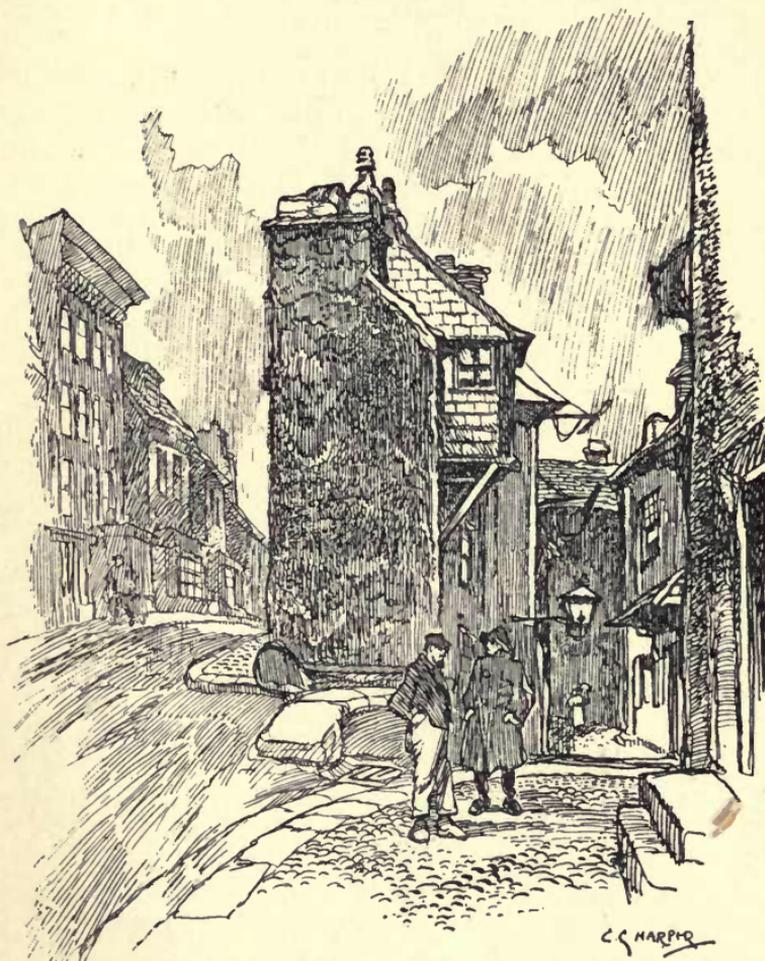
The individually quite sufficient objections to this are that the prince was not yet acknowledged king, and that tea was then unknown at Brixham ; and in any case, it would have been an expensive luxury far beyond the reach of fisherfolk. What "buckhorn" may have been is a mystery not revealed to the present generation.

The place was thronged that day and night with the expeditionary force, and the landlord of the one inn that then sufficed for the thirst of the whole community—it was probably the "Buller's Arms," quite recently rebuilt—was, according to the diarist who recorded all these things, so puffed up with the honour of serving so many lords that he almost imagined himself to be one.

William himself was lodged in the house, still standing in Middle Street, the home of the little man, Varwell, who afterwards marched with the army on to Exeter, and was promised a reward for his services. Unhappy Varwell ! He went later, to London, and fell to gossiping with strangers in a tavern, with the result that they drugged him and sent one of their confederates to Whitehall to claim the promised recompense. He was paid a hundred guineas, and when the real Varwell put in an appearance, he was not only sent empty away, but received a good thrashing as well.

William's army, having camped in the fields overnight, marched from Brixham about noon on November 6th, in very rainy weather and along

bad roads. They made but four miles that day, and halted the night at Paignton, where tradition



THE HOUSE WHERE WILLIAM OF ORANGE SLEPT.

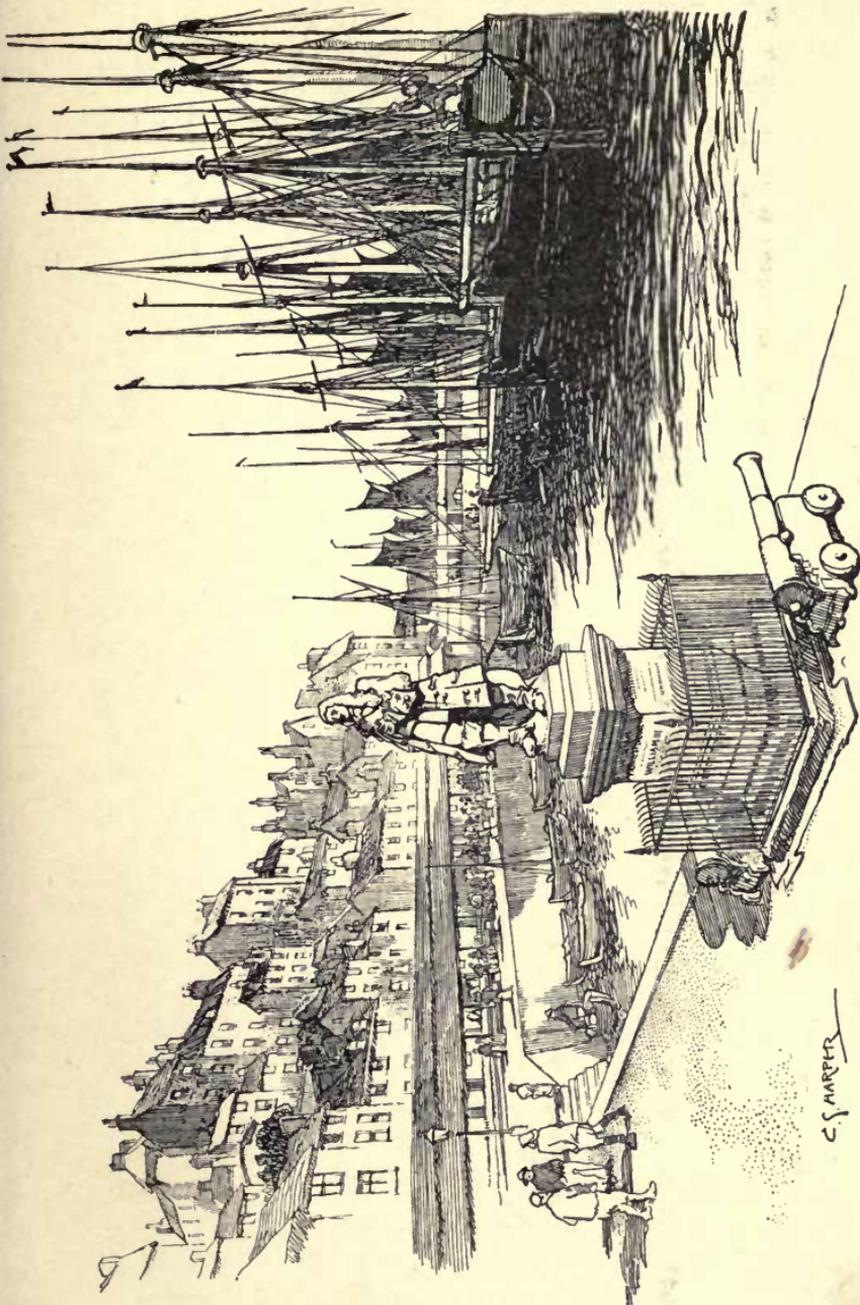
says William slept at the "Crown and Sceptre," within sight of that old red sandstone tower in which, according to another tradition, Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, another sturdy

Protestant protagonist, had translated the Bible.

Meanwhile William had been receiving assurances of support from influential personages. Nicholas Roope, of Dartmouth, was the first considerable person to join him. But others exhibited a not unnatural timidity and caution. Memories of the ferocious revenge taken upon the sympathisers with Monmouth, three years earlier, were keen, and the influential and the great did their negotiation as secretly as might be. That is why records of those early days are so scarce and traditions are our only resort.

The greatest and the proudest personage then in the neighbourhood of Brixham was Sir Edward Seymour, of Berry Pomeroy Castle. He it was who, when William asked if he were not of the family of the Duke of Somerset, replied: "Pardon me, the Duke of Somerset is of my family." There you see the head of the original stock venting his spleen on the younger branch of the Seymours, upon whom the accident of fate had bestowed a proud title, while the elder was fobbed off with a mere knighthood.

Sir Edward joined the Prince of Orange at Exeter, when it was tolerably clear to most people that the cause of James was lost; but when the Prince was but newly landed, that cautious Sir Edward, and a number of equally cautious gentlemen with him, met him secretly at Aish, a lonely, out-of-the-way hamlet between Brixham and Totnes, to discuss the support to be given.



BRIXHAM HARBOUR : STATUE OF WILLIAM THE THIRD.

C. S. MARPES



The cottage where they met is still standing, and is called "Parliament House," while all the country-folk know the road to it by the name of "Parliament Lane."

That caution was very noticeable, all the way to Exeter. When William came to Newton Abbot, and stayed at Ford House two nights, Sir William Courtenay, the owner, although he left directions that the prince was to be hospitably entertained, found it convenient to be elsewhere on urgent business that would brook no delay, and when the clergyman at Newton handed over the keys of the church, in order that the bells might be rung in honour of the proclamation in the market-place, of the Prince as King William the Third, he made it clear, *pro formâ*, that he only relinquished those keys on compulsion.

There is some curious food for the whimsical mind in the fact that the Prince of Orange should have crossed the river Lemon, on his way past Newton Abbot; and there is ample room for criticism of the inscription on the famous Proclamation Stone in Newton Abbot market-place, in which it is stated that the Rev. John Reynell proclaimed the Protestant Deliverer there, November 5th. Reynell—the clergyman who was so cautious as to hand over the keys of the church only "on compulsion"—was not a man rash enough to proclaim any king who might presently become a fugitive, and thereby possibly find himself arraigned before the ferocious Jeffreys. No: Reynell did not proclaim the new king. It was

probably Dr. Burnet—who accompanied the expedition—who did so, and certainly not before November 7th. Meanwhile, we will leave William to march on to Exeter and thence to London, where he arrived December 18th.

The stone on which William's foot rested on his landing has been jealously preserved, but it has been moved about overmuch. The landing was on the site of the present fishmarket, and there the obelisk partly enclosing the stone was first erected; but when another William—the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William the Fourth—came ashore at Brixham in 1828, it was removed to its present position, on what was then called the New Quay. The weird passion for utility that characterises Englishmen, and has spoiled so many monuments, has caused this obelisk to be crowned with a gas-lamp.

It was left to modern times to fitly commemorate this great event in our history, for on the two hundredth anniversary the marble statue of the king that now forms so striking a feature of the harbour was erected. He is represented at the moment of his stepping ashore and, hand to heart, declaring, "The liberties of England and the Protestant religion I will maintain."

Those who gaze upon the statue and pronounce the face of it ugly forget that William was not handsome. He was consumptive, asthmatic and hollow-cheeked, and the sculptors have rendered him, not idealistically, but as he was, with the

very necessary reservation that he is here of heroic size, while in life he was small and undersized.

For the rest there are few records at Brixham of the coming of William of Orange. No blood was shed there, and the only note of that stirring time to be found in the parish registers is the pathetic burial entry: "1688, November 21, a foreigner belonging to the Prenz of Oringe," with another entry of the same date referring to the same person being buried in woollen: "a Dutch man, cujus nomen ignotum." He was probably some humble follower, who fell sick aboard, and so died on the threshold of this land flowing with milk and honey, in which so many of his fellow mynheers flourished so well.

The *Brill*, the vessel on which William came to England, had a strange after-history. She was re-christened *Princess Mary*, and converted into a yacht. So she remained through the reign of Queen Anne; but when the Hanoverian line began, and sentiment was cut off at the main, she was sold to some London merchants, who re-christened her the *Betsy Cairns* and sent her trading to the West Indies. From that condition the poor old vessel declined to that of a collier, and so continued for an incredible number of years, being wrecked on the Black Middens, off Tynemouth, in quite recent times.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### BRIXHAM—THE FISHERY—ROUND THE COAST TO DARTMOUTH

THE statue of Dutch William makes the background of Brixham Harbour picturesque, and the fishing-fleet and the houses climbing up, tier above tier, confer a nobility upon the statue: they re-act upon one another, in short, in a most admirably pictorial way. There are over three hundred vessels in the trawling fleet of Brixham, and all are sailing-boats. The largest, known technically as "dandies," are of fifty tons burthen, and cost about £1,000. The intermediate, and most numerous class are "bumble-bees," and the smallest are merely "hookers," "hukers," in the Devon inflection, of twenty-five tons. The cost of a "bumble-bee" is £450. It carries a crew of three men, who work according to the custom of the Brixham fishery, on rarely changing lines. Brixham, unlike the great fishing port of Grimsby, where steam-trawling and highly costly vessels owned by corporations are the rule, conducts its industry on more individual and joint-stock lines. Here we find the captain and the owner usually one and the same person, work-

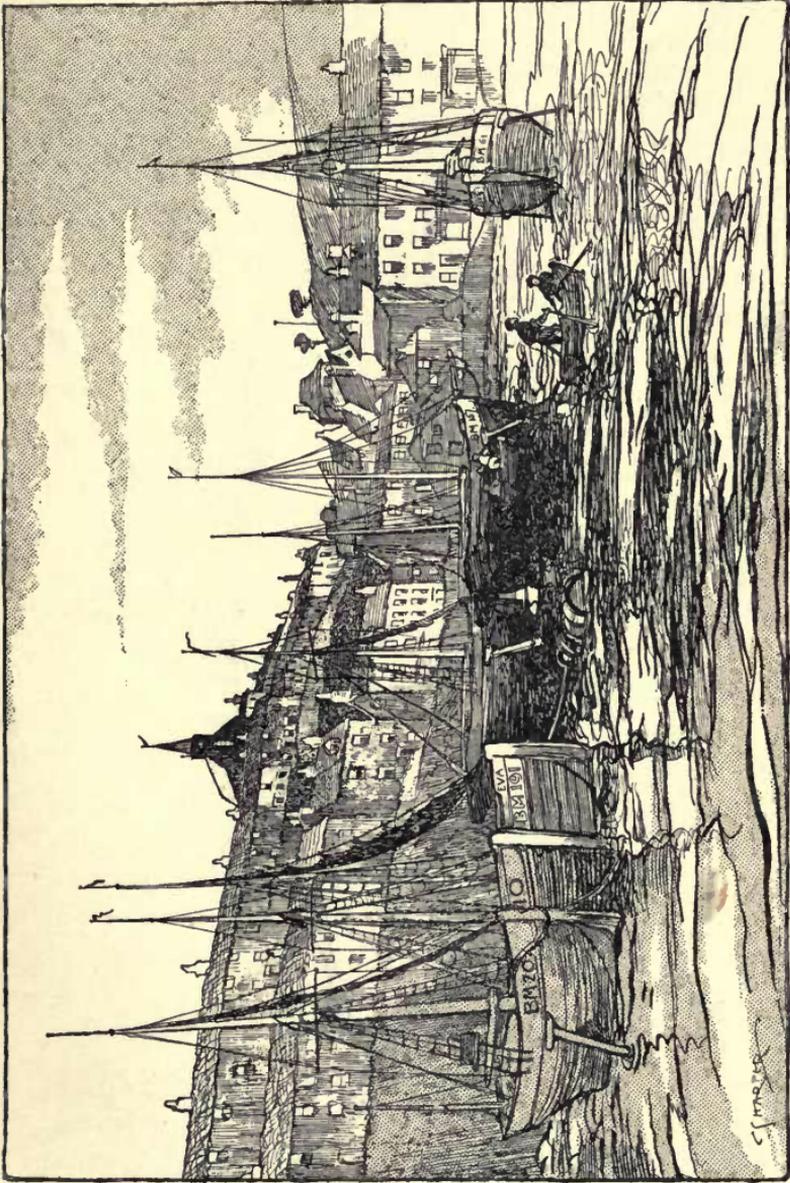
ing with his two men on the partnership principle. He is, of course, by virtue of his ownership a capitalist in his way, and for the purpose of getting a return for his venture, as well as for his labour, the shares of the boat are divided into five parts, of which he takes three; one for self, one for the boat, and one for the nets and general gear, leaving one each for the crew, who contribute only their labour. The takings are divided every week, and, like the fortunes of war, they vary extravagantly.

If you conceive a bag forty to fifty feet in length, you will have some approximate notion of the size of a trawl-net. The mouth of it is stretched wide apart by a pole like a builder's scaffold-pole, heavily shod at each end with iron, for the purpose of weighing down the mouth of the net as it is drawn, or "trawled," along the bottom of the sea. Sailing out of harbour, the trawl-net is "shot" the length of some seventy fathoms, necessary to reach the bottom of the fishing-grounds in Torbay, and thus, going with the wind for six to eight hours, the smacks drag their exaggerated bags along the bed of ocean, scooping up whatever lies in the way. It may thus justly be supposed that the bed of Torbay is a pretty well-swept floor.

It is a comparatively easy thing to shoot a trawl-net, but a long and laborious job for two men, straining at the winch, to wind it aboard again, with its load of fish, often very largely useless. So soon as the hauling up of the nets begins,

myriads of sea-gulls, springing apparently from nowhere in particular, appear, with the instantaneous promptitude of a crowd in a quiet street of London when an accident has happened. Screaming and circling about, dipping instantaneously into the water, and rising up quickly, they often make daring snatches at the fish aboard. Surely there is nothing so sharp-eyed on earth, in air, or water, as a sea-gull, and nothing so greedy and insatiable. The sea-gull is the scavenger of the fisher towns and villages, and is not nice in his tastes. Nothing comes amiss to his hungry maw, from fresh fish down to stale, ancient enough to be a very monument of offence and a something beyond the worst experiences of a sanitary inspector; and the dead kittens and rats of the seaside communities form welcome side-dishes.

The gulls' turn, however, comes when the sorting of the nets begins. When the useless dog-fish are flung overboard they struggle and guzzle their fill: for, unfortunately for the fisher-folk, the dog-fish are never lacking, although the saleable fish may be often sadly to seek. But now dog-fish are often marketed as "flake." The catch is generally a miscellaneous one of turbot, bream, plaice, whiting, hake, haddock, gurnet, sole, and brill, with a few lobsters, crabs, and eels, and when the undesirables among the fish, and the stones and the seaweed, are sorted out, frequently resolves itself into a dozen or so pair of soles, and a few baskets and "trunks" of other fish. The aristocracy of the catch are, of course, the turbot



BRIXHAM HARBOUR.

5/11/1885



and the soles, but when a bad day's trawling and a day of poor market prices come together, the day's labour for three men may not bring the skipper more than twelve shillings and his two men four shillings apiece.

The fish is sold by auction in the long-roofed but open-sided shed that runs the whole length of the harbour, and the auctioneers settle weekly with the skippers, after deducting their commission, the market-dues, and the earnings of the lumpers, as the fish-porters who carry the catches from the smack to the market are called. Rougher, more rugged, ragged, or more quaintly dressed and bearded men than those of the Brixham trawling fleet, and those others who attend the auctions, it would be difficult to find; but many among them are of the famous "Brixham lords." A "Brixham lord" is the product at a considerable distance of time, of the vicissitudes of the old lords of the manor of Brixham. That manor, passing from the Novants and the Valletorts, and coming eventually to the Bonviles, was at length divided into quarters, of which one quarter came to the Gilberts, from whom it was purchased by what in these financial days we should term a "syndicate" of twelve fishermen. In the course of many generations and the natural subdivision of property, those original twelve shares of that quarter have been so apportioned that the "lords" of Brixham, owning infinitesimal portions of the manor, are a very large crowd indeed. Some of them, too, are "ladies." The saying of Brixham

is therefore easily credible, that there are more lords of the manor in it than in any other town in England.

A pathetic literary interest belongs to Brixham, for it was here that the Rev. Henry Francis Lyte was vicar for twenty-five years. He died at Naples, whither he had gone to seek health, in his fifty-fourth year. One last evening, before he left Brixham for ever, as he knew it must be, he prayed that he might be allowed to write something by which the memory of him might be kept green to all time, and, returning from the fisher-town as sun was setting, to Berry Head House, conceived and wrote that best-known of hymns, "Abide with Me." In the widespread favour it immediately obtained, and in the vogue it must ever retain while hymns last, his prayer was answered. It is a beautiful hymn, but a thing of tears, depression, and hopelessness, that leaves you a great deal worse, and a great deal more self-pitying, than before indulging in it. As well might one suggest sitting in a draught as the remedy for a cold, as hope to revive the spirits on "Abide with Me." It is beautiful, but for my part, I want something more uplifting and robustious, and would rather go forth and do battle with blue-devils and kick stumbling-blocks out of the way, and keep a stout heart to the ultimate breath, on some swashbuckling Hew-Agag-in-Pieces-before-the-Lord psalmody, than dissolve in tears on the minor key of "Abide with Me."

Berry Head is a kind of natural barrier, or unsurmountable wall, to the Brixham people. You will readily understand why it should be so, if you seek to walk round to Kingswear by the coast. It is so, not so much by reason of the steepness and ruggedness of the way, for the road out of Brixham, up-along to the railway-station and so on to Churston Ferrers, is equally heart-breaking, but there are all manner of occasions for going in *that* direction; while few have any business, or pleasure either, over Berry Head, or along that lonely and rugged coast, save some poor fool of an exploring tourist who, encountering rain on these shelterless coastguard walks, is fain to think, like the Melancholy Jaques in Arden, that when he was at home, he was in a better place. Hence the peculiar appositeness of the Brixham synonym for death, "going round the Head," as it were into the Unknown. "Bless 'ee! 'er's bin gone round the Head these drie months" was the reply to an inquiry after one recently dead.

Primed with all this knowledge, it is scarcely with uplifted heart that the explorer scales these minatory heights. On the way to the Head the road looks down upon the incomplete breakwater, begun in 1843 and abandoned when 1,300 feet of it had been built and £21,000 expended. Across the bay lies Torquay, glorious in the sunshine; behind us is the end of the world, as it seems—the gorsy plateau of the Head, with a forlorn refreshment house among the ruins of

five forts erected during the Napoleonic scare, themselves built amid the walls and earthworks of the Romans, constructed some 1850 years ago. Here is the Ash Hole, a cavern where the soldiers of the early nineteenth century flung the bones and broken pottery and domestic refuse of their barracks on the top of a similar deposit made by the Roman soldiery of the first century of our era. And beneath the potsherds of the Romans is stalagmite, and beneath *that* again the bones of animals extinct aeons before Rome began. Ugh!

From hence it is an easy walk to the sheer edge of this great mass of pink limestone, which drops perpendicularly down into deep water. Round the point, the cliffs grow darker and more jagged, with the Cod Rock and Mewstone out in the sea and Durl Head, splashed pink and black, marked by a deserted iron mine.

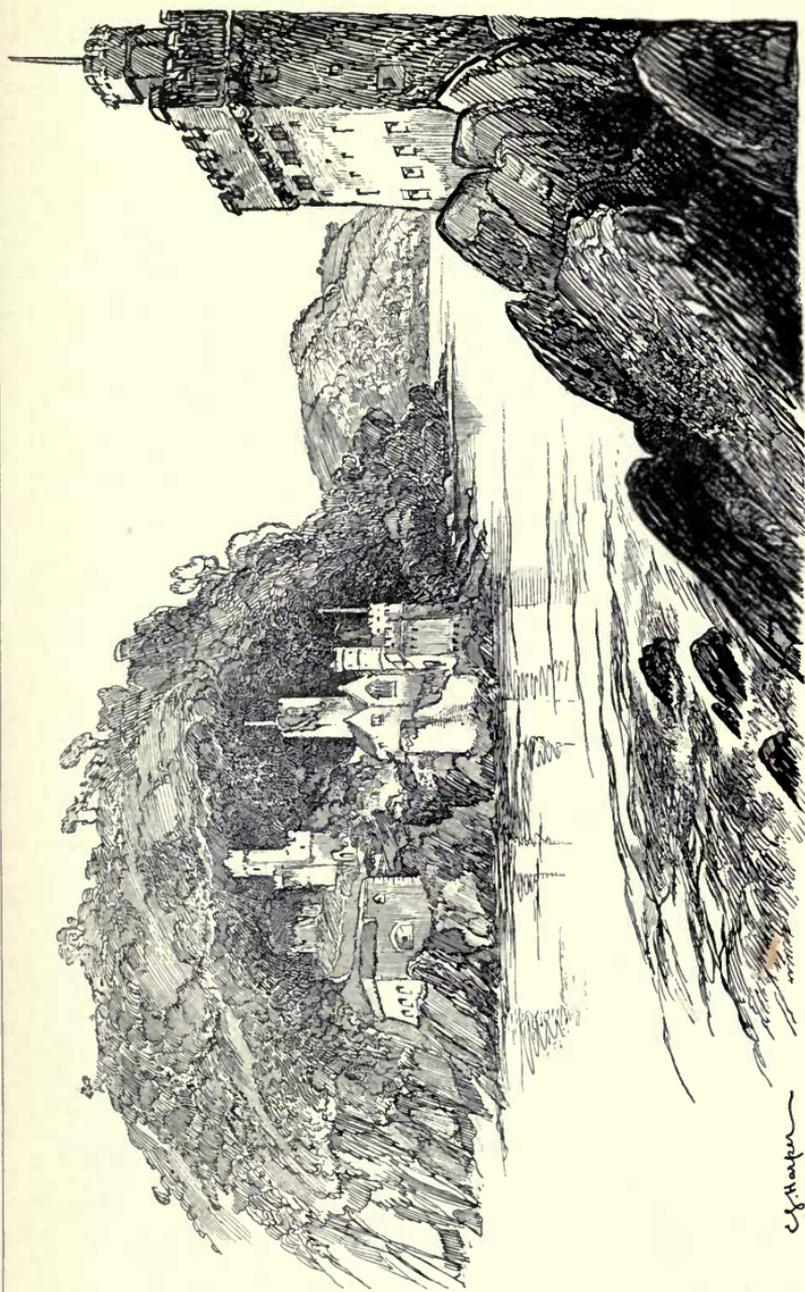
Durl Head looks across to Mudstone Sands, not really muddy, and Sharkham Point. Inland, in between them, is Windmill Hill, with its celebrated cave, sharing the prehistoric honours of Kent's Cavern. No visitor to Brixham who arrives by steamboat is likely to be left in ignorance of "Philp's Cave," for handbills extolling the glories of it are plentifully distributed at such times.

Philp was a dyer who in 1857 determined to leave his dyeing and go in for quarrying, and to this end purchased a plot of land here of the Commissioners for the enclosure of Waste Lands.

He soon got to work, and in the following January the cave "discovered" itself by engulfing a quarrying tool that Philp in person was using. He explored the place and found it to be a tunnel running fifty feet into the hill, with a further gallery at the end, in another direction. Stalagmite made a continuous covering on the floor, and from it projected bones which scientific men who soon flocked to the spot proclaimed to be those of reindeer and cave-bears. Among them were the flint implements of prehistoric man, who seems never to have returned for them, for his bones are not among the remains. Perhaps one of the hyænas of Kent's Cavern cut him off, untimely.

I think the ten miles (for it is not an inch less) round from Mudstone Bay to Kingswear is the loneliest, and the most scrambly and tiring, coast climb in South Devon. Rocks succeed sands, and sands follow rocks; headlands alternating with bays, and ups with downs. Now you face west, now south, then something betwixt and between; and if you don't quite box the compass, you do so very nearly. Every coombe, every headland, has a name, but they are all of a likeness: Sharkham Point, South-down Head, Man Sands, Crab Rock Point, Long Sands, Scabbacombe Sands, Down Head, Ivy Cove, Pudcombe Cove, Kelly's Cove, and Froward Point. Not a soul will you see, not a house, save the coastguards and their station and cottages at Man Sands. And this is overcrowded England!

Off Froward Point, black and splintered and well-named, is yet another Mewstone, with a companion, the Cat Stone ; and the Black Rock some distance out. From here we turn gradually round and come by Mill Bay, under the tall white day-mark on the hill-top, to Kingswear Castle.



*C. Harper*

DARTMOUTH CASTLE AND THE CHURCH OF ST. PETROX, FROM KINGSWEAR.



## CHAPTER XIX

### DARTMOUTH

THE cheapest ferry in England is that which takes you across from Kingswear to Dartmouth. In point of fact, there are two : the pontoon-like affair that plies from the ferry-slip, and the Great Western Railway's steamer, conveying passengers between Kingswear station and Dartmouth Quay. The fare for one person is merely a humble halfpenny.

It is a romantic way of entering Dartmouth, which lies across there, down by the water's edge, with great hills rising in the background, and the smoke from Dartmouth's thousand chimneys ascending visibly, like some great incense-offering. From this point of view you perceive the essential justness of that ancient foreigner's report when, sent to spy upon the chances of surprising Dartmouth, he declared that the hills were its walls.

And the story of Dartmouth is one of raids, made and suffered, alternately. The kingdoms of England and of France might be at peace, but the ports on either side of the Channel were often engaged in their own private wars, and sent ships

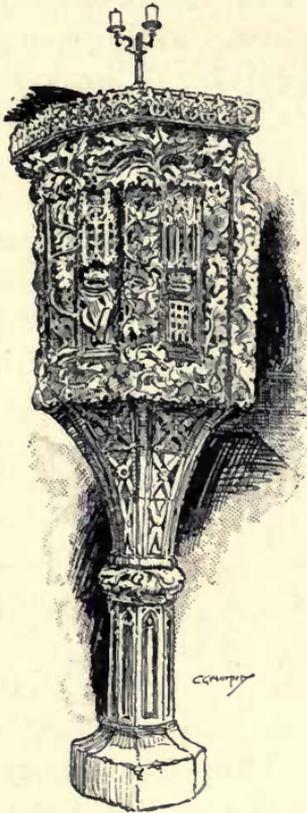
and men out to burn, pillage, and slay ; while between the English seaman and the Spaniard there existed an enmity which neither treaties nor prudence could set at rest. The gallant seaman of the age of romance, whether Frenchman, Spaniard, or Englishman, was nothing less than a corsair : a murdering scoundrel who, if he could appear in person at this day before his eulogists, would be the most unwelcome of visitors from the great and glorious past. His only recommendation is his undoubted courage and his exclusive patriotism. The English sea-captains of Queen Elizabeth's day had no more doubt of being God's avengers against the Spaniard than they had of the sun's setting in the west ; and—although we do not hear so much of the views entertained by the other side—the foreigners doubtless held equally bigoted opinions. The merchant-adventurers of Dartmouth, such as the Hawleys and the Roopes, whose monumental brasses may to this day be found in the ancient churches of St. Saviour in the town, and St. Petrox at the Castle, were embattled traders, whose captains knew what was expected of them, and accordingly did not merely trade peacefully to foreign parts, but beat about the seas in the hope of snapping up rich prizes ; whether in time of peace or war mattered little or nothing. Their piety and their ferocity were equally remarkable, and they could find it easily possible to slit a throat, or to make a whole ship's company walk the plank, to the tune of a thanksgiving psalm.

It was a remarkable combination of good qualities and defects, but after all not more remarkable than the doings of such modern people as Rockefeller in America—who will, by illegitimate trading and systematic lying, ruin thousands while posing before a Sunday School—and of his fellows in England, whose names the law of libel will not permit of being printed

The daring seamanship and the unscrupulous methods of Hawley's captains, little better than pirates, enriched Hawley immensely, and the like may be said of the Roopes and others. At times of national emergency Hawley could, with an ease readily to be understood, lend his ships entirely for warlike purposes, and probably his crews did not find the change from their "mercantile" voyages very striking. In 1390, for example, as the chronicler Stow informs us, his flotilla "took thirty-four shippes laden with wyne to the sum of fifteen hundred tunnes." It was probably of one of Hawley's captains that Chaucer was thinking when he described the "shipman of Dartmouth," one of the Canterbury Pilgrims setting out from Southwark in 1383. This shipman, at any rate, had need of pilgrimage, or some drastic purging course for the remission of sins, for he is described as having sent many "home by water"; a polite way of saying that he had murdered many upon the high seas by making them walk the plank overboard.

The great John Hawley is represented in effigy on the floor of St. Saviour's church. He

died full of years and honours in 1480, and his two wives, Joan and Alice, are represented beside him. He looks a substantial and honest



THE PULPIT, ST. SAVIOUR'S,  
DARTMOUTH.

merchant, a benevolent burgess, and everything respectable and right worshipful, as though piracy were a word that had no meaning for him. The interior of St. Saviour's is further remarkable for the Elizabethan gallery, panelled and elaborately ornate with the heraldic shields of other old legalised pirates of the town, and for its beautiful early sixteenth-century pulpit of most ornately carved, painted and gilt stone: one of some eight or ten such pulpits in wood or stone to be found in the surrounding districts, and nowhere else in England. The extra-

ordinary boldness, wealth, and high relief of the carving single these remarkable pulpits out from anything else in the country; and their gilding, their vivid red, blue, and green colouring, give them a gorgeous and almost barbaric effect.

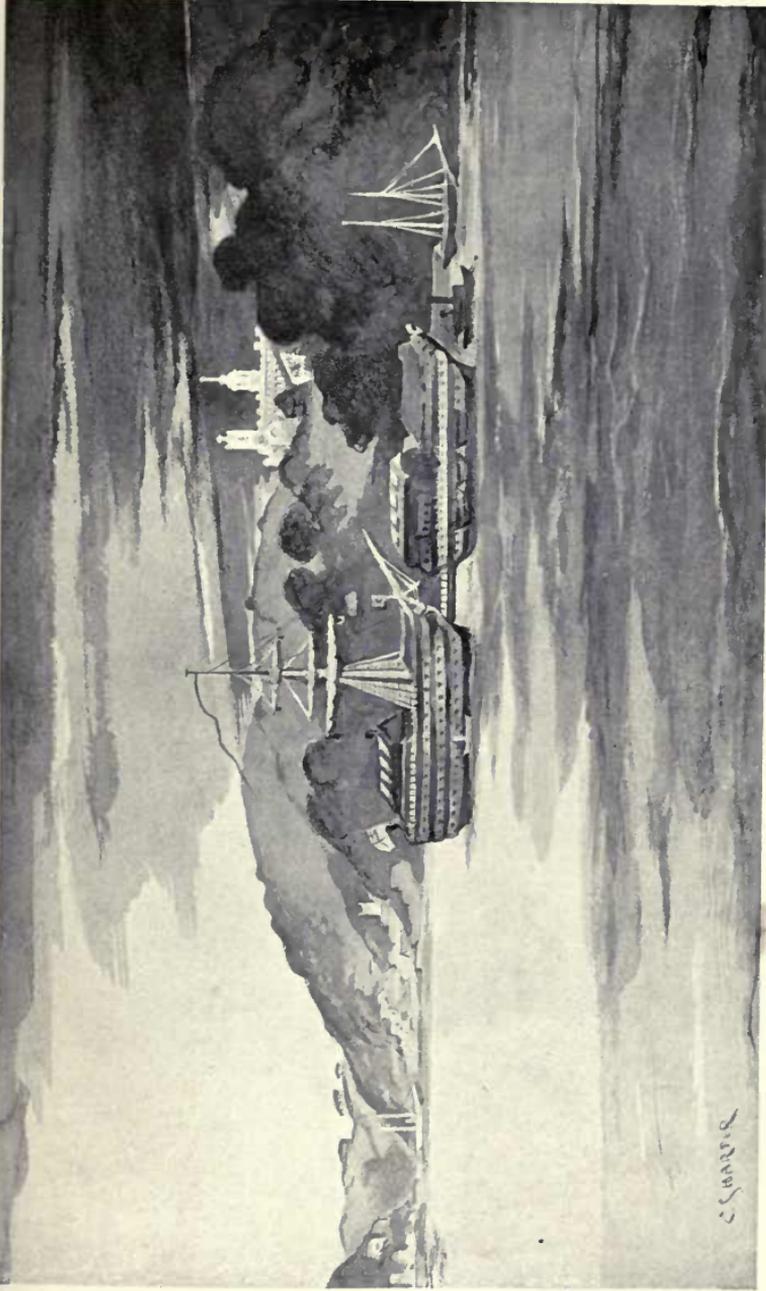
Probably as a direct result of the piratical doings of the Dartmouth people, inviting reprisals, it was in 1481 considered advisable to further strengthen the defences of the narrow entrance to Dartmouth harbour; and the existing fortifications on either side were built. The people of Dartmouth were clever enough to get this done at the expense of the nation, the king agreeing to pay the cost, to the extent of £30 a year, out of the customs of Dartmouth and Exeter. The "stronge and myghtye and defensyve new tower" then agreed upon to be built is the existing castle. A chain was to be stretched across between this and Kingswear every night, and although this has, of course, disappeared, the places whence it was stretched are still to be seen.

Dartmouth as a port of call for liners died hard, but the last line of steamships, the Donald Currie service to the Cape, went, and now it is divided between being a favourite yachting station and the home of the new Royal Naval College, which, transferred from its picturesque and make-shift old home aboard the *Britannia* and *Hindustan*, now crowns the hill and nobly dominates the whole of Dartmouth in the great range of buildings overlooking the Dart.

The ferryman who puts us across the Dart is full of information and as full of regrets about the *Britannia* and *Hindustan*, the new Naval College, and the changed conditions of seafaring life, but with a sardonic smile he thinks the cadets will learn their business as well ashore as they have

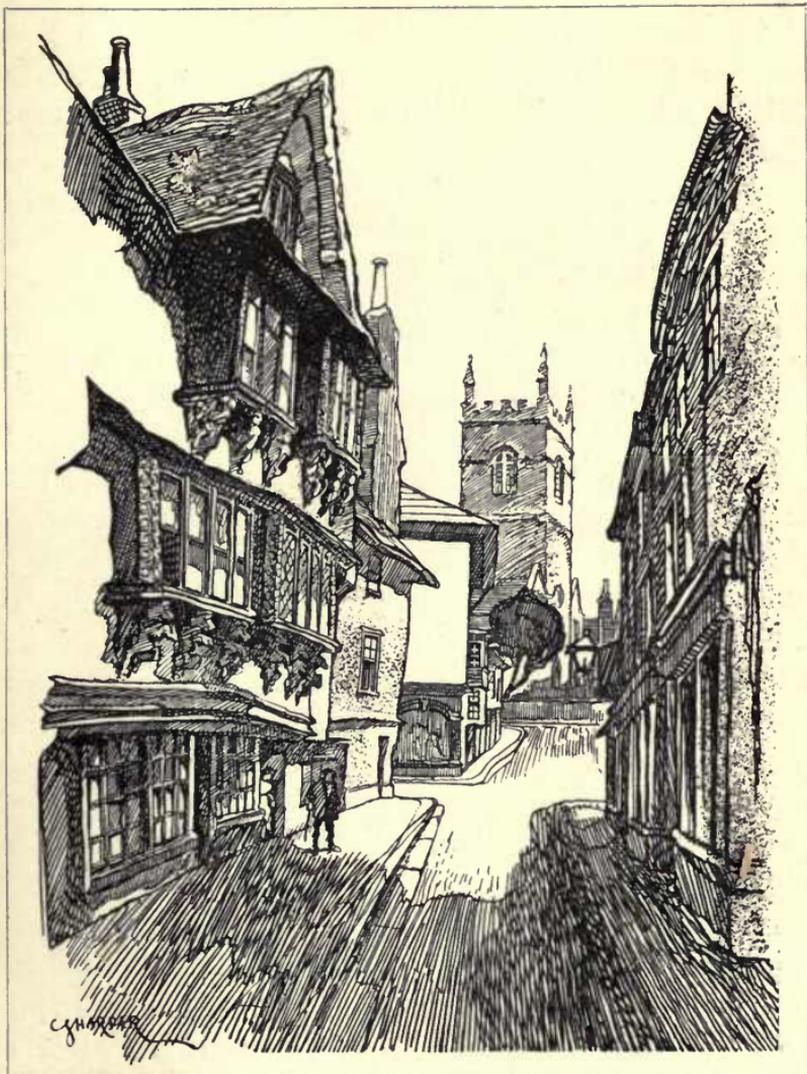
done afloat. "Why not?" he asks. "They don't want no sailors nowadays. There *was* a time when a sailor was never without his marline-spike an' mallet. Now they're all bloody Dagoes and Dutchies in the merchant sarvice, an' engineers and stoke-hole men, with cold chisels, 'stead of knives, in the Navy. For a sailor—when there *were* sailors, mind you—to be without his knife, why, he might every bit as well up'n give his cap'n a clump auver th'yed, so he might. An' up *there*—" he jerked so contemptuous a thumb over his shoulder that it was almost a wonder the new flagstaff on the new central tower did not wilt—" up *there* them young juicers is fêd up with 'lectricity 'n things no Godfearing sailorman in *my* time never heard of."

Although it is designed in the Paltry Picturesque Eclectic Renaissance or Doll's House, style with ornamental fripperies and fandangalums galore, the Naval College has the noblest of aspects, seen from down the harbour, or across the Dart, from Old Rock Ferry. Planted on the wooded summit of Mount Boone, the long range of buildings, backed by dark trees, sets just that crown and finish upon Dartmouth which suffices to raise the scenic character of the place from beauty to nobility. A curious feature of it is the clock in the central tower, which rings seafaring time ashore: so many "bells." At sea the twelve hours are divided into three watches of four hours each, with a "bell" to every half-hour.



DARTMOUTH: THE "BRITANNIA" AND "HINDOSTAN," AND THE NEW NAVAL COLLEGE.





FOSS STREET AND ST. SAVIOUR'S.

Thus the "bells" rise with the half-hours to eight, when they begin again, with the completion of the first half-hour of the new watch. In this manner, the "bells" agree with shoregoing chimes only twice a day: at eight o'clock, morning and night.

The parish church of Dartmouth, oddly enough, is neither St. Saviour's in the town, nor St. Petrox at the castle, but St. Clement's at Townstal, on the hilltop, quite a mile distant. Many of the very old and very fine fifteenth and sixteenth century overhanging and gabled houses have in modern times been destroyed, some by fire and some in wanton "improvements"; but Foss Street, looking along to St. Saviour's, shows what old Dartmouth was like. There are found ancient houses with windows bracketed out upon strikingly artistic Renaissance carvings of lions and unicorns; but the houses in that street are decrepit, and the Butter Walk undoubtedly shows the best preserved old architecture. When we consider that Dartmouth was once, as a whole, like this, it will sadly be realised how grievous the change.

Dartmouth to-day is still a very busy place, and full of slummy little alleys, and extraordinarily swarming with children. Amid all this crowding and bustle of business there are always plenty of loafers to lean over breast-high walls, contemplating the picturesque scene, where houses crowd and cling to the very water's edge, and old, half-forgotten waterside towers stand, silent

reminders of a bygone need for watchfulness. At Bayard's Cove in especial, the coal-lumpers, the



THE BUTTER WALK, DARTMOUTH.

boatmen, and the generally idle sit on the quay walls in the sun, or lean against them, keeping them up. The coal-lumpers work perhaps sixteen or twenty hours at a stretch, coaling the

steamers that come into port, and then want no more work for a month. They laze away the days, run up a score at the nearest pub, and groan if by chance they see another job coming round the corner.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE DART—DITTISHAM—STOKE GABRIEL—" PARLIAMENT HOUSE "

THE eight miles steamboat trip up or down the Dart is one of the finest things Devonshire has to show, for the river Dart is rightly thought the most beautiful of rivers. The Dart chiefly known in this manner by tourists is not the mountain-stream that rises in the heart of Dartmoor, but the tidal, salt-water estuary between Dartmouth and Totnes. Not only tourists, but all who have business between those two places, use the Dart and its steamers ; for the district, hilly as it is, knows nothing of railways. The Dart is known well enough by tourists from the decks of these little steamers, but its shores and creeks, and the quiet villages along them, are rarely explored. The picturesque village of Dittisham is perhaps an exception, for the steamers call off its quay, and picnic parties penetrate so far. Dittisham is a large village occupying a rather puzzling geographical position on one of the numerous capes or headlands formed by the amazing windings of this romantic river. It looks upon the water from two directly opposite

outlooks, and is partly the home of salmon-fishers, builders of fishing-smacks, and, in these latter days, a sprinkling of independent "residential" people, who enjoy the "quiet life." A little row of white-washed and pink-washed and



SALMON NETS AT DITTISHAM QUAY.

blue-washed houses faces upon a quay, and the "Passage House" inn marks where the boat plies across to Greenaway; but apart from this quayside there is scarce a level square yard of ground in Dittisham, whose lanes, bordered for the most part by old, heavily thatched cottages and gardens, where flowers and shrubs grow in prodigal luxuri-



GREENAWAY FERRY.



ance, are steep and stony in the extreme. Dittisham is always beautiful, but especially lovely in spring, when the surrounding orchards are in blossom : particularly the damson orchards, for which the place is locally famous.

A great deal of the supreme beauty of the Dart is due to the dense woods that cover the bold hillsides of either shore and are reflected with solemn loveliness in the tide. The Anchor Rock, prominent in mid-stream, lends its more or less authentic story to guide-book students, for legend tells us that the scolding wives of the community were landed upon it and given ample leisure to repent ; although the very name of this solitary crag would lead the student to suppose that it was originally the spot whereon some early hermit, or anchorite, voluntarily secluded himself.

By crossing the river to Greenaway, and walking through woods and across meadows, the explorer comes, in a scrambly way, to a place very rarely seen by fleeting tourists. This is Galmpton—or “ Gaamton ” as the Devonshire folk call it—hidden away in a lakelike creek. Here the stranger finds an unexpected scene of industry, for in this nook, where the tide lazily rolls up and as lazily slides down, with the ooze and scum, and chance leaves and twigs voyaging back and forth, is a busy shipbuilding yard.

They do not build ocean liners at Galmpton, but they have had for some seventy years past a very fine steady business in the building of trawlers for the Brixham and Lowestoft fisheries ;

and sometimes a smart sailing yacht leaves these sheds. Here, for example, as I write, a teak-built yacht of one hundred tons, to cost £4000 is on the stocks, and will leave Galmpton fully rigged. The average output of this yard is twelve trawlers a year, and it gives employment to between sixty and seventy men, who live mostly at Dittisham, taking boat to and from work each morning and evening.

Aish, that spot historic in connection with the landing of the Protestant Defender in 1688, is



A SALMON  
FISHER.

not so easily discovered by the stranger in these gates, and its very remoteness was its chief recommendation in the times when it became historic. It is reached most easily by breaking the steamboat trip up the Dart at Duncannon Quay, which is also the landing-place for Stoke Gabriel, tucked away in its own shy creek. Stoke Gabriel is the

least visited and most primitive place on the Dart, and headquarters of the salmon-fishery; as the nets, drying on long poles, and the strange jerseyed and booted figures of the fisherfolk proclaim. With every tide the salt water comes to fill the picturesque creek of Stoke Gabriel and to make a mirror for the woods to view their own loveliness, and with every ebb it flows out again in a murmuring cascade over the rude weir built of mossy boulders. It hushes the children of the village to sleep at night, and fills the ears on summer days with a lazy purr.

There is a good deal of Stoke Gabriel when you come to know it well. Particularly pretty is the little street of cottages leading up to the church, where the "Church House Inn" by its sign seems to indicate that it was originally one of those houses provided by the church for the accommodation of parishioners coming from some distance to attend service. Such houses were often kept by the parish clerk, who brewed the "church ales." In the course of centuries the custom of clerical ale-brewing and keeping a "church-house" fell into disuse, and the house itself generally became a village inn. In this manner the singularly close neighbourhood of village churches and inns, often curiously commented upon, originated.

The church contains one rather pretty epitaph :

It is "To the memory of Mrs. Tamosin, wife of Peter Lyde, Deceased ye 25 of Febru. MDCLXIII," and is inscribed upon a heart-shaped mural monument :—

"Long may thy name, as long as marble, last,  
Beloved Tamosin, though under clods here cast.  
This formall heart doth truly signify  
'Twixt wife and husband cordiell unity.  
If to be graccius doth requir due praise  
Let Tamosin have it, she deserves ye bayes."

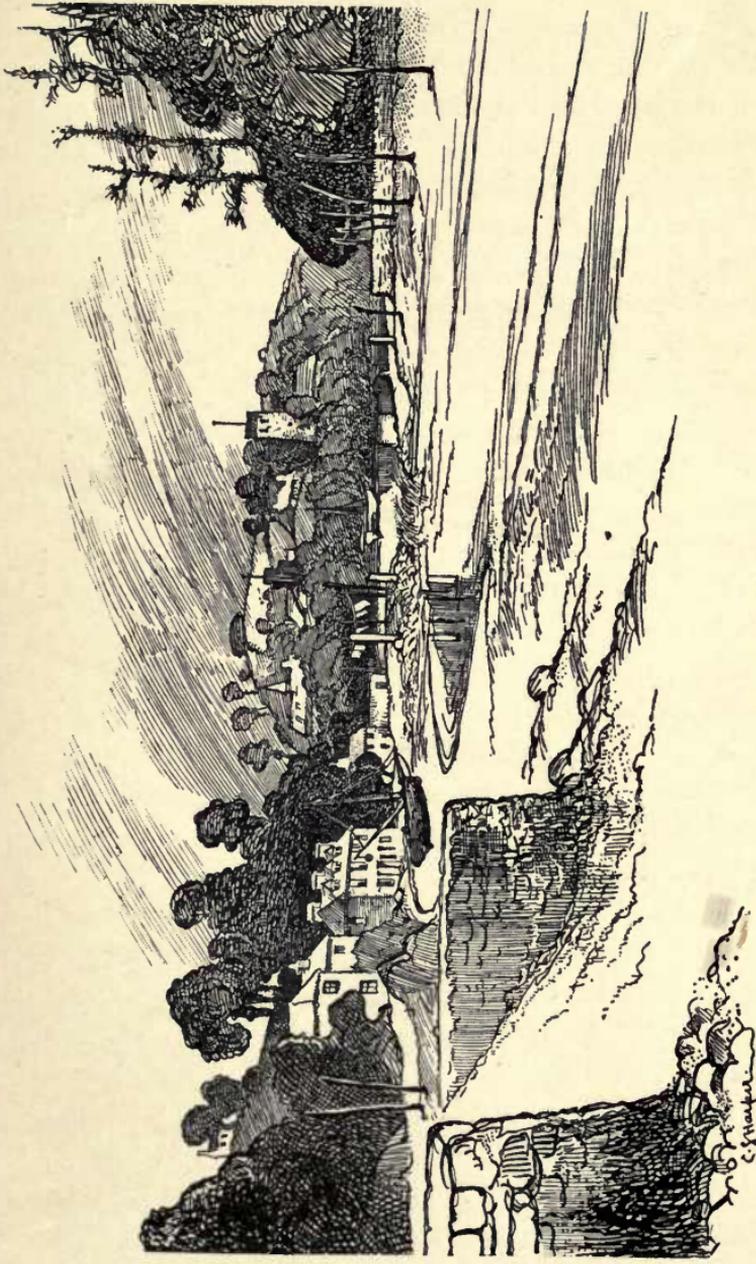
It is curious to observe how the "Mrs." has been inserted before "Tamosin," as an after-thought. We seem to see in it a post-mortem jealousy on the part of the bereaved Peter Lyde that any one should use the name of his lost Tamosin without that formal title.

The passengers landing at Duncannon Quay are few ; often there are none at all, and the few are rarely other than country-folk making for their quiet villages.

For the average tourist to land at Duncannon, instead of completing the time-honoured trip to Totnes, would be an originality never likely to enter into the mind of him. He takes the excursion trips as he finds them, and is content. And, being content, who shall blame him ? Not I, for one ; for his satisfaction with the well-worn round is of itself no ignoble thing in this dear Devonshire, where even the most frequented circuits are exquisite, and crowds unknown.

So it happens that the explorer making for Aish finds himself the only passenger for Duncannon, and is like to feel important when for him the steamer hoots and stops, and he goes over the side into the ferry-boat, amid the interested and wondering glances of the excursionists for Totnes.

Half-a-dozen strokes of the oars, and the boat brings you to the quay, nestling by the quiet waterside, where low cliffs of red earth dip to the shore. "One penny, sir, please," says the old boatman, who, with straw-hat of primæval plait and design, like a thatched roof, seems a survival of the old Devonshire rustics, whose speech was so unintelligible to those tourists who were the first to ever burst into these unknown wilds. Appearances, it is well known, are deceptive, and here no less than elsewhere ; for when you look



STOKE GABRIEL.

C. Spangher



upon the raw newness that has replaced the old ramshackly and delightfully sketchable aspect of Duncannon Quay, and remark upon the change, this seeming survival says—oh, the shock of it—“ Oh, yes, it’s been thoroughly renovated.” Not unjustifiably, I think, one feels aggrieved, both at that renovation and at that departure from the ancient Doric of the countryside. Time was when this old lank boatman, with the clothes that seem to have grown in one of his native orchards, rather than to have been made, and with a tanned and freckled face, the colour of the russet apple ;—time was, I say, when this ferryman, who merely paddles about in this remote nook of the Dart, would have phrased it differently, and would have said : “ ’Ee’s proper did up,” which is certainly more racy of Devon.

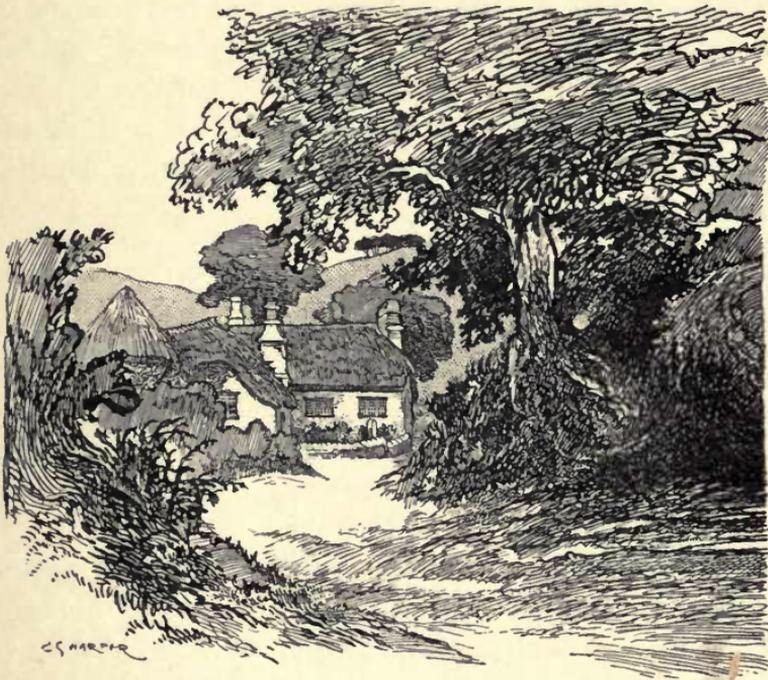
The “ doing up ” or the “ renovation ”—whichever you will—of Duncannon Quay is certainly thorough. Its two houses are faced with that pallid stucco of which they are so alarmingly fond in modern Devon ; neat little white brick piers stand in a neat little row, with neat little railings in between, on the quayside ; and a corrugated tin hut is posted at the end. The Philistines have descended upon Duncannon, with a vengeance ; and although the ferryman, with his intimate knowledge of the moist Devon climate, is of opinion that the newness will not last long, we venture to think that when the edge of novelty has been taken off by the weather, it is shabbiness, and not picturesqueness, that will

result. One thing is certain ; neither moss nor lichen ever yet grew on galvanized corrugated iron.

Aish, we know, means Ash, and is merely the old-world style of pronunciation crystallised in writing, and perpetuated on many maps, but our boatman styles it "Ash." Yet even he is not without some lingering relics of the old rustic inflections, for he directs the enquirer to it by advising him to "volley" the telephone wire. A few years ago, one would have "volleyed" the "telegraft"; yet another few years, with wireless communication everywhere and all the poles and wires abolished, and the chief landmark and standby of local guides gone, what will the stranger do then but lose his way?

There really are unusual numbers of ash trees on the way to Aish, and fine ones, bordering the road, or "Parliament Lane" as the rustics yet know it, between Brixham, Yalberton, and this historic hamlet. Two or three country seats or villas, with a number of modern cottages, and two or three ancient thatched dwellings: such is Aish; but "Parliament House" is, after all, not in Aish, but away, through it, considerably on the other side, in a fine solitary situation at the foot of a steep hill, in what is, with a peculiar appropriateness, called Longcombe. It is not difficult to see into the minds of those who selected this cottage for that meeting. Aish is a small hamlet now, and must have been very tiny then, but that place was far too large and crowded,

where one house commanded another and where the foregathering of fine gentlemen could be noted and remembered against a possible day of reckoning. So, through Aish and to Longcombe, those cautious negotiators came and conducted their parley in this leafy solitude. And although it



“PARLIAMENT HOUSE.”

is on the direct road to Totnes, it is solitary still ; a place where on your approach you hear a child say, in the softly reverberant Devon speech, “Mothurr, here’s a man” ; and mother, thus advised, gazes long after the unwonted sight.

I wish, for the sake of completeness, I could say that an ash overhangs the road at this point :

but I cannot. It is an oak, and a very fine oak, which here frames in the picture made by the old cottage at the foot of the hill.

Built of local ragstone and thatched, the old dwelling has probably not been altered in any particular since the memorable time of that secret conclave, and it still belongs to the Seymours, or St. Maurs, as they now—harking back to the ancient spelling—choose to style themselves. The historic association is the subject of a diffident allusion inscribed in recent times on a stone pillar in the garden :—

William  
Prince of  
Orange  
is said to have  
held his first  
Parliament  
here  
in November  
1688

The remainder of the voyage up the Dart to Totnes is along a gradually narrowing stream, past the noble hanging woods of Sharpham, to Bridgetown Quay, where the road-bridge and the narrowed river alike forbid further progress.

Of Totnes there is a great deal more to be said than can be set down here. Between the mythical legend of its being founded by Brutus the Trojan and modern times, it has acquired a history which demands volumes. It had a mint in Saxon ages, is described as a walled town in Domesday, and was not without some eminent

rotteness as a rotten borough at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It has a mystical castle mound, with a circular shell of a keep on the summit, an ancient gateway spanning the main street, and an interesting old guildhall. Its beautiful church is among the very finest in Devon, and the quaint old piazza shops vie with those of Dartmouth. There is, as may well be supposed, much doubt of Brutus the Trojan having been the founder of Totnes, but the legend is indestructible, from very inability to disprove it; besides, let into the pavement outside 51, Fore Street, you are shown the very granite boulder on which Brutus set foot when he landed! and so he becomes associated, at the beginning of the town's long story, with a wanderer, in his own way equally remarkable, at its close. For in Totnes you may see, in the open space called "The Plains," a monument to William John Wills, a native of the town, and son of a local doctor, which narrates how he was born in 1834, emigrated in 1852 to Australia, and, having been "the first of mankind to cross the Australian Continent, perished in returning." He was a greater traveller than Brutus; and his exploits, as we see, are matters of ascertained fact.

## CHAPTER XXI

DARTMOUTH CASTLE—BLACKPOOL—SLAPTON SANDS  
—TORCROSS—BEESANDS—HALL SANDS

THE little coach that runs daily from Dartmouth to Kingsbridge has a steep climb up out of Dartmouth. Here the pedestrian certainly has the advantage, for, tracing his coastwise way round through the woods of Warfleet creek, where a disused limekiln by the waterside looks very like an ancient defensible tower, he comes at last upon the strangely grouped church of St. Petrox, the Castle, and the abandoned modern battery, all standing in a position of romantic beauty, where the sea dashes in violence upon the dark rocks. The "garrison" of Dartmouth Castle in these days is generally a sergeant of garrison artillery retired from active service, or in some condition of military suspended animation not readily to be understood by a logically minded civilian. It is a situation worthy of comic opera : in which you perceive the War Office erecting batteries for defending the entrance to the harbour, and then, having completed them, furnishing the works with obsolete muzzle-loaders, capable of impressing no one save the most ignorant of

persons. Then, these popguns having been demonstrated useless, even to the least instructed, they are removed at great expense, and their places left empty: it having occurred in the meanwhile to the wisecracks ruling the Army that, in any case, under modern conditions, a hostile fleet would be able to keep well off shore and to throw shells into Dartmouth, without coming in range of any ordnance ever likely to be placed at the castle.

So the sergeant-in-charge, who lives here with his wife and family, and is apparently given free quarters and no pay, on the implied condition that he makes what he can out of tips given by tourists, is not burdened with military responsibilities. The present incumbent appears to have developed strong antiquarian tastes, is learned in the local military operations of Cromwell's era, and a successful seeker after old-time cannonballs and other relics of strange, unsettled times.

You cannot choose but explore the interior of the Castle, for as you approach there is, although you may not suspect it, an Eye noting the fact. The Eye is the sergeant's, and there is that way about old soldiers which admits of no denial when he proposes that he shall show you over. You are shepherded from one little room to another, peer from what the sergeant calls the "ember-shaws" (by which he means embrasures), and then, offering the expected tribute for seeing very little, depart.

The coastguard path ascends steeply from

Dartmouth Castle and follows a rough course along a deeply indented headland of dark slate-rock, that plunges almost everywhere, without hesitation, into deep water. Patches of sands are few and inaccessible ; and, confronting every good ship making from the south-west for Dartmouth, the black Ham Stone rises with an ugly



STOKE FLEMING.

menace from sunshiny seas, ringed around with its own little circle of foam. Thus you come, round Hollowcombe Head and Redlap Cove to Stoke Fleming, past rocky bastions, where the rival yellows of sea-poppy and yellow toad-flax enliven the dark slate, and the Devon "wall-flower"—the spur valerian, not the gilly-flower—flourishes bravely in occasional masonry walls.

Stoke Fleming, standing high and wind-swept, is of a Cornish sternness, and its great dark church tower is so bleak-looking, that not even the sunniest day can put a cheerful complexion upon it. It was built in the Perpendicular period, and is just about as complete an example of long-drawn perpendicularity as can be imagined, rising, stage upon stage, until at last it ends, for all the world as though the old-time architect of it had gone on, like a child building with a "box of bricks," as far as he dared. A perky little banneret vane on the roof aids this impression. Ferns grow plentifully in the joints of the masonry, to the very summit, and are every now and then removed, but they always reappear. The tower is said to have been built as a mark for sailors, but however that may be, it is certainly one of a very numerous type in South Devon, and own brother to that of Halwell, quite six miles from the sea.

Below Stoke Fleming lies the charmingly sequestered glen of Blackpool, where a little stream comes out of an emerald valley and oozes away through a perfect semicircle of sands, guarded by pinnacled rocks. Dense masses of trees, some of them strangely exotic in appearance, overhang the road. This quiet and beautiful spot was the scene of a descent by the Bretons in 1403. An expedition set out from across the Channel, under the command of one Du Chatel, and after raiding Tenby and Plymouth came ashore at Blackpool with the object of taking Dartmouth in the rear. Unfortunately for them, the Devonshire folk had got

wind of what was in store, and when the raiders landed they happened unexpectedly upon some six hundred defenders, lying hid until the supreme moment, behind entrenchments. Among these valiant defenders of hearth and home were many women, who fought like devils and slew great numbers of Breton knights and men-at-arms with catapults. Only a sorry remnant of the invaders escaped those gentle creatures, and Dartmouth



BLACKPOOL SANDS.

was on that occasion saved. But, bolder and with the reward of boldness, others came the next year and sailed in to Dartmouth town and burnt it to the ground.

Blackpool sands were destined to witness a yet more historic landing, for it was here that the great Earl of Warwick, the "Kingmaker," who had made Edward the Fourth king, and then quarrelled with his handiwork, came back from exile in 1471, with an armed expedition, intent upon unmaking him. It was Warwick's last throw, and ended

a few weeks later with his defeat and death at the battle of Barnet.

Sunday-school treats are held nowadays on the golden sands of Blackpool; sands that in more than a figurative sense have been found golden, for a discovery was made here in modern times of gold coins dating from that period, and doubtless lost in the confusion of the landing.

The entirely uninteresting hamlet of Street passed, standing at the head of the next rise, the road goes, steep and winding, down to one of the most remarkable stretches of coast-line in Devon; the famous Slapton Sands, a flat two miles of raised beach along which, ages ago, the present high road was formed. The sands take their name from the village of Slapton, a mile inland, and consist of small shingle thrown up by the sea, and banking back the outflow of three streams, which thus forms a long and marshy freshwater lake, the whole length of this shingle bank. Just as you come down-hill upon the finest view from above of the sea, the sands, the Ley, as this freshwater lake is named, a long and lofty blank wall shuts out the scene and proclaims the malignant humour of the landowner who built it.

Sparse and hungry-looking grass grows on the ridge of the shingle, but the yellow sea-poppy thrives, and so does the spurge, or milkwort, whose poisonous juice is milk-white and innocent-looking. Here, too, on the inner face of the bank, looking upon the rush-grown waters of the Ley, the purple blossoms and hairy leaves of the

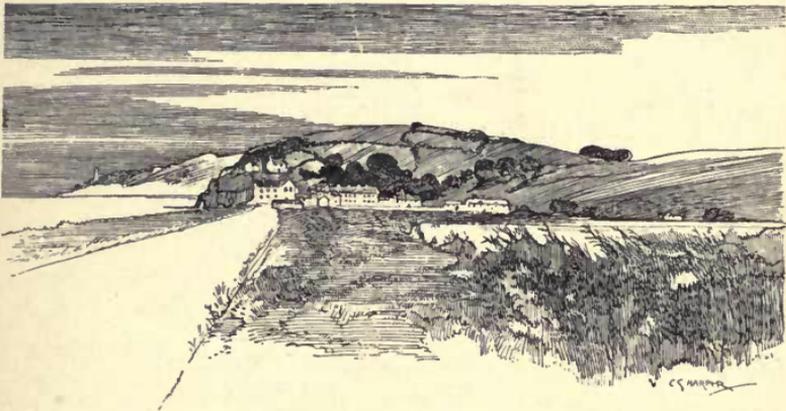
mallow are abundant, while bordering the highway, and braving the dust of it, are masses of the thrift or sea-pink.

The Ley, or Lea, is one of the most noted resorts of wild birds in Devon, and its two hundred acres are frequented in winter by sportsmen, whose headquarters are the lonely "Sands Hotel," standing solitary, a mile from anywhere, on the shingly ridge, facing the sea one way, and on the other the highroad and the Ley.

The waters of the Ley are crowded with ferocious pike and other fish, and the vast banks of sedge and rush are peopled thickly, not only with the winter concourse of wild duck and geese, but with the shy birds of the fields and woods. Inland, the marshy lowlands ascend gently, with white-faced cottages in little groups among the trees, and an old bridge spans the water at a favourable point and helps a bye-road on the way to Slapton. The scene is not greatly disturbed; the midday coach comes by on the high road, with a cheerful tootling of its horn, and disappears, on the way to Torcross; a wild bird pipes as it flies overhead, and a fish leaps up from the still water, after a fly; that is the summer aspect. But in winter the wild-fowler wakes the echoes of the hills with his sport, and when the gales blow strong out of the south-west there is a sea-wrack in the air and foam in the road, that make the enterprise of walking from Street to Torcross almost as wet a business as sea-bathing.

Torcross is a hamlet at the extremity of the

Sands, where the road turns inland to Charleton, Stokenham, and Kingsbridge. Its back is to the slightly projecting headland that divides these sands from the further stretches of sand and shingle, extending towards the Start, and with an air of wondering mildly at its own existence, and further wondering if it is really worth while to exist at all, it faces the long flat road along which we have come. Of all the unlikely places,



TORCROSS.

here is an hotel, and out of that hotel, as the present chronicler passed, there came a German waiter in a dress suit, and stood on the beach among the bronzed fishermen, watching the evolutions of a naval squadron, half a mile off-shore, in the deep water of Start Bay. Thinking many things and strange, I passed upon my way.

The direct road to Kingsbridge lies to the right hand, through Stokenham. That the quiet of country life was in the long ago occasionally

broken by picturesque doings denied to us is evident in this extract from the parish records of the year 1581 :

“ Henri Muge, a pirat of the sea, was hanged in chains upon the Start, the 28 day of September.”

Another interesting record at Stokenham—which, by the way, you must be careful not to pronounce “Stok’n’am” but “Stoke-en-ham,” as though it were a dish, like eggs-and-ham—is the epitaph upon :

“ Katherine Randle,  
daughter of William Richard Randle, who was shot March 12th,  
1646.

“ Kind reader, judge ! Here’s under laid  
A hopeful, young and virtuous maid,  
Thrown from the top of earthly pleasure  
Headlong ; by which she’s gained a treasure.  
Environed with Heaven’s power,  
Rounded with Angels from that hour  
In which she fell : God took her home,  
Not by just law, but martyrdom.  
Each groan she fetched upon her bed  
Roar’d out aloud ‘ I’m murdered ! ’  
And shall this blood which here doth lye  
In vain for right and vengeance cry ?  
Do men not think, tho’ gone from hence,  
Avenge God can’t her innocence ?  
Let bad men think, so learn ye good,  
Live each that’s here doth cry for Blood.”

This is a relic of the siege of Salcombe Castle and the military operations between Cavaliers and the Parliament troops. It seems that the Puritan soldiery, attacking a farm-house, were

met with a stout resistance and fired through a window, mortally wounding the farmer's daughter.

To follow the coast from Torcross to the Start, it is necessary at this point to take to the sands, or, more strictly speaking, the shingle ; extremely heavy walking, but endurable on account of the interesting rocks piled up in huge masses on the shore. The slaty cliffs have here fallen in ruins, with picturesque results. Some of the great blocks twenty feet or more in height, have sides quite smooth and lustrous.

We are here in a district not indeed far removed from modern accommodation, but in the same primitive condition as it must have been a century, or even more, ago. The fine shingle gives place to a waste of laminated slate and then, where the cliffs die away for a space into a marshy bottom, to a scrubby flat piece of waste leading to the hamlet of Beesands, marked on many maps as Beeson Cellar.

Beesands has a perpetual air of rejoicing, for on every fine day the waste between the sea and the one row of fishermen's cottages flies its banners to sea and sky. It is only the domestic wash hung out to dry, but the effect is one of festival.

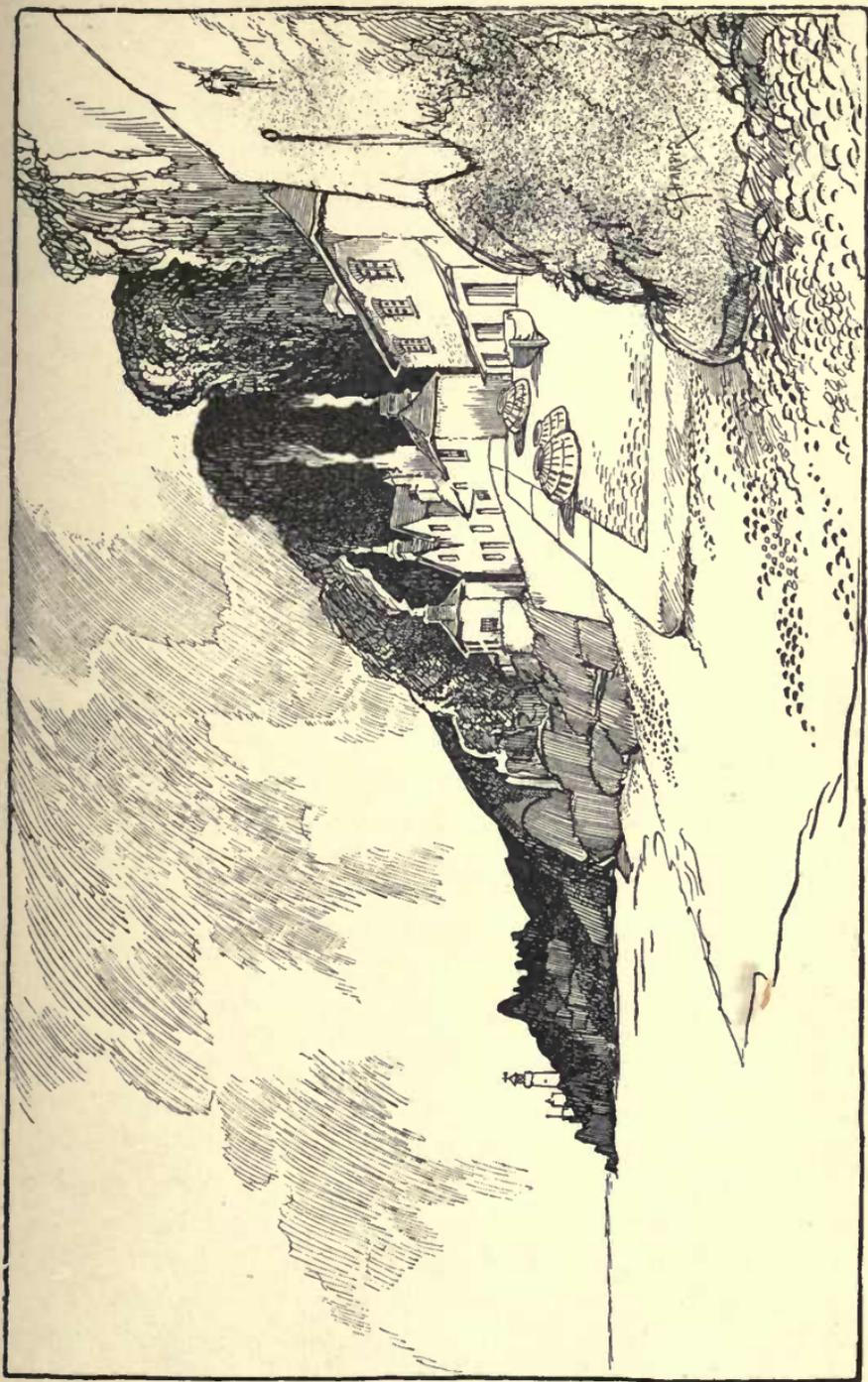
There is a something Irish in the look and the manners and customs of Beesands. The drying-ground of washing and of fishing-nets is rich in old tins and brickbats, and is populated numerously with fowls, housed as a rule in decayed boats turned keel upward. They are the most trustful cocks and hens in the world, and follow

the fishermen into the inn and the cottages like dogs.

A tourist not preoccupied with the arts would inevitably style this a "miserable place," a "wretched hole," or other things uncomplimentary; but to a painter, wanting atmosphere and utter unconventionality, it is delightful. Poor fisherfolk are its only inhabitants, and its one inn neither offers accommodation to the tourist, nor, if it did, would he be likely to accept it. For one thing, strangers, either here or at the sister hamlet of Hall Sands are rare, both places being innocent of roads of any kind. Just a row of rude whitewashed cottages on the level: that is Beesands, and just a double row of somewhat superior cottages on the cliffside; that is Hall Sands.

A mile of climbing up cliff paths and scrambling down, and then across another scrubby bottom where the white champions grow, brings the adventurous stranger to Hall Sands, built into the tall dark cliffs, just as the house-martens plaster their nests against the eaves. The hardihood—the foolhardihood, if you like it better—that ever induced mortal man to build houses in this perilous position under the threatening eaves of the cliffs and on the margin of the waves can only be appreciated by those who look upon the place itself. It beggars description.

The scene is one of a wild beauty, the cliffs rising dark and craggy overhead, draped thickly with ivy, the end of the street blocked with



HALL SANDS.



gigantic masses of fallen rock, and the sea at the very foot of some of the houses ; with here and there a narrow strip of beach.

The hardy fisherfolk exist chiefly on seine-net fishing and crab and lobster-catching. The trained Newfoundland dogs that are still a feature of this hamlet and of Beesands are fewer than of yore. There were some seven or eight of them, taught to swim out through the particularly rough surf of this shore, to meet incoming boats and bring the end of a rope to the beach, so that the boats might be hauled in.

The later history of Hall Sands is somewhat thrilling. It seems that for some years past the shingle in front of Hall Sands has been dredged away by the contractors for the extension works at Keyham Dockyard, Plymouth, for the purpose of making concrete, and that the Government committed the incredible folly of allowing it. The inevitable and foretold result happened. In September 1903 most of the foreshore disappeared in a storm, and in the spring of 1904 the very existence of Hall Sands was threatened. The one inn of the place, the "London," stood with other cottages on a piece of rock jutting out to sea. Suddenly, one afternoon, a heavy groundswell wrecked them. The landlady was making tea, when the side of the house disappeared, without warning. Since then Hall Sands has been without an inn. To help build the new concrete sea-wall and the slipway, which have since been built in the effort to remove the danger

that ought never to have been incurred, the Government granted £1,750, while the Member of Parliament for the county division subscribed £250, and the contractors contributed an unascertained sum. The whole miserable history would assure us, if we did not already know it, that Governments—it matters not of what party—are entirely callous upon subjects that do not endanger their own existence. Now if this had happened in Ireland, the outcry against the “murdering Saxon” would have been appalling.

## CHAPTER XXII

THE START AND ITS TRAGEDIES—LANNACOMBE—  
CHIVELSTONE—EAST PRAWLE—PORTLEMOUTH

THE Start looms up prominently from here, but it is a long scramble up out of Hall Sands and round by the coastguard path to that weird spot.

The uncanny-looking Start has impressed itself upon the imaginations of most of those who have seen it. Polwhele, the historian of Devon, led to the thought by the fantastic solemnity of the rocky headland, and by the sound of its name, gravely assures us that here, in the dim dawn of history, stood a temple of the Phœnician goddess, Astarte, the "Ashtoreth" of the full-blooded Scriptural denunciations of the "worshippers of strange gods"; the more suave and worshipful Venus Aphrodite of the Greeks, fair goddess of the sea.

The Start—Start "Point" is a redundancy—has, however, nothing to do with heathen mythology, suitable though it be, above all places, for altars of hungry sea-gods. The name of the headland is the Anglo-Saxon "Steort," which itself means simply a point or tail; as seen in the name of the Redstart, or "redtail"; but to the

fanciful, these cruel rocks, the scene of so many fearful wrecks, seem not unlike the sacrificial altars of some blood-stained superstitious cult.

The Start projects far out to sea, a dark mass of gneiss rock with quartz veins. It is in the uncomfortable shape of a razor-backed ridge, with demoniacal-looking humps, spires, and spines of iron-hard rock, ranging from prominences like the



THE START.

vertebræ of a crocodile's back to sharp points in the likeness of hedge-stakes. The weird imagination of Doré never conceived anything in scenery more shuddery than that of the Start, and the coastguards, who declare that you have not seen England until you have come to the extremity of this difficult point, are not without some reason for their cryptic saying.

It behoves the stranger to be careful how

he comes to his exploration, for this, A, is the section of the Start. Sloping sides of short slippery grass at an alarming angle descend dangerously to the sea from the serrated skyline, and a false step will send you rolling down to those rocks that have proved fatal to full many a shipwrecked mariner.

It is some sixty years since the lighthouse at the extremity of the point was built. The lantern of it is two hundred feet above the sea ; and shows two lights, lit every evening, ten minutes before sunset : a revolving beam once every minute for vessels out in the Channel, and a constant fixed gleam for shore-going boats, to warn them off the Skerries bank.

But, for all these safeguards, the Start remains a fatal point. When a "snorter" from the south-west, or a fog, sends vessels out of their course upon this coast, they are doomed. The lights are next to useless in foggy weather and at such time the fog-horn, bellowing in unearthly manner, is fraught with every kind of tragical suggestion.

Among the many wrecks of modern times is that of the *Spirit of the Ocean*, March 23rd, 1866, when twenty-eight out of thirty were drowned, the *Gossamer*, China tea-clipper, driven ashore between the Start and Prawle Point in December 1868, when thirteen of a crew of thirty-one were lost ; the *Emilie*, laden with saltpetre, broken up during a fog in June 1870 ; and the *Lalla Rookh*, a large vessel, coming home from Shanghai,

laden with 1,300 tons of tea and 60 tons of tobacco, wrecked in March 1873 near Prawle Point. Shortly before the vessel struck she ran so close to the rocks that four of her crew jumped on to them as she flew by ; but this was a wreck which did not touch the deepest note of tragedy, for in the end, all but one of those on board were saved. There was, however, a woeful waste of cargo, and the little beaches near by, and the long three miles of Slapton Sands, were for days strewn in places with the wreckage of the *Lalla Rookh*, and ridges of tea eleven feet high, and trails of tobacco of almost equal size, were piled up at high-water mark by the waves.

Most dramatic was the wreck of the steamship *Marana*, in the wild blizzard of March 9th, 1891. As night closed down upon the wild scene off the Start, the lighthouse-keeper's wife, looking forth from behind a window, upon that seething world of torn sea and whirling snowflakes, thought she saw a vessel drive through the smother of it, under the lighthouse. No help was possible, and the vessel was gone like a ghost. The tale that was afterwards told was a pitiful one.

Just before the vessel struck, and was broken in two, amidship, the crew made for shore, twenty-two of them in the lifeboat and four others in a smaller. The surf in Lannacombe Bay was so great that they dared not attempt a landing, and made for Prawle, where the lifeboat was smashed to pieces on the Mag Ledge. Most of the unfortunate sailors were drowned, only four

surviving to tell the tale. A fifth, who had managed to drag himself, bruised and bleeding, from the rocks to land, lay down, exhausted, for shelter, and died out there in the snow. It was not until a fortnight later that his body was found.

It was on the same occasion that the *Dryad* was totally wrecked at the extremity of the Start at midnight, and all hands lost. One survivor was seen at daybreak, clinging to a rock, but before help could reach him he was washed away.

The neighbourhood of the Start is an unsatisfactory place to be in on a day threatening rain, for it is outside roads, and the more than knee-high bracken of the coastguard paths is at such times a supersaturating growth. And the way up-along and down-along and round this way and that, past Pear Tree Point, where there are not any pear-trees ( and I dare swear there never were any) is toilsome. Beyond the Point is the yellow strand of Lannacombe, famous for Lannacombe Mill and its miller, who, when French privateers were here, there, and everywhere in the old rumbustious days and visited him one night, flung his money-bag out of window and found it, safe enough, the next morning, suspended in an elder-bush. The guide-books tell how the ruins of the mill may be seen, but they shyly hide themselves from some, and the other Lannacombe Mill, up the combe, which may not be historic in this small sort, is at any rate picturesque enough

to be excused a story. If one were not afraid of getting wet through on a moist afternoon, here by the clucking water-wheel and the moss-grown walls and the clear-running mill-leat should some hours be whiled away.

But the day that had gloomed at length grew



CHIVELSTONE : A RAINY DAY.

damp, and necessity compelled a double-quick to the most accessible village : that of Chivelstone. On the way to it, that fine rain characteristic of Devonshire came down like smoke from the hills. " 'Tis what us carls a miz-wet," said a farm-labourer, trudging home contentedly beneath a thick covering of potato-sacks ; and they do not

call it amiss, for the mist is undeniable, and there is no mistaking the wetness of it.

A traveller's curse upon all landowners who suppress inns, and all villages without spirit sufficient to maintain one. Here the "Seven Stars" inn of guide-books, the only inn of Chivelstone, was not in existence, and this obviously was no resting-place. So to East Prawle, along a featureless road, in a wet and swirling fog, the way made musical with the howls and trumpeting of the Start fog-horn.

East Prawle ceased its growth in the act of developing from a farm-yard into a village; so that there are cottages where there should be ricks and cow-byres, and muck where there should be houses. Grass grows and liquid manure lies in the road, and stones and rocks in the pastures; and, altogether, Prawle, which is a very undesirable spot of earth, is a splendid example of matter in the wrong place.

But gentility of a kind has come to Prawle. You can never tell: the wind bloweth where it listeth; overmantels and preposterous photograph-frames, to say nothing of spiky articles of furniture in bamboo-ware, all projections and easily upset through the window, are to be found in the unlikeliest places. And that is how—Heaven help them and us!—they spell gentility at Prawle.

The Point—well-known by name to diligent readers of the shipping news in the daily papers—is crowned at Hurter's Top with the Lloyd's signal

station, where the vessels going out and home are "spoken." It is a rude and jagged Point, and its rugged character lends it an air of greater height than it possesses. It rises suddenly out of a down, sloping towards the sea, and may be compared with the appearance of a hacked and uneven quarter of a round Dutch cheese. Off this point H.M.S. *Crocodile* was wrecked, and on the next westerly headland, Gammon Head, two Spanish galleons.

All the way round from this point the great dark mass of Bolt Head shows finely, away across the arm of the sea running up between Portlemouth and Salcombe. Portlemouth, although of so impressive a name, is a meagre place on the very crest of the rugged upland overlooking Salcombe and the Kingsbridge River, and consists of merely a farmhouse with a few cottages grouped round the ancient church of St. Onolaus, otherwise, abating that Latinised form, the early sixth-century British St. Winwaloe. The horribly plastered exterior of the tower would dissuade many from seeking a further acquaintance with the church, by which the finely carved and painted thirteenth-century rood screen would be missed. In the churchyard, to the north-west of the tower, is a grim slate headstone, with a still more grim epitaph, on one "Richard Jarvis, of Rickham in this parish, who departed this life the 25th day of May 1782, aged 79 :—

" Through poison he was cut off  
And brought to death at last.

It was by his apprentice-girl,  
On whom there's sentence past.  
O may all people warning take,  
For she was burnèd at the stake."

The interesting person, who thus cheated the unfortunate Richard Jarvis of the few years that probably, in the course of nature, would have remained to him, was one Rebecca Downing, who was executed at the end of the following July at Ringswell, Heavitree, near Exeter ; the old-time spot where Devonshire criminals and martyrs suffered ; but this was really not quite so fearful an execution as it looks, for she was first hanged and her body then cut down and burnt. The exceptional treatment of hanging and then burning the body of the criminal was owing to the crime being, over and above that of murder, the particularly heinous one, in the eye of the old laws, of *petit treason*, the murdered person being the master of, and person in authority over, the assassin.

Coming down a breakneck path from Portle-mouth to the ferry, you find yourself come, not only to an out-of-the-way spot, but to a place where, for the first time, you have a foretaste of the Cornish way of speech. Some one aboard the ferry-boat compares this arm of the sea with Fowey. "Aw, my dear man," says the ferryman, 'tes wider yur than 'tes tu Foy : ees, feth."

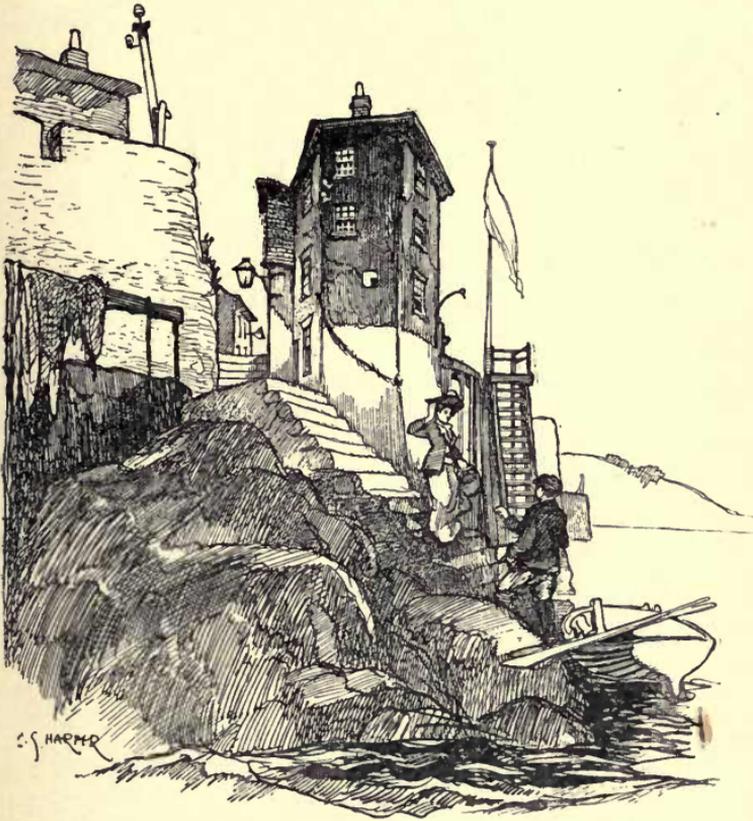
That is a kind of middle-marches compromise between the Devon talk and that of Cornwall, where, instead of say "yes, faith," they say, "iss, fay."

## CHAPTER XXIII

SALCOMBE—KINGSBRIDGE—SALCOMBE CASTLE—  
BOLT HEAD—HOPE

It is quite a narrow passage across the Kingsbridge River to Salcombe, and shut in majestically by dark rocks and a winding channel. The little town dabbles its feet in the deep water of this arm of the sea, and is in every way a fishy and marine place ; but, unless you are lodged in one or other of the houses that rise sheer from the water, it is little or nothing of the sea you will get a sight of. Only from the two narrow alleys leading to the ferry stairs, or down the infrequent passages on to littery quays, is any outlook possible ; and it is quite a mile before the jealously walled-in villas and estates of the outskirts cease and one comes to the little bay of South Sands. The naturally uncomfortable physical circumstances of Salcombe, which has no foreshore for the visitor, no pier, and no seats anywhere, are jealously preserved in all their rigours by the luxurious villadom of the place, which has hitherto succeeded in keeping the railway out, and would, if it were possible, put a ring-fence around the neighbourhood and exclude every one but those who are

necessary to minister to their wants. Salcombe is probably the most exclusive place on this, or any other coast, and its exclusiveness is, singularly enough, shared by all classes in the place. Here

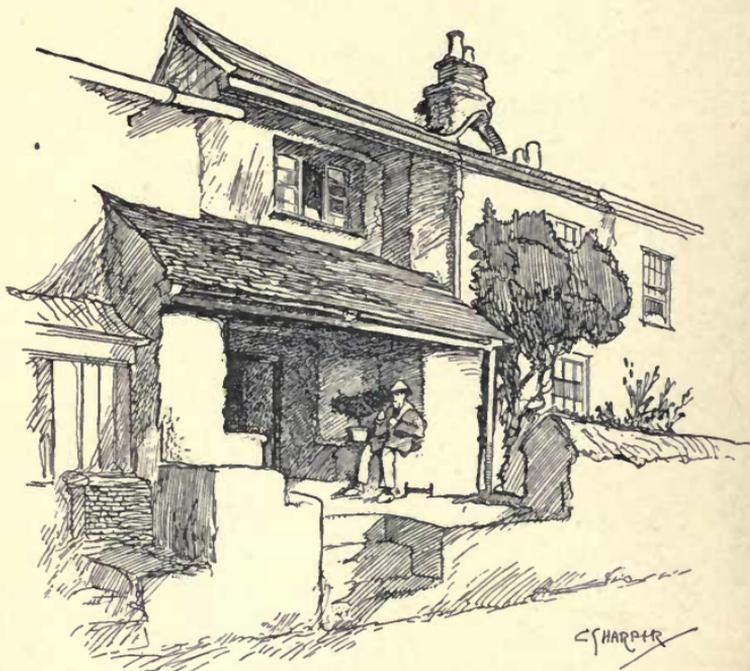


THE FERRY SLIP, SALCOMBE.

is a literally reproduced conversation that enforces the point.

“Why, ’tes like this yur, ye see, Salcombe don’ want no railway; we’m martel glad, I zhuree, ’ur didden coom no furder’n Kingsbridge, an’

them as wants et now'd be main zorry et ever comed, ef't du coom. Some on 'em wrote their names down on what they carled a petition for et. That old feller nex' door to me was one on 'em. 'Aw, yo' ole fule,' I ses, friendly like, 'what av'ee dued now; baintee zatisfied tu be left



AN OLD COTTAGE, SALCOMBE.

peaceable? Why, yo' must be maazed; vair zillee, fer zure. Scralee out yer name to-rights, ses I; 'us-uns, don' wan' no railways yur.' "

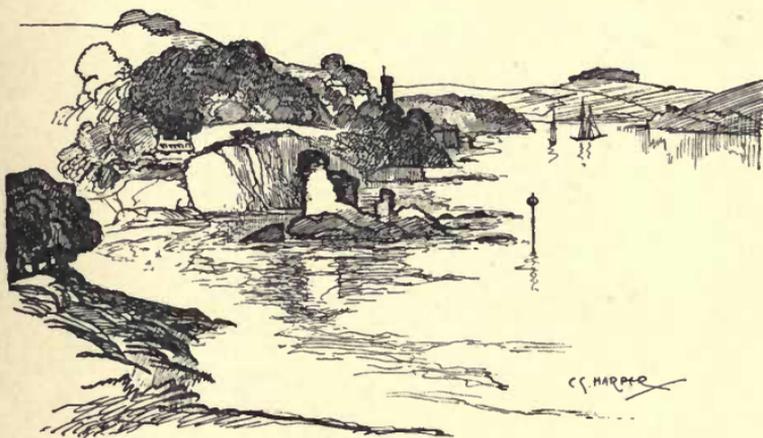
"And the railway has been abandoned, then?"

"Zim zo: leastways we'm niver yurd nuthin' more on't."

"But why object to a railway: it would

bring more people ? Look how prosperous Kingsbridge has become since the railway was opened.”

“ Aw, my dear sawl, ther's no livin' fer poor vo'k wher' ther's a railway. It doubles yer rent an' the price of yer food, an' all the gentry goes away, an' all them as cooms into the place on business, an' usen'd be able to git out'n it agen in a hurry, why, they'm off agen same arternoon.”



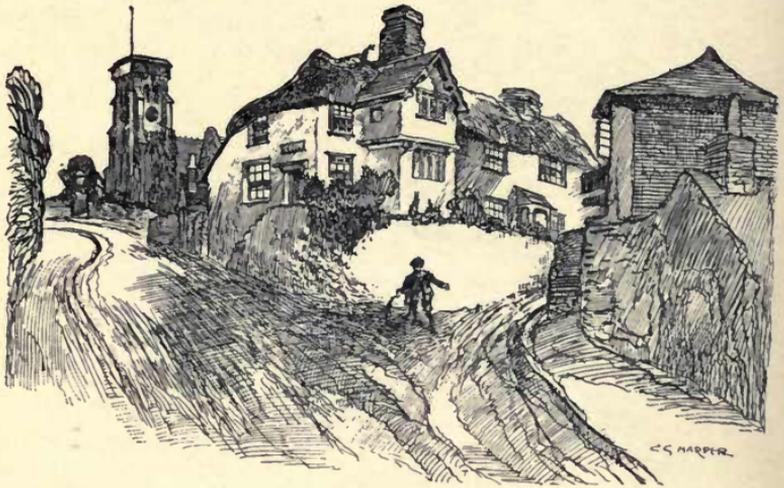
SALCOMBE CASTLE.

And that's true enough, as Kingsbridge has discovered. Meanwhile, Salcombe remains a place which may not inaptly be compared with a lobster pot or a beetle-trap. It is not difficult to enter, but it *is* difficult to leave, unless you are prepared to hoof it, as many a commercial traveller knows.

Touch is kept with the outer world by means of an omnibus to Kingsbridge and by a steamer plying up and down the river ; and sometimes the Kingsbridge Packet voyages out to sea, and

comes at last to a safe haven in Plymouth Barbican after having casually taken ground on a mud-bank or two down the river. The Kingsbridge Packet is not precisely a liner, and is indeed a cargo-boat which does not even disdain potatoes and live sheep.

“ Kingsbridge River ” is altogether a misnomer.

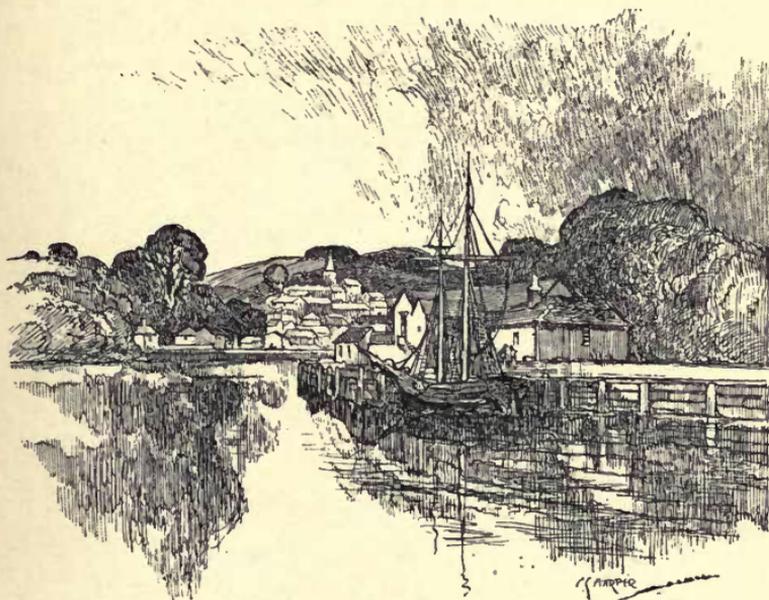


SALCOMBE CHURCH.

It is a five-mile long inlet of the sea, with numerous subsidiary creeks winding between the hills. The scenery is rendered comparatively desolate by the lack of woods, and it is of a peculiar solitude. Kingsbridge town itself sits at the head of the creek, and is a thriving little place. The villages of Charleton, Frogmore, and South Pool stand on their respective creeks.

Salcombe is not a little proud of its literary association with Froude, who entertained Tennyson

at his residence, Woodcot, toward the close of their respective careers, and it is a cherished article of faith that the Poet Laureate here received the inspiration of his "Crossing the Bar." Froude



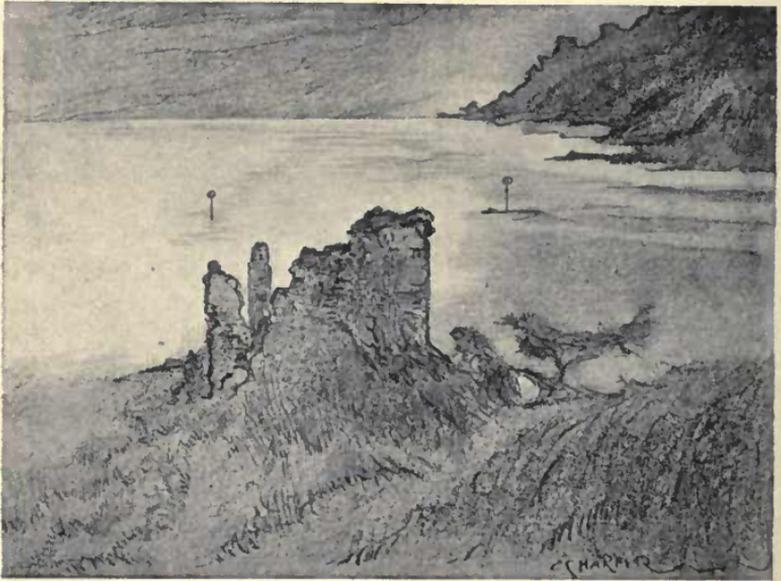
KINGSBRIDGE.

himself sleeps in the cemetery on the hill-top, where his epitaph may be read with interest:—

In Memory of  
 James Anthony Froude, M.A.,  
 Regius Professor of  
 Modern History, Oxford.  
 Son of the Rev. R. H. Froude,  
 late Archdeacon of Totnes.  
 Born at Dartington  
 April 23, 1818,  
 Died at Salcombe,  
 October 20, 1894.

He drew a picture of Carlyle which hero-worshippers have bitterly resented, but a picture that shows the man, alike in his strength and his weakness ; that makes him just human, instead of the infallible philosopher, superior to all little-nesses and prejudices, of a growing tradition.

Salcombe Castle, or Fort Charles, situated on



SALCOMBE CASTLE.

a rocky islet off South Sands, was a ruinous mediæval tower in the time of the Cromwellian wars, but the perfervid loyalty of the West repaired it and fortified the place with cannon, throwing in an armed garrison, fully provisioned, at a cost, as the surviving accounts state, of £3,196 14s. 6d. During a four months' bombardment in 1646, in which the gunners were such extravagantly

bad marksmen that only one person on each side was killed, Sir Edmund Fortescue held the fort, and then, only through some doubts of the loyalty of members of his garrison, capitulated and marched out, with guns firing, drums beating, and colours flying, to the seclusion of his own mansion at Fallapit. The bravado of this capitulation was more fatal than the siege, for three persons were accidentally shot.

If the landowners of Salcombe had their way it is little of the coast scenery hereabouts the public would see. Of late years the grassy summit of the cliffs looking upon Salcombe Castle has been enclosed and planted, and now, passing the inlet of South Sands, and coming to Splatt's Cove, a notice-board beside the path announces that "by the order of Ford's Trustees" there is no right of way. My own advice to those who are confronted with notices such as this is, enter if you wish; and in this instance the Salcombe Urban District Council have given the lie direct to the impudent contention of the Trustees, and have erected a prominent notice of their own, side by side with the other, stating that, notwithstanding this warning, a right of way *does* exist.

Changeful has been the policy here. A former Earl of Devon, resident at the Moulton, caused the Courtenay Walk to be cut midway up the once-inaccessible face of the cliffs round to Bolt Head, or, to speak by the card, "The Bolt." And now, passing the mutually destructive notices above Splatt's Cove, and under a recently built hotel,

we find the entrance to that walk flanked with offensively worded injunctions to keep to the path ; by which it is abundantly evident that the present owner would dearly like to close it altogether. Here stands, or clings, a modern villa, on the edge of the sloping cliff, with a little terrace down below, like a tiny gun-platform.

The Walk begins by burrowing through a stunted wood, that looks romantic enough to be pixie-haunted. And, by the same token, the foxglove grows abundantly in its shade, so the pixies must needs foregather here ; for the foxglove provides gloves for the little "folk" and has nothing at all to do with foxes. They are the splendidest gloves you ever saw, much superior to the best *gants de suède* that ever were, and neither Fownes nor Dent and Allcroft have ever made anything like them. That is quite certain. And if you come here at midnight and turn round three times and say "willie-willie wiskins," you will see—what you *will* see. I can say no more than that, because whoso gives away the secrets of the little folk is lost.

Beyond the wood you come to very weird scenery indeed, along the boulderesque footpath, with bracken and hoar rock intermingled, and the blue sea below on the left and great grey spires of cliff overhead on the right, splashed with lichens red, golden, tawny, pallid green—all colours. Then rise in front of you the Pinnacles. You see at once, when you are come in sight of them, that you are come by quick change from the territory



THE PINNACLES, BOLT HEAD.



of the little folk into some Arthuresque land of the giants, for the great fantastic pinnacles are in twisted and contorted forms that suggest having originally been fashioned when warm and plastic by some Titan hand.

The slaty stratification of the surrounding rocks lends itself to the most outlandish horrent shapes of monstrous jibing faces, anvils, halberds, battle axes, and the likeness of a perfect armoury of magic weapons of offence, taking their most uncanny guise in the ragged mists that almost always enwrap and cling about The Bolt.

It seems that, contrary to general belief, this headland, of which these Pinnacles are the culminating point, is not the real Bolt Head. It is the further point, across the intervening valley, where the explorer finds the coastguard path die away, and himself perilously walking on the treacherous grassy slopes, where a slip will conduct at express speed on to some particularly sharp and cruel-looking rocks. It is like an inferno down there, in the sense that the descent is fatally easy, and to retrace one's steps—or rather, flight—impossible. It is here that, warily shirking the point, you wish you hadn't come ; that you were a goat or a chamois, or, at the very least of it, that you had spikes in the soles of your shoes.

But they are lovely, as well as awe-inspiring, glimpses down there, sheer into the sea, where the cliff-walls are as black as coal and the sea now a dark, now a light green, here and there ringing a half-submerged rock with creamy foam. Hollow

sound the surges in those cavernous depths, and reverberant the cries of the seagulls. Such is the extremity of the real Bolt, out yonder.

The descent from the Pinnacles leads down into a solitary valley, with towering fantastic rocks on the one side and the sea on the other. A deserted cottage standing near the sea emphasises the loneliness. The cottage has a story, for it was built to house the submarine cable from Brest, landed here in May 1870. Here, thank goodness, you plunge out of the over-civilisation of to-day, and, leaving hotels behind, come for a space into something of the rural England of sixty years since. Here, where nature is so beautiful and the littlenesses of towns are left behind, one can understand something of that latter-day portent, Anarchism, which, in this close touch with mother earth, reveals itself as a divine discontent with lovely things exploited and degraded, rather than the bogey of statesmen and sociologists.

Stair Hole Bottom they call this valley. It is carpeted with bracken; a little peaty stream comes oozing along in boggy places, or purling, as from the lip of a jug, over scattered boulders, overhung by the nodding foxglove. It is, in a word, Cornish, rather than Devonian, and, as commonly is the case in Cornwall, you have to pick your way among the chancy places, for lack of road or path.

Looking back, the Pinnacles show fitfully through the mist, the hole through them, like an All-seeing Eye, glowering darkly as the mists close

in, or lightening, with a tinge of beneficence, in the sun.

On those moist, hot, steamy Devonshire days, when the mist, condensed off the sea, rolls like smoke over the rocky ledges, you look over the cliffs' edge into a pillowy whiteness, which, for all you may discover, is the next field, or a sheer drop of three hundred feet on to a rocky beach. But through the smother, like a warning cry, comes dully the turmoil of the waves, the husky voice of the sea, sounding to the unromantic Londoner like the roaring of the traffic in his native streets, as heard from one of the metropolitan parks.

The coastguard path is rugged and perilous, and the whitened stones of it are apt to fail one at critical moments, like moral resolutions in the pathway of life. Sometimes they are not there at all, and in some spots they are so overgrown with bracken that you barge into them unawares, with painful results.

Up at Clewer signal station, where the coastguard, outside his tiny whitewashed hut, does incomprehensible things with strings of flags, the wild growths of these downs run riot, kept in subjection only by the winds, which have imposed the oddest shapes upon them. The gorse-bushes have been buffeted by them into closely compacted hummocky figures, the heather is disposed in hemispherical groups, the brambles, turn in upon themselves in a way the free-born hedgerow bramble would despise, and only the bracken, which is a summer growth and, like the

grass of the field, here to-day and gone to-morrow, is independent and upstanding. The beautiful bracken! Come here in July, and you will think all the strawberries in the world are on t'other side of the next shoulder of hill; for in that month the bracken has a perfume like that of the ripest and choicest and sweetest strawberries ever grown.

There are rabbits on these uplands, as with a painful wrench of the ankle you are not unlikely to discover, when your foot plunges unexpectedly into one of their burrows. There are moles, too, evidently, and slow-worms wriggle plentifully across the path.

And thus, now up, now down and around, with the perspiration streaming from you in the still, close hollows, and drying off on the breezy heights, you come by astonishing rocks down to a little sandy rock-girt cove, solitary, without even a Man Friday's footprints on the yellow sand, through which a little stream trickles. But though no human footprint may be seen, the sands are patterned by the thousand with the broad-arrow prints of the gulls' feet, as though the War Office had descended upon the place and thus prodigally marked it for its ownest own.

One could—and two could even better—go a-Robinson-Crusoeing here very comfortably for awhile in the summer, with the aid of a tent, despite the unlovely name of the place, which is Sewer Mill Cove.

What's in a name? Not much here, at any rate, for it has really nothing to do with drains.

There are several "sewer" farms in the neighbourhood, east and west, and the district in general is called "The Sewers": the name deriving from the Anglo-Saxon description of the folk living here, the "Sæware," the sea-folk, as distinguished from those who, living a little more inland, obtained their livelihood from the land. The process by which the place took its name is not an unusual one; and Canterbury—the "burgh of the Kentware," or Kentish folk—may be taken as a prominent and familiar instance.

Sewer Mill Cove was the scene in 1885 of one of the many wrecks that have made this coast dreaded by mariners, for then the *Hallowe'en* teaship was cast away here, fortunately without loss of life.

The downs here, at the summit of the cliffs between this and Hope, are those of Bolberry, whence comes, some consider, the name of Bolt Head. Heather clothes them and the cliff-tops with a more than imperial magnificence. Imperial mantles are poor things and tawdry beside such purple splendour. If Solomon in all his glory were not arrayed like the lilies of the field, certainly no emperor has ever attained to the gorgeousness of the heather.

It is an untameable wilderness on these heights, for the land is of such negative quality that it is worth no farmer's while to touch it, and moreover, great fissures and holes, like those of earthquakes, partly masked by undergrowth, exist here. The country people speak of them as

Ralph's Pits, Vincent Pits, Rotten Pits. Ralph, they tell you, was a smuggler, and that is the closest touch you can make to him. Ralph is as insubstantial as the mists that come streaking over the downs.

Now we come to Bolt Tail and the signal-station, overlooking Ramilies Cove, where the *Ramilies* man-o'-war was wrecked in 1760. Seven hundred and eight of the seven hundred and thirty four men on board perished. Down below lies Hope village, in its tiny cove, where an island can be seen in the making ; a great mass of rock dividing the cove in two being joined to the mainland only by strips of sand and heaps of tumbled boulders. It was here that one of the many ships of the Spanish Armada was wrecked : so many ships and so many wrecks that the pen revolts from writing about them, even as the London apprentices revolted, in the centuries gone by, against salmon every day. These Spanish Armada ships are the "salmon every day," or the *toujours perdrix*, if you like to put it in terms of a surfeit of game, of the historian of the coasts. Scarce a cove but they dashed their stout timbers to pieces upon its rocks, and those beaches are few that have no legends of silver ingots, pieces of eight, moidores, doubloons, dollars, and all the glittering galaxy of treasure-trove deriving from such a romantic source ; but devil a dollar has rewarded the quest of this pilgrim, errant with the best will to it.

Then, if you have faith, you may see in every dark-featured Devonian a descendant from a

captured or shipwrecked Don. There are the names of Miggs and Jermy (among others), which may, or again may not, derive from Miguel and Jeronimo, and Cantrell has been recognised as a debased form of Alcantara, but 'tis a far cry. Here, at any rate, we know the name and rating of the Spanish vessel. She was the hospital-ship *St. Peter the Great*, and was on her way home, after having, in flight from Drake and his fellows, circumnavigated Great Britain. One hundred and fifty of the one hundred and ninety aboard of her were saved ; and possibly the Delmers, the Jaggers, and the Murrens to be met with are descendants of that crew.

Hope is just bidding "good day t'ye" to the old immemorial times, when it was just a hamlet of crabbers and lobster-catchers and the like, for villas and bungalows are putting the old cottages of cob and rock to shame, and they are becoming, although still a small community, as up-to-date as you please, or you don't please. No longer, I think, is the once-famous "White Ale" of South Devon made or sold at Hope, or even at Kingsbridge ; once, in some sort, the metropolis of its brewing. But we need not regret the disappearance of this heady nastiness, which was not in the least like ale, and more nearly resembled that extremely potent and convivial compound, "egg-flip," than anything else. But "White Ale" had a great and an ancient reputation, and was described a couple of centuries ago as "the nappiest ale that can be drunk."

It was held to be the "ancient and peculiar drink of the Britons and Englishmen, and the wholesomest, whereby many in elder times lived a hundred years."

If we can frame to believe that, then the disappearance of it is something like a national disaster; but it may well be supposed that although the numbers of police-court cases would sensibly increase with the re-introduction of "White Ale," those of centenarians would not. The composition of this tippie, which is really grey, seems to be milk, gin, and spice, and, bottled, it blows off in hot weather like a high-pressure boiler.

## CHAPTER XXIV

THURLESTONE—THE AVON—BOROUGH ISLAND—  
RINGMORE—KINGSTON—THE ERME

THE little headland enclosing the western side of Hope Cove forms the eastern horn of Thurlestone Bay, and as you rise the neck of land dividing the two, you see the strange rock with the hole through it—the Thurlestone—which gives a name,



THE THURLESTONE.

not only to the sandy bay, but to the village of Thurlestone, which stands with its ancient church on the bare hillsides beyond. The Thurlestone, is a mass of red conglomerate, oddly isolated amid the neighbouring slate, standing in deep water, surrounded by a group of small satellite rocks and reefs, and derives its name from the Anglo-Saxon, "thyrlian," to pierce. It is thus "the drilled,"

or pierced stone, and claims philological kin with "nostril," or nose-hole, and "thrall," a slave whose ear has been pierced. That standby of topographers, the Domesday Book, calls the village "Torlestan," which is as near as the Norman-French scribe could arrive at the sound of the Saxon word. My own respect for the Thurlestone is considerably heightened by the evidence of its having worn, a thousand years ago, very much the same appearance it does now. Curiously enough, there is a Thirlestane Castle in Scotland.

When the south-westerly winds bring great seas raging into the bay, with towering white combers dashing in upon the sands, the Thurlestone finds a voice and calls with a sound of roaring all over this countryside. The rustics say that at such times you shall hear the bellowing of the Thurlestone ten miles distant.

For myself, I have come to Thurlestone at a time when there are no voices, save the cat-like screaming of the gulls and the horrible squawking noises of the cruiser setting out to sea from Hop Cove, and bidding a series of half-suffocated good-byes with her steam-whistles, dreadfully like some one being very offensively sick. Noises are not common on Thurlestone strand, and I would even say it was lonely, save that the millions of sand-fleas inhabiting the shore forbid the thought.

I have bought a piece of Dutch cheese and some biscuits, and disregarding the inmates of

the one hideously plastered boarding-house recently built here, take off shoes and stockings, and sitting on a convenient rock sliding down into deep water, come into intimate touch with the infinities, and make these notes. Two pennyworth of Dutch cheese, with biscuits to match, a comfortable seat on a rocky ledge, your feet dabbling in the clear water, and sunshine over all, will bring you into close relation with the Infinite. Here I hew off in the rough a slab of the Simple Life, and enjoy it hugely. It is, I suppose, the sunshine and the solitude in collaboration. At any rate, it is obviously enough not the white ale.

There are cornelians and lovely pebbles on this lonely strand, and sea-anemones, to the eye appetisingly like fruit-jellies, on the rocks. Alas! they are *not* good to eat, and as fairy gold, we all know, turns to sere leaves, so the translucent pebbles of the wet sea-shore become the commonplace opaque stones that the next day we turn disgustedly out of our pockets. In short, it is life in little you find reflected here, and reduces the heady optimism of a summer noon to something like tears. I don't expect, or hope, every one who comes to this salt margin of Devon will feel thus. This it is to be cursed with temperament, to be, against your will, a snivelling sentimentalist, whom the lowing of the cattle at eventide, the distant tinkling of the sheep-bells, or the very beauty of day or place will suffice to reduce to a chastened melancholy.

Thurlestone church is neighboured on the hillside in these expansive times by a golf club, which, in the interest of golf-balls, has actually had the impudence to spread wire-netting over the charming little rustic stream that here flows to the sea ; and near by are the ornate brand-new villas built and furnished by speculators with an eye on the possible huge profits to be earned from letting them for the summer season, in these times of a revived appreciation of the countryside. It is with a malignant joy that the wayfarer perceives the speculators to have overreached themselves, and the villas—"white elephants" says the ferryman at Bantham—to be unlet. How, indeed, should Thurlestone become a place of resort ? It is remote, and its sands, unstable and shelving steeply to the sea, are extremely dangerous.

The dark, stern, upstanding Perpendicular tower of the old church looks down grimly upon these white and red and yellow upstarts. It is a fine, large church, the successor of an earlier, as the great Norman bowl-font of red sandstone would seem to prove, and the designers of it designed in a fine, large, broad style, suited to the coarse-grained granite and limestone of their building-materials. That Rev. Mr. John Snell, chaplain to Charles I., who was with the Royalist garrison in Salcombe Castle, was rector here, and although one of the articles of surrender declared that he was not to be disturbed in his living, he was plundered of his goods, and his farm-stock

was twice carried off by the Puritans, so that he found it prudent to leave. Unlike so many others, he lived to return to his parish, and, I have no doubt, rendered things in his turn, extremely uncomfortable for some. One little natural human touch of him remains, in the entry in the register under his hand, against the years covered by the Commonwealth :—

*“ Monstrum horrendum informe,”*

Horrible and shapeless monster.

“ This is youre houre and ye power of darkness.”

The iron had evidently entered into his soul.

The interior of the church has of late been exquisitely decorated and repaired : we will not say “ restored,” for that word is rightly of ill-savour in these times. In place of the almost inevitable pitch-pine pews, or the commonplace chairs, there are green-stained, rush-bottomed chairs, with woodwork of the same hue : all very artistic and delightful, and sufficing to show that the more usual order of things is less inevitable than might be supposed, and only so common because taste is a quality of the rarest. Only, I would that these things did not so commonly go with that new reforming zeal which is sending the Church of England Romewards, so fast as its clergy dare. Here a faculty has been obtained for a rood-screen, and in general things are developing at a rate dangerous to that new movement itself and bringing that counter-reformation which is presently to repeat history.

History, it is true, does repeat itself, but not on precisely identical lines, and the newer Reformation will be the disestablishment and disendowment of an unworthy Church, and free-trade in religion.

There are weird rocks out beyond Thurlestone, on the coastwise route round to the Avon estuary ; one of them—it may be glimpsed in the background of the Thurlestone illustration—resembling some monstrous growth of the mushroom kind. The direct way to the crossing of the Avon is through Thurlestone street, and thence by the hillside village of Buckland, and by Bantham, a hamlet nestling under the lee of the Ham, a great sandy elbow thrown up, ages ago, by the sea and the winds, in vain efforts to fling back the Avon upon itself. That river is no rushing torrent, but just a softly gliding stream ; and the sand dunes have not sufficed to imprison it. All they have done is to turn its course aside, due west instead of south, and there, denied a direct access to the sea, it has eaten away the cliffs in a great semicircular mouthful, and goes gliding out to the Channel through a waste of flat sands.

It was here in 1772 that the *Chanteloupe*, homeward-bound from the West Indies, was totally wrecked, and of all those on board only one person saved. Those were the times when the fisherfolk and shore-dwellers generally prayed for wrecks, and if none was forthcoming, helped Providence to produce them by exhibiting false lights on shore, to lure vessels to their doom. They

thought no shame of asking, "O Lord, give us a good wreck," and were perhaps very little more civilised than the savages of strange lands, who, thinking shipwrecked sailors, to have been shipwrecked at all, must be under the high displeasure of the gods, murder them out of hand, and consider themselves, in so doing, the vicars of those affronted deities.

"A good wreck," especially if there were no survivors left to tell the tale, or to claim anything, would keep the seaboard of half a county in luxury of sorts for quite a considerable time, and as survivors were such detrimentals, they were, in those "good old times," very quickly made not to survive. It was a rude, but practical application of that Socialistic doctrine of collectivism, of which we hear so much nowadays, "the greatest good to the greatest number."

The story of the *Chanteloupe* is a dark and repellent instance of those practices. It narrates how a lady named Burke, familiar with the evil reputation of these people, and fearful of being murdered, put on all her jewellery when the ship struck, and was flung ashore glittering with precious stones. If she had thought to purchase life with that display, she made the most fatal of errors, for the sight only served to arouse the worst passions of those beach-combers, who slaughtered the unfortunate woman for the sake of her rings and other trinkets. When enquiries were set afoot, her body was discovered in the sands, bloodstained, with fingers cut off and ears

mutilated ; but it does not appear that the guilt was brought home to any one. The fisherfolk, doubtless, all hung together, lest they should hang separately.

Two years earlier a local Quaker, one Henry Hingeston, had published a pamphlet denouncing the wrecking propensities of this coast :

“ I have been deeply affected,” said he, “ to see and feel how sweet the report of a *shipwreck* is to the inhabitants of this country, as well professors as prophane, and what running there is on such occasions, all other business thrown aside, and away to wreck. . . . I am verily persuaded that it hath been more sweet to hear that all the men are drowned, and so a ‘ proper wreck,’ than that any are saved, and by that means hinder their more public appearance on that stage for getting money. O ! the cruelty that hath been acted by many. My heart hath been often heavy to consider it, insomuch that I think multitudes of heathen are nothing near so bad. Remember the broadcloth slupe, stranded in Bigbury Bay, richly laden. O ! for shame, for shame, I am really vext that ever my countrymen should be guilty of such devilish actions.”

But the estimable Hingeston might just as effectively have preached to the gulls and the cormorants on the iniquity of catching fish, as to have denounced wrecking. ‘Twas in the blood, and that is all there is to it.

These old tales of long-vanished days seem very remote and indistinct, but they came very

near and vivid when a few years ago some children digging in the sand of the Ham, turned up a skull, pronounced to be that of a negro. It was considered, together with heaps of bones afterwards discovered, to be a relic of the tragedy of the *Chanteloupe*.

The Devonshire folk—the rustic sort, at any rate—generally call their Avon the “Aune,” and a little hamlet not far from this same Bantham is “Aunemouth;” while the village of Aveton Gifford, standing up-river, where the salt estuary becomes a freshwater stream, is impartially “Aveyton,” or “Auton,” “Jifford.”

At Bantham Ferry the boatman puts you across for twopence, or however much or little he thinks you will stand—and it is only the matter of a dozen strokes at low water. And then you have the sands, the loose stones, and the rustling bennets and the sedges all to yourself; a kind of seashore Sahara. Then you round a rocky point; and there before you is Burr Island, a majestic reek of acetylene, or other gas, and people. Wide stretch the sands at ebb, but they are not so wide but that the prints of footsteps have disfigured them pretty thoroughly; for where the land slopes down to the shore in grassy fields, the Plymouth people have built bungalows, and are building more. Burr, or Borough, Island is tethered to the mainland at ebb by this nexus of sand. It is in this circumstance a kind of minor St. Michael's Mount, and like it again in that it once owned a chapel dedicated to St. Michael.

The chapel disappeared in the lang syne, and when the solitary public-house—whose deserted roof-tree may still be seen—ceased business, civilisation and Borough Island wholly parted company.

Beyond this point is the little sand-smothered bight of Challaborough, with a coastguard station, where this explorer, at least, met coastguards of exceptional stupidity and astonishing ignorance of the coast beyond their own insignificant nook. Why, they could not even spell or pronounce the name of their own station properly, and made it "Shellaborough." "Erme Mouth?" they had never heard of it, nor of the Erme River, but dimly conceived "Muddycombe," to be meant. And as for the coast, they spoke of it in such awe-struck terms that (it shall be confessed) the time drawing on towards evening, I made inland, and so do not know what manner of dragons and chimeras those are, which no doubt inhabit the three miles and a half of a not very rugged shore, awaiting the advent of a fine juicy tourist.

Primitive, indeed, are those villages that lie away back from the sea in these parts. First comes Ringmore, where the rock outcrops from the macadam in the main road, where the cottages are half-smothered in flowers, and where the domestic fowls that squatter and plunge in dust-baths in the middle of the street are the only signs of life. Reminiscences of the old window-tax are called up by a house with a walled-up window, carefully painted with a pretence of being a genuine one of panes and sashes. Even the

brass catch has not been forgotten by the artist in illusion, whose treatment is so literal, he must have been the forerunner of the Newlyn School. The brass catch is rendered more than a thought too brassy, and the unfortunately painted panes are by no means convincing. But the deception although so grotesquely obvious, could not, under such opaque circumstances, be called transparent, could it ?

Like the Reverend Mr. Snell of Thurlestone, William Lane, rector of Ringmore, was a militant Royalist. He raised and trained a company of men and, laying hands upon some cannon, opened out a battery against the Parliamentary forces on their way to the leaguer of Salcombe. His exploit made him a marked man, and he was considered sufficiently important for an expedition to be sent against him by sea from the Parliamentary stronghold of Plymouth. The orders given the commander of this force were to capture and shoot the combatant cleric ; but Mr. Lane, advised of what was afoot, took refuge in the tower of his church, where the secret room, provided with a fireplace, in which he hid is still to be seen. Here he lay three months, fed by his faithful parishioners, but was at last obliged to escape to France. At last, venturing to return, he worked for awhile as a labourer in the limestone quarries near Torquay, until his little dwelling was pillaged by a French privateer. He died at last when on his return from London, whither he had journeyed on foot to ventilate his grievances.

The ancient church of Ringmore contains a relic of more recent strife, in the shape of an icon from Sebastopol.

At Kingston, on the way across to the river Erme, there is but one inn. The "Sloop" is the name of it, and there, if you wait half-an-hour, while the cocks and hens run in and out of the rooms and passages, they will get you tea. There is very little of a Lyons' or other tea-shop about the "Sloop." And Kingston village is to match; primitive Devonian in style, which is a style partaking of all the characteristics belonging to the untamed villages of Cornwall, Ireland, and the Highlands of Scotland. There are very few of the type left now, which is a cause for thankfulness, or regret, as you will, and they ought to be preserved on ice and kept for the admiration, or otherwise, of posterity.

Out of Kingston the road runs deep down below the level of the fields, in true Devonshire sort, with high banks and tall hedges on either side, so that no view is possible. Nor would it have mattered had it been otherwise when this Stanley of these remote parts passed this way, for the whole face of the land and sea and the blue of the sky was blotted out on this warm and close evening of a hot summer's day by a white pillowy fog, which, the nearer the shore, grew more dense.

After long tramping comes a left-hand turn, with a signpost inscribed "Mothecombe." The name suggests some moth-eaten hamlet that

would be all the better for plenty of camphor and a good airing ; but presently one realises that *this* is the place called by the coastguards " Muddycombe," and more usually, in local speech, " Muthycombe."

It is a solitary road that leads down from this signpost, and the fog discloses only one person on the way : a boy, driving a cow. " Coom oop, Primrose," says he, and that mild-featured dame and he turn into a field, the whiteness engulfs them at once, and the wayfarer is alone in the world.

Suddenly the road ends, upon a sandflat. This is really the mouth of the Erme, the estuary where it slides out to sea, but it is infinitely mysterious in this smother of fog and woolly silence. The stranger, of course, assumes a village from the direction of that curt, staccato signpost up the road, but devil a house can he find here ; only a something looming out from under low cliffs, which at first he takes to be an inn, and then a blockhouse fort, resolving itself finally into the inhospitable likeness of a ruined limekiln.

The distant rustle and whispering of waves on the sea-shore comes fitfully through the fog, which breaks mysteriously and shows the river, with occasional glimpses of the woody banks opposite. For the rest, all is silence, save for an odd continuous buzzing or sizzling undertone, like bacon-frying, *piano*. It is marvellously like, and only the smell is wanting to complete the illusion, which is produced by the billions of

sand-fleas living their little crowded hour in the sands and among the drying seaweed. Every time you kick over a tuft of weed you disturb a little world, and rouse that frying-bacon sound, as though a rasher had been turned in the frying-pan.

Meanwhile, the way is obviously across that river, but how to win to that other side? No one, nor any house, is in sight, but here, by fortunate chance, is a fisherman's boat, and I up-anchor, cast off, and row myself to the opposite shore, expectant all the while of an angry shout from somewhere. But anything, rather than stay the night over yonder with the sand-fleas. No one, however, witnessed that little act of piracy, and I walked up out of that steamy laundry-like hollow, where one is reduced to the limpness of washing hung over a clothes-line, and wondered what yon fisherman said and thought when he found himself on the one side of the river and his boat on the other. I hope it is not many miles round to the first bridge, or ford.

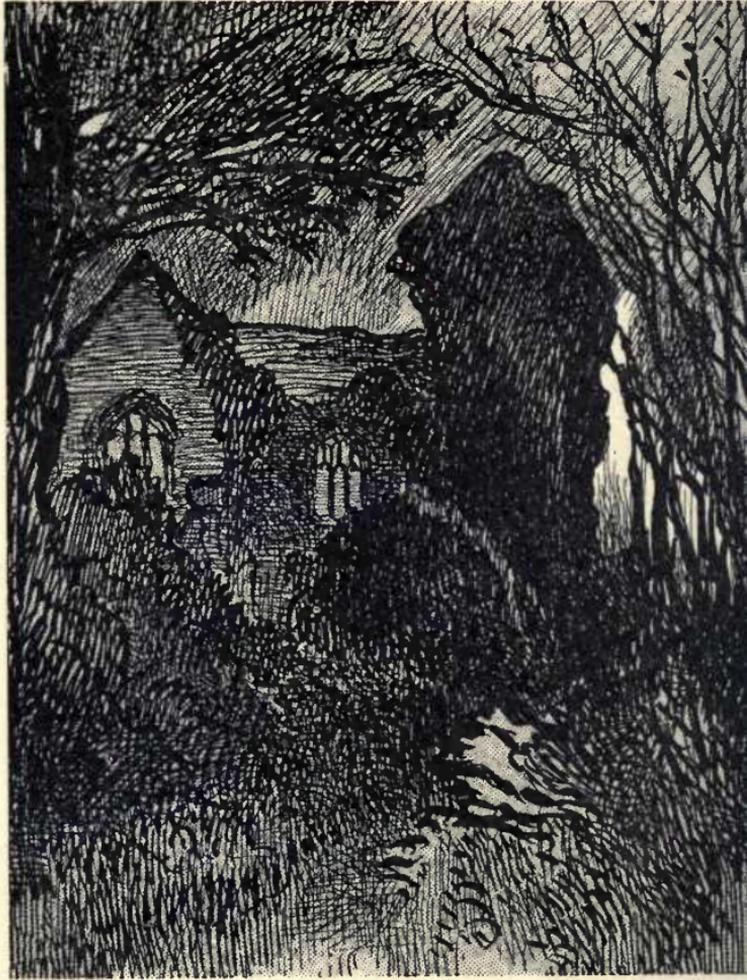
## CHAPTER XXV

MOTHECOMBE—REVELSTOKE—NOSS MAYO—THE  
YEALM—WEMBURY—THE MEWSTONE

MOTHECOMBE is a place where explorers and visitors of any kind are severely discouraged, the local landowners, the Mildmays of Flete, a magnificent modern mansion whose park extends for several miles along the Erme and the Pamflete creek, having abolished the inns, while their tenants dare harbour no such chancey thing as a stranger. It seems rather mediæval. Far from being aggrieved at this, the chance wayfarer is so impressed that he is only too grateful to be allowed to live, instead of being shot at sight. It is, in any case, a difficult matter to explore the coast at beautiful Mothecombe, for the summer atmosphere is that of a stewpot, and merely to gently walk the shortest distance bathes one in perspiration. The only thing to do is to enquire the way to Revelstoke, the next place marked on the map, and to make for it under as easy conditions as may be.

When at last, after leaving inhospitable Mothecombe, the explorer comes to Revelstoke, whose name, at any rate, promises something better, he

finds himself in rather worse case, and understands why it was the country-people, even within a



THE RUINED CHURCH OF REVELSTOKE.

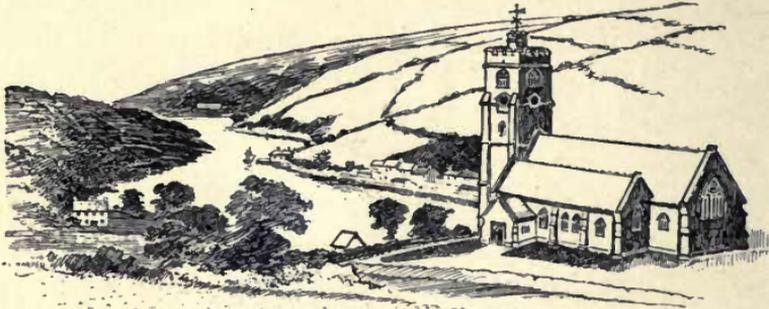
miles of it, put their heads together and consulted with one another so deeply, and with so little result. For, beyond a ruined church, solitary

the verge of the cliffs, and at the end of a tangled footpath, overgrown with brambles and nettles, there is *no* Revelstoke at all, and the hospitality foreshadowed by its name is seen to be a thing impossible. It is a very pleasant and romantic place to come to on a bright summer's morning, but to come strange to it at night——! Praise be to the powers that took me, after Mothecombe, inland to Holbeton instead.

This ruined church of St. Peter, near Stoke Point, nearly overhangs the cliffs of a rocky inlet, but the building itself is so shrouded with ivy, even to the apex of its saddle-backed roof, that it is almost reduced to terms of vegetation, and is, moreover, so overhung with trees that neither from the sea nor from any distance inland is it visible.

The nice taste generally exhibited by newly ennobled personages in their selection of titles is worthy of all praise. When Edward Charles Baring was created a baron, in 1885, he had a choice, among his surrounding properties, of such names as Membland, Battisborough, Noss, Newton, and Worsewell. Noss and Worsewell, I should think, were, on the score of euphony, quite out of the question. But—in the phrasing of the newest slang—what was wrong with Membland, Newton, or Battisborough? Nothing at all; but there is doubtless a something about the sound of Revelstoke that suggests aristocratic devilry and high jinks, infinitely pleasing. Not that the name necessarily signifies anything of the kind, for

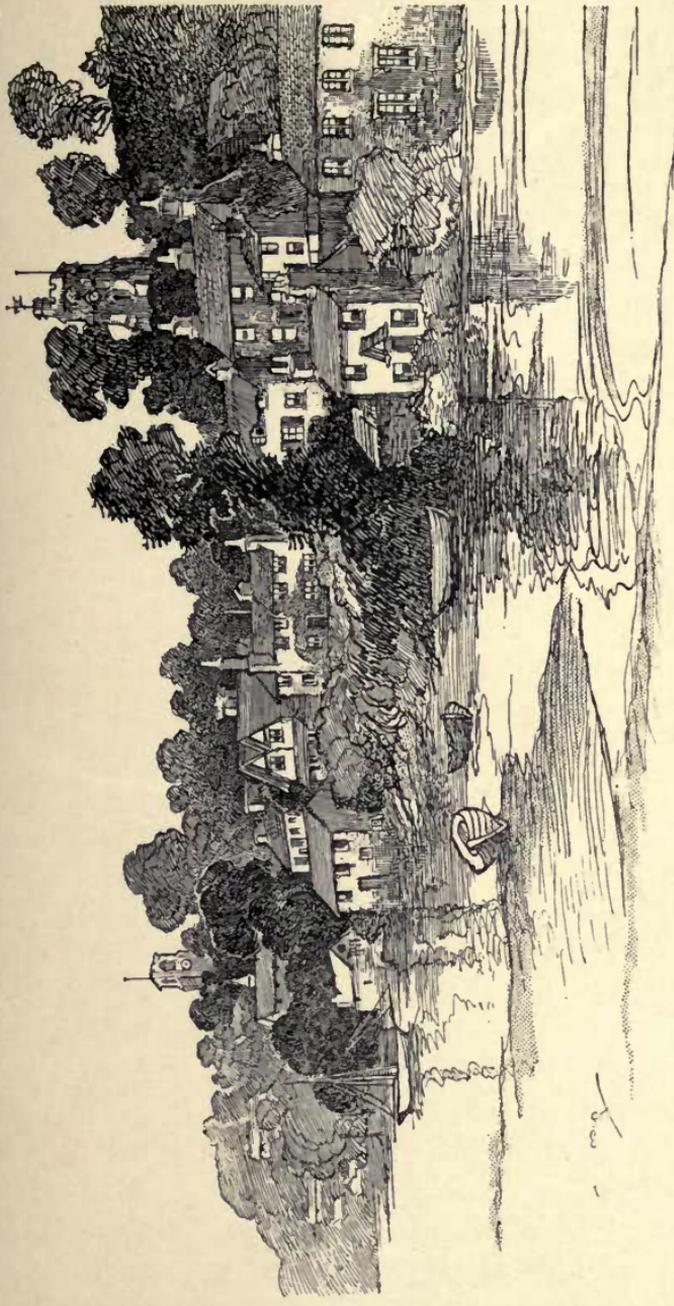
the Middle-English meaning of "revel" was not so much a jollification as a disturbance; which seems to have been the inevitable result of those ancient drinking-bouts. The "Revel" of the place-name is said to derive from *reafful*, meaning rapacious. The place, according to this view is christened after some early *reafere*, rover, or robber, a progenitor, possibly of that "Sir Ralph (or Rafe) the Rover," familiar to us in the poem of the Inchcape Rock, off the coast of Scotland.



THE YEALM: FROM NOSS.

and the "Stoke" was his stockade, the defence of his robber's lair. Who this robbing rover was—or who they were, for there must needs have been a band of them—there can be little doubt. They were an isolated party of the marauding Danes or vikings of the ninth century, whose main body was defeated in A.D. 851 at Wembury.

There is no difficulty raised against the pedestrian following the private drive made by Lord Revelstoke round the coast. In this manner the great piled-up slabs of rock forming Stoke Point can be seen, with Yealm Head and the woodland



NOSS MAYO AND NEWTON FERRERS.



on the way. But most pilgrims who have already made a long walk of it will undoubtedly feel disposed to cut that detour out and make for the modern church of Revelstoke inland, overlooking a creek of the deep sea-channel of the Yealm and the villages of Noss Mayo and Newton Ferrers. "Newton" and "Noss" those villages are familiarly styled. They confront one another like Putney and Fulham across the Thames, the old church of Newton Ferrers in outline the fellow of the new one of Revelstoke. But the new building is the veriest upstart. It was built by Lord Revelstoke in 1882, at a cost of £29,000, and is a very prominent example of great cost, much pretension, and little real art. Less of the ecclesiastical furnishers' work and more solid, if less showy, fittings would have made the church more worthy its beautiful site. That riches take to themselves wings is exemplified here; for in less than ten years from the completion of this church and the ornate rebuilding of Membland Hall, came the great Baring financial crash, and with it the impoverishment of Lord Revelstoke.

The Yealm runs up, as a deep, narrow and beautiful salt estuary for some three miles inland, and excursion steamers from Plymouth penetrate so far as Steer Point, where Kitley and Coffleet creeks branch right and left to Yealmpton—"Yampton" locally—and Brixton, and in the middle the smaller creek of Puslinch. The fresh water stream of the Yealm, like all the streams of South Devon, comes from Dartmoor. The

banks of the estuary are deeply wooded and extremely picturesque ; presenting, more than any of those numerous inlets that are so notable a feature of this coast, the appearance of a gorge ; Noss Mayo standing on its branch creek, deriving, indeed, the first part of its name from the projecting height—the “ ness ” or “ nose ”—on which it stands. Noss in 1849 suffered terribly from cholera, and even more terribly two centuries ago, when only seven of its inhabitants survived.

By the row-boat ferry at Yealm Mouth the explorer is put to the tiring scramble towards Wembury. Descending the hillside fields of corn, the lonely church is seen, and over it, out to sea, the famous Mewstone appears, rising, a huge, abrupt and angular mass of dark limestone rock, a mile off-shore. Dangerous, and nearly inaccessible though it be at most times, it and its surrounding sea look so innocent and harmless under the sun of a still day in July that the evil reputation of that rock and these waters seems based on insubstantial grounds. Yet the Mewstone has amply occasioned the poetic tribute :

“ The sullen crash, the shriek of wild despair,  
 One moment swell the gust that whistles by ;  
 The next—no sound of living voice is there,  
 None, save the waken'd sea-mew's dreary cry.”

The verse points to the origin of the name of this and the several other Mewstones along this coast of Devon ; the sea-mew is of course the sea-gull, and these isolated reefs so many “ sea-gull rocks.” References are often found in litera-

ture to the "laughter of the gulls," but the name of "sea-mew" more nearly indicates the sound of the peevish cry of those birds, which closely resembles the mew of a cat.

About 1836 the Mewstone was inhabited by one Samuel Wakeham and his wife, who lived in a little rustic house and looked after Squire Calmady's rabbits, which swarmed the seemingly lifeless rock. The Mewstone was made the subject of an article in a local South Devon magazine, and (according to the editor of it) drew the annexed reply from the "Lord of the Isles," as the editor calls him. The thing is amusing, but smells suspiciously like an editorial invention:

"On bored the moostone septembur The  
fust Sur, i ham verry mutch obliged to u for  
puttin a drawn of the moostone an mi howse  
into youre booke an I Rite this to tel u that no  
won cant wark from the moostone to the shoar  
At lo warter for a six ore gig as i nose cud be toed  
over the roks without runnen fowl of it or a  
smawl bote mite sale over in good Wether squire  
kill maid he nose the same i ave a been livin hear  
a long time an i Never seed the hole beech all  
across dry at No time whatsumdever the see  
warshes over sum part of them for I Nose all the  
roks an goes down their to pik sof crabs for bate  
gainst i goes a chad fishen an me wife youre hum  
Bell servant

" to cum hand samel warkeam

" Po. scrip

if any genteelman what likes a wark he can wark

to the shoar At wembury an if they holds up there white pockethanchecuffs for a signal an ile cum off in me bote an fetch them to the island for two pence a pease an you furgot to say that there's a bewtifull landin place dead easterd on the iland an sum stairs that i made to cum up for the ladeys an ile be verry mutch oblige to put this in your booke you maid a mistake I be not fortney ears old i be only 39 an 6 munths.

“ Samel warkeam ”

“ P.s. Youve a forgot to say that ive a got a bewtifull Kayl plat for the gentlemen an ladeys for To play to KeEls an shut rabets at nine pens A pease except the panches for me piggs an kip the jackits ov em

An my missus hasent got no hobjectsiums to boyll the kittle an make the tay pon the Kayll Plat an hand the tay Pot out of the winder an put a tabell outside the winder on every thing hum Bell an comfortabell.”

There is no village at Wembury ; only, down beneath the swelling contours of those hillside cornfields, a church, a farmstead, and a water-mill on the very verge of the beach : the whole so situated and of such a singularly unnatural loneliness and air of detachment that you feel sure whatever history may have to say of the place, or whatever it may leave unsaid—you feel sure, I say, that the sea has at some time come up and munched off a great piece of land and the village with it, and has long ago digested the whole.

And indeed what is left of Wembury is situated in a little semi-circular bay, where the downs descend to low clifflets of friable earthy rock, which is now slaty, now gravelly, and again of the red Devonian sandstone, all by turns. It is as though that hungry sea had come suddenly and taken a mouthful, as you might bite a piece of bread and butter.

Descending to this strange spot, you look down upon the leads of the church tower and thence come by rough and steep tracks to the shore, where a little stream runs by the water-wheel of the old mill on to the shingle of the beach. So near is the wheel to the sea that in times of storm the salt water of the waves mingles with the fresh, and so close to the tide are the walls of the mill-house that when the winds lash the waters into foaming breakers the rooms smell of the salt spray, and are filled with the clamour of the elements.

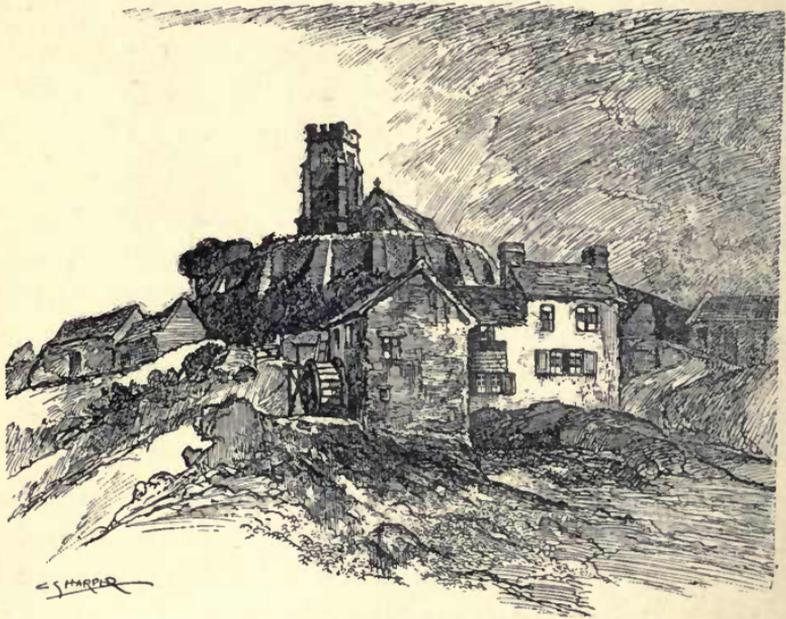
Here the singular picturesqueness of the place is most fully revealed, and the church to which just now you descended is seen to stand high and boldly above the beach, on a commanding knoll, girt about with a circular brick retaining-wall heavily buttressed, lest it, as well as the church, and the churchyard it shores up from a sudden descent, should come toppling down in common ruin.

The age, the rugged beauty, and the interest of the church are almost completely hidden beneath a coating of plaster, and the grass grows

rankly in the churchyard, where the odd epitaph may be noted :

Henry Kembil  
 died Nov. 25 1725  
 'Tis over with your friend  
 Mind That.

An arresting inscription, surely, and not a little puzzling until it is discovered that Henry



WEMBURY.

Kembil was a ferryman of the Yealm and a portion of his epitaph is a play upon the word "over," by which, shouting across the river, the would-be passenger who is versed in Devon ways still brings the ferryman to him.

Save, indeed, for the hullabaloo created by the battleships out to sea and the forts off Plymouth,

practising their heavy guns, Wembury would scarce be associated with bloody war ; yet if this place is really the " Wicganbeorch " of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle—as by antiquaries it is supposed to be—it saw particularly hard fighting in A.D. 851, when " Ceorl the Ealdorman, with the men of Devon fought against the heathen men (that is, the Danes), and there made great slaughter and got the victory."

Those " heathen " men or Danes were the vikings, of whom early history has so much to tell ; but here we see the Anglo-Saxon chronicler, in writing " Wicganbeorch," which means Wikingbury—adopting the advice given so many centuries later by Tony Weller to his dutiful Sam, and " spelling it with a ' we.' "

The big gun practice of the battleships out in the Channel, whose roaring is like that of several thunderstorms growling in concert across the water, is very impressive, and majestic, and altogether different from the sound of firing from the forts, producing a less resonant noise, like that of rude and impudent persons, very much out of temper, violently and continually slamming doors.

Oh ! it is good to stand on the beach of a primitive place like Wembury when the sea breeze blows in strong, and the great curling waves come creaming up to the very walls of the mill-house, with the stinging salt particles on your face and an unutterable sense of vitality and freedom clothing you, and the giant waves spouting out yonder on the Mewstone, and the hoarse jamboree

of the great guns bellowing yonder. But when the sea and the air are still and the August sun glares down upon the hilly coast, why then there is nothing for it but to either rest till sundown or plod on exhaustedly in a reeking moist heat, welcoming every little puff of wind on the rises, and almost sinking to the ground in the stew-pan of the hollows.

## CHAPTER XXVI

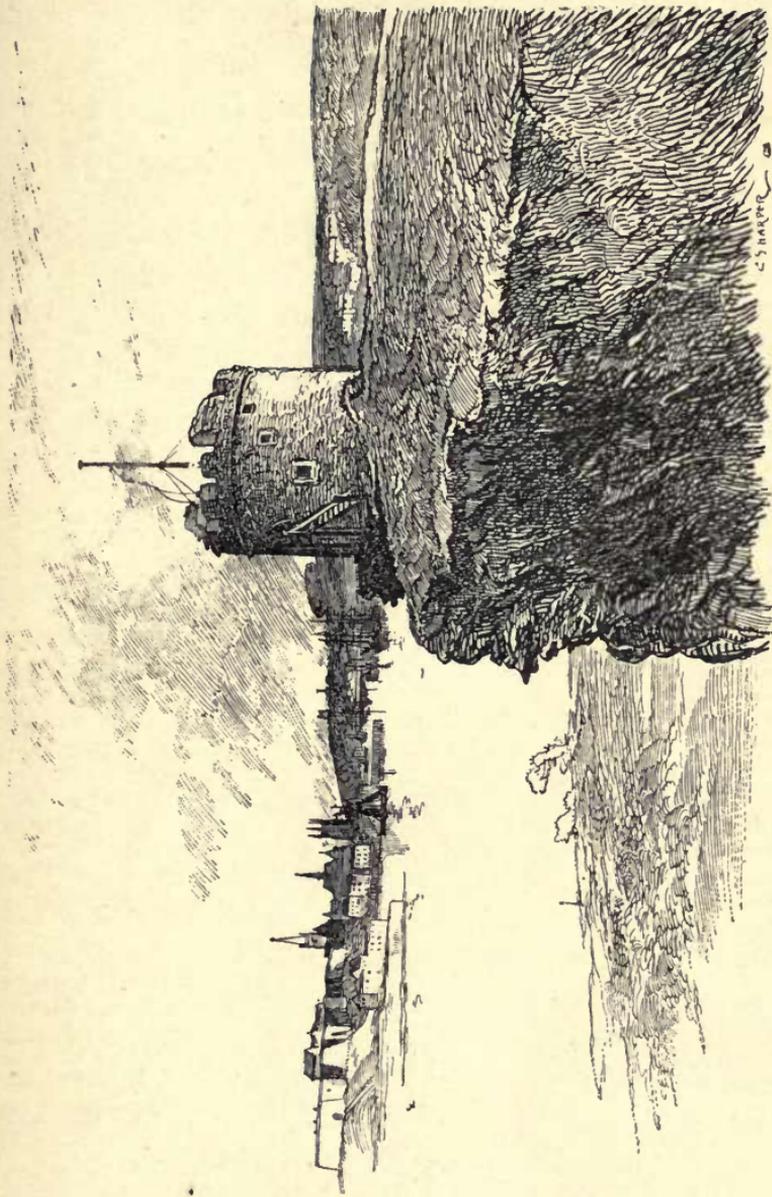
THE CATWATER—THE BARBICAN—THE “ PILGRIM  
FATHERS ”—THE HOE

DISTANCES in and around Plymouth are most remarkably deceptive, and the local geography is full of surprises. The famous Plymouth Sound is from two to four miles wide, but the clear air and the heights on either side give an impression of smaller scale. As you round the hilly coast from Wembury and come within the Sound, you enter upon a panoramic scene, where the great Breakwater, itself nearly a mile and a half long, with a sea-passage on the hither side of a mile's breadth, rests upon the blue waters like some pigmy undertaking, and the ironclads seem quite trivial. The ordinary vision is altogether at fault at Plymouth, and requires careful adjustment to an unfamiliar scale of things ; and in the meanwhile the stranger, walking round the coast, discovers that in tramping these last miles the way is quite twice as long as it seems. Plymouth town lies distinctly in sight, but you seem for a long while never to approach any nearer, and meanwhile you tramp up coastguard paths and down, and round into coves and still more round

headlands, gradually coming within the area of War Department activities, where old forts and middle-aged forts, and forts still in the making astonish the rabbits. The outstanding features of garrison towns are grittiness, barrenness, and glare, served up in squalor ; and military strength is generally made to look silly by clothes-lines fluttering signals of washing day over the embrasures and the dry moats. Approaching Plymouth therefore by Bovisand and Staddon Forts, the heat and the glare make the very brains ferment in your head, the grit scarifies your feet, and the sordid garrison details, and then the slumminess of Turnchapel sear your very soul. But in between, there are some jewelled nooks : the green valley and woods of Bovisand and little unexpected baylets, with tiny sands that you look down upon suddenly, shamefacedly surprising young ladies bathing in a costume of little more than nothing, supplemented thinly by their native modesty, and piquantly surmounted with picture-hats. Convention would require them to be embarrassed, but the startled pedestrian's blushes and the nymphs' comparative unconcern outrange the expected feelings of the situation.

At Turnchapel the ferry steamer takes the wearied exerciser upon Shanks's Mare across the Catwater to Phoenix Wharf and the old original Plymouth, adjoining the Barbican and Sutton Pool.

Every one knows the stream that comes down from Dartmoor and falls into the Laira creek as



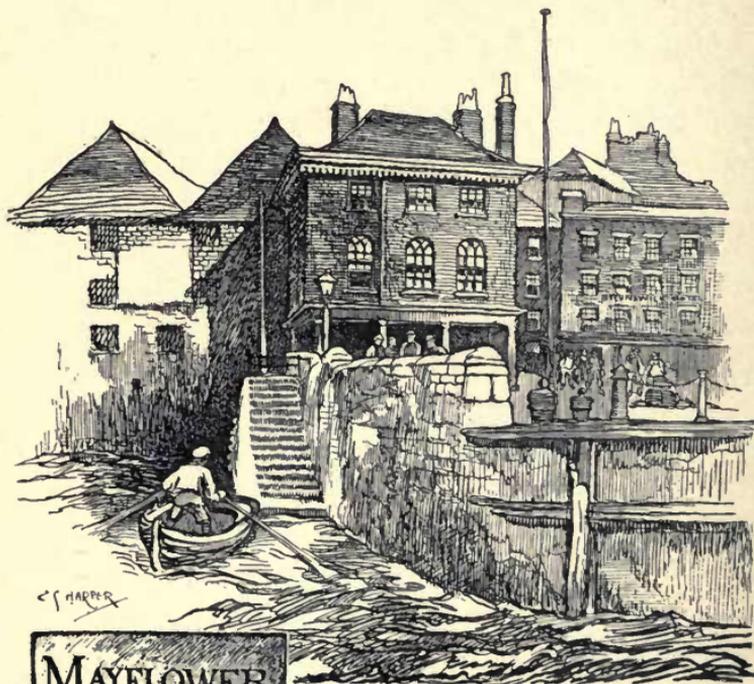
OLD PLYMOUTH, FROM MOUNT BATTEN.



the Plym, but its original name was the Cad, and Plymouth was originally "Sutton": still known as "Sutton-on-Plym." It is found under this name in Domesday Book. The name Catwater, or Cattewater, as it is also spelled, may be a survival of the original name of the river, as well as being one of the numerous stretches of water with this prefix: the Cattegat, *i.e.*, the "narrow gate," at the entrance of the Baltic; Catford, near London, Catawade, on the river Stour, near Manningtree; all with the same meaning of narrowness.

There is some ground for supposing that the original name of Plymouth, or a portion of the vast site now occupied by the Three Towns of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse, was in Saxon times "Tamarweorth," and the present name only begins to figure in ancient documents of the mid-thirteenth century, in a tentative way, as "Sutton-super-Plymouth." After that period it gradually rose to importance, being first represented in Parliament in 1298. Sutton Pool, the innermost basin of Plymouth, the old original harbour, and still the place to which the fishing smacks and many of the local steamers come, is bordered by the ancient quays and the queer old houses of the Barbican, once a district inhabited by merchant princes, but now pre-eminently "Old Plymouth," and although exceedingly picturesque, scarcely a residential quarter. The Barbican took its name originally from the castle, now the citadel, which guarded the narrow entrance to Sutton Pool, across which was stretched every night, in

the time of Henry the Eighth, a protective chain. From these defences the existing arms of Plymouth, four black castles between a green saltire, are said to derive. The pious motto of the town is *Turris fortissima est nomen Jehovah*, but at the



**MAYFLOWER**  
1620

THE BARBICAN : WHERE  
THE PILGRIM FATHERS EMBARKED.

same time Plymouth is very strongly fortified in the military way.

Certain very definite and picturesque scenes arise out of the dim abysmal, grey and confused rag-bag of history here in this fishy Barbican. Most definite of all the last farewell to England

of the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620. On the pavement, by the quay, is a modest stone, inscribed, "Mayflower," with the date ; and near at hand, let into a wall, a less modest commemorative bronze tablet, with this inscription :—

" On the 6th of September, 1620, in the Mayoralty of Thomas Fownes, after being " kindly entertained and courteously used by divers Friends there dwelling," the Pilgrim Fathers sailed from Plymouth in the MAYFLOWER in the Providence of God to settle in NEW PLYMOUTH, and to lay the Foundation of the NEW ENGLAND STATES. The ancient Cawsey whence they embarked was destroyed not many years afterwards, but the Site of their Embarkation is marked by the Stone bearing the name of the MAYFLOWER in the pavement of the adjacent Pier. This Tablet was erected in the Mayoralty of J. T. Bond, 1891, to commemorate their Departure, and the visit to Plymouth in July of that Year of a number of their Descendants and Representatives."

There were forty-eight men and fifty-three women and children in this little band, and the voyage occupied sixty days.

The spot means much to Americans, for here the handful of emigrants for conscience' sake definitely cast adrift from their native land, which denied them religious liberty, and made oversea to the coast of Massachusetts, there to found a nation anew. The little *Mayflower* had sailed originally from Boston, in Lincolnshire, and bade farewell to old England from the coast of Devon ; and thus it seemed fitting to those stern voluntary outcasts that they should—still fondly looking back to their motherland—name their landing-place in the new world " Plymouth Rock," and

the earliest among their settlements "Boston." There was, therefore, an exquisite fitness in the circumstance that it was into this Boston harbour in America, a hundred and fifty-three years later, that the colonists should fling the taxed tea, and thus begin the struggle whence the dependent New England colonies emerged as the sovereign United States.

Our sympathies go out, historically, toward those Pilgrim Fathers, but they would seem, viewed closely, to have been not quite so lovable as historic glamour makes them. Their religious fervency was undoubted, but by all accounts it made them ill to live with, and they would have been greatly improved by a little sense of humour. But then—it is a startling thought—if humour had entered at all into their composition they had never left their native shores at all, and the stern principles which led them to refuse to acknowledge James I. as head of the Church, and to expatriate themselves when that shambling travesty of a king declared that if they did not conform, the country should not hold both, would have melted into satiric laughter and an easygoing compliance.

But two autocrats may not reign side by side ; as easily might a soliloquy be conducted by two or more persons ; and a king with a fondness for omniscience and absolutism, and a people whose religious fervency had risen almost to the white heat of fanaticism cannot abide together ; hence the voyage of the *Mayflower*, and this place

of pilgrimage for descendants of those New Englanders.

The greatest point of vantage in all Plymouth is the great open space beside the citadel.

It is the Hoe. What the Rialto was to Venice, what the Hard to Portsmouth, the Sandhill to Newcastle-on-Tyne, the Broomielaw to Glasgow, that was the Hoe to Plymouth of old. From it, let us never forget, on a memorable day of 1588, the "Invincible" Armada was sighted; that proud fleet which was to conquer England, and place the foot of Spain upon our necks, and the spiritual domination of the Pope of Rome over our consciences. History tells us that the King of Spain was not making that unprovoked attack upon us which the simple legends of an earlier and uncritical age would have us believe, and we know that he was but seeking a very natural revenge for the piracies Drake and others had long practised upon his ships and foreign possessions; both sides played the same lawless game, only in those days Spain was the richer country and her treasure galleons the easier prey.

How did Elizabeth's captains await the coming of the foe? Cheerily and calmly enough, though their ships were few and small, and parsimony at the fountain-head of State forbade the proper measures being taken in the teeth of this long-threatened danger: Stout hearts and ready seamanship, aided by the providential tempest that wrecked the stately ships of Spain, served our turn, and Old England came victorious through

that time of storm and stress, as she has since come through many another, by favour of Providence and through the handiwork of brave hearts alone. Statesmanship and the proper preparations of Government had been to seek, as they commonly are. Was ever there another so happy-go-lucky—and so lucky—a country ?

I like—and all Englishmen must needs like—to think of the proud spirit of that gallant company of captains assembled upon the *Hoe* at their game of bowls, when news of the Armada sighted off the *Lizard*, and coming with the south-westerly wind up Channel, gave them momentary pause. There were gathered together Lord Howard of Effingham, the Lord High Admiral of England, and with him were Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, and other great captains, among others of lesser fame. It was like to be a crushing force that was advancing toward our shores, for it numbered no fewer than one hundred and thirty-five men-o'-war, with crews of 8,000 men and 19,000 soldiers. But so confident were that gallant company of their capacity to resist invasion that—so the story from that time has run—on the suggestion of Sir Francis Drake, who boldly asserted that there was plenty time to finish their game first and thrash the Spaniards afterwards, they elected to complete their bout of bowls.

I will not seek the authority upon which that brave old tradition rests, and a malison, I say, upon all who would whittle away our most

cherished beliefs. Cold-blooded commentators tell us that the famous expression, "The Old Guard dies, but never surrenders," was not uttered, and declare, contrary from general belief, that the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo never said, "Up Guards, and at 'em!" and very likely some one, somewhere, has made hash of the heart-stirring tradition of Plymouth Hoe and claimed to prove something craven and mean. Sufficient for me, however, the story with which the Muse of History has hitherto been content.

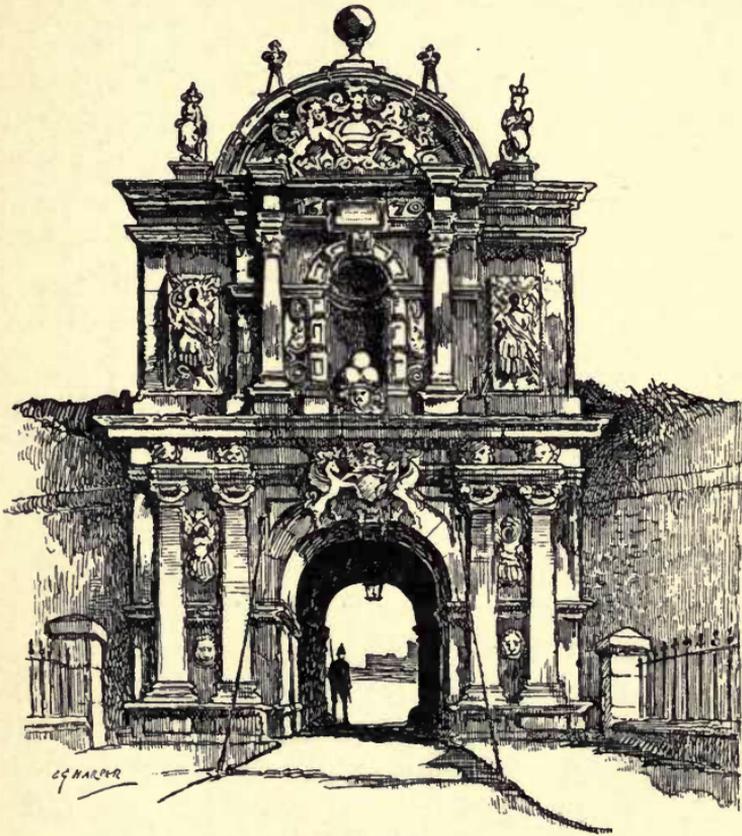
For centuries the memories of that soul-stirring victory over the Invincible abode only in the minds of Englishmen and between the covers of history-books, but in these latter days, these post-heroic days of criticism and commemoration, when all the great men are dead and all the great deeds done, and we have for some time been engaged upon raising monuments to the deeds and to the men who wrought them, or criticising and explaining the why and the how and the uses, or the uselessness it may be, of those men and the work of their hands;—in these latter days, I say, an Armada Memorial has been set up upon the historic Hoe. It is a tall pedestal, embellished with bronze plates and medallions, and bearing the inscription, "He blew with His winds and they were scattered," and with the virago figure of a helmeted Britannia rushing in tempestuous petticoats, atop. Close at hand is the statue of Sir Francis Drake, that brilliant member of a brilliant group of Devonian

Elizabethans ; one who, like Raleigh, in his time played many parts, was foremost among those scourges of Spain we bred in those spacious days, pirate, filibuster, patriot, benefactor, and the first to circumnavigate the globe. Little wonder, then, that the name of Drake is honoured, even yet, in Plymouth. They honour his memory so jealously every year, at the Corporation visit to the weirs, not because of his martial exploits and the services he rendered the nation, but for the benefit he conferred upon Plymouth by bringing its water-supply from the inexhaustible springs of Dartmoor ; and thus, in piously exclaiming, " May the descendants of him who brought us water never want for wine," the Mayor sinks the repute of the Imperialist of the Elizabethan age in that of the local benefactor.

The improving hand of modern times has indeed improved away much of the outward and visible romance of the Hoe, which, from the rugged cliff-top common of Elizabeth's time, whence the great captains, roused from their historic game of bowls, first glimpsed the dreaded Armada, has been flattened out into trim lawns, and provided with broad gravelled promenade paths, like the veriest urban park or recreation ground. All the forces that make for the commonplace and the obvious have been let loose upon the Hoe, and much of its highly picturesque character has been lost under the treatment of the surveyor and the landscape gardener. But this historic spot can never be quite spoiled,

so long as it continues to look out upon Plymouth Sound, and nothing less than a cataclysm of Nature can alter that outlook.

Consider how exceptional the site. A hundred



THE CITADEL GATE.

and fifty feet above the sea, it looks straight out to the Channel, three miles away, with the many square miles of glorious Plymouth Sound in between, enclosed to right and left by the wooded heights of Mount Edgcombe and the terraced hills

of Mount Batten and Bovisand. Drake's Island, immediately in front of the Hoe, and looking so near, is a mile away, and at the distance of another two miles is the famous Breakwater. The Hoe thus stands at the head of one of the finest harbours in the world: finest alike from the seafaring and the picturesque points of view; but it has yet another function—or had, in those days before the giant ordnance of modern times was dreamt of—for it is situated prominently between the further inlets of the Catwater and the Hamoaze, where, unsuspected by the ill-informed enemies of other centuries, lay the wealth of Plymouth. Then it was that the Citadel, built upon the Hoe, was capable of challenging the foe, wishful of sending exploratory keels up the many creeks and estuaries that run in every direction inland, like the spreading fingers of a hand. The citadel is a fine, impressive piece of late seventeenth-century work, and although it was obsolete as a defence centuries ago, appeals very strongly to the layman in fortification, to whom battlements and castellated architecture appeal more forcibly than the earthworks of yonder forts semicircling the crescented hills, from Staddon Heights and Bovisand in Devon, to Tregantle and Screamdon in Cornwall.

Off the Hoe, in the most commanding position, disputing, if need were, the entrance to Mill Bay, the Catwater and the Hamoaze, is the great crag now known as Drake's Island. It is a kind of islanded Gibraltar, a nest of forts and batteries

of a calibre not generally known, but reputed immensely strong. Drake's Island is not accessible to the public, and like all mysteries, is looked upon with awe. In the old days, when it was St. Nicholas Island, the place made an ideal prison, as regicides and recusants discovered in the reign of Charles the Second.

That was a worthy and a noble idea by which Smeaton's old lighthouse-tower, superseded from its watch and ward over the Eddystone, was rebuilt on the Hoe in 1882. From the gallery of it you may glimpse its successor, diminished by the distance of fourteen miles to the semblance of a tiny stalk rising lonely amidst the waste of waters. It was no reflection upon the stability of the tower that it was found necessary to remove it, after it had safely weathered the storms of a hundred and twenty years in that exposed situation. It was the reef on which it stood that had decayed. The interior of this wave-washed tower, come ashore again after so many years, is open to inspection, and there, around the cornice of what was the store-room, you read the expression of the piety of those who built, in the text, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it," while above the lantern is the further inscription, "24th August, 1759, *Laus Deo.*"

Unhappily for the romantic associations of the Hoe, fifth-rate and utterly unhistoric streets and tramways conspire to render sordid the immediate neighbourhood, and the place-name

has itself been, time beyond the memory of man, the sport of the H-less. It was H. J. Byron, the dramatist, who made a crushing retort to an actor, who, late for rehearsal, had excused himself by saying he had been for a "walk round the 'oe." "Next time," said Byron, "don't wander so far. Take a stroll round the H."

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE STORY OF THE EDDYSTONE—THE GUILD- HALL—ST. ANDREW'S

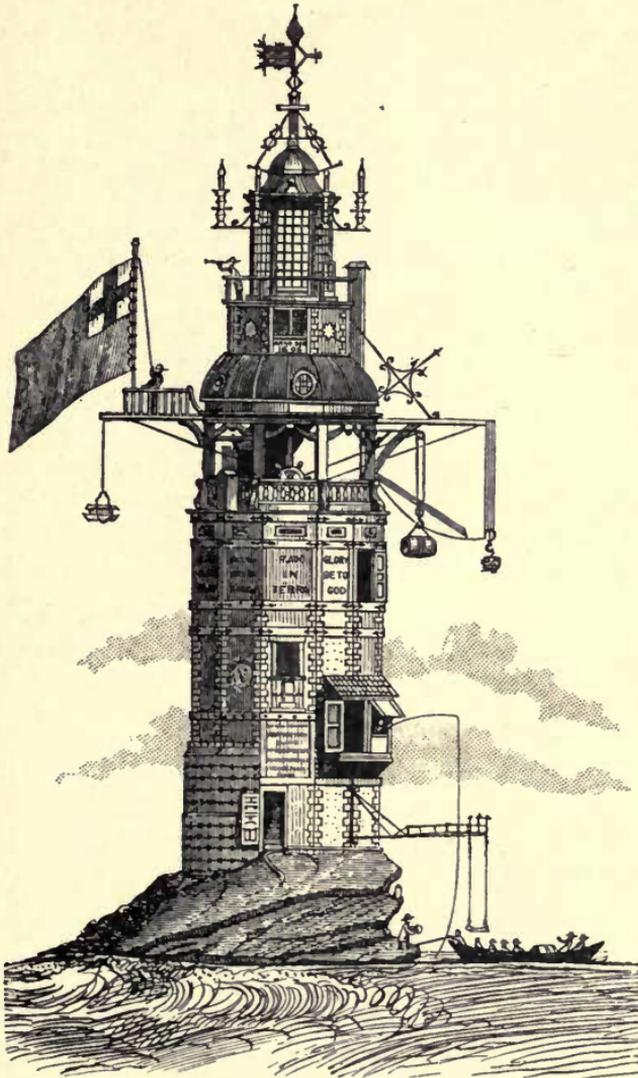
EXCURSION steamers in summer take thousands of visitors from the Hoe Pier out to the Eddystone, and so in many minds renew the moving story of that fatal reef. The existing lighthouse is the fourth to be built in this terrible isolation, whose loneliness appeals more to the imagination when viewing the solitary tower in the hazy distance, from the Hoe, than when it is seen at close quarters. At a distance its puny proportions in relation to the surrounding leagues of restless sea are realised with a shudder at the temerity of its builders, but near at hand the massive character of its masonry is the first thing to attract attention. If the daring of modern engineers inspires respect, what should be those emotions with which we look back upon the first audacious attempts to rear a lighthouse upon the tiny foothold of the exposed Eddystone, so far back as 1696?

It was early in 1665 that the first proposal for lighting this dangerous reef, full in the course of ships passing up or down Channel, was made; Sir John Coryton and one Henry Brouncker

petitioning the Duke of York, the then Lord High Admiral, for permission to build a number of lighthouses, and, incidentally, one on the Eddystone. This proposal, referred to the Trinity House, was eventually reduced to a scheme for the Eddystone only, and the projectors, who were not proposing to benefit mankind without a good profit for themselves, were to be recouped their outlay by a charge of *2d.* a ton on foreign shipping entering West Country ports: English vessels to be free of charge.

Nothing more was ever heard of this early project, but in 1692 one Walter Whitfield made a bid for a patent from the Trinity House, by which he was to be authorised, at his own risk, to build a lighthouse, to reap the entire profits for a term of three years, and one-half for the next fifty years: the undertaking then to revert to the Trinity House. A patent was granted on these terms in 1694, but no works were initiated, and even when a revised agreement was made in 1696, it was not Whitfield, but Winstanley, who designed and built the first Eddystone Lighthouse. Under this compact the projector's term of full profits was extended from three to five years.

Henry Winstanley was a singular genius: very much of an artist, something, but not much, of an engineer, and a wholly sanguine person. He commenced operations on the rock on July 14th, 1696, his workmen being occupied all that summer in drilling holes and fixing the iron stanchions that were to support his building. Sometimes



WINSTANLEY'S EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE.

he and his men slept on the rock itself, on other occasions they were rowed at nightfall to the guardship *Terrible*, which, lent by the Admiralty,

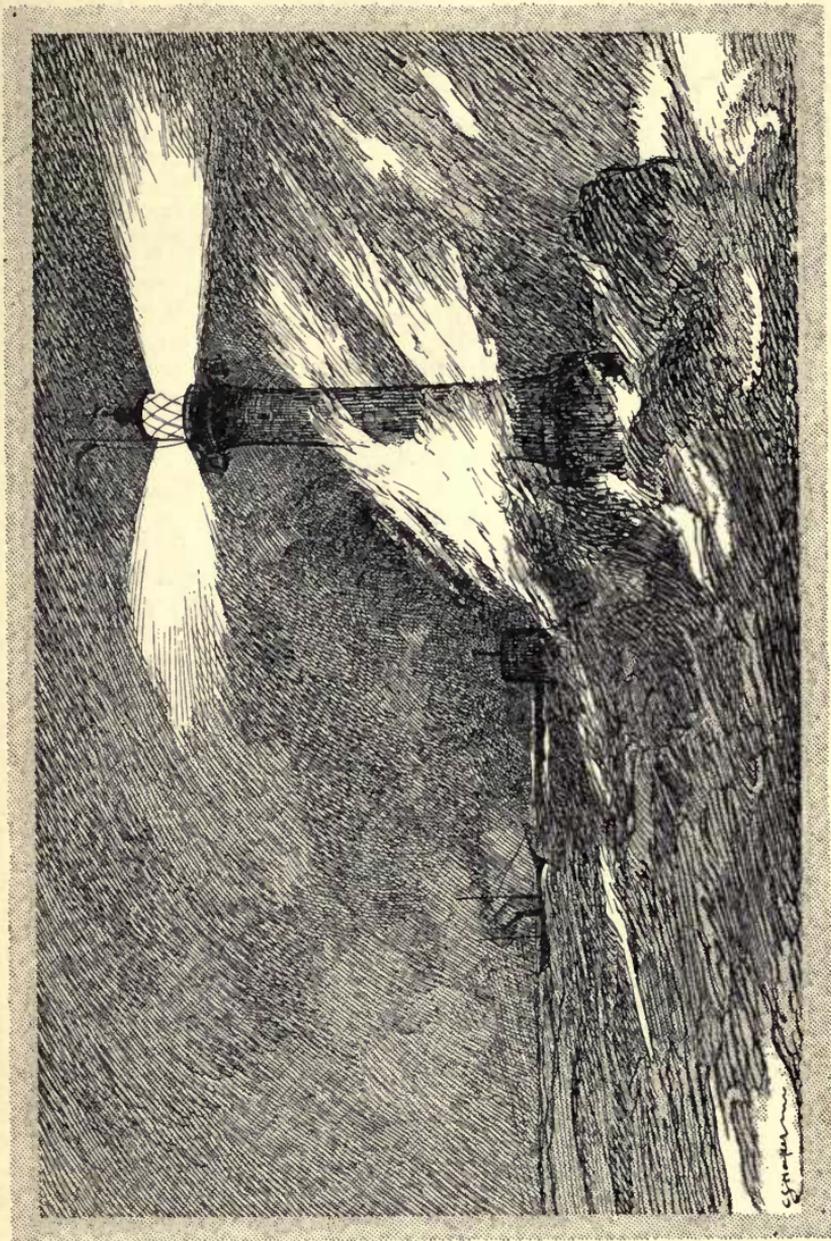
stood off and on all day. In June 1697, the commander of this ship, one Commissioner St. Loe, thought well to go off upon a wholly unauthorised cruise for nearly a week, and in the meanwhile a French privateer pounced upon Winstanley and his men, took Winstanley prisoner and, taking away the last stitch of the workmen's clothing, turned them adrift in their boat. To the credit of the French government, Winstanley was speedily released, and the too zealous captain of the privateer seems to have been reprimanded for excess of zeal; while St. Loe was peremptorily asked by the Admiralty for an explanation of his conduct. In the midsummer of 1698 Winstanley's lighthouse was completed and on November 14th, shed the first warning gleam across the waters. It was a remarkable structure. Rising to a height of about eighty feet to its weather-vane, it was fantastic in outline, beautiful in colour and gilding, and adorned with devices of the sun in splendour and the imposing inscriptions, "*Pax in terra. Post tenebras lux. Glory be to God.*" It was rather more picturesque than even a Chinese pagoda, and offered so many angles of resistance to the wind that we can only marvel how the elements in those four years allowed him to complete it, and then suffered it to remain another three years. If picturesque beauty were the sole consideration in lighthouse-building this mingled stone and timber tower with its strange suggestions of Wren's City of London church steeples and the "Queen Anne"

architecture of Bedford Park, was surely the finest lighthouse ever built. It proclaims itself in every circumstance the work of an artist, and was to its smallest detail unpractical. Winstanley even provided a highly picturesque means of defence against an enemy: a contrivance in an upper gallery that would drop heavy stones upon his boats; and he designed an elaborate room, from which, in the picture, you see him fishing, and apparently trying to hook one of the boat's crew pushing off from the rock.

Many of these ornate features were found to be hazardous; the tower itself was not sufficiently lofty, and alterations were made in 1699, by which its height was increased to 120 feet. Remodelled, it was, in Winstanley's own opinion, as safe as any castle ashore, and he expressed himself as only too eager to be in his lighthouse when the worst storm ever known was blowing. On November 26th, 1703, he had his wish. He put off from the Barbican at Plymouth for the Eddystone on the afternoon of that day, when all the signs pointed to an unprecedented tempest. That night was the night of the famous storm that levelled uncounted trees, unroofed and wrecked many mansions, and sunk fleets of shipping. Henry Winstanley was born at Littlebury, near Saffron Walden, but he is not buried there, for on that night he and his lighthouse and the lighthouse-keepers perished together. When morning dawned the rock was bare, except for one surviving link of iron chain.

Winstanley's project had lost considerably more than £3,000, and his widow was reduced to seeking a pension from the Government; but a singular fascination seems to have impelled private persons to risk their all in a work that should have been the sole concern of the Trinity House. A certain John Lovett, merchant, of London, was the next to enter this, as a commercial project, and the designer of his lighthouse was Rudyerd, a Ludgate Hill silk mercer. He began work in 1706, and by 1709 had completed a wooden tower, which lasted nearly fifty years, and was then destroyed by fire, December 2nd, 1755. There were three keepers. Their efforts at subduing the flames were useless, the molten lead from the roof driving them into the crannies of the rock; where they went through such terrors of exposure to the cold and the waves on the one hand, and the cascades of melted lead on the other that one, raving mad, plunged to death in the sea. Two actually survived the occasion, but one of these was thought a lunatic by the rescuing party. He declared that while he stood looking up at the flames, some molten lead had run down his throat. In the course of twelve days he died, and his incredible story was proved by nearly eight ounces of lead being found in his stomach. Incidentally, Lovett was ruined.

The third lighthouse was begun by the mortgagees of Lovett's estate, in June 1757. This was the famous stone structure designed and built by Smeaton. Although the building was



EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE.

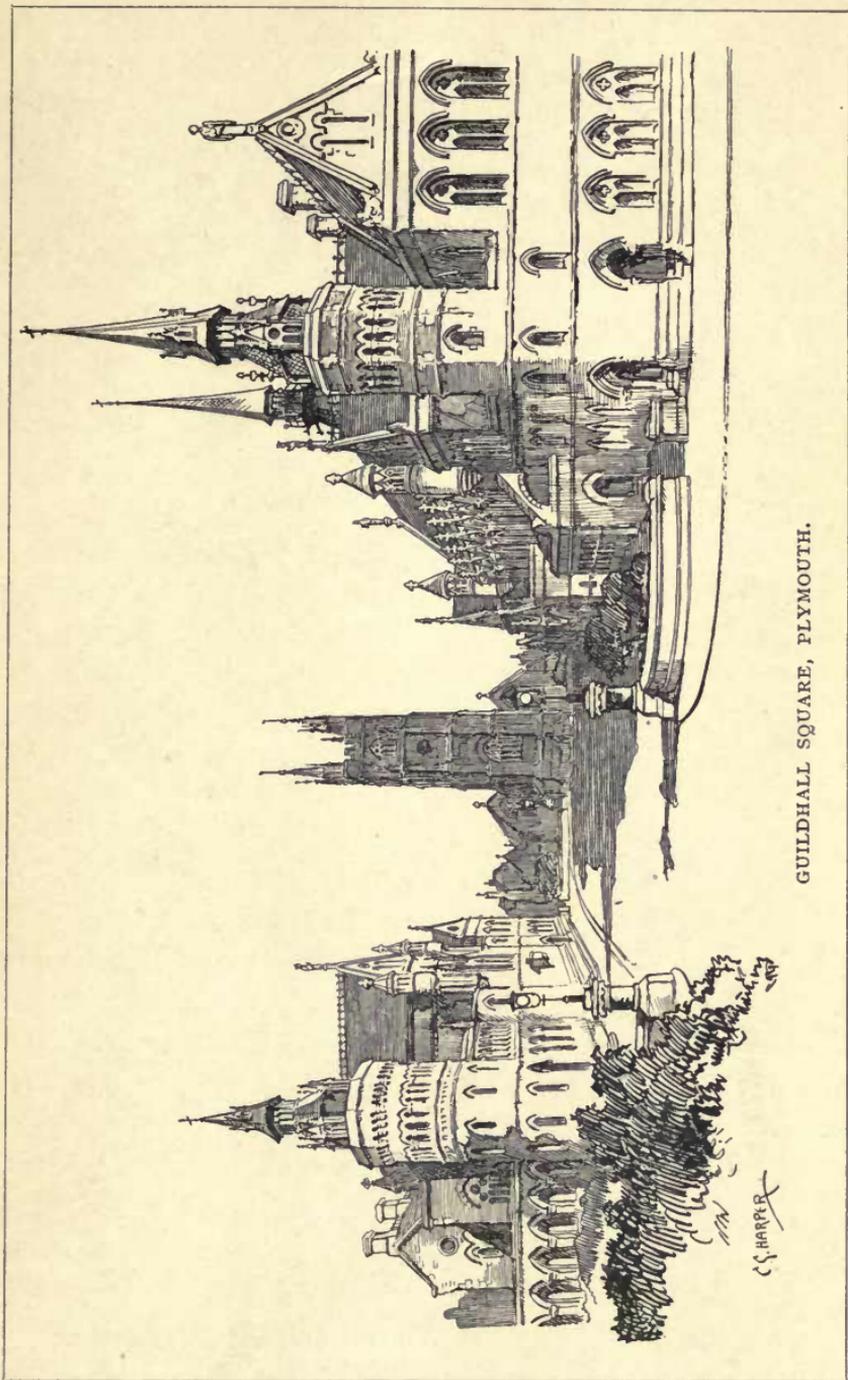


hindered by Smeaton's men being every now and again seized by the Press Gang, it was completed in October 1759, and would probably still be standing except for the curious fact that the rock it stood upon was showing signs of weakness. In 1807 the building lease lapsed and the lighthouse became the property of the Trinity House, when the tallow candles, which, up to that time had been the sole illuminant, were exchanged for oil. A newer building, the existing lighthouse, was decided upon in 1877, and built on an adjoining reef. Begun in 1879, it was completed in 1882. It is circular, constructed of Cornish granite, and rises to a height of 130 feet.

The streets of Plymouth and its sister towns are a good deal more crowded than even those of London. It is among the busiest of places, and with its vast naval dockyards at Devonport and Keyham, its military interests, and its great commercial importance, is in a good many districts grim and unlovely. The centre of Plymouth—the municipal centre—is, however, strikingly beautiful, and is the outcome of a movement dating from about 1867, having for its object the creation of a group of municipal buildings worthy of a place with so long and stirring a history. What the old Guildhall was like may still be seen, for it survives in the dirty, dark and inconvenient building thought good enough for the Public Library, though not for the town Councillors. It was a worthy and brilliant idea to build a new

group of Guildhall and offices for the governance of the town ; a majestic group that should harmonise with the ancient Gothic church of St. Andrew, and form with it three sides of a spacious square. The opening of the Guildhall took place in 1874, when the then Prince of Wales performed the ceremony. The Great Hall, used for concerts and public functions, is a noble building, with fine hammerbeam roof, and an excellent range of beautiful stained-glass windows, recounting in spirited and well-coloured designs the Departure from Plymouth for France of the Black Prince, in 1355 ; the Breton raid upon the town in 1404 ; the enquiry at Plympton Priory as to the incorporation of Plymouth, 1440 ; the Landing of Katharine of Aragon, 1501 ; Captain Fleming announcing the Armada in sight, 1588 ; Drake inaugurating the Water Supply, 1592 ; the Arrest of Raleigh, 1618 ; Sailing of the *Mayflower*, 1620 ; Final Repulse of the Royalists from the town, 1643 ; Proclamation of William of Orange as King of England 1688 ; Cookworthy and the Plymouth Club House, 1772 ; and Napoleon on the *Bellerophon* at Plymouth, 1815.

The series ends with a window representing the opening of the Guildhall itself, August 15th, 1874, by the Prince of Wales, who is shown in stained-glass, taking part in the ceremony attired in conventional silk hat, frock coat, and lavender-coloured trousers. It is a weird and uncanny use for stained-glass, and the thing is not less grotesque because it thus perpetuates what now seems the



GUILDHALL SQUARE, PLYMOUTH.



ridiculous fashion, in hats, coats, and trousers obtaining in 1874. The Prince is shown holding a wand, symbol of his then honorary office of High Steward of the borough of Plymouth; within the other hand the key used for the opening. In the background of this highly remarkable work of art, which would certainly astonish the mediæval craftsmen, could they return and see it, are represented those who strutted their little parts on the local stage in that day. They are duly pictured in their robes as Town Councillors, and are happier in that fact than the Prince is in his everyday gear. Prominent among them you see a face like a Dutch cheese with whiskers; probably intended for the mayor.

St. Andrew's Church is a striking feature in this group of municipal buildings. It "suggested" the group: it was the keynote whence this architectural symphony was developed, and in the continual modernising of Plymouth, it remains one of the very few old, and characteristic Devonian buildings in the Three Towns. The tower, built in 1460, is the latest part of the church.

An odd punning epitaph within is worthy a note. It is to the memory of one "Mrs.



THE PRINCE OF  
WALES IN  
STAINED GLASS.

Mary Sparke," whose light was quenched in 1665 :—

“Life's but a Sparke, a weake uncertaine breath,  
No sooner kindled but puft out by Death.  
Such was my Name, my frame, my fate, yet I,  
Am ftill a living Sparke, though thus I dye,  
And fhine in Heaven's orbe, a Star most bright,  
Though Death on Earth fo foone Eclipst my light.”

Plymouth's other old church—although not so very old—has a romantic story. It is one of the four churches in England dedicated to “King Charles the Martyr.” Begun in the reign of Charles the First, it was abandoned during the troubles that led to the execution of the king, and was completed and dedicated in 1664.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE HAMOAZE—THE VICTUALLING YARD AND DOCK-YARD—THE TAMAR

UNDOUBTEDLY the best way of obtaining the fullest general idea of the size of Plymouth and its satellite towns of Devonport and Stonehouse—to say nothing of the newer towns of Stoke Damerel and Morice Town—is to voyage by one of the steamboats leaving the West Hoe Pier for Saltash. You pass the Great Western Railway docks at Mill Bay, and, rounding Devil's Point—named originally after an entirely harmless French Protestant refugee, one Duval—come in sight of that immense range of buildings, the Royal William Victualling Yard. The particular Royal William who gave his name to this establishment was William the Fourth, whose great ugly statue in granite, thirteen feet high, presides like some nightmare realised in stone, over the entrance. There is, if you do but consider it, a peculiar appropriateness in the long, long stony frontage of the Victualling yard being placed here, at Stonehouse, and possibly a legend will be created dating the inception of the name to the period when this establishment was built; but the real original

"Stone House," was one built by a certain Joel, Lord of the Manor in the far-off time of Henry the Third.

Sir John Rennie, who designed and built the massive range of the Victualling Yard, built for all time. There are fifteen acres of it; comprising cattle-lairs and cold-meat stores, gigantic corn and flour stores, bakeries, rum stores, and dozens of other departments from which the Navy is supplied.

Beyond the yard, the long creek, infinitely muddy, of Stonehouse Lake opens out, and, across the entrance, the military headquarters, Mount Wise; semi-rural in appearance, its grassy slopes crowned by signalling station and semaphore. The name of "Mount Wise," is no satirical nickname holding up to ridicule the invincible incapacity of the War Department, but a survival from the time of Charles the Second, when the Wise family owned the place. Another survival here is the wooden signal semaphore, last of a line of thirty-two that formed a "telegraphic" communication between Plymouth and London in the days before the electric telegraph was invented. To apply the term "telegraph" to a series of wooden semaphores sounds grotesque, but it is on record that the arrival of Napoleon as a prisoner in Plymouth Sound, in 1815, was "telegraphed" to London in fifteen minutes.

Here we are come to the great dockyard, forming, with its recent extension at Keyham, a continuous frontage facing the Hamoaze, of over two miles. I suppose there are some five thou-

sand men employed here by the Government in the building and repairing of ships : a vast development since 1691, when " Plymouth Dock," was first established. " Plymouth Dock," the neighbourhood remained until 1824, when the town that had sprung up around the dockyard received the newly-coined name of " Devonport."

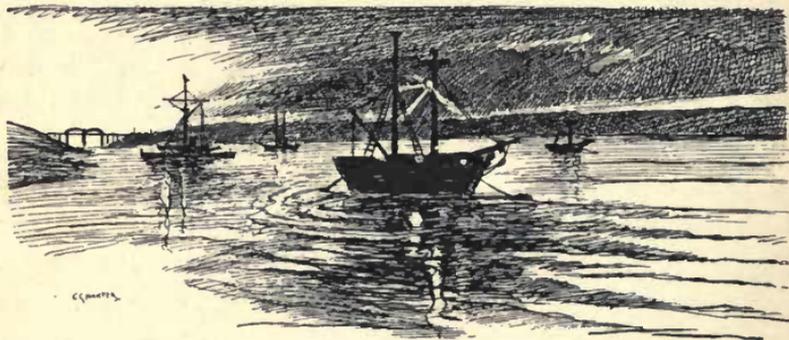
The steamers call at North Corner, hard by the dockyard, where the grim streets of Devonport, rich in pawnbrokers' shops and public-houses, dip down to the water, and dozens of naked boys splash about on summer days in a longshore mixture of sea water, mud, orange-peel, corks, and all the miscellaneous flotsam and jetsam of a great town.

North Corner is a busy place, and from the steamer pontoon you look out upon all the activities of the Hamoaze, with perhaps a great modern battleship close inshore, come home, weather-stained, from a long commission, and flying, from her topmost truck, for all to notice, the paying-off pennon ; a ribbon of amazing length, reaching to the waterline. Sailors, overjoyed to be home again, come ashore with kitbags like great bolsters on their shoulders, and look so bronzed, healthy and happy that you are struck with astonishment when, in some lowering, beetle-browed waterside tavern, you hear them grumbling and advising civilian and shore-going friends, with blazing emphatics, " Don't you never wear three rows of tape round your neck," which is a highly technical way of saying, " Don't join the Navy," the blue-

jacket's jumper being ornamented with three thin white lines.

"A.B.'s no bloomin' catch. All right for petty orf'cer or articifer, fine thing to be a snotty, or a leutenant, an' finer to be captain, or one o' them admirals what ye see in the photograph shops, cuddlin' their telescopes under their arms, and lookin' as if they'd just come out o' Sunday School ; but—well, here's yours, my sonny."

Past North Corner and the steam-ferry across



THE HAMOAZE.

the Hamoaze to Torpoint in Cornwall, you come to Bull Point, where the explosives live, and to the poor discarded ships of the Navy.

Here are tiers of vessels ; steel-built cruisers, gunboats, torpedo craft, and what not, at their last moorings, and presently to be sold out of the navy for the price of an old tin kettle.

There is nothing more pitiful in all this world of activity than the sight of these discarded ships of our modern navy. The old wooden men-o'-war, out-of-date long generations ago, are still things

of a worshipful nobility. Even the blackened coal-hulks and the floating station of the Harbour Police have the remains of a majestic presence ; but the obsolete cruisers and other vessels of the present iron age are dreadfully abject and mean. They have been in every clime, and on many a distant station have upheld the dignity of the Empire, and so have a claim upon our respect ; but no worn-out boiler or discarded kitchen-range, among the rubbish-heaps of a builder's yard, looks so utterly and unromantically sordid. For myself, I *want* to be impressed ; I acutely wish to read romance and the pathos of neglect into these discarded things of iron and steel, that have carried the King's commission over all the seas of the habitable globe and are now struck off the effective list, even though they be not more than twenty years old ; but I find it impossible. I could as easily—nay, could with greater ease—drop a salt tear over the old kitchener that has cooked me many a dinner, and now lies rusting in the garden.

The ships look so small ; and their sides and decks are red with rust-stains. When quite deserted they are even more than abject, and resemble floating scrap-heaps, but when some solitary figure of a marine is perceived, in charge, pipe in mouth, and clad in the extraordinary deshabelle of undress that only a soldier will descend to when removed from the eye of command, and with intimate articles of his under-clothing drying in the sun, they wear the look

of sea-going slums. Figures and statistics do not commonly impress me; you can make so much play with an extra 0 or two, but here are cruisers that have cost £150,000 a-piece which will each fetch at auction only a trifling £5,000, and for the mere look of them, would seem to be extravagantly dear at £500; and when I think of these things, I am very much impressed indeed.

The Hamoaze between St. Budeaux on the Devonshire, and Saltash on the Cornish, shores, becomes the Tamar, and narrows to something a little less than half a mile wide. It is spanned here by the famous Saltash Bridge, built by Brunel to carry the railway across, and opened in 1859. For eleven miles above the bridge, the Tamar is navigable at high tide by small steamers, past Cargreen, to Calstock, and past Morwellham Quay, to Weir Head. Beyond, where New Bridge carries the highway across, Devon and Cornwall join hands.



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