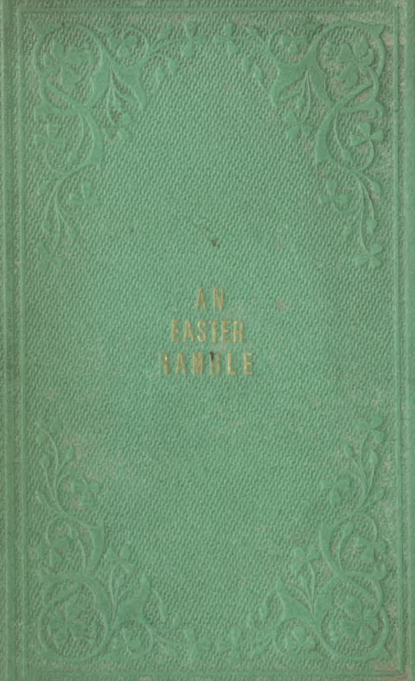

AN
EASTER
RAMBLE

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To Mrs. Edward Wright -
With Respectful Compliments -
of The Author -

Harwich -
1st April 1861

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

AN
EASTER RAMBLE.

BY WILLIAM IRVINE, HAWICK.

"'T IS SPRING-TIDE HOLIDAY.
THE BONDS OF CARE ARE BURST;
FAIR FANCY'S SHACKLES FALL UNLOOSED;
AND NOW ANTICIPATION PLUMES HER WINGS
FOR A BRIEF FLIGHT OF PLEASURE."
WILLIAM KEATING CLAY.

HAWICK:
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1860.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND
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22 OCT 1979

TO

WILLIAM JAMES, ESQ.,

20, CAMBRIDGE STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

MY DEAR JAMES,

AS YOU FURNISHED ME WITH THE ROUTE WHICH I HAVE ENDEAVOURED TO COMMEMORATE IN THESE DESULTORY PAGES, WHICH WERE FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE "HAWICK ADVERTISER," AND ARE NOW PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION, I HAVE MUCH PLEASURE IN DEDICATING THE LITTLE WORK TO YOU, WITH KIND REMEMBRANCE.

BELIEVE ME,
MOST FAITHFULLY YOURS,
WILLIAM IRVINE.

HAWICK, 15TH OCT., 1860.

AN

EASTER RAMBLE.

THE OUTSET.

"THIS day week will be Good Friday, and I anticipate a few happy holidays at home," was the self-satisfying after-dinner remark of our good friend Edsall, as we sat enjoying our fragrant weed in the smoking-room of the Prince of Wales Hotel, in the metropolis of Ireland. Being Scottish, and of the Presbyterian persuasion, we have no traditionary record which attaches a sacred solemnity to Easter time, as the Church of Rome and the sister Church of England profess to have. The New Testament is silent on this theme; and we own no other instructor in sacred matters. Could it be arranged all over the kingdom, however, that the fasting, and humiliation, and thanksgiving days connected with our solemn sacraments could be observed on the same day throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland, we feel assured that the objects contemplated in ordaining these sacred occasions would be more universally obtained. In travelling over Scotland, interruption to business, and loss of valuable time, is incalculable, as no one can tell when he may not drop into a town where business is suspended for the day; whereas in England the Easter and Christmas holidays are so well known, that one's business calculations may easily be made to avoid them. Clergymen are, generally speaking, bad business men, or these matters would be better managed in Scotland. Moreover, clergyman are bigots. The parochial priest generally stands aloof from his dissenting brotherhood; the dissenter repudiates the insolent demeanour of his State-paid brother; and so each party splits straws, and maintains misunderstandings where there ought to be unity of purpose. Seeming to forget their high calling, each one maintains that his shibboleth is the chosen of the Lord, and the others aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. These miserable jealousies are a disgrace to Scottish Presbyterianism, and out of them has arisen the confusion which all commercial men have to complain of in connection with the disorderly fashion in which the solemnities of fasting, and humiliation, and thanksgiving days are arranged. We appeal to the clergy for a reformation of these annoyances. We wish to see parochial priest and dissenting minister agree to observe the same day all over Scotland as they do in England and Ireland, and then we will have our solemn ordinances conducted with becoming decency and order.

The above-quoted remark of friend Edsall's recalled interruptions in business arrangements which our Scottish ignorance of the times had not forseen and avoided; and here again, when too far from home, and when it was too late to reärrange our journey, the unwelcome prospect of a similar interruption dawned upon us. Well, what shall be done? Holidays at home, like Edsall, we cannot have. We are due in Liverpool on Good Friday, and will not be able to get properly to work till Wednesday after Easter—a spoilt week, so far as business is concerned. One suggested a sojourn at Killarney, but the cold, ungenial, half-wintry spring weather, did not favour a visit to this charming region. We called for Bradshaw, studied the sailings from Cork to Milford Haven, and forthwith decided on a pilgrimage to Stratford-on-Avon.

The sky was lovely and unclouded; the breath of spring was in the breeze; a gentle ripple was on the waters of the Lee, as we left the harbour of Cork for Milford Haven in the tight little screw steamer the "Propeller." Capt. Allward was full of glee at the prospect of pleasant sailings after a winter of unprecedented severity. Away we scudded down "the pleasant waters of the River Lee," famed in tourists' guide-books as the Irish Rhine. Its shores are richly decorated with the delightful residences of the merchants of Cork, who seem embued with a praiseworthy rivarly as to who shall have the most elegant abode. One knows no weariness in dropping down this richly-grit river, and slips into the spacious and world-famed Cove, the harbour of Queenstown, after an hour's sail through as richly-varied river scenery as the world can boast of. The sun shone pleasantly on the windows of Queenstown, and seemed to bid us a genial farewell to Ireland as we rode away through that splendid harbour, which is girt with hills like some inland lake. It is four miles long and two broad, exclusive of numerous little picturesque creeks and bays. It contains Spike Island, an area of 100 acres; Haulboline, 28 acres; and the Rocky Island, 2½ acres. On Spike there is a strong fortification and a depôt for military stores like at Deptford, and also a large depôt for convicts doomed to oakum-picking and other inglorious occupations. Haulboline is dignified by the Governor's mansion and one of the largest depôts of ordnance stores in the empire. On the rocky island there are two enormous powder magazines, and a barracks for the requisite complement of soldiers to guard these national stores and maintain order among the convicts. The entrance to the harbour is two miles long and fully a mile broad, and is well guarded by forts in which there appears to be preparations going forward for any national emergency.

As we left this splendid harbour a stiff breeze sprang up in our teeth and our jolly captain prognosticated a tardy voyage. We were soon out to sea, and the coast of Ireland grew dim on our lee, and gradullay vanished. Yet though the terrestrial abodes of men had disappeared, we had still before us the indications of man's indomitable energies. At one time we saw four steamers besides our own, two coming from England to Cork, the others leaving Cork for different harbours in England; and as we looked at the splendid spectacle, the fine thought of

George Combe came forcibly into our memory :—"Ocean extends over half the globe its watery plain, in which no path appears, and the rude winds oft lift its waters to the sky. There, too, the power of man is owned. He launches forth his strong-knit bark, expands its canvass to the gale, and makes the pathless waste a highway through the world."

As we paced the deck, the breeze increased, and carried off our "wide-awake," an incident which amused the passengers, as people are generally amused when a man's hat is blown off. In these cases, a man's misfortunes seem to yield a compensating capital of fun to the onlookers, and their enjoyment appears to be exactly in the reverse ratio of his annoyance. Our chapeau was irrecoverably gone; so we put a cheerful face on the incident and laughed with the others. Still the breeze blew keenly, and forced us down below, where, after making an abortive effort to play a rubber at whist, and realise the Mark Tapley philosophy of being jolly under all circumstances, we retired to our berths, and the waves and winds rocked our ocean cradle, and sung us asleep.

In our experience, sleep at sea is not refreshing. The confined berth—the commotion of the waves—the thundering of the paddles, or thudding, disagreeable motion of the screw—and above all, the sickness of companions not accustomed to the sea—all tend to make sleep loose and unrefreshing; so it came and went as usual. During the intervals we could see, through our cabin loophole, in the full moonlight, the watery horizon, and the clouds scudding before the wind, now obscuring the moon, and darkening all the prospect, anon clearing off and unveiling the fair orb and twinkling stars, and the silvery ocean path—a scene full of solemnity and power—so we mused and dosed, and woke and dosed again till daylight shone fully out, and we were for the first time entering Milford Haven. It is a splendid harbour; nature has hemmed it with high coast lands for many miles, the narrow sea between reminding one of the Kyles of Bute, the shores on either side being so near. Here too, active preparations are going forward with the coast defences; the harbour is defended by two forts, one on either coast, and both are being enlarged and strengthened. No fleet could live between their fires. For the cause of civilisation and human brotherhood, may God keep war from our shores, no matter how grandly they be guarded. Here some of our finest war steamers have been built, and, as we steamed into the harbour, we saw the long row of Government building sheds, under each of which one of England's terrible ocean bulwarks may, even now, be preparing to be launched on the element on which it will have to act its part in Britain's future efforts to maintain the supremacy of the seas. These sheds are all covered and closed, so that no stranger can know what they contain. A launch is seldom announced; the vessels are dropped quietly into the sea when ready for their masts and rigging. Milford is a small place. After the building sheds the most conspicuous object is the South Wales Hotel, to which we gladly betook ourselves to wait the starting of the train for Gloucester.

SECOND PAPER.

THE windows of the South Wales Hotel at Milford Haven command a fair prospect of the harbour. We could hear the din of hundreds of hammers at work on the hulls of the war-ships in the building-sheds across the water. Two splendid 120-gun men-of-war lay at anchor, "the meteor flag of England" streaming proudly from their top-gallant masts. The bristling guns looked grim and defiant from the sides of the noble vessels, as if conscious of their trust, and confident of their power to maintain it against the world. A splendid trust, when defensive of British life and property, but questionable in any other cause. While such warlike scenes appeal to our patriotism, they appeal to our humanity as well; and the idea that these sullen rows of bated guns may yet have their terrible thunderbolts directed against human life, in hellish passion, is truly awful. Is it for this that men are crowned, and enthroned, and permitted to establish governments? A great statesman has said wisely, "The end of all government is the happiness of the people." The divine commandment says, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." An application of these principles of the divine government would quench the hell of war, and secure the legitimate objects of honest and laudable statesmanship. Advanced Liberals, like honest John Bright and sagacious Richard Cobden, have striven nobly to inaugurate these old and almost forgotten principles in our time. Men who laugh at these statesmen will laugh at the Sermon on the Mount. Retrenchment must begin somewhere; and a congress of the nations may assemble for a worse object than a consideration of the simplest and most effective methods by which a reduction and ultimate abolition of armaments may be accomplished. While we hold these opinions, we are aware that warlike preparations, of an ominous and questionable nature, are pushed forward with alarming rapidity at Brest and at Cherbourg. While we cannot question or control such inscrutable operations our best policy is to prepare. We must maintain the supremacy of the seas, for our own sake and the interest of humanity. We must not allow an unscrupulous Power to terrify the world; and for every war-ship launched by France, we should launch two. It is an expensive contest; but if reason and revelation cannot abolish it, we know who can afford to maintain it longest; and in such a contest it is poor economy to be penurious. "When a strong man, armed, keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

On glancing over the annals of England, we find that the licentious and cruelly vindictive Richard II. landed from Ireland at Milford Haven, when his kingdom had passed into the abler and more equitable hands of Henry Plantagenet, the son and immediate successor of John of Gaunt, "time-honoured Lancaster." Leaving his army at Milford, in command of the Earl of Worcester, he went in disguise to Conway Castle, to concert with the Earl of Salisbury and other adherents, who had thrown themselves into that splendid and almost impregnable fortress. Meanwhile, the Earl of Worcester, hopeless of accomplishing Richard's restoration, and probably unwilling to involve himself in a desperate and thankless cause, disbanded the army at Milford, and the fourth Henry occupied his throne without striking a blow. Eighty-six years after, on the morning of the 16th of August, 1485, another fleet cast its anchors in Milford Haven. It was commanded by Henry, Earl of

Richmond, who had embarked from Harfleur, to revenge himself and his country, by dethroning the murderer of his kindred, the inglorious Richard III. His object was accomplished sixteen days after, when he humbled and overcame the tyrant on Bosworth Field. When describing the death of Richard, Sir James Mackintosh remarks, with characteristic pith and discrimination—"While engaged in the hottest contest, he fell by a death too honourable for his crimes, but becoming the martial virtues of his life." Lord Stanley crowned the victorious Earl of Richmond on Bosworth Field, the crown of England having been found among the spoils of Richard's camp. The army shouted, "Long live King Henry!" Five days after, the King acknowledged the signal services of Stanley by creating him Earl of Derby, a title and dignity which has descended, in an unbroken line, to the present day.

The mightiest of England's admirals, Horatio Nelson, once took refuge from a storm by putting into Milford Haven with the fleet in his command. He stayed there a month, with Lady Hamilton, the only associate that ever tarnished his otherwise fair and upright name. While there, he received the courtesies of the leading families of the neighbourhood, and was persuaded to sit for a full-length portrait to an Italian artist of considerable eminence—singularly enough, the only portrait for which he ever sat, and consequently the one which makes the *personel* of the great admiral familiar to all time. But for this incident, the features of Nelson might have been a fanciful posthumous exaggeration, like the over-refined ideal portraits of Shakespeare. The gentlemen who subscribed for the portrait presented it to the billiard-room of the hotel in which the admiral lived—which has been called the Nelson ever since—with the condition attached that it should never be removed from the room in which Nelson had passed many pleasant hours, and watched many tough games. So it became a part of the property; and landlords came and went, and the picture remained. When it became known that it was the only portrait for which Nelson had sat, famous engravers and artists came to copy it, and many tried to get possession of it; but in vain. A drunken ruffian drove a billiard cue through it, which disfigured it for years. Two gentlemen took up their quarters at the Nelson one summer morning about twenty years ago. They stayed about six weeks, fishing, shooting, eating oysters, and drinking punch with the landlord, who fancied them vastly, as they paid their score with honest weekly punctuality. They had been full three weeks in the house before they took notice of the picture to the host. At length, they affected to discover a likeness of Nelson, and reproached Boniface for allowing it to remain in such a disreputable condition, and offered to take it to London, and get the hole mended, and the painting cleaned. The unsuspecting host thanked them for their kindness, and allowed them to carry off the treasure. About a month after, he got back, not the original, but a finely executed copy, very beautifully framed. He could never discover his friends, and the original picture has not been heard of since. Surely such a treasure cannot be lost, and it should find a place in the National Gallery whenever it turns up: it is too valuable to be at the mercy of drunken Welshmen and nameless adventurers.

Our meditations at the South Wales Hotel were disturbed at last by the puffing of the engine at the terminus, and the ringing of the first bell for the starting of the Gloucester train. Boots hurried in exclaiming, "Time's up, Sir!" So off we started, just in time to get comfortably placed, when off we went, and away through a strange country, and with nothing to enlighten us as to the localities but Bradshaw's Guide, and the signboards at the stations. Oh, how we longed for the box seat of a coach and the companionship of an intelligent driver! Truly a railway carriage is a poor conveyance for an inquiring tourist; and, though nothing can match it for business purposes, one gets a miserable idea of the characteristics of town and country as one dashes through tunnels, into fosse-like cuttings, and past the outskirts of famous places. There used to be something jolly and edifying in the exciting doings on a coach top—the song —the joke—the hearty laugh—the boon companionship along the road, and at the way-side inns, where active ostlers changed the horses with marvellous speed—the splendid prospect of open country, where every turn of the road levied fresh instalments of coachie's discriptive eloquence. And, oh, how bravely we used to rattle through the towns, carrying away at a glance impressions of places which entitled us to speak of them with a consciousness of authority whenever they became topics of conversation! Now all is changed by the steam genius of the age. Despatch is the order of the day, and all men must bow to the new conditions.

We passed through a country rich in mountain and woodland scenery. At the stations we were much amused at the appearance of the country women, who wore black felt hats with broad brims, just like inverted flower-pots, and tall as a sugar loaf,—reminding one of the Old Mother Hubbards and other venerable dames who figure in the quaint illustrations of the fairy tales familiar to our childhood. And so we passed swiftly over the counties of Pembroke and Caermarthen, and at length reached the important town of Swansea in Glamorganshire, famous for its vast copper smelting works. It is computed that 200,000 tons of copper are smelted annually in the United Kingdom, nine-tenths of the entire quantity being produced at the vast works of Swansea. The population exceeds 36,000. It is the most important town in South Wales. The situation is naturally beautiful between two mountains, and beside the river Tawe, and overlooking the fine bay which is named after it. This bay extends from east to west nine miles, and is sheltered by a magnificent environment of wooded hills; but for miles round vegetation is burned up by the vapours of the copper works, under whose blighting influence it seems impossible for any green thing to live. The top of one of the hills emits vast clouds of smoke, suggestive of a burning mountain. On enquiry we were informed that the mountain had been bored 1500 feet for a chimney to one of the greatest mining and smelting establishments, which is situated at the base. So thoroughly is the atmosphere pervaded with these odours that we imagined we tasted copper the whole day.

Leaving Swansea, we rushed on again through an undulating hill country, beautified with woods, and many tree-sheltered villas, and numerous castellated ruins, telling of a warlike people in the old times, when the owners of these shattered memorials of ancient power were either the guardians or the oppressors of the neighbourhood. Like the venerable Wordsworth, we love to linger amid these desolate scenes, musing on the impressive mutations which time has wrought, and giving utterance to his solemn thoughts :—

"Relic of kings ! wreck of forgotten wars !
To winds abandoned and the prying stars,—
Time *loves* thee ! at his call the seasons twine
Luxuriant wreaths around thy forehead hoar ;
And, though past pomp no changes can restore,
A soothing recompence, his gift is thine."

One cannot traverse a country like Wales without thinking of the tyranny of Edward I., whose sole object was the entire subjugation of Great Britain. The sad story of Llewellyn, the last native prince who held the sovereignty of Wales, illustrates the bravery of these hardy mountaineers, who contended with the tyrant of England for every inch of their native land, but were driven from fastness to fastness by superior numbers, until they mustered on the island of Anglesea as a last or forlorn hope. From this retreat Llewellyn arranged a treaty with Edward to cede him all his Welsh possessions in consideration of being permitted to retain undisturbed possession of Anglesea. The faithless Edward, with characteristic cruelty and rapacity, soon invaded this sanctuary of the remnant of a gallant people.

Llewellyn and his brother David assailed the invaders with their brave and faithful mountaineers, and either killed or drove the audacious minions of Edward into the sea. The leaders of this cruel invasion, the Lords Audley and Clifford, were slain, and the King took refuge in one of the strong fortresses which he had erected to awe the people into submission by displays of military power. The vast dimensions of the castles of Conway and Carnarvon, which were built for this purpose by Edward, exhibit to this day the stupendous arrangements which the tyrant was necessitated to make for the maintenance of his detestable conquests.

Llewellyn, now hemmed in on all sides, in the last extremity, went, with a little band of his faithful adherents, to a rendezvous near Builth, where he had arranged with the Welsh chiefs to concert measures. The perfidious miscreants, however, certain of ultimate defeat, and selfishly thinking of personal safety, abandoned the brave prince; and some annalists affirm that they betrayed him to Roger Mortimer, who slew him on the spot where he was captured, on the 10th December, 1282. The head of the prince was cut off, and sent to Edward, who held court at Shrewsbury. "To the lasting disgrace of Edward," Sir James Mackintosh remarks, "the head was placed on the Tower of London, with a crown of willows, in base mockery of these ancient songs which were fondly believed by the Welsh to prefigure their delivery, as adorned by this symbol of sovereignty. Thus perished the last sovereign of one of the most ancient ruling families of Europe." Wales was conquered, but not subdued: the love of liberty, which belongs to all mountaineers, still burned fiercely, and reprisals on the invaders continued to be carried on for two centuries, until the equitable laws of Henry VIII., and succeeding Tudor princes, gave equal rights, and extended full protection to the lives and properties of the people of Wales.

The fate of Prince Llewellyn reminds one sadly of that of our own Wallace, the victim of the same rapacious and remorseless tyrant, who endeavoured to accomplish the union of Great Britain by physical instead of moral power. In our own day, we enjoy the benefits of peaceful union; while in Scotland we think with honest pride of the battles for freedom which our forefathers fought. The fact that we were never a conquered people does not affect our loyalty to the throne, or our good fellowship with the people of England now. Had Wales and Ireland never been subdued, it is probable that they would have been loyal and friendly to England, as we are, and the sense of deep and deathless injury which they must feel would have been unknown. This feeling—the fruit of the bitter seed sown by the tyranny of Edward—will linger for ever in the annals of Ireland and Wales; for the inhabitants of the mountain and the sea-shore love the voice of liberty, and know it well:

"Two voices are there: one is of the sea,
One of the mountains—each a mighty voice.
In both, from age to age, thou did'st rejoice;
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him, but hast vainly striven;
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee!"

These are brave lines of Wordsworth's—his sacred admiration of brave men expatriated for their virtues, and their heroic protests against the irrepressible rapacity of the cruel and the strong.

While musing on the historical changes of Wales, we had been sweeping on past castles and towns famous in story, which we would fain have lingered to study and describe—especially Llandaff, with its ancient and time-honoured cathedral, and Cardiff, with its splendid canal and docks, which the late Marquis of Bute, whose son has great possessions in this neighbourhood, constructed at a cost of not less than £300,000; but we could not stay, and shot away through rich orchards and highly cultivated farms, along the beautiful shores of the Severn, till we reached Chepstow, where we had resolved to sojourn for a day, to enjoy the exquisite scenery on the lower reaches of the classic Wye, and to linger amid the stupendous ruins of Raglan Castle, and the impressive and lovely remains of Tintern Abbey, so exquisitely beautiful, independently of all description, but not less interesting as standing in a vale which has inspired the grandest strain of Wordsworth, and which, we have been told, furnished Dr Johnson with the ideal—or rather, reality—of the Happy Valley, in "Rasselas." We will reserve our impressions of these classic themes for our next paper.

THIRD PAPER.

CHEPSTOW has a lovely situation on the side of a hill which overlooks the confluence of the Severn and the Wye. There are few prettier towns in England. A look of quietness pervades the place which plainly intimates that it is a town of people independent of business, and well-to-do. Truly, "a pleasant habitation," where the good folks seem to enjoy every necessary comfort, without the ostentation of unsubstantial gaiety. The population is nearly 5000. The most interesting object in the place is the remains of what has been a castle of vast extent and strength. Its site occupies three acres of ground; it has been laid out in four courts. The entrance is very imposing—a fine Norman arch, flanked by two lofty towers. It occupies a bold site on a lofty cliff, whose base is washed by the waters of the Wye. There is a splendid tubular bridge here, one of the grandest triumphs of Brunel's engineering skill. It is only excelled by the world-famous Britannia Bridge of Stephenson across the Menai Straits. Brunel's work cost £65,000, and Stephenson's, £621,865.

Raglan Castle is fourteen miles from Chepstow, and Tintern Abbey five miles; so we hired a conveyance, and set out for the former, having arranged to return by another road to the latter. It was pleasant to change the mode of travelling: we could hear the varied notes of the birds, and scent the breath of spring in the budding trees and the young grass—sounds and incense far more grateful than the scream of the engine, and its offensive odours. We drove for miles through splendid avenues of trees, more like the scenery of a noble park than that of a turnpike-road. When about seven miles from Chepstow, after reaching the top of a long ascent on the road, a scene of rare beauty displayed itself before us—a finely cultivated vale, of vast extent, gloriously decorated with sheltering plantation belts, and splendid orchards, budding with the promise of the year—studded with comfortable-looking farm-steadings, and all the evidences of rural comfort. It was the Valley of Abergavenny, famous as one of the loveliest regions in the world. The prospect is terminated by a picturesque range of mountains. The most conspicuous is called "The Sugar-Loaf," and the name and configuration remind one forcibly of its namesake in County Wicklow; but, beautiful as Wicklow is, we are compelled to say that Monmouthshire is more beautiful still.

We were now at Raglan, a fine, clean, old English village. We took an immediate fancy for the pretty inn —the Beaufort arms—with sedate, staid old maids for waitresses, and a scrupulous tidiness in all its appointments which we have never seen surpassed. The drive had been cold—in fact, we had been assailed by a smart hail-shower, so that we enjoyed the clear-burning, clean fireside, the tidy dinner, a glass of as fine old Port as an epicure might fancy, and, after all, a mild Havannah; and, so fortified, we sallied out to see the grandest ruined castle in England.

Raglan Castle is about five minutes walk from the hotel. We approached the splendid ruins with a feeling of awe, on glancing for the first time, at its grand dimensions. We rang the bell at the outer gate several times before the warder answered. He explained politely that he had been engaged in a distant part of the ruins with another party who left as we entered. On passing the gate we were in a beautiful turf-clad court or park, seated all round for the convenience of pic-nic parties and visitors. Passing over this lovely sward, we were before the castle, which is environed with three moats or fosses, the inner one filled with water, which enabled us to realise the appearance of the place in the old times, when these spacious defences were necessary. We have seen nothing more impressive in castellated architecture—the round tower of Windsor always excepted—than the gateway of Raglan Castle,—flanked by two massive towers of most picturesque appearance, a combination of beauty and strength,—o'erhung with ivy, and surmounted by massive corbelled battlements of the most beautiful and imposing description. Several towers of the same character dignify the angles of the castle. We passed over the drawbridge, and into the inner court, a spacious square where a regiment might be drilled. Our guide, an accomplished and intelligent gentleman, who had evidently seen better days, described with interesting minuteness the characteristics of the place,—the spacious kitchen, with huge fire-places at each end, where a couple of oxen might have been roasted at the same time; the noble banqueting hall, with its entrance at one side for domestics bringing in the viands, and its exit on the other side for their removal by another passage, and another set of attendants; then the long suites of apartments for the family and their guests, and the numerous retainers of the Earls of Pembroke and Worcester, its successive possessors. On ascending one of the towers, and looking down from its ivy-clad battlements, we realised the grandest idea of the place, and must admit that we never beheld a more splendid combination of the grand and the beautiful in castellated masonry. The accomplished warder intimated that he had removed 122 cart-loads of ivy from the walls the year before, as visitors complained that the building was more like a wood than a castle. He has certainly managed this denudation with fine taste, as there is no lack of ivy, and the masonry is now finely revealed. This gentleman has collected an interesting archæological museum in one of the towers, where he keeps a register of visitors. He turned up Alfred Tennyson's, and the idea at once struck us that the Poet-Laureate must have composed his fine bugle song in "The Princess" in this impressive ruin,—

> "A splendour falls on castle walls,
> And hoary turrets famed in story."

Little licence of fancy is necessary to suppose these lines to have been suggested here.

The older parts of this magnificent edifice are supposed to have been built by the Earls of Pembroke early in the fifteenth century. It exhibits the various fashions of architecture from the days of Henry V. to those of Charles I.,—many additions and alterations having been made in the period that intervened from its origin to its fall during the Parliamentary wars. It afforded a refuge to Charles I. after his flight from Naseby; where the historian who continued the works of Sir James Mackintosh after his lamented death, affirms that the reckless King employed himself "in the vain pomp and amusement of a royal chase at this period of disaster."

This castle and domain became the property of the Earls of Worcester, now the Dukes of Beaufort, by the marriage of Sir Charles Somerset with Elizabeth, granddaughter of the Earl of Pembroke, about the beginning of the sixteenth century. It was the last castle in England that held out for Charles I. After maintaining an eleven weeks siege it surrendered to Sir Thomas Fairfax in August, 1646, and was dismantled by order of the Parliament. We would fain have lingered all day among these gorgeous ruins, but the sun was far west. Tintern Abbey was ten miles away, and, being anxious to see that part of the valley of the Wye which inspired Wordsworth's most beautiful and impressive reverie, and the world-famous abbey too, before the shadows of night had obscured it, we turned from Raglan with a regret only solaced by the thought that we would visit it again when fortunate enough to realise the idea that reconciles all business men to their industrial pursuits—a hard-won competency, and freedom, and power to enjoy the afternoon and evening of life as fancy willed.

For ten miles we retraced the same road that we had driven over in the morning, and then turned off into a grass-bordered lane-like way, where tinkers might encamp, and vagabond donkies find unchallenged pasture. A few turns of the wheels conveyed us to the valley of the Wye. There lay "the happy valley" girdled by

"These steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion, and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky."

Had the spring time been genial, or had the summer flush of June been on the scene the truthfulness of the poet's almost matchless description might have been vindicated. Guided by his chaste and exalted fancies we might, on the same genius-hallowed ground, and amid similar influences, have realised, in our own humble fashion, feelings akin to Wordsworth's. All the main features of his description were about us :—

"These plots of cottage ground, these orchard tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. . . . . .
These hedgerows,—hardly hedgrows,—little lines
Of sportive wood run wild;—these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some hermit's cave, where, by the fire,
The hermit sits alone."

The place seemed consecrated and dedicated to beauty. It was not wonderful that a mind so worshipful of nature and so susceptible of the finest impressions that beauty can convey should have been embued with the divine aflatus here. We could almost fancy we saw the inspired man composing these solemn

"Thoughts that wander through eternity."

In the loved companionship of his amiable sister Dorothy, under the shadow of the "dark sycamore," while beauty ministered to him, he stood and worshipped,

"With an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
He saw into the life of things."

The impressions carried away from a scene like this are more precious than gold—treasures of memory which are imperishable. To use the poets own phrase, they

"Haunted him like a passion,"

and were a source of perpetual joy. This feeling is grandly expressed in these exalted thoughts :—

"Yet oh! how oft,
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight, when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
How oft in spirit have I turned to thee
O, sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!"

We would like to follow the poet line by line through this finest of all his poems, but our space and design cannot admit of this. Our readers who have not seen it may acquire an abiding mental treasure by acquainting themselves with its exquisite thoughts, and allowing them a place in memory. So instructed, the student may some day say with the poet,—

"For I have learned
To look on nature not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still sad music of humanity;
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts—a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns.

. . . . .

"Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed

With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings."

In a happy rapture, suggested by these impressive thoughts, we drove through the scenes that inspired them, until we reached the village of Tintern Parva. After passing its somewhat scattered dwellings, an acute turn in the road brought us beneath the shadow of the grandest and most beautiful ecclesiastical ruin in England. Some writers assert that nothing of the kind in Europe can surpass it. Melrose is quite as beautiful, and the masonic details are more exquisite, but Tintern is loftier and greater in all its parts—more like the ruins of a vast cathedral than of an abbey in a secluded and thinly populated valley. The architecture is pointed Gothic, the most appropriate for sacred buildings. Over the western door, by which we entered, there is a window of great beauty and faultless proportions. It might be a splendid model for the church architects of our own time. No description can convey to those who have not visited Tintern Abbey even a faint idea of its impressive beauty. Founded in 1131, by Walter de Clare, the grandson of William the Conqueror, for monks of the Cistercian Order, it was successively held by several Earls of Pembroke; and, when the male line of the Strongbows was extinct, it became the property of the Earl of Norfolk, who completed the beautiful edifice in 1286. At the dissolution of the monasteries by the Parliaments of Henry VIII., it was conveyed to the Earl of Worcester, whose successors, the Dukes of Beaufort, have held it till now. As we paced its solemn aisles and spacious nave and transept, a feeling of awe stole over us. The long lines of graceful pillars, supporting their lofty Gothic arches, possessed the charm of faultless masonry. The eye could rest on nothing that displeased;

it was like a poem in stone, or a song without a jarring note—a perfect harmony. Age had made it reverend; and where rude hands or decay had broken the beautiful work, time had covered the place with "ivy, never sere." The once gorgeous floor—a part of the rich, tessellated pavement of which has been recently discovered—was now clad with

> "Nature's quiet robe of green,
> Humanity's appointed shroud."

The young grass covered the graves of the old churchmen and warriors whose remains had been buried there: the solemn processions and grand ceremonials of the Church of the middle ages were things of the past. The voice of the priest instructed there no more. An old man wandered about the ruins telling the story of their former glories; and where the pealing organ had often led the song of praise to God, the yelping of hundreds of jackdaws—sole inhabitants of the place—seemed to be a peculiarly appropriate anthem of triumph over long desolations. A system of wickedness had grown up within these institutions. The strong common sense of Englishmen could not be satisfied with such perversion of sacred truth. Recent histories of the period of the reformation in England, especially Froude's, have brought to light, by an appeal to unquestionable documentary evidence, the abominable practices that made monastic life a scandal and a mockery, which justified the uncompromising measures of the Parliaments of Henry VIII. The doom of the monasteries has been confirmed by the approving verdict of each successive generation from their dissolution until now. While we glory in the principles of the Reformation, we are yet often tempted to regret that these "solemn temples" have been permitted to become what they are; but no such feeling had possession of us here. That ruin was more lovely than any unharmed mediæval cathedral we have seen,—and we have worshipped in many of the most famous in Europe. When standing in the choir we heard the voice of the Wye murmuring between its richly-wooded banks. A gentle breeze swayed the festoons of ivy which beautified the fine windows, and o'erhung the stately arches ; there was no glory of

"Storied windows richly dight;"

but no painted window in any church in the world can possibly reveal a more memorable picture than the splendid eastern window with its magnificent background of bosky wood and rock-crowned hill. While standing there we realised the truthfulness of a remark once made to us by our accomplished friend, George Gilfillan of Dundee, when talking of York Minster—"Yes, sir," said he; "the building is grand and perfect in its way; but I'd rather see it like Melrose Abbey, all desolate, a thing of the past, telling to all time of just punishment for unjustifiable delinquency."

After ascending by a narrow stair to the top of the abbey, and enjoying a lovely sunset, and the finest of all the aspects of "the happy valley," we returned to Chepstow with new conquests and recollections that may illuminate many dark hours in future experience.

FOURTH PAPER.

The route from Chepstow to Gloucester is bounded all the way on one side by the majestic waters of the Severn, and on the other for many miles by the forest of Dean, one of the ancient hunting-grounds of the Kings of England,—now a public property, and nominally managed or rather mismanaged by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. When the affairs of England come to be managed by men of practical commercial quality, who will look at the national balance sheet as at their own, these ancient lands will not be long in changing hands. The cumbrous sinecures associated with them will be abolished; they will be put up to the hammer, and will be knocked down to the highest bidder; the proceeds will go into the public purse, and help to pay the public burdens. In our opinion this theory should be applied to all public property, civil or ecclesiastical, that does not fulfil its original purposes. It is simple justice to demand such an arrangement. Were Church lands, which are public property, and which pay for the maintenance of religious ordinances to a minority of the community, to be associated with all the crown lands, which are so miserably guided as scarcely to pay the expenses of their management, and were both sold, the proceeds of the sales would at once enable the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reduce taxation, so that no member of the community would suffer injustice, and public property would liquidate public burdens. By such an arrangement each religious sect would have to maintain its own ordinances, and a sense of injustice would surely cease. Such a change would be peculiarly beneficial to Ireland, where the great majority of the people consider the establishment of the Episcopal system a plundering imposture. The statesman who can disconnect the Episcopal Church in Ireland from State dependence and emolument will be a beneficent benefactor to that ill-used land, and will have an honoured and a lasting place in its annals.

The vale of the Severn is famous for its rich soil. We cannot speak of yellow harvests, or even of fields rich with the promise of the year; for cold east winds and protracted winter had cast a spell over the earth. The buds were out, but seemed in danger of early death. No blue sky was visible, but dull, grey clouds hung heavily and cheerlessly over the scene. This valley is famous for hops, and its broad, rich fields were being prepared for their valuable offering to the vats of Burton and Edinburgh, and every brewery in the empire. Piles of poles attracted our attention in numerous fields, and in enormous quantities. On enquiring, we learned that when the hops are above ground these poles are stuck down like pea-sticks for the hops to climb. When in full blow, amid the glory of summer, they must be beautiful as the vineyards of the sunny slopes of France, which, once seen, can never be forgot. These fair fields were richly intersected with belts of fruit trees and spacious orchards, suggestive of cider and perry and dumplings pleasant to think of. The fruit of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire is a principal item in the farmers' accounts, and hops appear to be very important too. In this district a shower in spring invariably elicits this remark from saluting friends—"Fine shower, Sir." "Yes," responds the other party; "'twill make the hops grow." We were amused the other day when coming on the bus from Roundtown to Dublin with a witty Irish barrister. It rained heavily, and as passengers came and went, comments were freely made about the disagreeable weather. A good looking lady sat smiling opposite our facetious friend evidently enjoying the fun which Irishmen will make even out of awkwardness. When the lady came to leave the bus he remarked—"I'm sorry to see you will be exposed to the wet, mem." "O, I don't mind the wet, Sir," she rejoined in a marked Gloucestershire accent; "'t will make the *hoops* grow." The other ladies in the bus blushed, supposing the remark referred to their already ample decorations. Our witty friend, as ignorant as they, responded quick as thought—"You should catch the *hooping* cough for making such a remark." The ladies tittered an approving laugh, and the Gloucestershire damsel turned away disconcerted and blushing. Poor thing! she meant no rude remark, and was hastily and ignorantly judged.

On reaching Gloucester, we made our way to the fine old commercial hotel, The Ram, expecting to meet a friend, our commercial representative in the south of England. We were disappointed, however, and despatched Master Boots to the other hotels; but he returned without success. Not satisfied with his investigations, we set forth to enquire at two places which he had not visited; and, on entering the spacious quadrangle of an antiquated hostelry—the oldest in the city, though called the New Inn—a name which it must have got more than two hundred years ago—the first countenance that we saw was that of our friend, doing his writing at the commercial room window. We admired his taste in preferring the quiet of this ancient place to the turmoil of more popular establishments. Really, the house is a curiosity worth going miles to see. It is a complete quadrangle, galleried all round, the doors of the apartments entering from the galleries. In this respect, it resembles the Hotel of the Three Kings, in Basle, and the Hôtel Russe, at Baden-Baden; but, instead of an arcaded roof, such as in these famous hostelries, the court is open, and is gracefully decorated in the centre with flowering shrubs. Take it all in all, we have not seen a more curious or picturesque hotel in England.

The most interesting object in Gloucester is its fine cathedral. Certainly not so great and grand as those of

York, or Lincoln, or Westminster, yet it is one of the finest of the minor cathedrals of England. Sublime embodiments of the devotional feeling of England in the Middle Ages, these impressive piles have been the depositories of the oracles of God, and have not wanted ministers, faithful and earnest, to declare his counsel in dark and fearful times. The names of Cranmer, and Latimer, and Ridley, and an army of soldiers of the Cross, who ever declared the truth, and who—especially during the fierce persecutions of the sanguinary Mary—were "ready to be offered" for their Master's cause, will hallow these noble temples so long as they endure. Even now, the beautiful ritual of the Church of England may be heard twice-a-day in all the cathedrals, and though it scarcely seems the living devotion of a mighty Christian land, it may yet be devotional to the pure in heart. There is something awfully solemn in leaving the roaring streets of a great city, and passing an hour at service in a fine cathedral, especially on the Continent, where all distinctions are laid aside—neither pews nor stalls, but chairs for all comers, which no one can claim but the occupant for the hour. Our Protestant Episcopal Churchmen might profit spiritually by imitating this Catholic practice. We were never more disgusted in a place of worship than at Westminster Abbey on the evening of Sabbath 24th June last. When wandering about the venerable pile, admiring its wonderful masonry, and comparing it not unfavourably with the gorgeous Palace of Parliament, we were attracted to the great entrance to the nave of the cathedral by a crowd of people. On enquiring, we ascertained that they waited the opening of the doors for public worship, and that it was the last of a series of "services for the people," until they could be resumed again in autumn. When the doors were opened we passed, with a sincere sense of awe, into that time-honoured nave, gorgeous and suggestive with splendid statuary memorials of the greatest Englishmen. We felt as if there for a higher purpose than to worship human greatness. By a rush from other doors, that had been opened simultaneously with the one at which we had entered, the nave was nearly filled. We observed some hundreds of unoccupied chairs about the pulpit and the choir roped in, and knowing that no one could profess with any proper plea to hold private property in an edifice that belongs to the public, we took possession of one, when one of these prim and smart vergers,

> "Clothed in a little brief authority,"

bustled forward, exclaiming, "You cannot sit here: must move out;" and by his movements even menacing a physical appeal. Looking scornfully at the creature, we asked by whose authority he had presumed to perpetrate such an unseemly rudeness in the house of God, and at a special service for the people? "By the orders of the Dean and Chapter," the fellow replied. Resolving on the exposure of a procedure so unworthy of a scholar and a gentleman like Dean Trench, and unwilling to bandy words with his stuck up menial, we retired to the only seat we could see unoccupied, behind a racecourse looking stand that had been erected, in despicable taste, for the choir, and which prevented about 100 people from seeing the preacher. Everything was ajar, out of harmony with the awful solemnity of the place and the occasion. The choir *performed* with artistic beauty and power, and the 100th psalm rolled with sublime solemnity from at least 3000 voices, and awoke such echoes as are seldom heard in the grand, old Abbey. The ritual ended and the anthem sung, a preacher ascended the pulpit and announced, with a kind of drawl that indicated little heart in his work, a text that might have suggested a noble appeal; but, sad to tell, the text, a sermon in itself, suggesting the unity and brotherhood of the human family—"The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all"—only suggested a few drawling common-places utterly unworthy of a scholar and a Christian preacher. Comparisons were irresistible. Oh, for an hour of Guthrie!—foremost of Scottish preachers—finding at once a way to the head and the heart by his stalwart sense, and pathetic illustration! or of Candlish, with his poetic fervour and logical appeal! or of John Cairns, with his Saxon eloquence and scholarly power! or of George Gilfillan's glowing imagination and burning words! or of David King, with chaste statement and moving pathos! or of John Kerr, with his manly beauty and matured wisdom. But, alas! there can be no such eloquence as theirs in the cathedrals of England, a whine and a drawl, peculiar to Oxford and Cambridge, and an apparent want of heart has pervaded every sermon we have listened to in these "solemn temples" with only one exception, and that the farewell sermon of Archibald Tait in Carlisle chathedral when leaving a charge that he had held with much honour and usefulness to assume the more prominent responsibilities which belong to the Episcopal rank of Lord Bishop of London, to which high office he had been deservedly elevated. All honour to such elevations; for the Church of England needs the service of such earnest and faithful watchmen in her high places.

We have learned that, by dropping a coin (a silver one) into a verger's hand, any visitor may find a chair within the appointed circle, and listen, in *select* company, to the Sabbath evening *performance* in Westminster Abbey. We make no commentary on such a scandal in the people's House of God. We will simply present copies of the little work in which these desultory sketches will be embodied to the Lord Bishop of London and Dean Trench, and leave them in the hands of the public.

With an apology for this Westminster episode, we must return to the Cathedral Church of Gloucester. Though not foremost in architectural beauty or grand dimensions, it is yet a noble pile, with what Westminster does not possess — a lantern-tower, of great beauty, 198 feet high, which is seen as a splendid landmark from all the uplands of the country. The tracery of this tower is exquisite, especially the beautiful turrets a'top, which exhibit in stone a delicacy almost as minute and rich as lacework. In Gothic masonry, we have seen no finer work, save that matchless masonic miracle, Henry VII.'s Chapel, at Westminster, and the wonderfully beautiful spire of the cathedral of Strasbourg. The cloisters, too, are very fine—none in England, or elsewhere, can match them. They form a complete square of arcaded masonry of the most elaborate character—a walk much enjoyed, no doubt, by the churchmen of the old times, who illuminated missals and adorned literature.

The interior of Gloucester Cathedral is very solemn—not unlike old Durham, but scarcely so grand as that

"Half church of God—half castle 'gainst the Scot."

The pillars which support the roof have no beauty, but great power. An attempt was made, some fifty years ago, by a Vandal architect, to reduce their huge dimensions. It was then discovered that the insides had been built hollow, like a factory stalk, and had been filled up with rubble, or rough stones. Since then, they have been undisturbed, and may remain as they are till the splendid edifice becomes a ruin. The choir is very lofty, and the roof is a combination of elaborate Gothic. In the gallery over it, there is a remarkable echo, like that in the Whispering Gallery of St Paul's. Behind the choir, there is a beautiful chapel, dedicated to St Mary, which in the Middle Ages must have been the *sanctum sanctorum*, or miserable substitute for the "holy of holies"—the presence chamber of the King of Kings—in the Temple of Solomon. The Clergy of the Reformation have ignored its use, and it is now simply a monument of human folly. We need no intercessor with the Highest, who says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Mary and Joseph were dismissed at the Temple, when the mission of Christ began; and we have no authority for approaching the Saviour through her to whom he said, "Woman, whoso heareth my Word, and doeth it, the same is my mother, my sister, and my brother."

There are several interesting monuments in Gloucester

Cathedral. The most curious is one of carved Irish bog oak to Robert Duke of Normandy, son of William the Conqueror, who was so long and so cruelly confined in Cardiff Castle by his brother, William Rufus. It is said to be the only monumental example of bog oak work of the period. There is also a magnificent monument to Edward II., of unhappy memory, whose ashes rest beneath it. There is also a grotesque effigy of a Gloucester citizen and his wife of the Elizabethan period, eclypt John Bower. This worthy pair had nine sons and seven daughters, whose effigies kneel, the daughters behind Mrs Bower, and the sons behind their father. They are all painted in the style of the period, and have a most curious appearance. Again, there is a splendid example of Flaxman's finest art, which, though executed previous to that great artist's visit to Rome, continued to be his own favourite work to the end of his wonderful career. It represents the Judgment scene,—"The sea shall give up its dead,"—and commemorates a lady who had died at sea, with her new-born child, both of which had found an ocean grave. The sea is represented in the sculpture as restoring the mother and child to two angelic forms of rare beauty. Once seen, such a glorious example of the sculptor's art can never be forgotten.

Gloucester cathedral was founded in 1047, as a monastic dependency of the more ancient cathedral of Worcester. It was greatly enlarged in 1551, and was created a cathedral by Henry VIII. When he suppressed the monastic systems it was one of the few monasteries that became a cathedral.

From Gloucester we proceeded to Ross, in Herefordshire, a charming town, built on a hill overlooking a beautiful reach of the classic Wye, the Tempe of England. From the windows of the Royal Hotel there is a scene of almost matchless beauty—a bend of the river, just like a horse shoe on a stupendous scale, in a lovely haugh fringed and dotted over with picturesque wood. No hotel in England can command so fine a reach of exquisite river scenery. The town has been made famous by the beneficence of John Kyrle, a worthy burgher, whose unostentatious charities have been perpetuated in the spirited verse of Pope, who details his generous deeds with characteristic point and pith in his Essay on the Use of Riches. As we love the memory of such a man, and the lines in which his worth is celebrated, we will quote them without abbreviation :—

"But all our praises why should Lords engross?
Rise honest muse! and sing the Man of Ross.
Pleas'd Vago echoes through her winding bounds,
And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.
Who hung with woods yon mountain's sultry brow?
From the dry rock who made the waters flow?
Not to the skies in useless columns tost,
Or in proud falls magnificently lost;
But clear and artless, pouring through the plain,
Health to the sick, and solace to the swain.
"Whose causeway parts the vale in shady rows?
Whose seats the weary traveller repose?
Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise?
'The Man of Ross!' each lisping babe replies.
Behold the market-place with poor o'erspread!
The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread:
He feeds yon alms-house, neat but void of state,
Where age and want sit smiling at the gate:
Him portioned maids—apprenticed orphans bless'd—
The youth who labour, and the old who rest.

"Is any sick? the man of Ross relieves,
Prescribes, attends, and medicine makes and gives:
Is there a variance? enter but his door,
Balked are the courts, and contest is no more;
Dispairing quacks with curses fled the place,
And vile attorneys, now a useless race.
Thrice happy man! enabled to pursue
What thousands wish, but want the power to do:
O, say! what sums that gen'rous hand supply?
What mines to swell that boundless charity?

"Of debts and taxes, wife and children clear,
This man possessed five hundred pounds a year!

Blush! grandeur, blush! proud courts withdraw your blaze!
Ye little stars hide your diminished rays;
And what! no monument inscription stone!
His race, his form, his name almost unknown!
Who builds a church to God and not to fame,
Will never mark the marble with his name:
Go search it there, where to be born and die
Of rich and poor makes all the history;
Enough that virtue fill'd the space between;
Prov'd, by the ends of being, to have been.

From Ross we drove to Goodrich Castle, and having left the horses at the house of an intelligent and eccentric old fellow named Titus Morgan, who combines the twofold occupations of guide to the castle and shoemaker to the neighbourhood, we walked over several fields to the old Saxon fortress, said, by Fosebrooke and other antiquarians, to be the finest example of that peculiar order of architecture in England. It occupies a hillock at whose base flows the Wye. Its aspect is strong and gloomy, but not beautiful. The glimpse of the interior through the low-browed gateway is the most memorable feature of the Castle, which is a favourite place for summer pic-nics from all parts of Herefordshire. The old guide seems to know every stone and mark about the place, and describes them with a humour that reminds us of worthy old John Bower of Melrose. He has a horror and disbelief of all written descriptions of the place, and seems to consider that they interfere with his grotesque lecture. He denounced the antiquarian Fosebrooke with great unction as a regardless adventurer on a theme of which he was utterly ignorant, and about which he had not written one sentence that could be believed. Titus is not unlike Lord Brougham in his personal appearance, and was quite pleased to be told of the resemblance, which he said had been named to him often. We left the old fellow with some reluctance, and should we ever be there again we would like to spend a June day in such unique and genial companionship.

On leaving old Titus, we drove up to the gate of Goodrich Court, the elegant modern mansion which was built by the late Sir Samuel Meyrrick, and which contains the fine collection of armour which was gathered by that enthusiastic antiquarian—a collection, strangely enough, said to be finer and more complete than the one which he was commissioned by the Government of England to collect at any cost for the Tower of London.

As we had understood that all civil visitors had been made welcome to see the curiosities of Goodrich Court, it was rather surprising and unusual to be told by the gate-keeper from whom we desired admission that we could not be admitted. The military heir and successor of Sir Samuel may please himself as to this, but it is a disappointment to the curious who may have travelled far to see his antique wealth. Such a character may be classified with Quilp and Corney Delaney.

From Ross we proceeded to Cheltenham, where we experienced the hospitalities of an old friend; and, being requested to make a contribution to a young lady's album, regarding something of interest on our excursion, we invoked the muse, and thus apostrophised the River Wye:

IMPROMPTU.

Ah, Wye, how fair wert thou, when first
  I saw thy waters glide along
By Ross, so pleasant on the hill,
  The theme of Pope's enduring song!

The poet sang of one whose deeds
  Will live while Ross o'erlooks thy tide:
John Kyrle, "the Man of Ross," has fill'd
  The place with honest English pride.

He fill'd the hungry poor with food—
  His kindly hand the aged led;
And orphans own'd his liberal aid,
  When all their sunshine friends had fled.

His name is honour'd o'er the land;
  That generous name compells a sigh,

That worth like his has seldom been
  Display'd upon thy banks, fair Wye!

Old Titus Morgan kindly tells
  The ancient glories of the keep—
Grey Gooderich, whose old Saxon towers
  Still frown from their embattled steep.

While Meyrrick bars his gate, and keeps
  His rusty armour to himself,
A kindly soul is more to mine
  Than him, with all his hidden pelf.

FIFTH PAPER.

CHELTENHAM is one of the favourite haunts of English invalids and time-killers. It is one of the finest towns in the world, well placed in the centre of what may be called an open valley, and environed with beautifully wooded hills. If nature has been prodigal of loveliness here, art has gone hand in hand with her elder sister in lavishing her powers to attract and to charm the idle and the weary.

The township of Cheltenham dates back earlier than the Conquest. In Doomsday Book we find it named *Chinteneham*, a manor of Edward the Confessor's. It contained 850 acres of land, and yielded to its lord £9 5s in money, and 3000 loaves per annum for the royal dogs that were maintained there for hunting in the neighbouring forests. It continued as royal property till sold by the extravagant and unwise Charles I. for £1200. In 1843 it changed hands again for £39,000.

Cheltenham appears to have been simply a manor and a hamlet till the discovery of the medicinal waters in 1716; in 1666 the population was 1500; in 1797 it was 2700 ; in 1851 it was 35,062, a population not developed in the place, but attracted from all parts of the empire by the manifold sanitary and educational advantages. Apart from those of the famous old University towns, the educational institutes of Cheltenham are unrivalled in England. Consequently crowds of families unconnected with business find pleasant homes here and excellent education.

The squares, crescents, and terraces of Cheltenham are fine and airy—all gay with flowering shrubs and almond trees, whose delicate pink blossoms, the effluence of early spring, were a novelty whose loveliness lingers in our memory like a charm. One of the finest features of the place is the splendid *Promenade* which connects the old town with its spacious suburbs of Tivoli, Lansdown, and Montpellier. It is a wide street of fine houses, with a grand avenue of trees between, as in the Boulevards of Paris. The other squares and crescents have the same Continental characteristic, and in sultry days their grateful shade must be a luxury to the infirm and the weary. The *Promenade* is about half a mile long; it rises with a gentle incline to the Queen's Hotel, whose noble façade, guarded by two large pieces of ordnance—spoils of Sebastopol—forms a magnificent termination. This hotel is like a palace. It was erected in 1836 at a cost of nearly £50,000, and is unquestionably the finest building in the place.

The handsomest villas in Cheltenham are in "The Park," which used to be the Zoological Gardens. A drive of a mile and a-half is guarded all the way by these fine residences, with their richly ornamented grounds. We were rather proud to notice that the finest of them all is "Oakfield," the mansion of one we may almost call our townsman, General Fiddes. Obeying a natural impulse, we rang his bell, anxious to shake a Roxburghshire hand, and hear the familiar accents of Teviotdale in this far-off centre of fashion. But the worthy General had gone out for a drive, and we pursued our tour of observation.

The Spa Temple of Pittville and the lovely pleasure-grounds there are the favourite haunts of visitors. The building cost £60,000. Placed in the centre of a finely ornamented park of 100 acres, it was to be the neucleus of a grand building scheme which may still be completed. The plan included about 600 houses, in terraces, crescents, and detached villas; but, should it never be carried further the place will always be attractive; and when years have imbued the young plantations with that stateliness and power which time only can convey, future generations may be grateful for the unfortunate conditions which upset this bold speculation.

There are many pleasant places in the neighbourhood of Cheltenham, and much to interest the archæologist; but having little time for minute investigation, we left all unvisited but Birdlip, an ancient village surrounded by fine woodlands, which are open to all comers, and "The Seven Springs," the source of the river Thames. It was strangely pleasant to listen to the infant voice of the mighty river, as it gurgled from its seven mouths in the rocks beneath its guardian willows, which waved their branches over the young stream, as if blessing it and saying, "Go forth and bless the world, and bear the navies of England to the great sea, and to all the nations of the earth, not with war, but with the produce of peaceful industry." Some writers have suggested that an allegorical monument be erected over this interesting fountain-head. We protest against such sentimental absurdity. Let the willows continue to wave a benediction, and let the brook sing on—Simplicity is the handmaid of greatness.

Some time ago, the estate of the Seven Springs was bought by a Lancashire manufacturer, Mr Hall, of Bury, who has built a handsome villa on the hill which overlooks the springs. A more appropriate monument cannot be raised. This representative of the industrial aristocracy—a prouder nobility than that which owes its origin to bloodshed and robbery—is fitly enthroned on the Hill of the Seven Springs, presiding genius of the infant Thames.

At Cheltenham, we took our tickets for Stratford-on-Avon, the object of our tour—the nook of English ground which of all others we had longed for years to see; and, as we looked at the ticket upon which the charmed words were imprinted, it was somewhat difficult to realise the idea that a few hours would make our notion of Stratford-on-Avon a reality, instead of a fancy, as heretofore

So musing, we reached the ancient city of Worcester, but could only glance at it from the station, where we had to wait half-an-hour, for the starting of the West Midland train for Honeybourne and Stratford. Fain would we have spent an hour in the old cathedral, where Hugh Latimer and Edward Stillingfleet have often delivered God's message to man with awful sincerity and power; but we had to content ourselves with looking at the cathedral-tower which crowns the city, and with the thought that we might worship beneath it on some future occasion.

Away we went, fast as a mail-train could carry us, through the rich orchard farms and finely cultivated fields of Worcestershire. It was Good Friday: rural labour was suspended, and Sabbath-like quiet pervaded the land. Our thoughts were all of Shakespeare. It seemed as if the mighty bard was yet alive, and as if we were on a visit to a friend, so grandly does genius assert its sovereignty, and secure the unaffected admiration of its lovers.

On reaching Honeybourne, a train was waiting to convey passengers by the branch line to Stratford. The engine was named *Shakespeare*. On reaching the station at Stratford, a portrait of "the gentle William" smiled a welcome from the walls. The boots of the *Shakespeare* Arms bustled up, crying flippantly, "'Bus, sir—'bus?—Shakespeare Arms, sir—Shakespeare Arms?" We had been reading Washington Irving's visit to this hallowed region, however, and, anxious to be where he had been, we seated ourselves in the opposition 'bus, whose claims were not so ostentatiously pled, and in a few minutes we were under the hospitable roof of the Red Horse, one of those homely inns for which the rural towns of England are famous.

Our first inquiry was for the birth-place of the bard. It is near the hotel; so, in a few seconds, we stood before the ancient edifice, familiar to us by written description and pictorial representation. It is now unoccupied, and in care of a curator, who lives in a snug house close beside it, with a trim garden in front. We rang the bell at the gate several times, without reply. A townsman passing informed us that the house was always shut during divine service, and that the curator was at church; and, following his direction, we sought the sacred edifice. A Sabbath repose was about the place, and, though the weather had been cold, now it was balmy—almost sultry; the streets were deserted; the good people were either at church or away in the fields, or on cheap trips which had been advertised to many places. So old Stratford looked solemn and impressive. We had supposed it a village, and were pleased to find it a fine, clean, old-fashioned English town, with many houses that, to use the figure of Hugh Miller, in his fine description of old York, "belly over like the sides of ships." Some of these ancient dwellings may have been there in Shakespeare's time—even if not, it is pleasant to indulge in the idea that they may have been. One can scarce think of any theme but Shakespeare in his native town. Memorials of him meet you everywhere. On the pillars of the gate of a coal-yard close to the bridge on the Leamington road, two busts of the poet welcome the traveller. From a niche in the wall of the Town Hall a full-length statue of the bard, very like the marble one in Westminster Abbey, looks down upon all passers. The busts of Henry V., Richard III., and Queen Bess, appear in the background. The poet's finger is on a scroll, on which these fine lines from "The Midsummer Night's Dream" are most appropriately displayed :—

"The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

Atop of the Plinth are these words from Hamlet :—

"Take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again."

While reading these lines the church bells rang out, and the street, so quiet before, was crowded with decent-looking people returning to their homes from church. We walked on towards the point from which this tide of people came, and so reached the beautiful parish church of Stratford, a solemn, abbey-like edifice, with an environment of trees which almost obscures it. A graceful spire points to heaven. An avenue of lime trees lines the path, and forms a natural arcade from the churchyard gate to the porch of the sacred edifice. Now they were bare of foliage, but thick-set buds were sufficiently suggestive of a solemn rustic gloom in summer time. An old man stood midway up the avenue. On asking what was to be seen about the place? he replied, "There's Shakespeare to be seen—nothing else." This old man was the beadle and grave-digger, the immediate successor of John Ange's friend, of whom Washington Irving makes such kindly mention. On entering the church, the choir was practising some sacred music; the people were all away. We sat quietly down till the music ceased and the choir retired. We were then alone with the verger, who showed us the grave of our grandest Englishman with becoming modesty and reverence. It is in the centre of the chancel, before the communion rails. On a stone slab which covers the dust of the mighty there are four lines of verse which have originated much criticism,—some calling them doggrel, and others recognising in them high poetic meaning, and a noble purpose. We read them with reverential interest, and in our humble opinion, since they have saved the dust of the bard from disturbance, and have held it sacred in the church of his native Stratford, they have not been put there in vain. Who could have the hardihood to desecrate a tomb over which these words are inscribed?—

GOOD FRIEND FOR JESVS SAKE FORBEARE
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE;
BLESTE BE YE MAN YT SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE YT MOUES MY BONES.

From the north wall of the chancel the half-length effigy of Shakespeare seems to keep watch over his grave. He is represented as writing. It is not like the highly fanciful faces of manifold character which engravers and painters have palmed upon the world as resemblances of the bard. It is a natural and manly face, thoughtful, intellectual, and humorous. It was erected seven years after his death, and commentators affirm that those who knew him have certified the likeness. This is a happy consideration. It was the work of an accomplished sculptor, Gerard Johnson, a native of Holland. It is not on record that the artist had been acquainted with the bard, but it is to be presumed that those who cared for his memory, and desired to perpetuate his likeness, would take care to entrust a work so important to a competent hand. The effigy was coloured originally so as to resemble life. The colours having faded, they were carefully retouched in 1746. Again in 1793 it was painted white under the auspices of Malone the commentator, a proceeding which has been justly censured. The gentle Charles Lamb becomes wroth on the theme, and exclaims,—"By God, had I been a Warwickshire justice, I would have clapt the sacrilegious varlet in the stocks." An unknown satirist wrote these lines in the album which is shown in the chancel,—

"Stranger to whom this monument is shown,
Invoke the poet's curse upon Malone,
Whose meddling zeal his barbarous taste displays,
And daubs his tombstone as he mars his plays!"

At the right hand of Shakespeare, the ashes of his beloved wife, Anne Hathaway, repose; and at his left are the graves of his eldest daughter and her husband, Dr John Hall. United in life by the bonds of true affection, in death they are not divided.

An awful solemnity pervades this quiet church, in which the great ones of the earth have uncovered their heads over the dust of one who was greater than them all. Scott and Byron have stood there, but have left no record. Washington Irving's exquisite tribute to the memory of the bard will live as long as Shakespeare's name is remembered—it is so full of human affection and gentle fancy. Hugh Miller's noble paper will be read as long as genius is revered. Surely no shrine has attracted so many pilgrims from all the ends of the earth. It was solemnising to sit in that house of God, thinking of those who had been there—the great ones we have named all gone—their voices mute as Shakespeare's now—their works almost as imperishable as his. The Avon slips quietly past the churchyard wall, as if unwilling to disturb the deep repose of the place. Peace to the dust of "the gentle William!" In the church of his native place, beside his native stream,

> "After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well."

Leaving the church, we returned to the house where the poet was born. It is an old-fashioned and time-worn edifice, now carefully kept, and likely to be preserved for centuries. Passing through the butcher's shop in front of the house, we were in the kitchen, beside whose huge fireplace Shakespeare must often have sat, both as boy and man; for his father occupied the house till he died. From the kitchen we passed up-stairs to the room where Shakespeare was born—a low-roofed, moderate-sized apartment, on whose walls thousands of visitors have inscribed their names. The principal work of the old lady who exhibits the place is to point out the autographs of the eminent. Not one spot on that roof and walls was unoccupied; so, unwilling to deprive forerunners of their memorial, we left a record in the visitors' book, bought a few memorials of the place, and came away.

Passing down the principal street, we crossed the Avon by a bridge, and, at the risk of being taken up for a trespasser, we strolled up the river-side, through rich haughs, beautiful with young grass. The day was gloomy and close; but it suited the occasion. No breeze stirred the willows and heavy-headed pollards which guard the oozy stream. A noise of building rooks, busy with their nests, was varied with an occasional blackbird's mellow note, and a bleating of young lambs. Our thought was all of Shakespeare, whose gentle fancy would often lead him to that quiet water-side; but time was passing, and we could not remain. We returned to the Red Horse; saw the room in which Washington Irving composed his delightful paper; sat in his chair, which the landlord (all honour to him!) honours for his sake; brandished the poker which Irving used, and on which the worthy host has engraven these words—"Geoffrey Crayon's Sceptre." The poker is kept in a bag, and accounted one of the valuables of this delightful hostelry.

Leaving Stratford with regret, we pushed on to Leamington, passing Charlecote, where tradition tells that Shakespeare killed a deer, and got into grief for the exploit. The park is grandly wooded, and well stocked with deer, and it is generally supposed that the poet composed some of the exquisite passages in "As You Like It" and "Midsummer's Dream" among its delightful glades. We had no time to visit the Hall, but glanced at the interior of an elegant new church which the present proprietor of Charlecote has erected at an expense of nearly £20,000. It is a gem, and should not be left unvisited by any tourist. It contains the old family monuments of the Lucys, one of which, by an Italian artist, is an exquisite work of art; but the most interesting monument is that of Shakespeare's friend, Sir Thomas, the prototype of Justice Shallow. No petty sessions potentate or county magistrate was ever made so notorious for punishing a poacher.

The shadows of evening were over Leamington when we drove up to its famous Regent's Hotel. We betook ourselves to bed, but not to sleep, for a colony of rooks had established their wind-rocked homes on a clump of trees close to our bedroom window. As rooks are noisiest in April, their unmelodious concert drove sleep away, and that wakeful feeling was intensified by reminiscences of the day. We counted the quarter-chimes and the more sonorous hours as their sounds came to us at regular intervals through the night. The clock had just struck three, when a beautiful melody, more varied and far sweeter than any song of bird we had listened to before, woke us entirely out of a half-dreaming, half-waking mood into which we had fallen. Supposing that it was the nightingale, but determined to be assured by a competent authority we rang for Boots. That gentleman having other thoughts than of singing birds, was hard to wake. We persisted in ringing, however, and up he came at last rubbing his eyes. He gaped with astonishment at our question, "What bird is that we hear singing so beautifully, Master Boots?" and opening his eyes as wide as they would open, he exclaimed, "Lor bless yer 'eart, sir, that ere bird is the nightingale—the first I've 'eard this ere season, sir!" It was enough; we gave the fellow a shilling, and told him to go to bed. He vanished without a word, evidently amazed at having been disturbed for such a purpose. The bird sang on, and sleep came kindly while it sang.

CONCLUSION.

WE made no stay at Leamington, for having only another day to spare we pushed on for Warwick and Kenilworth, places famous in English history, and hallowed by the ingenious fictions of Bulwer and of Scott. Though Warwick is said to be two miles from Leamington they appear to be one place, as their suburban villas connect them entirely. On reaching the ancient town, our first care was to see the famous castle of the grand old Earls of Warwick, which Sir Walter Scott describes as "that fairest monument of ancient and chivalrous splendour which remains uninjured by time." Founded by Ethelfleda, the daughter of Alfred the Great, in 915, it rose in stateliness and splendour as the house of Warwick became great, to be a fit mansion for the almost regal chiefs who bore the famous names of Newburg, Beauchamp, Neville, Plantagenet, Dudley, Rich, Greville, and Brooke. No castle in the land is so suggestive of feudal splendour. Unlike Raglan, which is a ruin, it is not only a tremendous fortress, but a residence not inferior to Windsor. On entering the gate the visitor is invited into the gate-house, which is fitted up as an armoury. Here is displayed the armour of Guy of Warwick, the gigantic Saxon baron whom old story celebrates as having killed, with his unarmed fist, a wild boar, a wild dun cow of enormous size, and even one of these fabled monsters—a green dragon. Guy is said to have been nine feet high, and to have had breadth of shoulder and strength of bone to match. The armour of man and horse are certainly of enormous size and weight.

A huge bell-metal pot stands in the centre of this apartment which the old lady who exhibits the place seems to glory in striking fiercely with the formidable flesh hook, which is said to have been used in the days of Guy to whom the pot belonged. The whole exhibition has left a savage reminiscence suggestive of fierce times and barbarous manners. The approach to the castle winds through the solid sandstone rock like a railway cutting; an acute angle passed, the grand features of the mighty building are revealed—type of England's mediæval grandeur, and of the greatest representative of the house of Warwick—the mightiest of his line—Richard Neville. "*The stout Earl or the King-maker*" of whom David Hume says—"He was the greatest as well as the last of all those mighty barons who formerly overawed the crown, and rendered the people incapable of any regular system of government." Sir James Macintosh calls him "a man distinguished by all the good and bad qualities which shine with most lustre in a barbarous age. He was the most conspicuous person in this disturbed reign; and the name of '*King-maker*' given to him by the people will express his love of turbulence for its own sake —his preference of the pleasures of displaying power to that of attaining specific objects of ambition; and his almost equal readiness to make or unmake any king according to the capricious inclination or repugnancy of the moment." Such, on the representation of two of our most eminent historians, was the character of Richard Neville, "The Last of the Barons," whose name will always stand prominently out before the intelligent visitor of Warwick Castle, a description of whose glories would fill a volume, and must now be dismissed with a passing allusion. In its magnificent apartments the first masters of almost every school of painters are finely represented. One of the grandest triumphs of the ancient sculptor's art is the Warwick Vase, which stands in the centre of a beautiful conservatory which was built expressly for its accommodation. It is of white marble, in the purest Grecian taste, and can hold 163 gallons. Its two enormous handles are exquisitely formed to represent interwoven vine branches, from which lovely tendrils, with fine broad leaves and beautifully formed clusters of fruit overspread the upper margin. The sculpture on the body of the vase is all emblematical of revelry ;—the panther's head and claws symbols of the god of mirth and wine; then beautiful female faces, with ivy-bound hair, and attending satyrs of sensual aspect. The *thyrsus* too, or vine-clad spear of Bacchus, and the *lituus*, or crooked staff of the Augurs, are artfully blended in the exquisite decoration. This noble vase was found at the bottom of a lake at Tivoli about twelve miles from Rome. It is supposed to be the work of Lysippus of Athens, and though upwards of 2000 years old, time has scarcely marred its surpassing loveliness.

From the top of Guy's Tower, a majestic polygon of twelve sides, which rises 130 feet above the castle-yard, a splendid country stretches on all sides. The spires of Coventry are distinctly seen in clear days, and "Guy's Cliff," with its matchless woodlands, and Kennilworth, with its ruined glory. The look at the subordinate towers and battlements of Warwick Castle itself is tremendous, and one feels awe-struck on surveying such indications of human greatness. Around the castle there are some of the grandest specimens of the cedar tree in the world; the oldest and largest ones are said to have been planted in the days of William the Conqueror.

From Warwick we drove on to Kenilworth, passing Guy's Cliff, which we saw through a fine avenue of patriarchal trees. We could not stay to survey the grand old mansion. Kenilworth has been a place of enormous strength and extent, but it has never possessed the masonic glories of Raglan and of Warwick. A charm has been thrown over it by the hand of genius, and it was delightful to sit on the sunny slopes of the castle-yard, realising the splendours of Leicester's princely pageant. One can almost converse with Tressillian and Wayland Smith, and hear the monster conning his speech and grinding his teeth at the gate, and see the gambols of that half-imp, half-boy, Flibbertygibbet. While on the ~~pleasure~~ pleasaunce, one can fancy one sees the vain, empty-headed, hollow-hearted Leicester, in moody silence, incapable of enjoying revelry which has cost him so much; and in that tower which stands apart, one can almost fancy one hears the terrified cries of the gentle Amy, when assailed by the drunken ruffian, Mike Lambourne. So great is the power of true genius, that its magic ~~pencil~~ can people the solitary place, and give strange vitality to what is quiet as death. Two hours passed away while with Scott we re-peopled that desolate grandeur with human shapes. Our ramble was nearly closed: now musing on bygone glory and the intrigues of courtiers under the shadow of the ancient towers of Kenilworth, a few hours would find us rushing away on the wheels of the steam chariot, leaving these fair scenes far behind. Yet experiences of this nature cannot be lost; we value them more than gold, and must now be gone to other rambles, where gold may be gathered for future use and fancy.

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