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SIGHTS A-FOOT.

BY

WILKIE COLLINS.

AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," "THE DEAD SECRET," "AFTER DARK," "HIDE AND SEEK," "THE YELLOW MASK," "THE CROSSED PATH," "THE STOLEN MASK," "SISTER ROSE," ETC., ETC.

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SIGHTS A-FOOT.

CHAPTER I.

A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION.

DEAR READER,

WHEN any friend of yours or mine, in whose fortunes we take an interest, is about to start on his travels, we smooth his way for him as well as we can, by giving him a letter of introduction to such connections of ours as he may find on his line of route. We bespeak their favorable consideration for him by setting forth his good qualities in the best light possible; and then leave him to make his own way by his own merit—satisfied that we have done enough in procuring him a welcome under our friend's roof, and giving him at the outset a strong extrinsic claim to our friend's estimation.

Will you allow me, reader (if our short previous acquaintance authorizes me to take such a liberty), to follow the custom to which I have just adverted; and to introduce to your notice this book, as a friend of mine setting forth for the first time on his travels, in whose well-being I feel a very lively interest. He is neither so bulky, nor so distinguished a person as some of the predecessors of his race, who may have sought your attention in years gone by, under the name of "Quarto," and in magnificent clothing of Morocco and Gold. As for his intrinsic claims to your kindness, he has only two that I shall venture to advocate. In the first place, he is able to tell you something about a part of your own country which is too rarely visited and too little known. He will speak to you of one of the remotest and most interesting corners of our old English soil: he will tell you of the grand and varied scenery; the mighty Druid relics; the quaint legends; the deep, dark mines; the venerable remains of early Christianity; and the pleasant primitive population of the county of CORNWALL. You will inquire, can we believe him in all that he says? This brings me at once to his second qualification—he invariably speaks the truth. If he describes scenery to you, it is scenery that he saw and noted on the spot. If he gives little sketches of character, they are sketches drawn from the life.

Does not this satisfy your doubts?

Have I said enough about my friend to interest you in him a little, when you meet him wandering hither and thither over the great domain of the Republic of Letters, to find shelter where he can, and to beg his passport from the Republic's official guardians, sitting in the high-places of the Press? (Admonish him tenderly, good critics!—touch him gingerly, or he will fall to pieces under your hands!) What more can I plead in his behalf? I can only urge on you that he does not present himself as fit for the top seats at the library table—as aspiring to the company of those above him—of classical, statistical, political, philosophical, historical, or antiquarian high dignitaries of his class, of whom he is at best but the poor relation. Treat him not, as you treat such illustrious guests as these! Toss him about anywhere, from hand to hand, as goodnaturedly as you can; stuff him into your pocket when you get into the railway; take him to bed with you, and poke him under the pillow; present him to the rising generation, to try if he can amuse *them;* give him to the young ladies, who (dear souls!) are always predisposed to the kind side, and may make something of him; introduce him to "my young masters" when they are idling in a contemplative and benevolent frame of mind over their cigars! Nay, advance him, if you will, to the notice of the elders themselves; but take care to ascertain first that they belong to the order of people who only travel to gratify a hearty admiration of the wonderful works of Nature, and to learn to love their neighbor better by seeking him at his own home—regarding it, at the same time, as a peculiar privilege, to derive their satisfaction and gain their improvement from experiences on English ground. Take care of this; and who knows into what high society you may not be able to introduce the bearer of the present letter! In spite of his habit of rambling from subject to subject in his talk, much as he rambled from place to place in his travels, he may actually find himself, one day, basking on Folio Classics beneath the genial approval of a Doctor of Divinity, or trembling among Statutes and Reports under the learned scrutiny of a Sergeant at Law!

WILKIE COLLINS.

CHAPTER II.

THE START.

ASSUREDLY, considering that our tour was to be a pedestrian tour, we began it inconsistently enough, by sitting down in the stern-sheets of a boat; tucking our knapsacks under our feet, and proceeding on our journey, not by making use of our own legs, but of another man's oars.

You will be inclined to ask, how many people are comprehended under the term "we?" what was our object in traveling? and where we were traveling to? I answer, that by "we," I mean the author of this book, and an artist, as a traveling com-

panion; that our only object in traveling was our own pleasure; and that our destination was, generally, Cornwall, and particularly, the village of St. Germans, towards which we were now proceeding in our boat from the town of Devonport.

The main reason that urged us to choose Cornwall as the scene of a walking tour which we had long proposed to ourselves, in some part of our own country, was simply this—Cornwall presented to us the most untrodden ground that we could select for our particular purpose. You may number by thousands, admirers of the picturesque who have been to Wales, to Devonshire, to the Lakes, to Ireland, to Scotland; but ask them if they have ever been to Cornwall, and you begin to tell them off by twos and threes only. Nay, take up the map of the world, and I doubt whether Cornwall will not gain by comparison with foreign countries, as an unexplored region offered to the curiosity of the tourist. Have we not, in fact, got under our thumbs, or in our circulating libraries, volumes of excellent books which amuse us with the personal experiences and adventures of travelers in every part of the habitable globe—except, perhaps, Cornwall and Kamtschatka? That the latter place should still be left open ground to the modern traveler, is, in these days, extraordinary enough; but that Cornwall should share the same neglect, passes all comprehension. Yet so it is. Even the railway stops short at Plymouth, and shrinks from penetrating to the savage regions beyond!* In a word, on considering where we should go, as pedestrians anxious to walk where fewest strangers had walked before, we found ourselves fairly limited to a choice between Cornwall and Kamtschatka—we were patriotic, and selected the former.

While my traveling companion was cleaning his color-box, and collecting his sketching books, I employed myself in seeking for information, among my friends, on the subject of our line of route. The great majority of them wondered what was the use of going to Cornwall. Was it not a horribly dreary country, where you could expect to do nothing but tumble down mines, and lose yourself on pathless moors? Were not the whole population wreckers and smugglers? Should we not be cheated, robbed, and kidnapped? Such were a few only of the opinions that my inquiries elicited. Very different, however, were the answers I received when I applied to one friend who was a Cornishman, and to another who had really been in Cornwall. From the first, especially, I received such an account of what we might see and do in the far West of England, if we traveled on foot and looked sharply about us, as materially accelerated the day of our departure. We packed

* This was written little more than a year ago; and it has become an obsolete remark already. A new Cornish Railway, from Penzance to Redruth (to be hereafter extended to Truro and Plymouth) will open in two months from the present time (December, 1851). I heard the mere idea of this railway talked of as a joke, when I was in Cornwall!—W. W. C.

up our knapsacks, transported ourselves at once to Plymouth, and, getting to the western water-side, saw the hills of Cornwall rising before us, lit by the last glorious evening rays of a July sunlight.

And now, reader, if you can follow a couple of vagrant tourists, with all their luggage on their backs; with a perfect independence of high roads, stage-coaches, time-tables, and guide-books; with no other object in view but to wander about hither and thither, in a zig-zag course, picking up a trait of character here, and a sketch from Nature there—why, then, step into our boat by all means, and let us go to St. Germans together.

We were lucky enough to commit ourselves, at once, to the guidance of the most amusing and original of boatmen. He was a fine, strong, swarthy fellow, with luxuriant black hair and whiskers, an irresistible broad grin, and a thoroughly good opinion of himself. He gave us his name, his autobiography, and his opinion of his own character, all in a breath. He was called William Dawle; he had begun life as a farm-laborer; then he had become a sailor in the Royal Navy, as a suitable change; now he was a licensed waterman, which was a more suitable change still; he was known all over the country; he would row against any man in England; he would take more care of us than he would of his own sons; and if we had five hundred guineas apiece in our knapsacks, he could keep no stricter watch over them than he was determined to keep now. Such was this Phœnix of boatmen—under such unexceptionable auspices did we start for the shores of Cornwall.

The calm summer evening drew near its close, as we began to move through the water. The broad orb of the moon was rising dim behind us, above the dark majestic trees of Mount Edgecombe. Already, the houses of Devonport looked pale and indistinct as we left them behind us. The innumerable masts, the lofty men-of-war hulks, the drooping sails of smaller vessels—all the thickly grouped objects of the great port through which we were proceeding—assumed a solemn stillness and repose under the faint light that was now shining over them. On this wide scene, at other hours so instinct in all its parts with bustle and animation, nothing spoke now of life and action—save the lights which occasionally broke forth from houses on the hill at our side, or the small boats passing at intervals over the smooth water, and soon mysteriously lost to view behind the hull of a man-of-war, or in the deep shadows of the river's distant banks.

In front of us, the last glories of day still lingered in the west. Here, the sky was yet bright and warm to look on, though the sun had gone down, and, even now, the evening star was plainly visible. In this part of the landscape, the wooded hills rose dark and grand against their transparent background of light. Where the topmost trees grew thinnest, long strips of rosy sky appeared through their interstices; the water beyond us was tinged in one place with all the colors of the prism, in another with the

palest and coldest blue—even the wet mud-banks, left by the retiring tide, still glittered with silvery brightness in the waning light. While, adding solemnity and mystery to all beside, the great hulks, painted pale yellow and anchored close in against the black trees, lay before us still and solitary, touched alike by the earliest moonbeams of night and the last sunlight of day. As the twilight gloom grew on—as the impressive tranquillity of the whole scene deepened and deepened gradually, until not even the distant barking of a dog was now heard from the land, or the shrill cry of a sea-bird from the sky—the pale massy hulls of the old war-ships around and beyond us, assumed gradually a spectral and mysterious appearance, until they looked more like water-monsters in repose than the structures of mortal hands, and the black heights behind them seemed like lairs from which they had issued under cover of the night!

It was such an evening, and such a view, as I shall never forget. After enjoying the poetry and beauty of the scene, uninteruptedly, for some time, we were at length recalled to practical matters of business by a species of adjuration suddenly addressed to us by that prince of British boatmen, Mr. William Dawle. Resting impressively upon his oars, and assuming a deplorable expression of countenance, he begged to be informed, whether we really wished him "to row his soul out any longer against tide?"—we might laugh, but would we be so kind as to step forward a minute and feel his shirt sleeves?—If we were resolved to go on, he was ready; for had he not told us that he would row against any man in England?—but he felt it due to his position as a licensed waterman, having the eyes of the public on him, and courting inspection, to inform us that "in three parts of an hour, and no mistake," the tide would run up; and that there was a place not far off, called Saltash,—a most beautiful and interesting place, where we could get good beer. If we waited there for the turn of the tide, no race-horse that ever was foaled would take us to St. Germans so fast as he would row us. In short, the point was, would we mercifully "spare his shoulders," or not?

As we belonged to the sauntering and vagabond order of travelers, and cared very little in how roundabout a manner we reached our destination, we inclined to the side of mercy, and spared the shoulders of Mr. William Dawle; who, thereupon, reckless of the state of his shirt-sleeves, began to row again with renewed and alarming energy. Now, he bent forward over the oars, as if he was about to fall upon us—and now, he lay back from them horizontal, and almost lost to view in the dim light. We passed, triumphantly, every boat proceeding in our direction; we brushed, at hair-breadth distances, by vessels at anchor and stakes planted in shallow water. Suddenly, what seemed to be a collection of mud hovels built upon mud, appeared in sight; shortly afterwards, our boat was grounded among a perfect legion of other boats; and the indefatigable Dawle jumping up nimbly, seized our knapsacks and handed

us out politely into the mud. We had arrived at that "beautiful and interesting place," Saltash.

There was no mistaking the tavern. The only light on shore gleamed from the tavern window; and, judging by the criterion of noise, the whole local population seemed to be collected within the tavern walls. We opened the door; and found ourselves in a small room, filled with shrimpers, sailors, fishermen and watermen, all "looming large" through a fog of tobacco, and all chirping merrily over their cups; while the hostess sat apart on a raised seat in a corner, calm and superior amidst the hubbub, as Neptune himself, when he rose to the surface to save the pious Eneas from shipwreck, at the crisis of the storm. As there was no room for us in this festive hall, we were indulged in the luxury of a private apartment, where Mr. Dawle proceeded to "do the honors" of Saltash, by admonishing the servant to be particular about the quality of the ale she brought, dusting chairs with the crown of his hat, proposing toasts, snuffing the candle briskly with his fingers, and performing other pleasant social attentions of a similar nature. Having, as he imagined, sufficiently propitiated us by this course of conduct, he started an entirely new proposition—which bore reference, however, to the old subject of mercifully sparing his shoulders, and was expressed to the following effect:—Might he go now, and fetch his "missus," who lived hard by? She was the very nicest and strongest woman in Saltash; was able to row almost as well as *he* could, and would help him materially in getting to St. Germans; but perhaps we objected to admit her into the boat? We had but to say the word if we did; and from that moment forth, he was dumb on the subject forever.

How could we resist this most irresistible of boatmen? There was something about his inveterate good-humor and inveterate idleness, his comical variations backwards and forwards between great familiarity and great respect, his honesty on one point (he asked us no more than his proper fare in the first instance) and his manœuvring on another, that would have cajoled a cynic into complacency. Besides, our innate sentiments of gallantry forbade the thought of objecting to the company and assistance of Mrs. William Dawle! So, we sent the fortunate spouse of this strong and useful woman, to seek her forthwith—and forthwith did he return, with a very remarkable species of "missus," in the shape of a gigantic individual of the male sex—the stoutest, strongest, and hairiest man I ever saw—who entered, exhaling a relishing odor of shrimps, with his shirt-sleeves rolled up to his shoulders! "Gentlemen both, good evening," said this urbane giant, looking dreamily forward two feet over our heads, and then settling himself solemnly on a bench—never more to open his lips in our presence!

Our worthy boatman's explanation of the phenomenon he had thus presented to us, involved some humiliating circumstances. His "missus" had flatly refused to aid her lord and master in the exertion of rowing, and had practically carried out her refusal by immediately going to bed before

his face. As for the shrimp-scented giant, Mr. Dawle informed me (in a whisper) that his name was "Dick;" that he had met him outside, and had asked him to favor us with his company, because he was a very amusing man, if we could only bring him out; and was capable of beguiling the time, while we were waiting for the tide, by an excellent story or two. Presuming that a fresh supply of ale was all that was wanting to develop the latent humor of our new friend, we ordered a second quart; but it unhappily produced no effect. (It would have required, I am inclined to think, a gallon to have attained the desired result.) "Dick" sat voiceless and vacant, staring steadily at the candle, and occasionally groaning softly to himself, as if he had something dreadful on his mind and dared not disburthen it in company. Abandoning, therefore, in despair, all hope of enjoying the comic amusement which had been promised us, we left our bulky humorist still silent and portentous as a Quaker at "meeting"—proof alike against the potency of the ale and the blandishments of Mr. Dawle—and went out at the last moment to make our observations on Saltash by night.

The moonlight gave us very little assistance, as we groped our way up a steep hill, down which two rows of old cottages seemed to be gradually toppling into the water beyond. Here and there, an open door showed us a Rembrandt scene—a glowing red fire brilliantly illuminating the face of a woman cooking at it, or the forms of ragged children asleep on the hearth; and leaving all beside—figures, furniture, and rough raftered ceiling—steeped in grand and gloomy shadow. There were plenty of loose stones in the road, to trip up the feet of inquisitive strangers; there was plenty of stinking water bubbling musically down the kennel; and there were no lamps of any kind, to throw the smallest light upon any topographical subject of inquiry whatever. When I have proceeded thus far, and have further informed the curious in such matters, that Charles the Second conferred upon Saltash the inestimable blessing of a Mayor and six Aldermen—that it had the honor and advantage, before the Reform Bill, of sending two members to Parliament—and that it still possesses various municipal privileges of an equally despotic and lucrative nature, connected with oyster-fisheries, anchorage, salvage, ferries, and market-tolls—I have said all that I can about Saltash; and must request the reader's permission to return to the tavern without further delay.

Here, the scene had changed since our departure. The jovial company of the public room had penetrated into the private parlor. In the midst of the crowd stood Mr. Dawle, haranguing, with the last glass of ale in his hand; by his side was his son, who had been bribed, for the paltry consideration of sixpence, to relieve his parent's shoulders by helping to row us to St. Germans; and, on the old bench, in the old position, with the old fixed stare straight into the flame of the candle, sat the imperturbable "Dick"—stolid and gloomy as ever, in the midst of the festive uproar. It was now high time to proceed. So we gave the word

to depart. But an unexpected obstacle impeded us at the doorway. All the women who could squeeze themselves into the passage, suddenly fell down at our feet, and began scrubbing the dust off our shoes with the corners of their aprons; informing us, at the same time, in shrill chorus, that this was an ancient custom to which we must submit; and that any stranger who entered a Saltash house, and had his shoes dusted by Saltash women, was expected to pay his footing, by giving a trifle—say sixpence—for liquor; after which, he became a free and privileged citizen for life. As I do not remember that this interesting custom is mentioned among the other municipal privileges of Saltash, in any Itineraries or Histories of Cornwall, I communicate it, in all humility, to any antiquarian gentleman who may be disposed to make a scientific use of it, for the benefit of the community at large.

On departing at last for St. Germans, grave doubts arose in our minds, as to the effect which Dawle's potations of ale might have on his professional exertions as a licensed waterman. We were immediately relieved, however, by finding that what he had drunk had influenced him for good, rather than for evil—he talked less, and rowed more. Smoothly and swiftly we glided through the still water. The tide had now been flowing for some time; the arm of the sea, up which we were proceeding, was in many places more than half a mile across; on the broad, smooth surface of the stream, the moonlight lay fair and unruffled; the woods clothing the hills on each side, grew down to the water's edge, and were darkly reflected, all along, in solemn, winding shapes. Sometimes we passed an old ship, rotten and mastless, anchored solitary, midway between land and land. Sometimes we saw, afar off, a light in a fisherman's cottage among the trees; but we met no boats, saw no living beings, heard no voices, on our lonely way. It was nearly midnight before we reached the landing-place; got out in the mud again here; and, guided by our trusty boatman, began to ascend the hill-path that led to St. Germans.

The village was about a quarter of a mile inland. Mr. Dawle's account of it was not cheering. He described it tersely (and, as we afterwards found, truly), as "a d—d *strap* of a place,"—meaning thereby, that it consisted of one long street only; thus answering to the mathematical definition of a line—"length without breadth." The inn, when we arrived at it, was locked up for the night. After much kicking at the door, we succeeded in inducing the landlady to look down on us from her bedroom window; and a very cautious and distrustful woman she soon proved to be. First, she required to be informed what sort of characters we were?—which gave Dawle an opportunity of loudly assuring her, that *he* was a licensed waterman, and that *we* were "right-down gentlemen, and no mistake!" Satisfied on this point, the landlady next declared, that nothing should induce her to admit us, until she had first discovered whether she had any aired sheets, or not. These chamber luxuries being fortunately

found to be forthcoming, the door was unbolted; and we found ourselves at last admitted to a shelter for the night on Cornish ground.

Our parting with Dawle was characteristic on *his* side. Interpreting the right way certain convulsive motions of his arms and twitchings of his countenance, when he came to bid us farewell, we held out our hands at a venture, and found them instantly caught and shaken with a fervor which was as physically painful, as it was morally gratifying. "Good-bye, gentlemen!" cried our friendly boatman, in his heartiest tones; "you have been very kind to me—God bless you both! I should like to walk all over Cornwall with you—and I would, if I could leave the missus, and get anybody to take care of my boat! Bill, boy!" (reproachfully to his son), "take off your hat, and make a bow directly!—Good-bye, gentlemen; God speed you both!"—and away he went, to row back to Saltash.

As for St. Germans, let me honestly confess that I have nothing to say about it. Mr. Dawle's happy metaphorical description of the village, as "a strap of a place," at once anticipates and expresses all that I could write on topographical matters. Beaten out of the field, therefore, at all points; and having by this time duly concluded the narration of our "Start," nothing remains for me but to pass at once to the evening when we strapped on our knapsacks for the first time, and set out on our "Views A-Foot, or Travels Beyond Railways," joyously, and in good earnest.

CHAPTER III.

A FISHING-TOWN ON THE SOUTH COAST.

THE time is ten o'clock at night—the scene, a bank by the road-side, crested with young fir-trees, and affording a temporary place of repose to two travelers, who are enjoying the cool night-air, picturesquely extended flat on their backs—or rather, on their knapsacks, which now form part and parcel of their backs. In their present position, these travelers are (to speak geographically) bounded toward the east by a long road winding down the side of a rocky hill; towards the west, by the broad, half-dry channel of a tidal river; towards the north, by trees, hills, and upland valleys; and towards the south, by an old bridge and some houses near it, with lights in their windows faintly reflected in shallow water. The reader has doubtless already discovered who the two travelers are; but it may be necessary to explain, without further delay, that the southern boundary of the prospect around them represents a place called Looe—the fishing-town on the south coast of Cornwall, which is their destination for the night.

They had, by this time, accomplished their initiation into the process of walking under a knapsack, with the most complete and encouraging success. You, who in these days of vehement bustle, business and competition, can still find time to travel for pleasure alone—you, who have yet to become emancipated from the thraldom of railways, coaches, and saddle-horses—patronize, I

exhort you, that first and oldest-established of all conveyances, your own legs! Think on your tender partings nipped in the bud by the railway bell; think on the coachman's detested voice that summoned you famishing from a good dinner-table; think of luggage confided to extortionate porters, of horses casting shoes and catching colds, of cramped legs and numbed feet, of vain longings to get down for a moment here, and to delay for a pleasant half hour there—think of all these manifold hardships of riding at your ease; and the next time you leave home, strap your luggage on your shoulders, take your stick in your hand, set forth delivered from a perfect paraphernalia of incumbrances, to go where you will, how you will—the free citizen of the whole traveling world! Thus independent, what may you not accomplish?—what pleasure is there that you cannot enjoy? Are you an artist?—you can stop to sketch every point of view that strikes your eye. Are you a philanthropist?—you can go into every cottage and talk to every human being you pass. Are you a botanist, or geologist?—you may pick up leaves and chip rocks wherever you please, the livelong day. Are you a valetudinarian?—you may physic yourself by Nature's own simple prescription, walking in fresh air. Are you dilatory and irresolute?—you may dawdle to your heart's content; you may change all your plans a dozen times in a dozen hours; you may tell "Boots" at the inn to call you at six o'clock, may fall asleep again (ecstatic sensation!) five minutes after he has knocked at the door, and may get up two hours later, to pursue your journey, with perfect impunity and satisfaction. For, to you, what is a time-table but waste-paper?—and a "booked place" but a relic of the dark ages? You dread, perhaps, blisters on your feet—sponge your feet with cold vinegar and water, and show me blisters after that, if you can! You strap on your knapsack for the first time, and five minutes afterwards feel an aching pain in the muscles at the back of your neck—walk *on*, and the aching will walk *off!* How do we overcome our first painful cuticular reminiscences of first getting on horseback?—by riding again. Apply the same rule to carrying the knapsack, and be assured of the same successful result. Again and uncompromisingly I say it, therefore—walk, and be merry; walk, and be healthy; walk, and be your own master!—walk, to enjoy, to observe, to improve, as no riders can!—walk, and you are the best peripatetic impersonation of genuine holiday enjoyment that is to be met with on the surface of this work-a-day world!

How much more could I not say in praise of a pedestrian tour? But it is getting late; dark night-clouds are marching slowly over the sky, to the whistling music of the wind; we must leave our bank by the road-side, pass one end of the old bridge, walk along a narrow winding street, and enter the cleanest of inns, where we are welcomed by the kindest of landladies, and waited on by the fairest of chambermaids. Succulent was our supper in these halls of plenty; fiercely did the strong

ale spout forth from the bottle's mouth, impatient to minister to the thirsty throat: wide, white, and tempting spread the spotless sheets on great drowsy four post beds of the olden time. *Bon soir*, reader! If Looe prove not to be a little sea-shore paradise to-morrow, then is there no virtue in the good omens of to-night.

* * * * * *

The first point for which we made in the morning, was the old bridge; and a most picturesque and singular structure we found it to be. Its construction dates back as far as the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is three hundred and eighty-four feet long, and has fourteen arches, no two of which are on the same scale. The stout buttresses built between each arch, are hollowed at the top into curious triangular places of refuge for pedestrians, the roughly paved roadway being just wide enough to allow the passage of one cart at a time. On some of these buttresses, towards the middle, once stood an oratory, or chapel, dedicated to St. Anne; but no vestiges of it now remain. The old bridge, however, still rises sturdily enough on its ancient foundations; and, whatever the point from which its silver-grey stones and quaint arches of all shapes and sizes may be beheld, forms no mean adjunct to the charming landscape around it.

Looe is known to have existed as a town in the reign of Edward I.; and it remains to this day one of the prettiest and most primitive places in England. The river divides it into East and West Looe; and the view from the bridge, looking towards the two little colonies of houses thus separated, is in some respects almost unique. At each side of you rise high ranges of beautifully wooded hills; here and there a cottage peeps out among the trees, the winding path that leads to it being now lost to sight in the thick foliage, now visible again as a thin serpentine line of soft grey. Midway on the slopes, appear the gardens of Looe, built up the acclivity on stone terraces one above another, thus displaying the veritable garden architecture of the mountains of Palestine magically transplanted to the side of an English hill. Here, in this soft and genial atmosphere, the dydrangea is a common flower-bed ornament, the fuchsia grows lofty and luxuriant in the poorest cottage garden, the myrtle flourishes close to the sea-shore, and the tender tamarisk is the wild plant of every farmer's hedge. Looking lower down the hills yet, you see the houses of the town straggling out towards the sea along each bank of the river, in mazes of little narrow streets; curious old quays project over the water at different points; coast-trade vessels are being loaded and unloaded, built in one place and repaired in another, all within view; while the prospect of hills, harbor, and houses thus quaintly combined together, is beautifully closed by the English Channel, just visible as a small strip of blue water, pent in between the ridges of two promontories which stretch out on either side to the beach.

Such is Looe as beheld from a distance; and it looses none of its attractions when you look at it more closely. There is no such thing as a straight street in the place. No martinet of an archi-

tect has been here, to drill the old stone houses into regimental regularity. Sometimes you go down steps into the ground floor, sometimes you mount an outside staircase to get to the bed-rooms. Never were such places devised for hide and seek since that exciting nursery pastime was first invented. No house has fewer than two doors leading into two different lanes; some have three, opening at once into a court, a street and a wharf, all situated at different points of the compass. The shops, too, have their diverting irregularities, as well as the town. Here you might call a man a Jack of all trades, as the best and truest compliment you could pay him—for here one shop combines in itself a smart drug-mongering, cheese-mongering, stationery, grocery, and oil and Italian line of business; to say nothing of such cosmopolitan miscellanies as wrinkled apples, dusty nuts, cracked slate pencils and fly-blown mock jewelry. The moral good which you derive, in the first pane of a window, from the contemplation of brief biographies of murdered missionaries, and serious tracts against intemperance and tight lacing, you lose in the second, before such fleshly temptations as gingerbread shirt-studs, and fascinating white hats for Sunday wear, at two and ninepence apiece. Let no man rashly say that he has seen all that British enterprise can do for the extension of British commerce, until he has carefully studied the shop-fronts of the tradesmen of Looe.

Then, when you have at last threaded your way successfully through the streets, and have got out on the beach, you see a pretty miniature bay, formed by the extremity of a green hill on the right, and by fine jagged slate-rocks on the left. Before this seaward quarter of the town is erected a strong bulwark of rough stones, to resist the incursion of high tides. Here, the idlers of the place assemble to lounge and gossip, to look out for any outward-bound ships that are to be seen in the Channel, and to criticise the appearance and glorify the capabilities of the little fleet of Looe fishing-boats, riding snugly at anchor before them at the entrance of the bay.

The inhabitants number some fourteen hundred; and are as good-humored and unsophisticated a set of people as you will meet with anywhere. The Fisheries and the Coast Trade form their principal means of subsistence. The women take a very fair share of the hard work out of the men's hands. You constantly see them carrying coals from the vessels to the quay in curious hand-barrows: they laugh, scream and run in each other's way incessantly: but these little irregularities seem to assist, rather than impede them, in the prosecution of their tasks. As to the men, one absorbing interest appears to govern them all. The whole day long they are mending boats, painting boats, cleaning boats, rowing boats, or, standing with their hands in their pockets, looking at boats. The children seem to be children in size, and children in nothing else. They congregate together in sober little groups, and hold mysterious conversations, in a dialect which we cannot understand. If they ever

do tumble down, soil their pinafores, throw stones, or make mud pies, they practise these juvenile vices in a midnight secrecy that no stranger's eye can penetrate.

At Looe, as in other parts of Cornwall, there is an unusually large congregation of Wesleyan Methodists, presided over by teachers unusually gifted in the art of preaching and singing exclusively through the regular Methodist organ of elocution—the nose. However, in spite of the obtrusive sanctity of manner and phrase, by the assumption of which these men appear determined to degrade themselves in the eyes of all whom they cannot convert, it is not to be denied that they have worked great and permanent good among the population of Cornwall. And the reason is obvious. The teachers of Methodism enter the cottages of the poor, as men socially related in language and manners to those whom they come to convert. This gives them the first great claim, to be heard favorably, to be recognized as brethren. The teachers of the Church have no such advantage. However zealously they may work in their vocation, they have still arrayed against them the obstacle of their own social position, the excluding influence of those nameless, indescribable peculiarities of tone, manner, and phrase, which are habits of their class and part of their education; which they cannot shake off at a moment's bidding, if they would; and which, trifles though they be, are nevertheless instantly and intuitively remarked by the man of a lower grade with secret awe, envy, or astonishment—feelings all three, not very compatible with prompt sympathy and hearty conviction. Is it impossible to admit a lower order in the Church, to give religious instruction — under due guidance and regulated authority —to the lower order in the state? Having ranks in the Church already, it is not very easy to discern the peril of extending them a little downwards, and not very sanguine to anticipate, if this experiment were tried, that in some cottages at least, the Prayer-book might then take the treasured place next the Bible, which is now exclusively occupied by Wesley's Hymns.

To return to the population:— In that second period of the dark ages, when there were High Tories and rotten boroughs in the land, Looe (containing at that time nothing like the number of inhabitants which it now possesses) sent four members to Parliament! The ceremony by which two of these members were elected, as it was described to me by a man who remembered witnessing it, must have been an impressive sight indeed to any foreigner interested in studying the representative system of this country. On the morning of the "Poll," one division of the borough sent *six* electors, and another *four*, to record their imposing aggregate of votes in favor of any two smiling civil gentlemen, who came, properly recommended, to ask for them. This done, the ten electors walked quietly home in one direction, and the two members walked quietly off in another, to perform the fatiguing duty of representing their constituents' interests in Imperial Parliament. The election was quite a snug little family party

affair, in these "good old times." The ten gentlemen who voted, and the other two gentlemen who took their votes, just made up a comfortable compact dozen, all together!

But this state of things was too harmonious to last in such a world of discords as ours. The day of innovation came: turbulent Whigs and Radicals laid uncivil hands on the Looe polling-booth, and politically annihilated the pleasant party of twelve. Since that disastrous period the town has sent no members to Parliament at all; and very little, indeed, do the townspeople appear to care about so great a deprivation. In case the reader should be disposed to attribute this indifference to municipal privileges, to the supineness rather than the philosophy of the inhabitants, I think it necessary to establish their just claims to be considered as possessing plenty of public spirit, prompt decision, and wise fertility of resource in cases of emergency, by relating in this place the true story of how the people of Looe got rid of the rats.

About a mile out at sea, to the southward of the town, rises a green triangularly shaped eminence, called Looe Island. Here, many years ago, a ship was wrecked. Not only were the sailors saved, but several free passengers of the rat species, who had got on board, nobody knew how, where, or when, were also preserved by their own strenuous exertions, and wisely took up permanent quarters for the future on the terra firma of Looe Island. In process of time, and in obedience to the laws of nature, these rats increased and multiplied exceedingly; and, being confined all round within certain limits by the sea, soon became a palpable and tremendous nuisance. Destruction was threatened to the agricultural produce of all the small patches of cultivated land on the island —it seemed doubtful whether any man who ventured there by himself, might not share the fate of Bishop Hatto, and be devoured by rats. Under these pressing circumstances, the people of Looe determined to make one united and vehement effort to extirpate the whole colony of invaders. Ordinary means of destruction had been tried already and without effect. It was said that rats left for dead on the ground had mysteriously revived faster than they could be picked up and skinned, or flung into the sea. Rats desperately wounded had got away into their holes, and become convalescent, and increased and multiplied again more productively than ever. The great problem was, not how to kill the rats, but how to annihilate them so effectually that the whole population might certainly know that the re-appearance even of one of them was altogether out of the question. This was the problem, and it was solved in the following manner: —All the available inhabitants of the town were called to join in a great hunt. The rats were caught by every conceivable artifice; and, once taken, were instantly and ferociously *smothered in onions*; the corpses were then decently laid out on clean china dishes, and straightway eaten with vindictive relish by the people of

Looe. Never was any invention for destroying rats so complete and so successful as this! Every man, woman, and child, who could eat, could swear to the death and annihilation of all the rats they had eaten. The local returns of dead rats were not made by the bills of mortality, but by the bills of fare; it was getting rid of a nuisance by the unheard-of process of stomaching a nuisance! Day after day passed on, and rats disappeared by hundreds never to return. What could all their cunning and resolution avail them now? They had resisted before, and could have resisted still, the ordinary force of dogs, ferrets, traps, sticks, stones, and guns, arrayed against them; but when to these engines of assault were added, as auxiliaries, smothering onions, scalding stewpans, hungry mouths, sharp teeth, good digestions, and the gastric juice, what could they do but give in? Swift and sure was the destruction that now overwhelmed them—everybody who wanted a dinner had a strong personal interest in hunting them down to the very last. In a short space of time the island was cleared of the usurpers. Cheeses remained entire: ricks rose uninjured. And this is the true story of how the people of Looe got rid of the rats!

It will not much surprise any reader who has been good-natured enough to peruse the preceding pages with some attention, to hear that we idly delayed the day of departure from the pleasant fishing-town on the south coast, which was now the place of our sojourn. If the truth must be told, it was not easy to quit in any hurry the comfortable precincts of the inn. The smiles of our fair chambermaid, and the cookery of our excellent hostess, addressed us in syren tones of allurement which we had not the virtue to resist. Then, it was difficult to leave unexplored any of the numerous walks in the neighborhood—all delightfully varied in character, and each possessing its own attractive point of view. Even when we had made our determination and fixed our farewell day, a great boat-race and a great tea-drinking, which everybody declared was something that everybody else ought to see, interfered to detain us. We delayed yet once more to partake in the festivities, and found that they supplied us with all the necessary resolution to quit Looe, which we had hitherto wanted; we had remained to assist at a failure on a very large scale.

As, in addition to the boat-race, there was to be a bazaar on the beach; and as fine weather was therefore an essential requisite on the occasion, it is scarcely necessary to premise that we had an unusually large quantity of rain. In the forenoon, however, the sun shone with treacherous brilliancy; and all the women in the neighborhood fluttered out in his beams, gay as butterflies. What dazzling gowns, what flaring parasols, what joyous cavalcades on cart-horses, did we see on the road that led to the town! What a mixture of excitement, confusion, anxiety, and importance, possessed everybody! What frolic and felicity attended the popular gatherings on the beech, until the fatal moment when the gun fired for the first race! Then, as if at that

signal, the clouds began to muster in ominous blackness; the deceitful sunlight disappeared; the rain came down for the day—a steady, noiseless, malicious rain, that at once forbade all hope of clear weather. Dire was the discomfiture of the poor ladies of Looe. They ran hither and thither for shelter, in lank wet muslin and under dripping parasols, displaying in the lamentable emergency of the moment, all sorts of mysterious interior contrivances for expanding around them the exterior magnificence of their gowns, which we never ought to have seen. Deserted were the stalls of the bazaar, for the parlors of the alehouses; unapplauded and unobserved, strained at the oar the stout rowers in the boat-race. Everybody ran to cover, except some seafaring men who cared nothing for weather, some inveterate loungers who would wander up and down in spite of the rain, and three unhappy German musicians, who had been caught on their travels, and penned up tight against the outer wall of a house, in a sort of cage of canvas, boards, and evergreens, which hid every part of them but their heads and shoulders. Nobody interfered to release these unfortunates. There they sat, hemmed in all around by dripping leaves, blowing grimly and incessantly through instruments of brass. If the reader can imagine the effect of three phlegmatic men with long bottle noses, looking out of a circle of green bushes, and playing waltzes unintermittingly on long horns, in a heavy shower, he will be able to form a tolerably correct estimate of the large extra proportion of gloom, which the German musicians succeeded in infusing into the gloomy proceedings of the day.

The tea-drinking was rather more successful. The room in which it was held was filled to the corners, and exhaled such an odor of wet garments and bread and butter (to say nothing of an incessant clatter of china and bawling of voices) that we found ourselves, as uninitiated strangers, unequal to the task of remaining in it to witness the proceedings. Descending the steps which led into the street from the door—to the great confusion of a string of smartly dressed ladies who encountered us, rushing up with steaming tea-kettles and craggy lumps of plum-cake—we left the inhabitants to conclude their festivities by themselves, and went out to take a farewell walk on the cliffs of Looe.

We ascended the heights to the westward, losing sight of the town among the trees, as we went; and then, walking in a southerly direction through some corn-fields, approached within a few hundred yards of the edge of the cliffs, and looked out on the sea. The sky had partially cleared, and the rain had ceased; but huge, fantastic masses of cloud, tinged with lurid copper-color by the setting sun, still towered afar off over the horizon, and were reflected in a deeper hue on the calm surface of the sea, with a perfectness and grandeur that I never remember to have witnessed before. Not a ship was in sight; but out on the extreme line of the wilderness of grey waters there shone one red, fiery spark—the beacon of the Eddystone Lighthouse. Before us, the green fields of Looe Island

rose high out of the ocean—here, partaking the red light on the clouds; there, half lost in cold shadow. Closer yet, on the mainland, a few cattle were feeding quietly on a long strip of meadow bordering the edge of the cliff; and, now and then, a gull soared up from the sea, and wheeled screaming over our heads. The faint sound of the small, shore waves (invisible to us in the position we occupied) beating dull and at long intervals on the beach, augmented the dreary solemnity of the evening prospect. Light, shade, and color were all before us, arranged in the grandest combinations, and expressed by the simplest forms. If Michael Angelo had painted landscape, he would have represented such a scene as we now beheld.

This was our last excursion at Looe. The next morning we were again on the road, walking inland on our way to the town of Liskeard.

CHAPTER IV.

HOLY WELLS AND DRUID RELICS.

THE man who first characterized human life as a succession of contrasts, was a wise philosopher, and must have been a great traveler as well. All tourists—but more especially tourists on foot—constantly find themselves in a position to bear witness to the truth of his remark. Even in our own limited sphere of action, in our short daily walks over one narrow county of England, we encountered such perpetual transitions from good to evil, from success to failure, from the very acme of jollity in this place, to the very depth of despondency in that, as seemed especially to mark us out for the duty of practically exemplifying the theoretical truth of the assertion just quoted, that "human life is a succession of contrasts."

Fresh from the quaint old houses, the delightfully irregular streets, and the fragrant terrace-gardens of Looe, we found ourselves, on entering Liskeard suddenly introduced to that genuine "abomination of desolation," a large agricultural country town. Modern square houses, barren of all outer ornament; wide, dusty, deserted streets; misanthropical-looking shopkeepers, clad in rusty black, standing at their doors to gaze on the solitude around them, greeted our eyes on all sides. Such samples of the population as we accidentally encountered, were not promising. We were unlucky enough to remark, in the course of two streets, a nonogenarian old woman with a false nose, and an idiot shaking with the palsy. But harder trials were in reserve for us. We missed the best of the many inns at Liskeard, and went to the very worst. What a place was our house of public entertainment for a great sinner to repent in, or for a melancholy recluse to retreat to! Not a human being appeared in the street where this tavern of despair frowned amid congenial desolation! Nobody welcomed us at the door—the sign creaked dolefully, as the wind swung it on its rusty hinges. We walked in: and discovered a little man clothed in a second-hand *paletot*, sitting at

an empty "bar," and hiding himself, as it were, from all mortal inspection behind the full sheet of a dirty provincial newspaper. Doleful was our petition to this secluded publican for shelter and food; and doubly doleful was his answer to our appeal. Beds he believed he had—food there was none in the house, saving a piece of *corned beef*, which the family had dined on, and which he proposed that we should partake of before it got quite cold. Having said thus much, he suddenly retired behind his newspaper, and spoke no word more.

In a few minutes the landlady appeared, looking very thin and care-worn, and clad in mourning weeds. She smiled sadly upon us; and desired to know how we liked corned beef? We acknowledged a preference for fresh meat, especially in large market towns like Liskeard, where butchers' shops abounded. The landlady was willing to see what she could get; and in the meantime, begged to be allowed to show us into a private room. She succeeded in incarcerating us in the most thoroughly private room that could be found out of a model prison. It was situated far away at the back of the house, and looked out upon a very small yard entirely circumscribed by empty stables. The one little window was shut down tight, and we were desired not to open it, for fear of a smell from these stables. The ornaments of the place consisted of hymn-books, spelling-books, and a china statue of Napoleon in a light green waistcoat, and a sky-blue coat. There was not even a fly in the room to intrude on us in our privacy; there were no cocks and hens in the yard to cackle on us in our privacy; nobody walked passed the outer passage, or made any noise in any part of the house, to startle us in our privacy; and a steady rain was falling propitiously to keep us in our privacy. We dined sumptuously in our retired situation on some rugged lumps of broiled flesh, which the landlady called chops, and the servant steaks. We broke out of prison after dinner, and roamed the streets. We returned to solitary confinement in the evening, and were conducted to another cell. This second private apartment appeared to be about forty feet long; six immense wooden tables, painted of a ghastly yellow color, were ranged down it, side by side. Nothing was placed on any of them—they looked like dissecting-tables waiting for "subjects." There was yet another and a seventh table—a round one, half lost in a corner—to which we retreated for refuge—it was covered with crape and bombazine, half made up into mourning garments proper to the first and intensest state of grief The servant brought us one small candle to cheer the scene; and desired to be informed, at the same time, whether we wanted *two* sheets apiece to our beds, or could do with a sheet at top and a blanket at bottom, as other people did? This question cowed us at once into gloomy submission to our fate; we just hinted that we had contracted bad habits of sleeping between two sheets, and left the rest to chance; reckless how we slept, or where we slept, whether we passed the night on the top of one of the six dissecting-tables,

or with a blanket at bottom, as other people passed it. Soon, the servant returned to tell us that we had got our two sheets each, and to send us to bed—snatching up the landlady's mourning garments, while she spoke, with a scared, suspicious look, as if she thought that the next outrageous luxury we should require would be a nightgown apiece of crape and bombazine.

Reflecting, the last thing at night, on the deplorable contrast presented to the jovial inn at Looe by the melancholy inn at Liskeard (I recommend our landlord at the latter place, to change the name of his house, when he repairs his sign-board, to "The Sackcloth and Ashes"), we derived some consolation from remembering that we should leave our comfortless quarters early the next morning. It was not Liskeard that we had come to see, but the country around Liskeard—the famous curiosities of Nature and Art that are to be found some six or eight miles away from the town. Accordingly, we were astir betimes, on the morrow. The sky was fair; the breeze was exhilarating. Once past the doleful doorway of the inn, we found ourselves departing under the fairest auspices for a pilgrimage to the ruins of St. Cleer's Well, and to the granite piles and Druid remains, now entitled the "Cheese-Wring" and "Hurler" rocks.

On leaving the town, our way lay to the northward, up rising ground. For the first two miles, the scenery differed little from what we had already beheld in Cornwall. The lanes were still sunk down between high banks, like dry ditches; all varieties of ferns grew in exquisite beauty and luxuriance on either side of us; the trees were small in size, and thickly clothed with leaves; and the views were generally narrowed to a few well-cultivated fields, with sturdy little granite-built cottages now and then rising beyond. It was only when we had reached what must have been a considerable elevation, that any change appeared in the face of the country. Five minutes more of walking, and a single turn in the road, brought us suddenly to the limits of trees, meadows, and cottages, and displayed before us, with almost startling abruptness, the magnificent prospect of a Cornish Moor.

The expanse of open plain that we now beheld stretched away uninterruptedly on the right hand, as far as the distant hills. Towards the left, the view was broken and varied by some rough stone walls, a narrow road, and a dip in the earth beyond. Wherever we looked, far or near, we saw masses of granite of all shapes and sizes, heaped irregularly on the ground among dark clusters of heath. An old furze-cutter was the only human figure that appeared on the desolate scene. Approaching him to ask our way to St. Cleer's Well—no signs of which could be discerned on the wilderness before us—we found the old fellow, though he was eighty years of age, working away with all the vigor of youth. On this wild moor he had lived and labored from childhood; and he began to talk proudly of its great length and breadth, and of the wonderful sights that were to be seen on different parts of it, the moment we addressed him. He

described to us, in his own homely forcible way, the tremendous storms that he had beheld, the fearful rattling and roaring of thunder over the great unsheltered plain before us—the hail and sleet driven so fiercely before the hurricane, that a man was half blinded if he turned his face towards it for a moment—the forked lightning shooting from pitch-dark clouds, leaping and running fearfully over the level ground, blackening, splitting, tearing from their places the stoutest rocks on the moor. Three masses of granite lay heaped together near the spot where we had halted—the furze-cutter pointed to them with his bill-hook, and told us that what we now looked on was once one great rock, which he had seen riven in an instant by the lightning into the fragmentary form that it now presented. If we mounted the highest of these three masses, he declared that we might find out our own way to St. Cleer's Well by merely looking around us. We followed his directions. Towards the east, far away over the magnificent sweep of moorland, and on the slope of the hill that bounded it, appeared the tall chimneys and engine-houses of the Great Caraton Copper Mine—the only objects raised by the hand of man that were to be seen on this part of the view. Towards the west, much nearer at hand, four grey turrets were just visible behind some rising ground. These turrets belonged to the tower of St. Cleer's Church; and the Well was close by it.

Taking leave of the furze-cutter, we followed the path at once that led to St. Cleer's. Half an hour's walking brought us to the village, a straggling, picturesque place, hidden in so deep a hollow as to be quite invisible from any distance. All the little cottage-girls whom we met, carrying their jugs and pitchers of water, curtseyed and wished us good morning with the prettiest air of bashfulness and good humor imaginable. One of them, a rosy, beautiful child, who proudly informed us that she was six years old, put down her jug at a cottage-gate and ran on before to show us the way, delighted to be singled out from her companions for so important an office. We passed the grey walls of the old church, walked down a lane, and soon came in sight of the Well, the position of which was marked by a ruined Oratory, situated on some open ground close at the side of the public pathway.

St. Cleer, or—as the name is generally spelt out of Cornwall—St. Clare, the patron saint of the Well, was born in Italy, in the twelfth century—and born to a fair heritage of this world's honors and this world's possessions. But she voluntarily abandoned, at an early age, all that was brilliant and alluring in the earthly career awaiting her, to devote herself entirely to the interests of her religion and the services of Heaven. She was the first woman who sat at the feet of St. Francis as his disciple, who humbly practised the self-mortification, and resolutely performed the vow of perpetual poverty, which her preceptor's harshest doctrines imposed on his followers. She soon became Abbess of the Benedictine Nuns with whom she was associated by the saint; and afterwards founded an order of her own—the order of "Poor

Clares." The fame of her piety and humility, of her devotion to the cause of the sick, the afflicted, and the poor, spread far and wide. The best and the most illustrious of the ecclesiastics of her time, attended at her convent as at a holy shrine. Pope Innocent the Fourth visited her, as a testimony of his respect for her virtues; and paid homage to her memory, when her blameless existence had closed, by making one among the mourners who followed her to the grave. Her name had been derived from the Latin word that signifies *purity;* and from first to last, her life had kept the promise of her name.

Poor St. Clare! If she could look back, with the thoughts and interests of the days of her mortality, to the world that she has quitted for ever, how sadly would she now contemplate the Holy Well that was once hallowed in her name and for her sake! But one arched wall, thickly overgrown with ivy, still remains erect in the place that the old Oratory occupied. Fragments of its roof, its cornices, and the mouldings of its windows lie scattered on the ground, half hidden by the grasses and ferns twining prettily around them. A double cross of stone stands, sloping towards the earth, at a little distance off—soon perhaps to share the fate of the prostrate ruins about it. How changed the scene here, since the time when the rural christening procession left the church, to proceed down the quiet pathway to the Holy Well—when children were baptized in the pure spring; and vows were offered up under the roof of the Oratory, and prayers were repeated before the sacred cross! These were the pious usages of a past age; these were the ceremonies of an ancient church, whose innocent and reverent custom it was to connect closer together the beauty of Nature and the beauty of Religion, by such means as the consecration of a spring, or the erection of a roadside cross. There has been something of sacrifice as well as of glory, in the effort by which we, in our time, have freed ourselves from what was superstitious and ignorant in the faith of the times of old—it has cost us the loss of much of the better part of that faith, which was not superstition, and of more which was not ignorance. The spring of St. Clare is nothing to the cottager of our day but a place to draw water from; the village lads now lounge, whistling, on the fallen stones, once the consecrated arches under which their humble ancestors paused on the pilgrimage, or knelt in prayer. Wherever the eye turns, all around it speaks the melancholy language of desolation and decay—all but the water of the Holy Well. Still the little pool is adorned with its own calm primeval beauty; still it remains the fitting type of its patron saint—pure and tranquil as in the bygone days, when the name of St. Clare was something more than the title to a village legend, and the spring of St. Clare something better than a sight for the passing tourist among the Cornish moors.

We happened to arrive at the well at the period when the villagers were going home to dinner. After the first quarter of an hour, we were left almost alone among the ruins. The only person who approached to speak to us, was a poor old woman, bent and totter-

ing with age, who lived in a little cottage hard by. She brought us a glass, thinking we might wish to taste the water of the spring; and presented me with a rose out of her garden. Such small scraps of information as she had gathered together about the well, she repeated to us in low, reverential tones, as if its former religious uses still made it an object of veneration in her eyes. After a time, she too quitted us; and we were then left quite alone by the side of the spring.

It was a bright, sunshiny day; a pure air was abroad; nothing sounded audibly but the singing of birds at some distance, and the rustling of the few leaves that clothed one or two young trees in a neighboring garden. Unoccupied though I was, the minutes passed away as quickly and as unheeded with me, as with my companion, who was busily engaged in sketching. The ruins of the ancient Oratory, viewed amid the pastoral repose of all things around them, began imperceptibly to exert over me that mysterious power of mingling the impressions of the present with the memories of the past, which all ruins possess. While I sat looking idly into the water of the well, and thinking of the groups that had gathered round it in years long gone by, recollections began to rise vividly on my mind of other ruins that I had seen in other countries, with friends, some scattered, some gone now — of pleasant pilgrimages, in boyish days, along the storied shores of Baiæ, or through the desolate streets of the Dead City under Vesuvius — of happy sketching excursions to the aqueducts on the plains of Rome, or to the temples and villas of Tivoli; during which, I had first learned to appreciate the beauties of Nature under guidance which, in this world, I can never resume; and had seen the lovely prospects of Italian landscape pictured by a hand now powerless in death. Remembrances such as these, of pleasures which remembrance only can recall as they were, made Time fly fast for me by the brink of the holy well. I could have sat there all day, and should not have felt, at night, that the day had been ill spent.

But the sunlight began to warn us that noon was long past. We had some distance yet to walk, and many things more to see. Shortly after my friend had completed his sketch, therefore, we reluctantly left St. Clare's Well, and went on our way briskly, up the little valley, and out again on the wide surface of the moor.

It was now our object to steer a course over the wide plain around us, leading directly to the "Cheese Wring" rocks (so called from their supposed resemblance to a Cornish cheese-press or "*wring*"). On our road to this curiosity, about a mile and a half from St. Clare's Well, we stopped to look at one of the most perfect and remarkable of the ancient British monuments in Cornwall. It is called Trevethey Stone, and consists of six large upright slabs of granite, overlaid by a seventh, which covers them in the form of a rude, slanting roof. These slabs are so irregular in form as to look quite unhewn. They all vary in size and thickness. The whole structure rises to a height, probably, of fourteen feet; and, standing as it does on

elevated ground, in a barren country, with no stones of a similar kind erected near it, presents an appearance of rugged grandeur and aboriginal simplicity, which renders it an impressive, almost a startling, object to look on. Antiquaries have discovered that its name signifies The Place of Graves; and have discovered no more. No inscription appears on it; the date of its erection is lost in the darkest of the dark periods of English history. I can only add, that this interesting sepulchral monument of the earliest inhabitants of Britain appears to be nothing respected by those who ought to be most interested in preserving it. The ground within and around the stones is permitted to remain in a state of filth, which might deter some travelers from examining them at all; and which speaks little for the national feeling, and less for the national decency, of the people of the district.

Our path had been gradually rising all the way from St. Clare's Well; and, when we left Trevethey Stone, we still continued to ascend, proceeding along the tram-way leading to the Caraton Mine. Soon the scene presented another abrupt and extraordinary change. We had been walking hitherto amid almost invariable silence and solitude; but now, with each succeeding minute, strange, mingled, unintermitting noises began to grow louder and louder around us. We followed a sharp curve in the tram-way, and immediately found ourselves saluted by an entirely new prospect, and surrounded by an utterly bewildering noise. All about us monstrous wheels were turning slowly; machinery was clanking and groaning in the hoarsest discords; invisible waters were pouring onward with a rushing sound; high above our heads, on skeleton platforms, iron chains clattered fast and fiercely over iron pulleys, and huge steam pumps puffed and gasped, and slowly raised and depressed their heavy black beams of wood. Far beneath the embankment on which we stood, men, women, and children were breaking and washing ore in a perfect marsh of copper-colored mud and copper-colored water. We had penetrated to the very center of the noise, the bustle, and the population on the surface of a great mine.

When we walked forward again, we passed through a thick plantation of young firs; and then, the sounds behind us became slowly and solemnly deadened the further we went on.

When we had arrived at the extremity of the line of trees, they ceased softly and suddenly. It was like a change in a dream.

We now left the tram-way, and stood again on the moor—on a wilder and lonelier part of it than we had yet beheld. The Cheese-Wring and its adjacent rocks were visible a mile and a half away, on the summit of a steep hill. Wherever we looked, the horizon was bounded by the long, dark, undulating edges of the moor. The ground rose and fell in little hillocks and hollows, tufted with dry grass and furze, and strewn throughout with fragments of granite. The whole plain appeared like the site of an ancient city of palaces, overthrown and crumbled into atoms by an earthquake. Here and

there, some cows were feeding; and sometimes a large crow winged his way lazily before us, lessening and lessening slowly in the open distance, until he was lost to sight. No human beings were discernible anywhere; the majestic loneliness and stillness of the scene were almost oppressive both to eye and ear. Above us, immense fleecy masses of brilliant white cloud, wind-driven from the Atlantic, soared up grandly, higher and higher over the bright blue sky. Everywhere, the view had an impressively stern, simple, aboriginal look. Here were tracts of solitary country which had sturdily retained their ancient character through centuries of revolution and change; plains pathless and desolate even now, as when Druid processions passed over them by night to the place of the secret sacrifice, and wild tribes and skin-clad warriors of old Britain halted on them in council, or hurried across them to the fight.

On we went, up and down, in a very zigzag course, now looking forward towards the Cheese-Wring from the top of a rock, now losing sight of it altogether in the depths of a hollow. By the time we had advanced about half way over the distance it was necessary for us to walk, we observed, towards the left hand, a wide circle of detached upright rocks. These we knew, from descriptions and engravings, to be the "Hurlers," and turned aside at once to look at them from a nearer point of view.

There are two very different histories of these rocks; the antiquarian account of them is straightforward and practical enough, simply asserting that they are the remains of a Druid temple, the whole region about them having been one of the principal stations of the Druids in Cornwall. The popular account of the Hurlers (from which their name is derived) is very different and rather poetical. It is contended, on the part of the people, that once upon a time (nobody knows how long ago), these rocks were Cornish men, who profanely went out (nobody knows from what place), to enjoy the national sport of hurling the ball on one fine "Sabbath morning," and were suddenly turned into pillars of stone, as a judgment on their own wickedness, and a warning to all their companions as well.

Having to choose between the antiquarian hypothesis and the popular legend on the very spot to which both referred, a common susceptibility to the charms of romance, at once determined us to pin our faith on the latter. Looking at the Hurlers, therefore, in the peculiar spirit of the legend attached to them, as really and truly petrified ball-players, we observed, with great interest, that some of them must have been a little above, and others a little below our own height, in their lifetime; that some must have been very corpulent, and others very thin persons; that one of them, having a protuberance on his head remarkably like a night-cap in stone, was possibly a sluggard as well as a Sabbath-breaker, and might have got out of his bed just in time to "hurl;" that another, with some faint resemblance left of a fat grinning human face, leaned considerably out of the perpendicular, and was, therefore,

in all probability, a hurler of intemperate habits. At some distance off we remarked a high stone standing entirely by itself, which, in the absence of any positive information on the subject, we presumed to consider as the petrified effigy of a tall man who ran after the ball. In the opposite direction other stones were dotted about irregularly, which we could only imagine to represent certain misguided wretches who had attended as spectators of the sports, and had, therefore, incurred the same penalty and judgment as the hurlers themselves. These humble results of observations taken on the spot, are offered in no irreverent spirit, but rather as tending to supply some pretty strong facts from ancient history to be adduced in argument by the next pious layman in the government, who gets up to propose the next series of Sabbath prohibitions for the benefit of the profane laymen in the nation.

Reluctantly abandoning any more minute observation of the Hurlers than that already recorded, in obedience to the necessity of carefully husbanding the little time still left to us, we soon shaped our course again in the direction of the Cheese-Wring. We arrived at the base of the hill on which it stands in a short time, and without any difficulty; and beheld above us a perfect chaos of rocks piled up the entire surface of the eminence. All the granite we had seen before, was as nothing compared with the granite we now looked on. The masses were at one place heaped up in great irregular cairns—at another, scattered confusedly over the ground, poured all along in close, craggy lumps, flung about hither and thither, as if in reckless sport, by the hands of giants. Above the whole, rose the weird fantastic form of the Cheese-Wring, the wildest and most wondrous of all the wild and wondrous structures in the rock architecture of the scene.

If a man dreamt of a great pile of stones in a nightmare, he would dream of such a pile as the Cheese-Wring. All the heaviest and largest of the seven thick slabs of which it is composed are at the top; all the lightest and smallest at the bottom. It rises perpendicularly to a height of thirty-two feet, without lateral support of any kind. The fifth and sixth rocks are of immense size and thickness, and overhang fearfully, all round, the four lower rocks which support them. All are perfectly irregular; the projections of one do not fit into the interstices of another; they are heaped up loosely in their extraordinary top-heavy form, on slanting ground half-way down a steep hill. Look at them from whatever point you choose, there is still all that is heaviest, largest, strongest at the summit, and all that is lightest, smallest, weakest at the base. When you first see the Cheese-Wring, you instinctively shrink from walking under it. Beholding the tons on tons of stone balanced to a hair's breadth on the mere fragments beneath, you think that with a pole in your hand, with one push against the top rocks, you could hurl down the hill in an instant a pile which has stood for centuries, unshaken by the fiercest hurricane that ever blew, rushing from the great void

of an ocean over the naked surface of a moor.

Of course, theories advanced by learned men are not wanting to explain such a phenomenon as the Cheese-Wring. Certain antiquaries have undertaken to solve this curious problem of Nature in a very off-hand manner, by asserting that the rocks were heaped up as they now appear, by the Druids, with the intention of astonishing their contemporaries and all posterity by a striking exhibition of their architectural skill. (If any of these antiquarian gentlemen be still living, I would not recommend them to attempt a practical illustration of their theory by building miniature Cheese-Wrings out of the contents of their coal-scuttles!) The second explanation of the extraordinary position of the rocks is a geological explanation, and is apparently the true one. It is assumed on this latter hypothesis, that the Cheese-Wring, and all the adjacent masses of stone, were once covered, or nearly covered, by earth, and were thus supported in an upright form; that the wear and tear of storms gradually washed away all this earth, from between the rocks, down the hill, and then left such heaps of stones as were accidentally complete in their balance on each other, to stand erect, and such as were not, to fall flat on the surface of the hill in all the various positions in which they now appear. Accepting this theory as the right one, it still seems strange that there should be only one Cheese-Wring on the hill—but so it is. Plenty of rocks are to be seen there piled one on another; but none of them are piled in the same extraordinary manner as the Cheese-Wring, which stands alone in its grandeur, a curiosity that even science may wonder at, a sight which is worth a visit to Cornwall, even if Cornwall presented nothing else to see.

Besides the astonishment which the rock scenery on the hill was calculated to excite, we found in its neighborhood an additional cause of surprise of a very different description. Just as we were preparing to ascend the eminence, the silence of the great waste around us was broken by a long and hearty cheer. The Hurlers themselves, if they had suddenly returned to a state of flesh and blood, and resumed their interrupted game, could hardly have made more noise, or exhibited a greater joviality of disposition, than did some three or four tradesmen of the town of Liskeard, who had been enjoying a pic-nic under the Cheese-Wring, had seen us approaching over the plain, and now darted out of their ambush to welcome us, flourishing porter-bottles in their hands as olive branches of peace, amity, and good-will. "Hooray! hooray! here's the Cheese-Wring and lots of porter!" shouted these commercial gentlemen, descending the rocks at such a rate to meet us, that we fully expected to see the necks of the bottles and the necks of the men both broken together. However, with sundry trippings and stumblings they got down to us in perfect safety, and in a state of malt-liquor benevolence that was truly expressive. My companion skilfully contrived to make his escape; but I was stopped and surrounded in an instant. One gentleman held a glass in a very

slanting position, while another gentleman violently uncorked a bottle and directed half of its contents in a magnificent jet of light brown froth all over everybody, before he found the way into the tumbler. It was of no use to decline imbibing the remainder of the light brown froth—"*There* was the Cheese-Wring, and *here* was the porter—*I* must drink all their good healths, and *they* would all drink mine—this was Cornish hospitality, and d——n them! Cornish hospitality was the finest thing in the world! As for my friend there, who was drawing, they bore him no ill-will because he wouldn't drink—they would buy his drawing, and one of the commercial gentlemen, who was a stationer, would publish a hundred, two hundred, five hundred, a thousand copies of it, on sheets of letter paper, price one penny! What had I got to say to that?—If that wasn't hospitality, why then what the devil was?"

All this was doubtless very amusing, and our new friends were certainly brimming over with benevolence; but we were nevertheless not at all sorry when their manners subsequently exhibited a slight change, under the influence of further potations of porter. Soon, they began to look stolid and suspicious—suddenly, they discovered that we were not quite such good company as they had thought us at first—finally, they took their departure in solemn silence, leaving us free at last to mount to the summit of the hill, and look out uninterruptedly on the glorious view which stretched around us over a circumference of a hundred miles.

Turning our faces towards the north-east, and standing now on the topmost rock of one of the most elevated situations in Cornwall, we were able to discern the sea on either side of us. Two faint lines of the softest, haziest blue, indicated the Bristol Channel on the one hand, and the English Channel on the other. Before us, lay a wide region of downs and fields, all mapped out in every variety of form by their different divisions of wall and hedge-row—while, further away yet, darker and more indefinite, appeared the Dartmoor forest and the Dartmoor hills. It was just that hour before the evening, at which the atmosphere acquires a more mellow purity, a more perfect serenity and warmth, than at earlier periods of the day. The shadows of great clouds lay in vast lovely shapes of purple blue over the whole visible tract of country, contrasting in exquisite beauty with the sunny glimpses of landscape shining between them. Beneath us, the picturesque confusion of rocks, topped by the quaint form of the Cheese-Wring, seemed to fade away mysteriously into the grass of the moorland, far out on which, a little lake, called Dosmerry Pool, shone in the sunlight with dazzling, diamond brightness. In the opposite direction, towards the west, the immediate prospect was formed by the rugged granite ridges, towering one behind the other, of Sharp Torr and Kilmarth—the long hazy outlines of the plains and hill-tops of southern and inland Cornwall closing grandly the distant view.

All that we had hitherto seen

on and around the spot where we now stood, had not yet exhausted its objects of attraction for strangers. Descending the rocks in a new direction, after taking a last look at the noble prospect visible from their summit, we proceeded to a particular spot near the base of the hill, where the granite was scattered in remarkable abundance, to examine some stones which are well known to all quarrymen in the district, as associated with an extraordinary story and an extraordinary man.

During the earlier half of the last century, there lived in one of the villages on the outskirts of the moor on which the Cheese-Wring stands, a stone-cutter named Daniel Gumb. This man was noted among his companions for his taciturn eccentric character, and for his attachment to mathematical studies. Such leisure time as he had at his command he regularly devoted to pondering over some of the problems of Euclid; he was always drawing mysterious complications of angles, triangles, and parallelograms, on pieces of slate, and on the blank leaves of such few books as he possessed. But he made very slow progress in his studies. Poverty and hard work increased with the increase of his family. At last he was obliged to give up his mathematics altogether. He labored early and labored late; he hacked and hewed at the hard material out of which he was doomed to cut a livelihood, with unremitting diligence; but want still kept up with him, toil as he might to outstrip it, in the career of life. In short, times went on so ill with Daniel, that in despair of ever finding them better he took a sudden resolution of altering his manner of living, and retreating from the difficulties that he could not overcome. He went to the hill on which the Cheese-Wring stands, and looked about among the rocks until he found some that had accidentally formed themselves into a sort of rude cavern. He widened this recess; he propped up a great wide slab, that made its roof, at one end where it seemed likely to sink without some additional support; he cut out in a rock that rose above this, what he called his bed room—a mere longitudinal slit in the stone, the length and breadth of his body, into which he could roll himself sideways when he wanted to enter it. After he had completed this last piece of work, he scratched the date of the year of his extraordinary labors (1735) on the rock; and then, he went and fetched his wife and family away from their cottage, and lodged them in the cavity he had made —never to return during his life time, to the dwellings of men!

Here he lived and here he worked; when he could get work. He paid no rent now; he wanted no furniture; he struggled no longer to appear to the world as his equals appeared: he required no more money than would procure for his family and himself the barest necessaries of life; he suffered no interruptions from his fellow workmen, who thought him a madman, and kept out of his way; and—most precious privilege of his new position—he could at last shorten his hours of labor, and lengthen his hours of study with impunity. Having no temptations to spend

money, no hard demands of an inexorable landlord to answer, whether he was able or not, he could now work with his brains as well as his hands; he could toil at his problems upon the tops of rocks, under the open sky, amid the silence of the great moor; he could scratch his lines and angles on thousands of stone tablets freely offered around him. The great ambition of his life was greatly achieved.

Henceforth, nothing moved, nothing depressed him. The storms of winter rushed over his unsheltered dwelling, but failed to dislodge him. He taught his family to brave solitude and cold in the cavern among the rocks, as *he* braved them. In the cell that he had scooped out for his wife (the roof of which has now fallen in) some of his children died, and others were born. They point out the rock where he used to sit on calm summer evenings, absorbed over his tattered copy of Euclid. A geometrical "puzzle," traced by his hand, still appears on the stone. When he died, what became of his family, no one can tell. Nothing more is known of him than that he never quitted the wild place of his exile; that he continued to the day of his death to live contentedly with his wife and children, amid a civilized nation, and during a civilized age, under such a shelter as would hardly serve the first savage tribes of the most savage country—to live, starving out poverty and want on a barren wild; defying both to follow him among the desert rocks—to live, forsaking all things, enduring all things for the love of Knowledge, which he could still nobly follow through trials and extremities, without encouragement of fame or profit, without vantage ground of station or wealth, for its own dear sake. Beyond this, nothing but conjecture is left. The cell, the bed-place, the lines traced on the rocks, the inscription of the year in which he hewed his habitation out of them, are all the memorials that remain of a man, whose strange and striking story might worthily adorn the pages of a tragic yet glorious history which is still unwritten—the history of the martyrs of knowledge in humble life!

We lingered about the wild habitation of Daniel Gumb, until sunset. Long shadows of rocks lay over the moor, the breeze had freshened and was already growing chill, when we set forth, at last, to trace our way back to Liskeard. It was too late now to think of proceeding on our journey, and sleeping at the next town on our line of route.

Returning in a new direction, we found ourselves once more walking on a high road, just as the sun had gone down, and the grey twilight was falling softly over the landscape. Once we stopped near a lonely farm-house, and went into a field to look at another old British monument to which our attention had been directed. We saw a square stone column—now broken into two pieces—ornamented with a curiously carved pattern, and exhibiting an inscription cut in irregular, mysterious characters. Those who have deciphered them, have discovered that the column is nearly a thousand years old; that it was raised as a sepulchral monument over the body of Dun-

gerth, King of Cornwall; and that the letters carved on it form some Latin words, which may be thus translated: — "PRAY FOR THE SOUL OF DUNGERTH." Seen in the dim light of the last quiet hour of evening, there was something solemn and impressive about the appearance of the old tombstone—simple though it was. After leaving it, we soon entered once more into regions of fertility. Cottages, corn-fields, and trees surrounded us again. We passed through pleasant little valleys; over brooks, crossed by quaint wooden bridges; up and down long lanes, where tall hedges and clustering trees darkened the way, where the stag-beetle flew slowly by, winding "his small but sullen horn," and glow-worms glimmered brightly in the long, dewy grass by the roadside. The moon, rising at first red and dull in a misty sky, brightened as we went on, and lighted us brilliantly along all that remained of our night-walk back to the town.

I have only to add, that, when we arrived at Liskeard, the lachrymose landlady of the inn benevolently offered us for supper the identical piece of cold "*corned beef*" which she had offered us for dinner the day before; and further proposed that we should feast at our ease in the private dungeon dining-room at the back of the house. But one mode of escape was left—we decamped at once to the large and comfortable hotel of the town; and there our pleasant day's pilgrimage to the moors of Cornwall concluded as agreeably as it had begun.

CHAPTER V.

CORNISH PEOPLE.

INHABITING the westernmost extremity of England, and little mixed up with strangers from other countries, the Cornish people are left, as it were, to straggle in the rear of the great onward march of the busy world before them. Modern improvements reach them very gradually. Their new railway (made since the author visited the county in the autumn of 1850) is, as yet, of very inconsiderable length, merely connecting the two western towns of Penzance and Redruth—which are not more than eighteen or nineteen miles apart. Thus slow in following the progress of the times, the people of Cornwall still exhibit much that is primitive and simple in their manners, much that is traditional and superstitious in their national modes of thought, and much that is kindly and honest in their behavior to strangers and their behavior to each other. It is my purpose, in this place, to communicate some few facts relating generally to their social condition, which were kindly furnished me by Cornish friends, together with such haphazard anecdotes and illustrations of popular character as I collected from my own observations in the humble capacity of a tourist on foot.

If the reader desires to compare at a glance the condition of Cornish people with the condition of their brethren in other parts of England, one small particle of practical information will enable him to do so at once. In the Government Tables of Mortality

for Cornwall there are no returns of death from starvation.

Many causes combine to secure the poor of Cornwall from that last worst consequence of poverty to which the poor in most of the other divisions of England are more or less exposed. The number of inhabitants in the county is stated by the last census at 341,269—the number of square miles that they have to live on, being 1327. This will be found, on proper computation and comparison, to be considerably under the average population of a square mile throughout the rest of England. Thus, the supply of men for all purposes does not appear to be greater than the demand in Cornwall. The remote situation of the county guarantees it against any considerable influx of strangers to compete with the natives for work on their own ground. We met a farmer there, who was so far from being besieged in harvest time by claimants for labor on his land, that he was obliged to go forth to seek them himself at a neighboring town, and was doubtful whether he should find men enough left him unemployed at the mines and the fisheries, to gather in his crops in good time at two shillings a day and as much "victuals and drink" as they cared to have.

Another cause which has lately contributed, in some measure, to keep Cornwall free from the burthen of a surplus population of working men must not be overlooked. For the last three years, emigration has been more largely resorted to in that county, than perhaps in any other in England. Out of the population of the Penzance Union alone, nearly five per cent. left their native land for Australia, or New Zealand, in 1849. The potato-blight is assigned as the chief cause of this; for it has damaged seriously the growth of a vegetable, from the sale of which at the London markets the Cornish agriculturists derived large profits, and on which (with their fish) the Cornish poor depend as a staple article of food.

It is by the mines and fisheries (of both which I shall speak particularly in another place) that Cornwall is compensated for a soil, too barren in many parts of the county, to be ever well cultivated, except at such an expenditure of capital as no mere farmer can afford. From the inexhaustible mineral treasures in the earth, and from equally inexhaustible shoals of pilchards which annually visit the coast, the working population of Cornwall derive their regular means of support, where agriculture would fail them. At the mines, the regular rate of wages is from forty to fifty shillings a month; but miners have opportunities of making more than this. By what is termed "working on tribute," that is, agreeing to excavate the mineral lodes for a percentage on the value of the metal they raise, some of them have been known to make as much as six, and even ten pounds each, in a month. When they are unlucky in their working speculations, or, perhaps, thrown out of employment altogether by the shutting up of a mine, they still have a fair opportunity of obtaining farm labor, which is paid for (out of harvest time) at the rate of nine shillings a week. But this is a resource of which they are rarely obliged to take advantage. A

plot of common ground is included with the cottages that are let to them; and the cultivation of this, helps to keep them and their families, in bad times, until they find an opportunity of resuming work; when they may perhaps make as much in one month, as an agricultural laborer can in twelve.

The fisheries not only employ all the inhabitants of the coast, but, in the pilchard season, many of the farm work-people as well. Ten thousand persons—men, women, and children—derive their regular support from the fisheries; which are so amazingly productive, that the "drift," or deep-sea fishing, in Mount's Bay alone, is calculated to realize, on the average, 30,000*l.* per annum.

To the employment thus secured for the poor in the mines and fisheries is to be added, as an advantage, the cheapness of rent and living in Cornwall. Good cottages are let at from fifty shillings, to between three and four pounds a-year—turf for firing grows in plenty on the vast tracts of common land overspreading the country—all sorts of vegetables are abundant and cheap, with the exception of potatoes, which have so decreased, in consequence of the disease, that the winter stock is now imported from France, Belgium, and Holland. The early potatoes, however, grown in May and June, are still cultivated in large quantities, and realize on exportation a very high price. Corn generally sells a little above the average. Fish is always within the reach of the poorest people. In a good season, a dozen pilchards are sold for one penny. Happily for themselves, the poor in Cornwall have none of the senseless prejudices against fish, so obstinately adhered to by the poor in many other parts of England. A Cornishman's national pride is in his pilchards—he likes to talk of them, and boast about them to strangers; and with reason, for he depends for the main support of life on the tribute of these little fish which the sea yields annually in almost countless shoals.

The workhouse system in Cornwall is said, by those who are well qualified to form an opinion on the subject, to be generally well administered; the Unions in the eastern part of the county being the least stringent in their regulations, and the most liberal in giving out-of-door relief.

Such, briefly, but I think not incorrectly stated, is the condition of the poor in Cornwall, in relation to their means of subsistence as a class. Looking to the fact that the number of laborers there is not too much for the labor; comparing the rate of wages with rent, and the price of provisions; setting the natural advantages of the county fairly against its natural disadvantages, it is impossible not to conclude that the Cornish poor suffer less by their poverty, and enjoy more opportunities of improving their social position, than the majority of their brethren in many other counties of England. The general demeanor and language of the people themselves amply warrant this conclusion. The Cornish are essentially a cheerful, contented race. The views of the working men are remarkably moderate and sensible—I never met with so few grumblers anywhere.

My opportunities of correctly

estimating the state of education among the people, were not sufficiently numerous to justify me in offering to the reader more than a mere opinion on the subject. Such few observations as I was able to make, inclined me to think that, in education, the mass of the population was certainly below the average in England, with one exception—that of the classes employed in the mines. All of these men, with whom I held any communication, would not have been considered badly-informed persons in a higher condition of life. They possessed much more than a common mechanical knowledge of their own calling, and even showed a very fair share of information on the subject of the history and antiquities of their native county. As usual, the agricultural inhabitants appeared to rank lowest in the scale of education and general intelligence. Among this class, and among the fishermen, the strong superstitious feelings of the ancient days of Cornwall still survive and promise long to remain, handed down from father to son as heir-looms of tradition, gathered together in a remote period, and venerable in virtue of their antiquity. The notion, for instance, that no wound will fester as long as the instrument by which it was inflicted is kept bright and clean, still prevails extensively among them. But a short time since, a boy in Cornwall was placed under the care of a medical man (who related the anecdote to me) for a wound in the back from a pitchfork; his relatives—cottagers of respectability—firmly believe that his cure was accelerated by the pains they took to keep the prongs of the pitchfork in a state of the highest polish, night and day, throughout the whole period of his illness, and down to the last hour of his complete restoration to health.

Another and a more remarkable instance of the superstitions prevailing among the least educated classes of the people, was communicated to me by the same informant — a gentleman whose life has been passed in Cornwall, and who is highly and deservedly respected by all those among whom he resides.

A small farmer living in one of the most western districts of the county, died some years back of what was supposed at the time to be "English Cholera." A few weeks after his decease, his wife married again. This circumstance excited some attention in the neighhorhood. It was remembered that the woman had lived on very bad terms with her late husband, that she had on many occasions exhibited strong symptoms of possessing a very vindictive temper, and that during the farmer's lifetime she had openly manifested rather more than a Platonic preference for the man whom she subsequently married. Suspicion was generally excited: people began to doubt whether the first husband had died fairly. At length, the proper order was applied for, and his body was disinterred. On examination, enough arsenic to have poisoned three men was found in his stomach. The wife was accused of murdering him, was tried, convicted on the clearest evidence, and hung. Very shortly after she had suffered

capital punishment, horrible stories of a ghost were widely circulated. Certain people declared that they had seen a ghastly resemblance of the murderess, robed in her winding-sheet, with the black mark of the rope round her swollen neck, standing on stormy nights upon her husband's grave, and digging there with a spade in hideous imitation of the actions of the men who had disinterred the corpse for medical examination. This was fearful enough—nobody dared go near the place after nightfall. But soon, another circumstance was talked of, in connection with the poisoner, which affected the tranquillity of people's minds in the village where she had lived, and where it was believed she had been born, more seriously even than the ghost-story itself.

Near the church of this village there was a well, celebrated among the peasantry of the district for one remarkable property—every child baptized in its water (with which the church was duly supplied on christening occasions) was secure from ever being hung. No one doubted that all the babies fortunate enough to be born and baptized in the parish, though they might live to the age of Methuselah, and might during that period commit all the capital crimes recorded in the "Newgate Calendar," were still destined to keep quite clear of the summary jurisdiction of Jack Ketch—no one doubted this, until the story of the apparition of the murderess began to be spread abroad. Then, awful misgivings arose in the popular mind. A woman who had been born close by the magical well, and who had therefore in all probability been baptized in its water like her neighbors of the parish, had nevertheless been most undoubtedly and completely hung. However, probability was not always truth—everybody determined that the baptismal register of the poisoner should be sought for, and that it should be thus officially ascertained whether she had been christened with the well water, or not. After much trouble, the important document was discovered—not where it was first looked after, but in a neighboring parish vestry. A mistake had been made about the hanged woman's birth-place—she had not been baptized in the local church, and had therefore not been protected by the marvellous virtue of the local water. Unutterable was the joy and triumph of this discovery throughout the village—the wonderful character of the parish well was wonderfully vindicated—its celebrity immediately spread wider than ever. The peasantry of the neighboring districts began to send for the renowned water before christenings; and many of them actually continue, to this day, to bring it corked up in bottles to their churches, and to beg particularly that it may be used whenever they present their children to be baptized.

Such instances of superstition as this—and others equally true might be quoted—afford, perhaps, of themselves, the best evidence of the low state of education among the people from whom they are produced. It is, however, only fair to state, that children in Cornwall are now enabled to partake of advantages which were probably not offered to their

parents. Good National Schools are in operation everywhere, and are—as far as my own inquiries authorize me to report—well attended by pupils recruited from the ranks of the poorest classes.

Of the social qualities of the Cornish all that can be written may be written conscientiously in terms of the highest praise. Traveling as my companion and I did, in a manner which was perfectly new to the majority of the people—who were only accustomed to see such few strangers as visited their county driving about in carriages, or traveling expeditiously along high roads in stage coaches—we found constant opportunities of studying the most amusing eccentricities of the popular character. We perplexed some, we amused others: here, we were welcomed familiarly by the people, as traveling pedlars with our packs on our backs; there, we were curiously regarded at an awful distance, and respectfully questioned in circumlocutory phrases as to our secret designs in walking through the country. Thus, viewing us sometimes as their equals, sometimes as mysteriously superior to them, the peasantry unconsciously exhibited many of their most characteristic peculiarities without reserve. We looked at the spectacle of their social life from the most searching point of view, for we looked at it from behind the scenes.

The manners of the Cornish of all ranks, down to the lowest, are remarkably distinguished by courtesy—a courtesy of that kind which is quite independent of artificial breeding, and which proceeds solely from natural motives of kindness and from an innate anxiety to please. Few of the people pass you without a salutation. Civil questions are always answered civilly. No propensity to jeer at strangers is exhibited—on the contrary, great solicitude is displayed to afford them any assistance that they may require; and displayed, moreover, without the slightest appearance of a mercenary motive. Thus, if you stop to ask your way, you are not merely directed for a mile or two on, and then told to ask again; but directed straight to the end of your destination, no matter how far off. Turnings to the right, and turnings to the left, short cuts across moors five miles away, churches that you must keep on this hand, and rocks that you must keep on that, are impressed upon your memory with the most laborious minuteness, and shouted after you over and over again as long as you are within hearing. If the utmost anxiety to give the utmost quantity of good advice could always avail against accident or forgetfulness, no traveler in Cornwall, who asks his way as he goes, need ever lose himself.

When people possess the virtue of natural courtesy they are seldom found wanting in other higher virtues that are akin to it. Household affection, ready hospitality, and great gratitude for small rewards of services rendered, are all to be found among the Cornish peasantry. Their fondness for their children is very pleasant to see. A word of inquiry or praise addressed to the mother makes her face glow with delight, and sends her away at once in search of the missing

members of her little family, who are ranged before you triumphantly, with smooth hair and carefully wiped faces, ready to be reviewed in a row. Both father and mother often wish you, at parting, a good wife and a large family (if you are not married already), just as they wish you a pleasant journey and a prosperous return home again.

Of Cornish hospitality we experienced many proofs, one of which may be related as a sample. Arriving late at a village, we found some difficulty in arousing the people of the inn. While we were waiting at the door, we heard a man who lived in a cottage near at hand, and of whom we had asked our way on the road, inquiring of some female member of his family, whether she could make up a spare bed. We had met this man proceeding in our direction, and had so far outstripped him in walking, that we had been waiting outside the inn about a quarter of an hour before he got home. When the woman answered his question in the negative, he directed her to put clean sheets on his own bed, and then came out to tell us that if we failed to obtain admission at the public-house, a lodging for the night was ready for us under his own roof. We found on inquiry, afterwards, that he had looked out of the window, after getting home, while we were still disturbing the village by a continuous series of assaults on the inn door; had recognized us in the moonlight; and had thereupon not only offered us his bed, but had got out of it himself to do so. When we finally succeeded in gaining admittance to the inn, he declined an invitation to sup with us, and wishing us a good night's rest, returned to his home. I should mention, at the same time, that another bed was offered to us at the vicarage, by the clergyman of the parish; and that after this gentleman had himself seen that we were properly accommodated by our landlady, he left us with an invitation to breakfast with him the next morning. Thus is hospitality practised in Cornwall—a county where, it must be remembered, a stranger is doubly a stranger, in relation to provincial sympathies; where the national feeling is almost entirely merged in the local feeling; where a man speaks of himself as *Cornish* in much the same spirit as a Welshman speaks of himself as Welsh.

In like manner, another instance drawn from my own experience, will best display the anxiety which we found generally testified by the Cornish poor to make the best and most grateful return in their power for any thing which they considered as a favor kindly bestowed. Such little anecdotes as I here relate in illustration of popular character, cannot, I think, be considered trifling; for it is by trifles, after all, that we gain our truest appreciation of the marking signs of good or evil in the dispositions of our fellow-beings; just as in the beating of a single artery under the touch, we discover an indication of the strength or weakness of the whole vital frame.

On the granite cliffs at the Land's End I met with an old man, seventy-two years of age, of whom I asked some questions

relative to the extraordinary rocks scattered about this part of the coast. He immediately opened his whole budget of local anecdotes, telling them in a quavering high-treble voice, which was barely audible above the dash of the breakers beneath, and the fierce whistling of the wind among the rocks around us. However, the old fellow went on talking incessantly, hobbling along before me, up and down steep paths and along the very brink of a fearful precipice, with as much coolness as if his sight was as clear and his step as firm as in his youth. When he had shown me all that he could show, and had thoroughly exhausted himself with talking, I gave him a shilling at parting. He appeared to be perfectly astonished by a remuneration which the reader will doubtless consider the reverse of excessive; thanked me at the top of his voice; and then led me, in a great hurry, and with many mysterious nods and gestures, to a hollow in the grass, where he had spread on a clean pocket-handkerchief a little stock-in-trade of his own, consisting of barnacles, bits of rock and ore, and specimens of dried seaweed. Pointing to these, he told me to take any thing I liked, as a present in return for what I had given him. He would not hear of my buying any thing; he was not, he said, a regular guide, and I had paid him more already than such an old man was worth—what I took out of his handkerchief I must take as a present only. I saw by his manner that he would be really mortified if I contested the matter with him, so as a present I received one of his pieces of rock—I had no right to deny him the pleasure of doing a kind action, because there happened to be a few more shillings in my pocket than in his.

Nothing can be much better adapted to show how simple and unsophisticated the Cornish character still remains in many respects, than Cornish notions of organizing a public festival, and Cornish enjoyment of that festival when it is organized. We had already seen how they managed a public boat-race at Looe, and we saw again how they conducted the preparations for the same popular festival, on a larger scale, at the coast town of Fowey.

In the first place, public feeling was stimulated by music at an uncomfortably early hour in the morning. Two horn players and a clarionet player; a very fat man who blew through a very small fife and kept time with his head; and a withered little man who beat furiously on a mighty drum, drew up in martial array, one behind the other, before the principal inn. Then, two boys, staring about them in an immensely important manner, and carrying flags which bore rather a suspicious resemblance to Indian pocket handkerchiefs sewn together, formed in front of the musicians. Then, two corpulent, solemn, doctor-of-divinity-looking men, formed in their turn on each side of the boys; and then the procession started—walking briskly up and down, and in and out, and around and around the same streets, over and over again; the musicians playing on all their instruments at once (drum included), without a moment's intermission on the part of any one of them. Nothing could exceed

the gravity and silence of the popular concourse that followed this grotesque procession. The solemn composure on the countenances of the two corpulent men who went before it, was reflected on the features of the smallest boy who followed humbly behind. The harmonic ceremonies seemed to be considered by all the townspeople, as of far too impressive a nature to be greeted by unseemly merriment. Profound musical amateurs in attendance at a classical quartett concert, could have exhibited no graver or more breathless attention than that displayed by the inhabitants of Fowey, as they marched at the heels of the peripatetic town-band.

But while the music was proceeding, another adjunct to the dignity and beauty of the festival was in course of preparation, which ultimately appealed more strongly to popular sympathy even than the band and procession. A quantity of young trees—miserable little saplings cut short in their early infancy—were brought into the town, curiously sharpened at the stems. Holes were rapidly drilled in the ground, here, there, and everywhere, for their reception, at corners of house walls. While men outside set them up, women in a high state of excitement appeared at first-floor windows with long pieces of string, which they fastened to the branches to steady the trees at the top, hauling them about this way and that most unmercifully during the operation, and then vanishing to tie the loose ends of the lines to bars of grates and legs of tables. Mazes of long tight strings ran all across our room at the inn; broken twigs and drooping leaves peered in sadly at us through the three windows that lighted it. We were driven about from corner to corner out of the way of this rigging, until no refuge was left, by an imperious old woman, who fastened and fettered the wretched trees with as fierce an air as if they were criminals whom she was handcuffing, and who at last fairly told us that she thought we had better go out again, and see how beautiful things looked from the outside.

The prospect of affairs in the street was rather uproarious than beautiful. At the sight of the trees, the long-repressed enthusiasm of the juvenile population found vent in a shout. The band marched by, playing furiously; but the boys deserted it. The people from the country, hastening into the town, hot and eager, paused, reckless of the music, reckless of the flags, reckless of the procession, to look forth upon the streets "with verdure clad." The popularity of the Sons of Apollo was a thing of the past already! Nothing can well be imagined more miserable and more ugly than the appearance of the trees, standing strung into unnatural positions, and looking half dead already; but they evidently inspired the liveliest public satisfaction. Women returned to the windows to give a last perfecting tug to their branches; men patted approvingly with spades the loose earth around their stems. Spectators, one by one, took a near view and a distant view, and then walked gently by and took a cursory view, and finally gathered together in little groups and took a general view. Never was enjoyment more complete than the enjoyment

afforded by the trees. If any of those amiable demagogues from foreign parts, who kindly return our national hospitality by predicting our national downfall, had been in Fowey on the day of the boat-race, they would certainly have thought that the English Revolution had begun in earnest by the planting of trees of liberty in a Cornish town, and would have "improved the occasion" on the spot, by haranguing the mob from the top of a wagon which stood most invitingly for the purpose immediately in front of the inn.

But, after all, I shall perhaps best illustrate the almost primitive simplicity of character displayed by the Cornish—especially the country people—by leaving the further and less amusing preparations for inaugurating the Fowey boat-race untold, and proceeding at once to the relation of some of the peculiarities of behavior and remark which the appearance of my companion and myself called forth in all parts of Cornwall. The mere sight of two strangers walking along with such appendages as knapsacks strapped on their shoulders, seemed of itself to provoke the most unbounded wonder. We were stared at with almost incredible pertinacity and good humor. People hard at work, left off to look at us; whole groups congregated at cottage doors, walked into the middle of the road when they saw us approach, looked at us in front from that commanding point of view until we passed them, and then wheeled around with one accord and gazed at us behind as long as we were within sight. Little children ran in-doors to bring out large children as we drew near. Farmers overtaking us on horseback, pulled in, and passed at a walk to examine us at their ease. With the exception of bedridden people and people in prison, I believe that the whole population of Cornwall looked at us all over—back view and front view—from head to foot!

This staring was nowhere accompanied, either on the part of young or old, by a jeering word or an impertinent look. We evidently astonished the people, but we never tempted them to forget their natural good-nature, forbearance, and self-restraint. On our side, the attentive scrutiny to which we were subjected, was at first not a little perplexing. It was difficult not to doubt occasionally whether some unpleasantly remarkable change had not suddenly taken place in our personal appearance—whether we might not have turned green or blue on our travels, or have got noses as long as the preposterous nose of the luckless traveler through Strasburgh, in the tale of Slawkenbergius. It was not until we had been some days in the county that we began to discover, by some such indications as the following, that we owed the public attention to our knapsacks, and not to ourselves.

We enter a small public-house by the roadside to get a draught of beer. In the kitchen, we behold the landlord and a tall man who is a customer. Both stare as a matter of course; the tall man especially, after taking one look at our knapsacks, fixes his eyes firmly on us and sits bolt upright on the bench without

saying a word—he is evidently prepared for the worst we can do. We get into conversation with the landlord, a jovial, talkative fellow, who desires greatly to know what we are, if we have no objection. We ask him, what he thinks we are?—"Well," says the landlord, pointing to my friend's knapsack, which has a square ruler strapped to it for architectural drawings—"well, I think you are both of you *mappers*—mappers who come here to make new roads—you may be coming to make a railroad, I dare say—we've had mappers in the country before this—I know a mapper myself—here's both your good healths!" We drink the landlord's good health in return, and disclaim the honor of being "mappers;" we walk through the country (we tell him) for pleasure alone, and take any roads we can get, without wanting to make new ones. The landlord would like to know, if that is the case, why we carry those weights at our backs? Because we want to take our luggage about with us. Couldn't we pay to ride? Yes we could. And yet we like walking better? Yes we do. This last answer utterly confounds the tall customer, who has been hitherto listening intently to the dialogue. It is evidently too much for his credulity—he pays his reckoning, and walks out in a hurry without uttering a word. The landlord appears to be convinced, but it is only in appearance: he looks at us suspiciously in spite of himself. We leave him standing at his door, keeping his eye on us as long as we are in sight, still evidently persuaded that we are "mappers," but "mappers" of a bad order whose presence is fraught with some unknown peril to the security of the Queen's highway.

We get on into another district. Here, public opinion is not flattering. Some of the groups, gathered together in the road to observe us, begin to speculate on our characters before we are quite out of hearing. Then, this sort of dialogue, spoken in serious, subdued tones, just reaches us: Question: "What can they be?" Answer: "*Trodgers!*"

This is particularly humiliating, because it happens to be true. We certainly do trudge, and are therefore properly, though rather unceremoniously, called trudgers, or "trodgers." But we sink to a lower depth yet, a little further on. We are viewed as objects for pity. It is a fine evening; we stop and lean against a bank by the roadside to look at the sunset. An old woman comes tottering by on high pattens, very comfortably and nicely clad. She sees our knapsacks, and instantly stops in front of us, and begins to moan lamentably. Not understanding at first what this means, we ask respectfully if she feels at all ill? "Ah, poor fellows! poor fellows!" she sighs in answer, "obliged to carry all your baggage on your own backs!—very hard! poor lads! very hard, indeed!" And the good old soul goes away groaning over our evil plight, and mumbling something which sounds very like an assurance that she has got no money to give us.

In another part of the county we rise again gloriously in worldly consideration. We pass a cot-

tage; a woman looks out after us, over the low garden wall, and rather hesitatingly calls us back. I approach her first, and am thus saluted: "If you please, sir, what have you got to sell?" Again, an old man meets us on the road, stops, cheerfully taps our knapsacks with his stick, and says: "Aha! you're tradesmen, eh? things to sell? I say, have you got any tea?" (pronounced *tay*;) "I'll buy some *tay!*" Further on, we approach a group of miners breaking ore. As we pass by, we hear one asking amazedly, "What have they got to sell in those things on their backs?" and another answering, in the prompt tones of a guesser who is convinced that he guesses right, "Guinea-pigs!"

It is unfortunately impossible to convey to the reader any adequate idea, by mere description, of the extraordinary gravity of manner, the looks of surprise and the tones of conviction which accompanied these various popular conjectures as to our calling and station in life, and which added immeasurably at the time to their comic effect. Curiously enough, whenever they took the form of questions, any jesting in returning an answer never seemed either to be appreciated or understood by the country people. Serious replies shared much the same fate as jokes. Everybody asked whether we could pay for riding, and nobody believed that we preferred walking, if we could. So we soon gave up any idea of affording any information at all; and walked through the country comfortably as mappers, trodgers, tradesmen, guinea-pig-mongers, and poor back-burdened vagabond lads, altogether, or one at a time, just as the peasantry pleased.

I have by no means communicated to the reader all the conjectures formed about us, for the simple reason that many of them, when they ran to any length, were by no means so comprehensible as could be desired. It will readily be imagined, that in a county which had a language of its own (something similar to the Welsh) down to the time of Edward VI., if not later—in a county where this language continued to be spoken among the humbler classes until nearly the end of the seventeenth century, and where it still gives their names to men, places, and implements — some remnants of it must attach themselves to the dialect of English now spoken by the lower orders. This is enough of itself to render Cornish talk not very easy to be understood by ordinary strangers; but the difficulty of comprehending it is still further increased by the manner in which the people speak. They pronounce rapidly and indistinctly, often running separate syllables into one another through a sentence, until the whole sounds like one long fragmentary word. To the student in philology a series of conversations with the Cornish poor would, I imagine, afford ample matter for observation of the most interesting kind. Some of their expressions have a character that is quite patriarchal. Young men, for instance, are addressed by their elders as, "my son"—every thing eatable, either for man or beast, is commonly denominated "meat."

It may be expected, before I close this hasty sketch of the Cornish people, that I should

touch on the dark side of the picture—unfinished though it is—which I have endeavored to draw. But I have little to communicate on the subject of offences in Cornwall, beyond a few words about "wrecking" and smuggling.

Opinions have been divided among well-informed persons as to the truth or exaggeration of those statements of travelers and historians, which impute the habitual commission of outrages and robberies on sufferers by shipwreck to the Cornish of former generations. Without entering into this question of the past, which can only be treated as a matter for discussion, I am happy, in proceeding at once to the present, to be able to state, as a matter of fact, that "wrecking" is a crime unknown in the Cornwall of our day. So far from maltreating shipwrecked persons, the inhabitants of the sea-shore risk their lives to save them. I make this assertion, on the authority of a gentleman whose life has been passed in the West of Cornwall; whose avocations take him much among the poor of all ranks and characters; and who has himself seen wrecked sailors rescued from death by the courage and humanity of the population of the coast.

In reference to smuggling, many years have passed without one of those fatal encounters between smugglers and revenue officers which, in other days, gave a dark and fearful character to the contraband trade in Cornwall. So well is the coast watched, that no smuggling of any consequence can now take place. It is only the oldest Cornish men who can give you any account, from personal experience, of adventures in "running a cargo;" and those that I heard related were by no means of the romantic or interesting order. As to offences in general—both heavy and light—the proportion of offenders of all kinds to the population, was stated by the Reports of 1835, as 1 in 1461.

Beyond this, I have nothing further to relate regarding criminal matters. It may not unreasonably be doubted whether a subject so serious and so extensive as the Statistics of Crime, is not out of the scope of a book like the present, whose only object is to tell a simple fireside story which may amuse an idle, or solace a mournful, hour. Moreover, remembering the assistance and the kindness that my companion and I met with throughout Cornwall—and those only who have traveled on foot can appreciate how much the enjoyment of exploring a country may be heightened or decreased, according to the welcome given to the stranger by the inhabitants—remembering, too, that we walked late at night, through districts inhabited only by the roughest and poorest classes, entirely unmolested; and that we trusted much on many occasions to the honesty of the people, and never found cause to repent our trust—I cannot but feel that it would be an ungracious act to ransack newspapers and Reports to furnish materials for recording in detail, the vices of a population whom I have only personally known by their virtues. Let you and I, reader, leave off with the same pleasant impressions of the Cornish people—you,

ratively modern in date, and superlatively ugly in design. A miserable altar-piece, daubed in gaudy colors on the window above the communion-table, is the only approach to any attempt at embellishment in the interior. In short, the town has nothing to offer to attract the stranger, but a public festival—a sort of barbarous carnival—held there annually on the 8th of May. This festival is said to be of very ancient origin, and is called "The Furry"—an old Cornish word, signifying a gathering; and, at Helston particularly, a gathering in celebration of the return of spring. The Furry begins early in the morning with singing to an accompaniment of drums and kettles. Then, all the people in the town leave off work and scamper into the country; then they scamper back again, garlanded with leaves and flowers, and caper about hand-in-hand through the streets, and in and out of all the houses, without opposition; being joined in their antics, it is said, even by the "genteel" resident families, who wind up the day's capering consistently enough by a night's capering at a grand ball. A full account of these extraordinary absurdities may be found in Polwhele's "History of Cornwall."

But, though thus uninteresting in itself, Helston must be visited by every tourist in Cornwall, for the sake of the grand, the almost unrivalled scenery to be met with near it. The town is not only the best starting-point from which to explore the noble line of coast rocks which ends at the Lizard Head; but possesses the further recommendation of lying in the immediate vicinity of the largest lake in Cornwall—Loo Pool.

The banks of Loo Pool stretch on either side to the length of two miles; the lake, which in summer occupies little more than half the space that it covers in winter, is formed by the flow of two or three small streams. You first reach it from Helston, after a walk of half a mile; and then see before you, on either hand, long ranges of hills, rising gently from the water's edge, covered with clustering trees, or occupied by wide corn-fields and sloping tracts of common land. So far, the scenery around Loo Pool resembles the scenery around other lakes; but, as you proceed, the view changes in the most striking and extraordinary manner. Walking on along the winding banks of the pool, you taste the water and find it soft and fresh, you see ducks swimming about in it from the neighboring farm-houses, you watch the rising of the fine trout for which it is celebrated—every object tends to convince you that you are wandering by the shores of an inland lake—when suddenly, at a turn in the hill slope, you are startled by the shrill cry of the gull, and the fierce roar of breakers thunders on your ear—you look over the light grey placid waters of the lake, and behold, stretching immediately above and beyond them, the expanse of the deep blue ocean, from which they are only separated by a mere strip of smooth white sand.

You hurry on, and reach this bar of sand which parts the great English Channel and the little Loo Pool—a child might run across it in a minute! You stand

in the centre—on one side, close at hand, water is dancing beneath the breeze in glassy, tiny ripples; on the other, equally close, water rolls in mighty waves, precipitated on the ground in dashing, hissing, writhing floods of the whitest foam—here, children are floating mimic boats on a mimic sea; there, the stateliest ships of England are sailing over the great deep—both scenes visible in one view. Rocky cliffs and arid sands appear in close combination with rounded fertile hills, and long grassy slopes; salt spray leaping over the first, spring-water lying calm beneath the last! No fairy vision of Nature that ever was imagined is more fantastic, or more lovely than this glorious reality, which brings all the most widely contrasted characteristics of a sea view and an inland view into the closest contact, and presents them in one harmonious picture to the eye.

The ridge of sand between Loo Pool and the sea, which, by impeding the flow of the inland streams spreads them in the form of a lake over the valley-ground between two hills, is formed by the action of storms from the south-west. Such, at least, is the modern explanation of the manner in which Loo Bar has been heaped up. But there is an ancient legend in connection with it, which tells a widely different story. It is said that the terrible Cornish giant, or ogre, Tregeagle, was trudging homewards one day, carrying a huge sack of sand on his back, which—being a giant of neat and cleanly habits—he designed should serve him for sprinkling his parlor floor. As he was passing along the top of the hills which now overlook Loo Pool, he heard a sound of scampering footsteps behind him; and, turning round, saw that he was hotly pursued by no less a person than the devil himself. Big as he was, Tregeagle, lost heart and ignominiously took to his heels: but the devil ran nimbly, ran steadily, ran without losing breath—ran, in short, *like* the devil. Tregeagle was fat, short-winded, had a load on his back, and lost ground at every step. At last, just as he reached the seaward extremity of the hills, he determined in despair to lighten himself of his burden, and thus to seize the only chance of escaping his enemy by superior fleetness of foot. Accordingly, he opened his huge sack in a great hurry, shook out all his sand over the precipice, between the sea and the river which then ran into it, and so formed in a moment the Bar of Loo Pool.

In the winter time, the lake is the cause and the scene of an extraordinary ceremony. The heavy incessant rains which then fall (ice is almost unknown in the moist climate of Cornwall), increase day by day the waters of the Pool, until they encroach over the whole of the low flat valley between Helston and the sea. Then, the smooth paths of turf, the little streams that run by their side—so pleasant to look on in the summer time—are hidden by the great overflow. Mill-wheels are stopped; cottages built on the declivities of the hills are threatened with inundation. Out on the bar, at high tide, but two or three feet of sand appear between the stormy sea on the one hand, and the stagnant swollen lake on the other.

If Loo Pool were measured now, it would be found to extend to a circumference of seven miles.

When the flooding of the lake has reached its climax, the millers, who are the principal sufferers by the overflow, prepare to cut a passage through the Bar for the superabundant waters of the Pool. Before they can do this, however, they must conform to a curious old custom which has been practised for centuries, and is retained down to the present day. Procuring two stout leathern purses, they tie up three half-pence in each, and then set off with them in a body to the Lord of the Manor. Presenting him with their purses, they state their case with all due formality, and request permission to cut their trench through the sand. In consideration of the three-penny recognition of his rights, the Lord of the Manor graciously accedes to the petition; and the millers, armed with their spades and shovels, start for the Bar.

Their projected labor is not great. A mere ditch suffices to establish the desired communication: and the water does the rest for itself. On one occasion, so high was the tide on one side, and so full the lake on the other, that a man actually scraped away sand enough with his stick, to give vent to the waters of the Pool. Thus, after no very hard work, the millers achieve their object; and the spectators watching on the hill, then behold a striking and tremendous scene.

Tearing away the sand on either side, floods of fresh water rush out furiously against floods of salt water leaping in, upheaved into mighty waves by the winter gale. A foaming roaring battle between two opposing forces of the same element takes place. The noise is terrific—it is heard like thunder, at great distances off. At last, the heavy, smooth, continuous flow of the fresh water prevails even over the power of the ocean. Farther and farther out, rushing through a wider and wider channel every minute, pour the great floods from the land, until the salt water is stained with an ochre color, over a surface of twenty miles. But their force is soon spent—soon, the lake sinks lower and lower away from the slope of the hills. Then, with the high tide, the sea reappears triumphantly, dashing and leaping, in clouds of spray, through the channel in the sand—making the waters of the Pool brackish — now, threatening to swell them anew to overflowing—and now, at the ebb, leaving them to empty themselves again, in the manner of a great tidal river; until a storm from the south-west comes on; and then, fresh masses of sand and shingle are forced up—the channel is refilled—the bar is reconstructed as if by a miracle. Again, the scene—changed but for a short season—resumes its old features—again, there is a sea on one side, and a lake on the other. But now, the Pool occupies only its ordinary limits—now, the mill-wheels turn busily once more, and the smooth paths and gliding streams reappear in their former beauty, until the next winter rains shall come round, and the next winter floods shall submerge them again.

At the time when I visited the lake, its waters were unusually

low. Here, they ran, calm and shallow, into little, glassy, flowery creeks, that looked like fairies' bathing places. There, out in the middle, they hardly afforded depth enough for a duck to swim in. Near to the Bar, however, they spread forth wider and deeper; finely contrasted, in their dun color and perfect repose, with the brilliantly white foaming breakers on the other side. The surf forbade all hope of swimming; but, standing where the spent waves ran up deepest, and where the spray flew highest before the wind, I could take a natural shower-bath from the sea, in one direction; and the next moment, turning round in the other, could wash the sand off my feet luxuriously in the soft, fresh waters of Loo Pool.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LIZARD.

We had waited throughout one long rainy day at Helston—"remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow"—for a chance of finer weather before we started to explore the Lizard promontory. But our patience availed us little. The next morning, there was the soft, thick, misty, Cornish rain still falling, just as it had already fallen without cessation for twenty-four hours. To wait longer, in perfect inactivity, and in the dullest of towns—doubtful whether the sky would clear even in a week's time—was beyond mortal endurance. We shouldered our knapsacks, and started for the Lizard in defiance of rain, and in defiance of our landlady's reiterated assurances that we should lose our way in the mist, when we walked inland; and should slip into invisible holes, and fall over fog-veiled precipices among the rocks, if we ventured to approach the coast.

What sort of scenery we walked through, I am unable to say. The rain was above—the mud was below—the mist was all around us. The few objects, near at hand, that we did now and then see, dripped with wet, and had a shadowy visionary look. Sometimes, we met a forlorn cow steaming composedly by the roadside—or an old horse, standing up to his fetlocks in mire, and sneezing vociferously—or a good-humored peasant, who directed us on our road, and informed us, with a grin, that this sort of "fine rain" often lasted for a fortnight. Sometimes, we passed little villages, built in damp holes, where trees, cottages, women scampering backwards and forwards peevishly on domestic errands, big boys with empty sacks over their heads and shoulders, gossiping gloomily against barn walls, and ill-conditioned pigs grunting for admission at closed kitchen doors, all looked soaked through and through together. Nothing, in short, could be more dreary and comfortless than our walk for the first two hours. But, after that, as we approached "Lizard Town," the clouds began to part to seaward; layer after layer of mist drove past us, rolling before the wind; peeps of faint greenish-blue sky appeared and enlarged apace. By the time we had arrived at our destination, a white, watery sun-

light was falling over the wet landscape. The prognostications of our Cornish friends were pleasantly falsified. A fine day was in store for us after all.

The man who first distinguished the little group of cottages that we now looked on, by the denomination of Lizard *Town*, must have possessed magnificent ideas indeed on the subject of nomenclature. If the place looked like any thing in the world, it looked like a large collection of farm outbuildings without a farm-house. Muddy little lanes intersecting each other at every possible angle; ricketty little cottages turned about to all the points of the compass; ducks, geese, cocks, hens, pigs, cows, horses, dunghills, puddles, sheds, peat-stacks, timber, nets, seemed to be all indiscriminately huddled together where there was little or no room for them. To find the inn amid this confusion of animate and inanimate objects, was no easy matter; and when we at length discovered it, pushed our way through the live stock in the garden, and opened the kitchen door, this was the impressive and remarkable scene that was displayed before us:

We beheld a small room literally full of babies, and babies' mothers. Interesting infants of the tenderest possible age, finely draped in long clothes and short clothes, and shawls, and blankets, met the eye wherever it turned. There were babies propped up uncomfortably on the dresser, babies rocking snugly in wicker cradles, babies stretched out flat on their backs on women's knees, babies prone on the floor, toasting before a slow fire. Every one of these Cornish cherubs was crying in every variety of vocal key. Every one of their affectionate parents was talking at the top of her voice. Every one of their little elder brothers was screaming, squabbling, and tumbling down in the passage with prodigious energy and spirit. The mothers of England—and they only—can imagine the deafening and composite character of the noise which this large family party produced. To describe it is impossible.

Soon, while we looked on it, the domestic scene began to change. Even as porters, policemen, and workmen of all sorts, gathered together on the line of rails at a station, move aside quickly and with one accord out of the way of the heavy engine, slowly starting on its journey,—so did the congregated mothers in the inn kitchen now move back on either hand with their babies, and clear a path for the great bulk of the hostess leisurely advancing from the fire-side, to greet us at the door. From this most corpulent and complaisant of women, we received a hearty welcome, and a full explanation of the family orgies that were taking place under her roof. The great public meeting of all the babies in Lizard Town and the neighboring villages, on which we had intruded, had been convened by the local doctor, who had got down from London, what the landlady termed a "lot of fine fresh matter," and was now about to strike a tremendous blow at the small-pox, by vaccinating all the babies he could lay his hands on, together, at "one fell swoop." The surgi-

cal ceremonies were expected to begin in a few minutes.

This last piece of information sent us out of the house without a moment's delay. The sunlight had brightened gloriously since we had last beheld it—the rain was over—the mist was gone. But a short distance before us, rose the cliffs at the Lizard Head—the southernmost land in England—and to this point we now hastened, as the fittest spot from which to start on our rambles along the coast.

On our way thither, short as it was, we observed a novelty. In the South and West of Cornwall, the footpaths, instead of leading through or round the fields, are all on the top of the thick stone walls—some four feet high—which divide them. This curious arrangement for walking gives a startling and picturesque character to the figures of the country people, when you see them at a distance, striding along, not on the earth but above it, and often relieved throughout the whole length of their bodies against the sky. Preserving our equilibrium, on these elevated pathways, with some difficulty against the strong south-west wind that was now blowing in our faces, we soon reached the topmost rocks that crown the Lizard Head: and then, the whole noble line of coast and the wild stormy ocean burst grandly into view.

On each side of us, precipice over precipice, cavern within cavern, rose the great cliffs protecting the land against the raging sea. Three hundred feet beneath, the foam was boiling far out over a reef of black rocks. Above and around, flocks of sea-birds flew in ever-lengthening circles, or perched flapping their wings and sunning their plumage, on ledges of riven stone below us. Every object forming the wide sweep of the view was on the vastest and most majestic scale. The wild varieties of form in the jagged line of rocks stretched away eastward and westward, as far as the eye could reach; black shapeless masses of mist scowled over the whole landward horizon; the bright blue sky at the opposite point was covered with towering white clouds which moved and changed magnificently; the tossing and raging of the great bright sea was sublimely contrasted by the solitude and tranquility of the desert, overshadowed land—while ever and ever, sounding as they first sounded when the morning stars sang together, the rolling waves and the rushing wind pealed out their primeval music over the whole scene!

And now, when we began to examine the coast more in detail, inquiring the names of remarkable objects as we proceeded, we found ourselves in a country where each succeeding spot that the traveler visited was memorable for some mighty convulsion of Nature, or tragically associated with some gloomy story of shipwreck and death. Turning from the Lizard Head towards a cliff at some little distance, we passed through a field on our way, overgrown with sweet-smelling wild flowers, and broken up into low grassy mounds. This place is called "Pistol Meadow," and is connected with a terrible event which is still spoken of by the country people with superstitious awe.

Some hundred years since, a transport-ship, filled with troops, was wrecked on the reef off the Lizard Head. Two men only were washed ashore alive. Out of the fearful number that perished, two hundred corpses were driven up on the beach below Pistol Meadow; and there they were buried by tens and twenties together in great pits, the position of which is still revealed by the low irregular mounds that chequer the surface of the field. The place was named, in remembrance of the quantity of fire-arms—especially pistols—found about the wreck of the ill-fated ship, at low tide, on the reef below the cliffs. The peasantry still continue to regard Pistol Meadow with feelings of awe and horror, and fear to walk near the graves of the drowned men at night. Nor have many of the inhabitants yet forgotten a revolting circumstance connected by traditional report with the burial of the corpses after the shipwreck. It is said, that when dead bodies were first washed ashore, troops of ferocious, half-starved dogs suddenly appeared from the surrounding country, and could with difficulty be driven from preying on the mangled remains that were cast up on the beach. Ever since that period, the peasantry have been reported as holding the dog in abhorrence. Whether this be true or not, it is certainly a rare adventure to meet with a dog in the Lizard district. You may walk through farm-yard after farm-yard, you may enter cottage after cottage, and never hear any barking at your heels;—you may pass, on the road, laborer after laborer, and yet never find one of them accompanied, as in other parts of the country, by his favorite attendant cur.

Leaving Pistol Meadow, after gathering a few of the wild herbs growing fragrant and plentiful over the graves of the dead, we turned our steps towards the Lizard Lighthouse. As we passed before the front of the large and massive building, our progress was suddenly and startlingly checked by a hideous chasm in the cliff, sunk to a perpendicular depth of seventy feet, and measuring more than a hundred in circumference. Nothing prepares the stranger for this great gulf; no railing is placed about it, it lies hidden by rising land, and the earth all around is treacherously smooth. The first moment when you see it is the moment when you start back instinctively from its edge, doubtful whether the hole has not yawned open in that very instant before your feet.

This chasm—melodramatically entitled by the people, "The Lion's Den"—was formed in an extraordinary manner, not many years since. In the evening the whole surface of the down above the cliff was smooth to the eye, and firm to the foot—in the morning it had opened into an enormous hole. The men who had kept watch at the Lighthouse, heard no sounds beyond the moaning of the sea—felt no shock—looked out on the night, and saw that all was apparently still and quiet. Nature suffered her convulsion and effected her change in silence. Hundreds and hundreds of tons of soil had sunk down into depths beneath them, none knew in how long, or how

short a time; but there the Lion's Den was in the morning, where the firm earth had been the evening before.

The explanation of the manner in which this curious landslip occurred, is to be found by descending the face of the cliff, beyond the Lion's Den, and entering a cavern in the rocks, called "Daw's Hugo" (or cave). The place is only accessible at low water. Passing from the beach through the opening of the cavern, you find yourself in a lofty, tortuous recess, into the farthest extremity of which, a stream of light pours down from some eighty or a hundred feet above. This light is admitted through the Lion's Den, and thus explains by itself the nature of the accident by which that chasm was formed. Here, the weight of the upper soil broke through the roof of the cave; and the earth which then fell into it, was subsequently washed away by the sea, which fills Daw's Hugo at every flow of the tide. It has lately been noticed that the loose particles of ground at the bottom of Lion's Den, still continue to sink gradually through the narrow, slanting passage into the cave already formed; and it is expected that in no very long time the lower extremity of the chasm will widen so far, as to make the sea plainly visible through it from above. At present, the effect of the two streams of light pouring into Daw's Hugo from two opposite directions—one from the Lion's Den, the other from the seaward opening in the rocks—and falling together, in cross directions on the black, rugged walls of the cave and the beautiful marine ferns growing from them, is supernaturally striking and grand. Here, Rembrandt would have loved to study; for here, even *his* sublime perception of the poetry of light and shade might have received a new impulse, and learned from the solemn teaching of Nature one immortal lesson more.

Daw's Hugo and the Lion's Den may be fairly taken as characteristic types of the whole coast scenery about the Lizard Head, in its general aspects. Great caves and greater landslips are to be seen both eastward and westward. In calm weather you may behold the long prospects of riven rock, in their finest combination, from a boat. At such times, you may row into vast caverns, always filled by the sea, and only to be approached when the waves ripple as calmly as the waters of a lake. Then, you may see the naturally arched roof high above you, adorned in the loveliest manner by marine plants waving to and fro gently in the wind. Rocky walls are at each side of you, variegated in dark red and dark green colors—now advancing, now receding, now winding in and out, now rising straight and lofty, until their termination is hid in a pitch-dark obscurity which no man has ever ventured to fathom to its end. Beneath, is the emerald-green sea, so still and clear that you can behold the white sand far below, and can watch the fish gliding swiftly and stealthily out and in: while, all around, thin drops of moisture are dripping from above, like rain, into the deep quiet water below, with a monotonous

echoing sound that half oppresses and half soothes the ear, at the same time.

On stormy days your course is different. Then, you wander along the summits of the cliffs; and looking down, through the hedges of tamarisk and myrtle that skirt the ends of the fields, see the rocks suddenly broken away beneath you into an immense shelving amphitheatre, on the floor of which the sea boils in fury, rushing through natural archways and narrow rifts. Beyond them, at intervals as the waves fall, you catch glimpses of the brilliant blue main ocean, and the outer reefs stretching into it. Often, such wild views as these are relieved from monotony, as you proceed on your way, by the prospect of smooth corn-fields and pasture-lands, or by pretty little fishing villages perched among the rocks, each with its small group of boats drawn up on a slip of sandy beach, and its modest, tiny gardens rising one above another, like the gardens of Looe, on rude terraces built up the hill, wherever the slope is gentle, and the cliff beyond rises high to shelter them from the sea-breeze.

But the place at which the coast scenery of the Lizard district arrives at its climax of grandeur, is Kynance Cove. Here, such gigantic specimens are to be seen of the most beautiful of all varieties of rock—the "serpentine"—as are unrivalled in Cornwall; perhaps, unrivalled anywhere. A walk of two miles along the westward cliffs from Lizard Town, brought us to the top of a precipice of three hundred feet. Looking forward from this, we saw the white sand of Kynance Cove stretching out in a half circle into the sea.

What a scene was now presented to us! It was a perfect palace of rocks! Some rose perpendicularly and separate from each other, in the shapes of pyramids and steeples — some were overhanging at the top, and pierced with dark caverns at the bottom—some were stretched horizontally on the sand, here studded with pools of water, there broken into natural archways—no one resembled another in shape, size, or position—and all, at the moment when we looked on them, were wrapped in the solemn obscurity of a deep mist; a mist which shadowed without concealing them, which exaggerated their size, and, hiding all the cliffs beyond, presented them sublimely as separate and solitary objects in the sea-view.

It was now necessary, however, to occupy as little time as possible in contemplating Kynance Cove from a distance; for if we desired to explore it, immediate advantage was to be taken of the state of the tide, which was already rapidly ebbing. Hurriedly descending the cliffs, therefore, we soon reached the sand: and here, while my companion was seating himself to sketch, and I was wandering around the rocks, doubtful whither to turn my steps first, I was fortunate enough to meet with a guide, whose intelligence and skill well deserve such a record as I can give of them here; for, to the former, I was indebted for much local information and anecdote, and to the latter, for quitting

Kynance Cove with all my limbs in as sound a condition as when I first approached it.

The guide introduces himself to me by propounding a sort of stranger's catechism. 1st. "Do I want to see every thing?—"Certainly." 2nd. "Am I giddy on the top of high places?"—"No." 3rd. "Will I be so good, if I get into a fix anywhere, as to take it easy, and catch hold of him tight?"—"Yes, very tight!" With these answers the guide is satisfied. He gives his hat a smart knock with one hand, to fix it on his head; and pointing upwards with the other, says, "We'll go up that rock first, to look into the gulls' nests, and get some wild asparagus." And away we go accordingly.

We mount the side of an immense rock which projects far out into the sea, and is the largest of the surrounding group. It is called Asparagus Island, from the quantity of wild asparagus growing among the long grass on its summit. Half way up, we cross an ugly chasm. The guide points to a small chink or crevice, barely discernible in one side of it, and says "Devil's Bellows!" Then, first courteously putting my toes for me into a comfortable little hole in the perpendicular rock side, which just fits them, he proceeds to explain himself. Through the base of the opposite extremity of the island there is a natural channel, into which the sea rushes furiously at high tide: and finding no other vent but the little crevice we now look down on, is expelled through it in long, thin jets of spray, with a roaring noise resembling the sound of a gigantic bellows at work. But the sea is not yet high enough to exhibit this phenomenon, so the guide takes my toes out of the hole again for me, just as politely as he put them in; and forthwith leads the way up higher still—expounding as he goes, the whole art and mystery of climbing, which he condenses into this axiom:—"Never loose one hand, till you've got a grip with the other; and never scramble your toes about, where toes have no business to be."

At last we reach the topmost ridge of the island, and look down upon the white, restless water far beneath, and peep into one or two deserted gulls' nests, and gather wild asparagus—which I can only describe as bearing no resemblance at all, that I could discover, to the garden species. Then, the guide points to another perpendicular rock, farther out at sea, looming, dark, substanceless, phantom-like, in the mist, and tells me that he was the man who built the cairn of stones on its top—and then, he proposes that we shall go to the opposite extremity of the ridge on which we stand, and look down into "The Devil's Throat."

This desirable journey is accomplished with the greatest ease on his part, and with considerable difficulty and delay on mine; for the wind blows fiercely over us on the height; our rock track is narrow, rugged, and slippery, the sea roars bewilderingly below, and a single false step would not be attended with agreeable consequences. Soon, however, we begin to descend a little from our "bad eminence," and come to a halt before a wide, tunnelled opening, slanting sharply downwards

in the very middle of the island —a black, gaping hole, into the bottom of which the sea is driven through some unknown subterranean channel, roaring and thundering with a fearful noise, which rises in hollow echoes through the aptly-named "Devil's Throat." About this hole no grass grew: the rocks rose wild, jagged, and precipitous, all around it. If ever the ghastly imagery of Dante's terrible "Vision" was realized on earth, it was realized here.

At this place, close to the mouth of the hole, the guide suggests that we should sit down and have a little talk!—and very impressive talk it is, when he begins the conversation by bawling into my ear (and down the Devil's Throat at the same time) to make himself heard above the wild roaring beneath us. Now, his tale is of tremendous jets of water, which he has seen, during the storms of winter, shot out of the hole before which we sit, into the creek of the sea below—now, he tells me of a shipwreck off Asparagus Island, of half-drowned sailors floating ashore on pieces of timber, and dashed out to sea again, just as they touched the strand, by a jet from the Devil's Throat—now, he points away in the opposite direction, under one of the steeple-shaped rocks, and speaks of a chase after smugglers that began from this place—a desperate chase, in which some of the smugglers' cargo, but not one of the smugglers themselves was seized—now, he talks of another great hole in the landward rocks, where the sea may be seen boiling within—a hole, into which a man who was fishing for fragments of a wreck fell and was drowned; his body being sucked away through some invisible channel, never to be seen again by mortal eyes.

Anon, the guide's talk changes from tragedy to comedy. He begins to recount odd adventures of his own with strangers. He tells me of a huge fat woman, who was got up to the top of Asparagus Island, by the easiest path, and by the exertions of several guides; who, left to herself, gasped, reeled, and fell down immediately; and was just rolling off, with all the momentum of sixteen stone, over the precipice below her, when she was adroitly caught, and anchored fast to the ground, by the ancle of one leg, and the calf of the other. Then, he speaks of an elderly gentleman, who, while descending the rock with him, suddenly stopped short at the most dangerous point, giddy and panic-stricken, pouring forth death-bed confessions of all his sins, and wildly refusing to move another inch in any direction. Even this man the guide got down in safety at last, by making stepping places of his hands, on which the elderly gentleman lowered himself as on a ladder, ejaculating incoherently all the way, and trembling in great agony, long after he had been safely landed on the sands.

This last story ended, it is settled that we shall descend again to the beach. Stimulated by the ease with which my worthy leader goes down beneath me, I got over-confident in my climbing, and be gin to slip here, and slide there, and come to awkward pauses at precipitous places, in what would be rather an alarming manner, but for the potent presence of the guide, who is always beneath me,

ready to be fallen upon. Sometimes, when I am holding on with all the necessary tenacity of grip, as regards my hands, but "scrambling my toes about" in a very disorderly and unworkmanlike fashion, he pops his head up from below, for me to sit on; and puts my feet into crevices for me with many apologies for taking such a liberty! Sometimes, I fancy myself treading on what feels like soft turf; I look down, and find that I am standing like an acrobat on his shoulders, and hear him civilly entreating me to take hold of his jacket next, and let myself down over his body to the ledge where he is waiting for me. He never makes a false step, never stumbles, scrambles, hesitates, or fails to have a hand always at my service. The nautical metaphor of "holding on by your eyelids," becomes a fact in his case. He really views his employer, as porters are expected to view a package labelled "*glass with care.*" No lady or gentleman bent on committing suicide, who ascended the rocks with him, would have a chance of effecting their purpose. I am firmly persuaded that he could take a drunken man up and down Asparagus Island, without the slightest risk either to himself or his charge; and I hold him in no small admiration when, after landing on the sand with something between a tumble and a jump, I find him raising me to my perpendicular almost before I have touched the ground, and politely hoping that I feel quite satisfied, hitherto, with his conduct as a guide.

We now go across the beach to explore some caves—dry at low water—on the opposite side. Some of these are wide, lofty, and well-lighted from without. We walk in and out and around them, as if in great, irregular, Gothic halls. Some are narrow and dark. Now, we crawl into them on hands and knees; now, we wriggle onward a few feet, serpent-like, flat on our bellies; now, we are suddenly able to stand upright in pitch-darkness, hearing faint moaning sounds of pent-up winds, when we are silent, and long reverberations of our own voices, when we speak. Then, as we turn and crawl out again, we soon see before us one bright speck of light that may be fancied miles and miles away—a star shining in the earth—a diamond sparkling in the bosom of the rock. This guides us out again pleasantly: and, on gaining the open air, we find that while we have been groping in the darkness, a change has been taking place in the regions of light, which has altered and is still altering the aspect of the whole scene.

It is now two o'clock. The tide is rising fast; the sea dashes in higher and higher waves on the narrowing beach. Rain and mist are both gone. Overhead, the clouds are falling asunder in every direction, assuming strange, momentary shapes, quaint, airy resemblances of the forms of the great rocks among which we stand. Height after height along the distant cliffs dawns on us gently; great golden rays shoot down over them; far out on the ocean, the waters flash into a streak of fire; the sails of ships passing there, glitter bright; yet a moment more, and the glorious sunlight in triumphant brilliancy

bursts out over the whole view. The sea changes soon from dull grey to bright blue, embroidered thickly with golden specks, as it rolls and rushes and dances in the wind. The sand at our feet grows brighter and purer to the eye; the sea-birds flying and swooping above us, look like flashes of white light against the blue firmament; and, most beautiful of all, the wet serpentine rocks now shine forth in full splendor beneath the sun; every one of their exquisite varieties of color becomes plainly visible—silver grey and bright yellow, dark red, deep brown, and malachite green appear, here combined in thin intertwined streaks, there outspread in separate irregular patches—glorious ornaments of the sea-shore, fashioned by no human art!—Nature's own home-made jewelery, that the wear of centuries has failed to tarnish, and the rage of tempests has been powerless to destroy!

But the hour wanes while we stand and admire; the surf dashes nearer and nearer to our feet; soon, the sea will cover the sand, and rush swiftly into the caves where we have slowly crawled. Already the Devil's Bellows is at work—the jets of spray spout forth from it with a roar. The sea thunders louder and louder in the Devil's Throat—we must gain the cliffs while we have yet time. The guide takes his leave; my companion unwillingly closes his sketch-book; and we slowly ascend on our inland way together—looking back often and often, with no feigned regret, on all that we are leaving behind us at KYNANCE COVE.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PILCHARD FISHERY.

IF it so happened that a stranger in Cornwall went out to take his first walk along the cliffs towards the south of the country, in the month of August, that stranger could not advance far in any direction without witnessing what would strike him as a very singular and alarming phenomenon. He would see a man standing on the edge of a precipice, just over the sea, gesticulating in a very remarkable manner, with a bush in his hand, waving it to the right and the left, brandishing it over his head, sweeping it past his feet; in short, apparently acting the part of a maniac of the most dangerous description. It would add considerably to the startling effect of this sight on the stranger aforesaid, if he were told, while beholding it, that the insane individual before him was paid for flourishing the bush at the rate of a guinea a week. And if he, thereupon, advanced a little to obtain a nearer view of the madman, and then observed on the sea below (as he certainly might) a well-manned boat, turning carefully to right and left exactly as the bush turned right and left, his mystification would probably be complete, and his ideas on the sanity of the inhabitants of the neighborhood would at least be perplexed with grievous doubt.

But a few words of explanation would soon make him alter his opinion. He would then learn that the man with the bush was an important agent in the Pilchard Fishery of Cornwall; that he had

just discovered a shoal of pilchards swimming towards the land; and that the men in the boat were guided by his gesticulations alone, in securing the fish on which they and all their countrymen on the coast depend for a livelihood.

To begin, however, with the pilchards themselves, as forming one of the staple commercial commodities of Cornwall. They may be, perhaps, best described as bearing a very close resemblance to the herring, but as being rather smaller in size and having larger scales. Where they come from before they visit the Cornish coast—where those that escape the fishermen go to when they quit it, is unknown; or, at best, only vaguely conjectured. All that is certain about them is, that they are met with, swimming past the Scilly Isles, as early as July (when they are caught with a drift-net). They then advance inland in August, during which month the principal, or "in-shore," fishing begins; visit different parts of the coast until October or November; and after that disappear until the next year. They may be sometimes caught off the south-west part of Devonshire, and are occasionally to be met with near the southernmost coast of Ireland; but beyond these two points they are never seen on any other portion of the shores of Great Britain, either before they approach Cornwall, or after they have left it.

The first sight from the cliffs of a shoal of pilchards advancing towards the land, is not a little interesting. They produce on the sea the appearance of the shadow of a dark cloud. This shadow comes on, and on, until you can see the fish leaping and playing on the surface by hundreds at a time, all huddled close together, and all approaching so near to the shore, that they can be always caught in some fifty or sixty feet of water. Indeed, on certain occasions, when the shoals are of considerable magnitude, the fish behind have been known to force the fish before, literally up to the beach, so that they could be taken in buckets, or even in the hand with the greatest ease. It is said that they are thus impelled to approach the land by precisely the same necessity which impels the fishermen to catch them as they appear—the necessity of getting food.

With the discovery of the first shoal, the active duties of the "look-out" on the cliffs begin. Each fishing-village places one or more of these men on the watch all round the coast. They are called "huers," a word said to be derived from the old French verb, *huer*, to call out, to give an alarm. On the vigilance and skill of the "huer" much depends. He is, therefore, not only paid his guinea a week while he is on the watch, but receives, besides, a perquisite in the shape of a per-centage on the produce of all the fish taken under his auspices. He is placed at his post, where he can command an uninterrupted view of the sea, some days before the pilchards are expected to appear; and, at the same time, boats, nets, and men are all ready for action at a moment's notice.

The principal boat used is at least fifteen tons in burden, and carries a large net called the "seine," which measures a hun-

dred and ninety fathoms in length, and costs a hundred and seventy pounds—sometimes more. It is simply one long strip, from eleven to thirteen fathoms in breadth, composed of very small meshes, and furnished, all along its length, with lead at one side and corks at the other. The men who cast this net are called the "shooters," and receive eleven shillings and sixpence a week, and a perquisite of one basket of fish each out of every haul.

As soon as the "huer" discerns the first appearance of a shoal, he waves his bush. The signal is conveyed to the beach immediately by men and boys watching near him. The "seine" boat (accompanied by another small boat, to assist in casting the net) is rowed out where he can see it. Then there is a pause, a hush of great expectation on all sides. Meanwhile, the devoted pilchards press on—a compact mass of thousands on thousands of fish, swimming to meet their doom. All eyes are fixed on the "huer;" he stands watchful and still until the shoal is thoroughly embayed, in water which he knows to be within the depth of the "seine" net. Then, as the fish begin to pause in their progress, and gradually crowd closer and closer together, he gives the signal; the boats come up, and the "seine" net is cast, or, in the technical phrase, "shot" overboard.

The grand object is now to enclose the entire shoal. The leads sink one end of the net perpendicularly to the ground—the corks buoy up the other to the surface of the water. When it has been taken all round the fish, the two extremities are made fast, and the shoal is then imprisoned within an oblong barrier of net worksurrounding it on all sides. The great art is to let as few of the pilchards escape as possible, while this process is being completed. Whenever the "huer" observes from above that they are startled, and are separating at any particular point, to that point he waves his bush, thither the boat is steered, and there the net is "shot" at once. In what ever direction the fish attempt to get out to sea again, they are thus immediately met and thwarted with extraordinary readiness and skill. This labor completed, the silence of intense expectation that has hitherto prevailed among the spectators on the cliff, is broken. There is a great shout of joy on all sides—the shoal is secured!

The "seine" is now regarded as a great reservoir of fish. It may remain in the water a week or more. To secure it against being moved from its position in case a gale should come on, it is warped by two or three ropes to points of land in the cliff, and is at the same time, contracted in circuit, by its opposite ends being brought together, and fastened tight over a length of several feet. While these operations are in course of performance, another boat, another set of men, and another net (different in form from the "seine") are approaching the scene of action.

This new net is called the "tuck;" it is smaller than the "seine," inside which it is now to be let down for the purpose of bringing the fish closely collected to the surface. The men who manage this net are termed "regular seiners." They receive ten

shillings a week, and the same perquisite as the "shooters." Their boat is first of all rowed inside the seine-net, and laid close to the seine-boat which remains stationary outside, and to the bows of which one rope at one end of the "tuck" net is fastened. The "tuck" boat then slowly makes the inner circuit of the "seine," the smaller net being dropped overboard as she goes, and attached at intervals to the larger. To prevent the fish from getting between the two nets during this operation, they are frightened into the middle of the enclosure by beating the water at proper places, with oars, and heavy stones fastened to ropes. When the "tuck" net has at length traveled round the whole circle of the "seine," and is securely fastened to the "seine" boat, at the end as it was at the beginning, every thing is ready for the great event of the day—the hauling of the fish to the surface.

Now, the scene on shore and sea rises to a prodigious pitch of excitement. The merchants, to whom the boats and nets belong, and by whom the men are employed, join the "huer" on the cliff; all their friends follow them; boys shout, dogs bark madly; every little boat in the place puts off crammed with idle spectators; old men and women hobble down to the beach to wait for the news. The noise, the bustle, and the agitation, increase every moment. Soon the shrill cheering of the boys is joined by the deep voices of the "seiners." There they stand, six or eight stalwart, sunburnt fellows, ranged in a row in the "seine" boat, hauling with all their might at the "tuck" net, and roaring the regular nautical "Yo-heave-ho!" in chorus! Higher and higher rises the net, louder and louder shout the boys and the idlers. The merchant forgets his dignity, and joins them; the "huer," so calm and collected hitherto, loses his self-possession and waves his cap triumphantly —even you and I, reader, uninitiated spectators though we are, catch the infection, and cheer away with the rest, as if our bread depended on the event of the next few minutes. "Hooray! hooray! Yo-hoy, hoy, hoy! Pull away, boys! Up she comes! Here they are!" The water boils and eddies; the "tuck" net rises to the surface, and one teeming, convulsed mass of shining, glancing, silvery scales; one compact crowd of thousands of fish, each one of which is madly endeavoring to escape, appears in an instant!

The noise before, was as nothing compared with the noise now. Boats as large as barges are pulled up in hot haste all round the net; baskets are produced by dozens; the fish are dipped up in them, and shot out, like coals out of a sack, into the boats. Ere long, the men are up to their ankles in pilchards; they jump upon the rowing benches and work on, until the boats are filled with fish as full as they can hold, and the gunwales are within two or three inches of the water. Even yet, the shoal is not exhausted; the "tuck" net must be let down again and left ready for a fresh haul, while the boats are slowly propelled to the shore, where we must join them without delay.

As soon as the fish are brought to land, one set of men, bearing

capacious wooden shovels, jump in among them; and another set bring large hand-barrows close to the side of the boat, into which the pilchards are thrown with amazing rapidity. This operation proceeds without ceasing for a moment. As soon as one barrow is ready to be carried to the salting-house, another is waiting to be filled. When this labor is performed by night —which is often the case—the scene becomes doubly picturesque. The men with the shovels, standing up to their knees in pilchards, working energetically; the crowd stretching down from the salting-house, across the beach, and hemming in the boat all round; the uninterrupted succession of men hurrying backwards and forwards with their barrows, through a narrow way, kept clear for them in the throng; the glare of the lanterns giving light to the workmen, and throwing red flashes on the fish as they fly incessantly from the shovels over the side of the boat, all combine together to produce such a series of striking contrasts, such a moving picture of bustle and animation, as not even the most careless of spectators could ever forget.

Having watched the progress of affairs on the shore, we next proceed to the salting-house, a quadrangular structure of granite, well-roofed in all round the sides, but open to the sky in the middle. Here, we must prepare ourselves to be bewildered by incessant confusion and noise; for here are assembled all the women and girls in the district, piling up the pilchards on layers of salt, at threepence an hour; to which remuneration, a glass of brandy and a piece of bread and cheese are hospitably added at every sixth hour by way of refreshment. It is a service of some little hazard to enter this place at all. There are men rushing out with empty barrows, and men rushing in with full barrows, in almost perpetual succession. However, while we are waiting for an opportunity to slip through the doorway, we may amuse ourselves by watching a very curious ceremony which is constantly in course of performance outside it.

As the filled barrows are going into the salting-house, we observe a little urchin running by the side of them, and hitting their edges with a long cane, in a constant succession of smart strokes, until they are fairly carried through the gate, when he quickly returns to perform the same office for the next series that arrive. The object of this apparently unaccountable proceeding is soon practically illustrated by a group of children, hovering about the entrance of the salting-house, who every now and then dash resolutely up to the barrows, and endeavor to seize on as many fish as they can take away at one snatch. It is understood to be their privilege to keep as many pilchards as they can get in this way by their dexterity, in spite of a liberal allowance of strokes aimed at their hands; and their adroitness richly deserves its reward. Vainly does the boy officially entrusted with the administration of the cane, strike the sides of the barrow with malignant smartness and perseverance—fish are snatched away with lightning rapidity and pickpocket neatness of hand. The hardest rap over the knuckles fails to daunt the sturdy little assailants.

Howling with pain, they dash up to the next barrow that passes them, with unimpaired resolution; and often collect their ten or a dozen fish a piece, in an hour or two. No description can do justice to the "Jack-in-Office" importance of the boy with the cane, as he flourishes it about ferociously in the full enjoyment of his vested right to castigate his companions as often as he can. As an instance of the early development of the tyrannic tendencies of human nature, it is, in a philosophical point of view, quite unique.

But now, while we have a chance, while the doorway is accidentally clear for a few moments, let us enter the salting-house, and approach the noisiest and most amusing of all the scenes which the pilchard fishery presents. First of all, we pass a great heap of fish lying in one recess inside the door, and an equally great heap of coarse, brownish salt lying in another. Then we advance farther, get out of the way of everybody, behind a pillar, and see a whole congregation of the fair sex screaming, talking, and—to their honor be it spoken—working at the same time, round a compact mass of pilchards which their nimble hands have already built up to a height of three feet, a breadth of more than four, and a length of twenty. Here we have every variety of the "female type" displayed before us, ranged round an odoriferous heap of salted fish. Here, we see crones of sixty and girls of sixteen; the ugly and the lean, the comely and the plump; the sour-tempered and the sweet—all squabbling, singing, jesting, lamenting, and shrieking at the very top of their shrill voices for "more fish," and "more salt;" both of which are brought from the stores, in small buckets, by a long train of children running backwards and forwards with unceasing activity and in inextricable confusion. But, universal as the uproar is, the work never flags; the hands move as fast as the tongues; there may be no silence and no discipline, but there is also no idleness and no delay. Never was three-pence an hour more joyously or more fairly earned than it is here!

The labor is thus performed. After the stone floor has been swept clean, a thin layer of salt is spread on it, and covered with pilchards laid partly edgewise, and close together. Then another layer of salt, smoothed fine with the palm of the hand, is laid over the pilchards; and then more pilchards are placed upon that; and so on until the heap rises to four feet or more. Nothing can exceed the ease, quickness, and regularity with which this is done. Each woman works on her own small area, without reference to her neighbor; a bucketful of salt and a bucketful of fish being shot out in two little piles under her hands, for her own especial use. All proceed in their labor, however, with such equal diligence and equal skill, that no irregularities appear in the various layers when they are finished—they run as straight and smooth from one end to the other, as if they were constructed by machinery. The heap, when completed, looks like a long, solid, neatly made mass of dirty salt; nothing being

now seen of the pilchards but the extreme tips of their noses or tails, just peeping out in rows, up the sides of the pile.

Having now inspected the progress of the pilchard fishery, from the catching to the curing, we have seen all that we can personally observe of its different processes, at one opportunity. What more remains to be done, will not be completed until after an interval of several weeks. We must be content to hear about this from information given to us by others. Yonder, sitting against the outside wall of the salting-house, is an intelligent old man, too infirm now to do more than take care of the baby that he holds in his arms, while the baby's mother is earning her three-pence an hour inside. To this ancient we will address all our inquiries; and he is well qualified to answer us, for the poor old fellow has prematurely worked away all the pith and marrow of his life in the pilchard fishery.

The fish—as we learn from our old friend, who is mightily pleased to be asked for information—will remain in salt, or, as the technical expression is, "in bulk," for five or six weeks. During this period, a quantity of oil, salt, and water drips from them into wells cut in the centre of the stone floor on which they are placed. After the oil has been collected and clarified, it will sell for enough to pay off the whole expense of the wages, food, and drink given to the "seiners"—perhaps, for some other incidental charges besides. The salt and water left behind, and offal of all sorts found with it, furnish a valuable manure. Nothing in the pilchard itself, or in connection with the pilchard, runs to waste—the precious little fish is a treasure in every part of him.

After the pilchards have been taken out of "bulk," they are washed in clean salt water, and packed in hogsheads, which are then sent for exportation to some large sea-port—Penzance, for instance—in coast traders. The fish reserved for use in Cornwall, are generally cured by those who purchase them. The export trade is confined to the shores of the Mediterranean—Italy and Spain providing the two great foreign markets for pilchards. The home consumption, as regards Great Britain, is nothing, or next to nothing. Some variation takes place in the prices realized by the foreign trade — their average, wholesale, is stated to be about fifty shillings per hogshead.

As an investment for money, on a small scale, the pilchard fishery offers the first great advantage of security. The only outlay necessary, is that for providing boats and nets, and building salting-houses — an outlay which, it is calculated, may be covered by a thousand pounds. The profits resulting from the speculation are immediate and large. Transactions are managed on the ready-money principle, and the markets of Italy and Spain (where pilchards are considered a great delicacy) are always open to any supply. The fluctuation between a good season's fishing and a bad season's fishing is rarely, if ever, seriously great. Accidents happen but seldom; the casualty most dreaded, being the enclosure of a large

fish along with a shoal of pilchards. A "ling," for instance, if unfortunately imprisoned in the seine, often bursts through its thin meshes, after luxuriously gorging himself with prey, and is of course at once followed out of the breach by all the pilchards. Then, not only is the shoal lost, but the net is seriously damaged, and must be tediously and expensively repaired. Such an accident as this, however, very seldom happens; and when it does, the loss occasioned falls on those best able to bear it, the merchant speculators. The work and wages of the fishermen go on as usual.

Some idea of the almost incalculable multitude of pilchards caught on the shores of Cornwall, may be formed from the following *data*. At the small fishing cove of Trereen, 600 hogsheads were taken in little more than one week, during August, 1850. Allowing 2,400 fish only to each hogshead—3,000 would be the highest calculation—we have a result of 1,440,000 pilchards, caught by the inhabitants of one little village alone, on the Cornish coast, at the commencement of the season's fishing!

At considerable sea-port towns, where there is an unusually large supply of men, boats, and nets, such figures as those quoted above, are far below the mark. At St. Ives, for example, 1,000 hogsheads were taken in the first three seine nets cast into the water. The number of hogsheads exported annually, averages 22,000. In 1850, 27,000 were secured for the foreign markets. Incredible as these numbers may appear to some readers, they may nevertheless be relied on; for they are derived from trustworthy sources—partly from local returns furnished to me; partly from the very men who filled the baskets from the boat-side, and who afterwards verified their calculations by frequent visits to the salting-houses.

Such is the pilchard fishery of Cornwall—a small unit, indeed, in the vast aggregate of England's internal sources of wealth; but yet, neither unimportant nor uninteresting, if it be regarded as giving active employment to a hardy and honest race who would starve without it; as impartially extending the advantages of commerce to one of the remotest corners of our island; and—more than all—as displaying a wise and beautiful provision of Nature, by which the rich tribute of the great deep is most generously lavished on the land which most needs a compensation for its own sterility.

CHAPTER IX.

ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT; A GLANCE AT HISTORY THROUGH DISSOLVING VIEWS.

LADIES and gentlemen, be good enough to sit down quietly! We are obliged reluctantly to keep you in the darkness, to give greater effect to the pictures we are now about to display under the strongest possible light—pictures which, I pledge you my sacred word of honor as a showman, will be ready for exhibition in one little moment more. Therefore, pray keep silence! Can you store your memories with historical associations while your

tongues are wagging incessantly with the chit-chat of the nineteenth century?—Certainly not! Then, once again, for your own sakes, keep silence!

Intelligent and orderly public! I respectfully beg leave to communicate that we are now about to exhibit a short series of historical pictures of the far-famed St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall, through the approved modern medium of dissolving views. These views will display something of the earlier history of the Mount, and something of the later. You will find them, as pictures, quite a superior article compared to the pictures you are accustomed to see at the Royal Academy. Here, every thing moveable that we present to you, moves as it does in Nature. Here, you may not only see the javelin uplifted in the hunter's hand, but, just at the right moment, and in the most approved ancient fashion, see it thrown, too! Here, our figures will nimbly walk and distinctly speak—here, on our landscapes, shadows will shift, clouds will change, tides will ebb and flow—nay, in reference to the excellence of our scenery, I may state even more than this; I may safely prophesy (so far do we carry the power of illusion) that when the wind is supposed to be blowing from the North-north-east, you will actually perceive the leaves of our trees all fluttering together, in one direction towards the South-south-west!

But the bell is ringing for the first dissolving view. I have only time to tell you that I shall explain every thing, as every thing goes on. You, gentlemen of the orchestra, who have been provided, regardless of expense, to supply appropriate music, take up the *cithara*, or lute, and the Pan's-pipes—the earliest known instruments. We are about to go back into the remotest regions of antiquity; play a barbaric strain, therefore, as loud as you possibly can. And now, silence, silence, silence!

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The first picture dawns through the darkness—dimly enough, just yet. But now, the colors brighten; and as objects grow clearer and clearer, we behold this scene: A wide bay sweeping in one grand semi-circle from the foreground to the distance of the view; with hills rising all along the shore, thickly wooded almost to the water's edge.

The tide is flowing—the sea runs heavy. Behold it, dashing against what appears to be an island, a furlong or two away from the mainland—an island close in the foreground, towering up to a point in the shape of a beautiful natural pyramid. This is the place that we moderns know as St. Michael's Mount; the bay round it is what we call Mount's Bay.

But these were the names of an after time; they were not thought of at the period which the picture we now examine is intended to illustrate. Look forth searchingly over the view, and you will guess what this period is. You see no large towns, no neat villages, no fertile fields: here and there, a few miserable huts peep out among trees, briars, and weeds: yonder, in that wood, men clothed in rough skins, and brandishing rude, heavy javelins, are hunting

the wild boar and the wolf. It is England, during England's darkest age, that we now behold. We are carried back over long past centuries to a long past period, before the time when the first Cæsar landed as a conqueror on the shores of Britain.

Fix your eyes again on the island. See how bare and desolate are the rugged granite rocks, starting into huge, wild forms, and rising all around, up to its summit. No sign of a habitation appears on any part of it, save at one corner, low down near the beach, where two or three coarse, clumsy structures are visible, made of mud and wattles, and propped up at certain places by slabs of unhewn granite. Below these, a rude pier runs out into the sea, and forms, with an accidental projection of the land opposite, a snug little haven, where a few boats might run for refuge. Now, look closer yet at this part of the island, and you will see that it is alive with human beings. Men with long elfish hair hanging over their shoulders; men rough in gesture and savage in feature, armed with bow and arrow, spear and shield, are hurrying impatiently backwards and forwards, or standing vigilantly on the watch. Wherefore this haste and confusion on one side, and this anxiety and attention on the other?

Turn once more towards the sea. Behold, in the offing, laboring heavily in the swell, a little fleet of vessels making for the land. They are all formed on the same strange, unwieldy model; carved dragons' heads rise from their gaudily-painted bows; their clumsy sails flap against the clumsier masts; rows of oars appear all along their sides, rising and falling in long, regular strokes. Now, as they approach the island, rolling perilously with every wave, we see armed men on deck, collected together on a platform above the rowers; and now, as the vessels near the harbor, the larger are hove to, while the smaller proceed until they touch the sides of the rude wooden pier. Then, the men on shore shout in token of exultation and welcome. The men from the vessels advance, meanwhile, in good order, to meet them; some carry heavy packages, others march as guards by their companions' sides. When the two parties meet together, a scene of confusion ensues. Signs and gestures are exchanged, sometimes abruptly varied, sometimes repeated over and over again: words of anger and impatience are spoken in two different languages; weapons are even raised threateningly. At last the tumult is calmed; the men of the island run to their mud-huts, and drag forth from them heavy ingots of tin which they carry down to the men from the vessels, and receive in return the packages which these last have brought ashore with them; packages containing salt, earthenware, and metal utensils. When the men of the island begin to examine closely the goods they have received in barter, it soon becomes evident that they have not had the best of the bargain. They quarrel among each other, and howl menacingly after the men from the vessels, who, on their part, care little for threats, and carry off their merchandise,

confident in their good discipline, and triumphing insolently in their superior sagacity and skill.

But now, ere we can follow them as they join once more their fleet outside, the whole view softly and slowly begins to dissolve—the first picture exists no longer! You have just been made acquainted with the earliest passage in the history of St. Michael's Mount, when the place was used by the ancient British tribes as a deposit for the tin they drew from the Cornish mines, and the adventurous Phœnicians—the great merchants and colonists of the old world—traded to it to barter their goods for the metal which our savage ancestors had already learnt to find in the earth of their native land.

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So much for our first picture! The second will be very different, and will illustrate some of the customs of a very different age. Now, let the attendant music cease the barbarian strain, and change to sonorous chaunts and solemn masses, pealed out grandly with the organ's fullest power; for these sounds alone may fitly accompany the second view, which already brightens through the darkness, in the place left vacant by the first.

Again we have the Mount and the Bay; but under altered aspects. The tide is ebbing; the sea is calm; the island of the last picture appears an island no longer; we see a narrow causeway—visible only at low water—which joins it to the shore. The clustering woods are thinned in certain places: the mud huts are succeeded by cottages and farmhouses, solidly constructed of stone and surrounded by cornfields. Such peasants as we can observe, are neatly, though coarsely, clad. The accoutrements of those armed men whom we see near yonder fortress—built where briars grew thick, and wolves skulked for refuge heretofore—are of glittering steel, complete at all points. The manners and customs of Englishmen have changed now; and many features of the landscape have changed with them.

Turn towards the causeway that joins the Mount and the shore. What procession is that moving slowly over it from the land? Men and women of all ages—even little children—form the throng. Long grey gowns clothe them, whitened with the dust of travel: shells and little leaden images are sewn round their broad hats; crosses, fastened to rows of beads, fall over their breasts; their leader carries a large crucifix, elevated on high. Hark! as they advance, they all chaunt in unison a solemn and sacred strain. The peasants watching them, uncover their heads reverently, and the peasants' wives and children kneel and cross themselves as they pass. What is this procession? and whither is it bound?

Look up to the Mount. Behold, where the naked granite alone rose before, a chapel with a tower, built on the pinnacle of the eminence, and a range of buildings by its side; both superb with the massive adornments of Saxon archetecture, and both rising like crowns of beauty on the noble summit of the Mount. See, on that stone terrace before the chapel, which overlooks the