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Staffordshire
Worthies

by

Frederick Wm. Hackwood,


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To
My Tried Friend and Trusted Adviser

Ernest C. Fowke.
THE
Good Old Times,
THE ROMANCE OF HUMBLE LIFE IN ENGLAND.

By Fredk. Wm. Hackwood.
Author of "Inns, Ales, and Drinking Customs of Old England," "Old English Sports."

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I.

The Father of Anglers.

In the historic old county town of Stafford, on the 9th August, 1593, was born the amiable and ingenious Izaak Walton, author of "The Complete Angler," one of the most notable works ever published.

Izaak Walton was the son of Jervis Walton, who is believed to have been the second son of George Walton, formerly bailiff of Yoxall. He was baptised at St. Mary's Church, Stafford, 21st September, 1593. Several houses in the town claimed the honour of being his birthplace, among them the "Ancient High House." This is extremely improbable, for if this house were in existence in 1593, it would have been the finest mansion in the town, and scarcely the residence of a family of whom next to nothing is known—the name of Izaak's mother is totally unknown, and at best the position of the family could have been only that of substantial yeomen.

The best local authority inclines to the belief that the birthplace of Walton was a very humble cottage in Eastgate Street, near the boundary line between St. Chad's and St. Mary's parishes, and demolished some years ago. He was baptised in St. Mary's Church, and in his will he left a sum of money for keeping the wall of St. Chad's churchyard in repair. This surmise has tradition to support it, though another claimant for the honour of being the birthplace is Halfhead Farm, at Shallowford, which became the property of Walton in his later life, and where he is believed to have lived in purposed seclusion during the turmoil of the Civil Wars.
His childhood is supposed to have been spent in Stafford. As to his education nothing is positively known. It has been presumed that he received it at Stafford Grammar School, as Latin formed part of the ordinary curriculum there, and in his works he frequently cites Latin and other learned authors, among them Gessner, Camden, and Albertus Magnus. He refers to his education in these very modest terms:—

"When I sometimes look back upon my education and mean abilities it is not without some little wonder at myself that I am come to be publicly in print."

After being apprenticed as a linen-draper, either in Stafford or in London, he became a shop-keeper in the latter place, settling near the Royal Exchange in Cornhill, where his shop was so small, measuring only seven and a half feet by five feet, it scarcely gave him elbow room.

In this place, which was much too confined for his business, he continued many years; and then removed to the "north side of Fleet Street, to a house two doors west of the end of Chancery Lane, and abutting on a shop, known by the sign of the Harrow," by which sign the old timber house at the south-west corner of Chancery Lane, in Fleet Street, was known till a century ago.

Here he traded as a "sempster and milliner." He married probably about 1632; for in that year he is known to have occupied a house in Chancery Lane, a few doors higher up on the left hand.

Although his business flourished amazingly, he tasted of much sorrow here. In 1626, at Canterbury, he had married Rachel Floud, maternally descended from Archbishop Cranmer. Seven children were the fruit of this union all of whom died in childhood, followed last of all by the mother, in 1640. The narrow accommodation which tradesmen's premises then afforded to large families may have been in no small degree responsible for these tragic results.

His second wife was Anne, daughter of Thomas Ken, of Furnival's Inn, and sister to Thomas, afterwards the famous Dr. Ken, bishop of Bath and Wells. She died in 1662, leaving her husband a son Izaak and a daughter Anne to
comfort him in his prolonged old age, and was buried in Worcester Cathedral.

In the year 1643, at the age of 50, he retired from London and from business, on a small competency. Whilst Izaak Walton resided in London his favourite recreation was angling, in which art he had the reputation of excelling every fisherman of his time. Langbaine calls him "the common father of Anglers." It is piquant to reflect that the author whose name is wedded to green fields and quiet waters lived his business life amidst the din and bustle of London's most crowded thoroughfare.

His most frequented river for this primitive amusement seems to have been the Lea, which has its source above Ware in Hertfordshire.

While Izaak Walton lived in the neighbourhood of St. Dunstan's Church, he had frequent opportunities of attending the ministry of Dr. John Donne, who was vicar of that parish.

To this prelate's sentiments he became, as he himself expresses it, a convert; and upon the doctor's decease, in 1631, Sir H. Wotton, formerly English ambassador in Paris, requested Walton to collect materials for Donne's life, which Sir Henry had undertaken to write.

Sir Henry died before he had completed his work, and Walton, between whom and Sir Henry a great angling friendship subsisted, undertook it himself, and in 1640 he finished and published it, with a collection of the doctor's sermons, in folio. The success of this biography led to similar efforts. On the death of Sir Henry, which took place in 1639, Walton was importuned by the King to write his (Wotton's) life also, and this work was, accordingly, undertaken and brought to a completion about 1644.

Izaak Walton, as may be inferred, was a staunch Royalist, and shortly after the battle of Worcester found himself in his native town, probably emerging from his seclusion at Shallowford (a deed of 1658 describes him "of Worson Farme" near that place), and on his way to London. At any rate, he undertook the hazardous mission of carrying to Colonel Blague, a prisoner in the Tower, one of the royal jewels, nothing less, in fact, than the King's "Lesser George," which the fugitive monarch had left be-
hind him in his sudden flight. He seems to have accomplished his dangerous task, for the Colonel afterwards made his escape from the Tower with the jewel, which he safely conveyed to his royal master on the Continent.

In 1655 Izaak Walton published that notable, that ever breezy and highly interesting book, for which he will be remembered as long as English literature endures—"The Complete Angler; or, Contemplative Man's Recreation." It was issued in duodecimo, adorned with some very excellent cuts of most of the fish mentioned in its pages.

It is not known exactly who was the artist on this occasion; but it is generally believed to have been Pierre Lombart, who is mentioned by Evelyn the diarist in the "Sculptura"; and also that the plates were of steel. Two other artists who have been named in this connection are Vaughan and Faithorne. On this little book, and not on the "Lives," reats Walton's true title to fame.

The book was dedicated "to the right worshipful John Offley, of Madeley Manor, in the County of Stafford, Esq.", the dedication being signed, "Iz. Wa." The author's name does not appear on any title page before that of the fifth (1676) edition. The second edition, issued 1655, had been re-written and enlarged, and was graced with the text, "Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing; they said unto him, we go also with thee." Appended to the fifth edition were two other works, "The Compleat Angler; Being Instructions how to angle for a trout and grayling in a clear Stream," by Charles Cotton; and "The Experienced Angler," by Col. Robert Venables. The former work was in its first edition, and the latter in its fourth; and the collective title was "The Universal Angler, made so by three books of fishing."

That part of "The Complete Angler" which treats of fly-fishing was chiefly communicated by Thomas Barker, author of "Barker's Delight, or the Art of Angling," an expert fisherman, who has been described as "an ingenious and highly facetious person." Doubtless he was addicted to telling "fishermen's stories."
It is unnecessary here to detail all the numerous editions, of that and the following centuries, through which this remarkable and deservedly popular work has run. A list of them occupies several columns of Simms' "Bibliotheca Staffordiensis." Suffice it to say, the author of the book holds a very distinguished place in the world of literature; how many learned editors and admiring annotators his famous book has had it would be difficult to say.

This little volume, originally published at eighteenpence, was at one time comparatively common; yet a copy of the first edition recently sold at auction for £1,085, and the Van Antwerp copy a year or so previously realised as much as £1,290.

There has not been a writer who has had occasion to make mention of the art of angling since Walton's time that has not referred to "The Complete Angler" as an undoubted authority on the subject; and it has been read, and will continue to be, by countless thousands who know little and care less for the art of angling, but who recognise good literature when they meet with it.

It must not be thought the "Complete Angler" has escaped adverse criticism. The advice the author gives for the treatment of live bait—as for instance, the dressing of a frog with hook and wire, needle and thread, "using him as though you loved him, that is harm as little as you may possible, that he may live the longer"; and the recommendation of a perch for taking a pike, as "the longest lived fish on a hook"—have subjected him to the charge of cruelty. Hence Byron writes in "Don Juan" of him—

Angling, too, that solitary vice
Whatever Isaac Walton sings or says;
The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.

About two years after the Restoration Walton wrote the Life of Richard Hooker, long known by the honourable, and in many respects deserved appellation of "Judicious." This life of Hooker appears to have been written with great care and faithfulness.

In 1670 he published the Life of George Herbert, brother to the celebrated Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in Shropshire.
In his eighty-third year, a period when, to use his own words, he might have claimed "a writ of ease," he undertook the Life of Bishop Sanderson, his fifth biographical work. The concluding paragraph of this book has been particularly noticed by Dr. Johnson as a specimen of nervous sentiment and pious simplicity. Incidentally this paragraph informs us that Walton was then in the eighty-fifth year of his age.

Besides these books, for which the memory of Walton will ever be venerated and esteemed, he was somewhat of a poet; but in this branch of literature he did not excel. He collected material for some other lives, but did not live to finish them, yet in his ninetieth year he published "Thealma and Clearchus," a pastoral history written long since by John Chalkhil, Esq. an acquaintance and friend of Edmund Spenser. To his he wrote a preface, containing a memoir of the author. He lived but a short time after this, dying on the 15th of December, 1683, during the rigours of a great frost, at Winchester, in the cathedral of which a large black, flat marble stone, with a miserable poetic epitaph, marks the place of his interment.

Such was the life of this eminent Staffordian, and such the useful nature of his studies and labours. As a biographer he will always be respected, and as an angler will never cease to be consulted and referred to. To not the least pleasing and useful branches of literature, and one of the most primitive and enjoyable of recreations, he devoted a long, valuable life.

It is not given to many men, even to writers a genius, to produce a book of sport which can be accounted a classic in literature.

Izaak Walton is the uncanonised patron saint of anglers. To "speak of him is to fall to praising him." And Charles Lamb, with unerring judgment, writes, "It might sweeten a man's temper at any time to read the 'Complete Angler.'"
Staffordshire has produced another eminent piscator. This was Charles Cotton, the poet-fisherman, and congenial friend of Izaak Walton, to visit whom at Dovedale the latter, in the eighty-third year of his vigorous old age, proposed to undertake a pilgrimage of more than a hundred miles. Charles Cotton was born on his father's estate at Beresford, in Staffordshire, 28th April, 1630. His father was himself a man of great ability, the warm friend of Ben Jonson, Seldon, Donne, and other illustrious men of the day. Beresford Hall, a grey gabled mansion, built by the family of this name, stood in an enchanting spot, near where "the princess of rivers" glides on her peaceful way, to the music of tiny waterfalls, her placid bosom reflecting pictures of surpassing beauty.

The Cottons of the Peak were descended from an honourable Hampshire family, and the poet's father having married the heiress of the Beresford family, settled on this Staffordshire estate near the romantic banks of the Dove.

Charles Cotton received his education at Cambridge University, and was esteemed one of its greatest ornaments. On the completion of his education he travelled into foreign countries, but the greatest part of his life was spent at Beresford.

He was a man of considerable learning, of amiable and agreeable manners, but thoughtless and imprudent in his conduct, so that he was often in debt, and "harrassed with duns,
attorneys, and bailiffs," a condition of life but ill-suited to literary pursuits, though it all seems to have troubled him less than most men.

In 1656 Charles Cotton married a distant relative, Isabella, a daughter of Sir Thomas Hutchinson, Knt. By the death of his father, two years later, he came possessed of the family estate, which the embarrassments of the father had much encumbered.

In Beresford Dale is a cave where Charles at one time retired from his creditors; it is a narrow crevice in the rocks, through which a man may just penetrate. This loophole of a retreat affords a space of six or eight yards, brought up by a platform or shelf of rock, perfectly dry and sheltered, upon which a pallet of moss and straw might do admirable duty for a bed.

Rich in verse, Cotton was at times so poor in pocket that rough experiences of this kind occasionally relieved his life of dull monotony. They may, too, have inspired his muse, though they never robbed him of his serenity.

In his epistle to Sir Clifford Clifton, speaking of himself, occur the following lines:

He always wants money, which makes him want ease;
And he's always besieged, tho' himself of the peace,
By an army of duns, who batter with scandals,
And are foemen more fierce than the Goths or the Vandals.

In 1663 he translated from the French the "Moral Philosophy of the Stoics." Two years afterwards he translated from the same language the "Horace" of Corneille. In 1670, the year before this was printed, he published, in folio, a translation of the "History of the Life of the Duke d'Espernon." About this time his affairs became more involved than ever, and he obtained a captain's commission in the army; with this he went over into Ireland, an experience which brought from his pen a burlesque poem, entitled a "Voyage to Ireland."

In this poem he notices that at Chester the Mayor was particularly struck on his coming out of church with the richness of his garb, and particularly with a gold belt he was wearing. The Mayor obsequiously invited him to supper, and treated him with great hospitality. In the
second canto, forming part of the account which he gives of his conversation with the Mayor, he flippantly writes—

I answer'd, my country was fam'd Staffordshire,
That in deeds, bills, and bonds, I was ever writ squire,
That of lands, I had both sorts, some good and some evil,
But that a great part on 't was pawn'd to the Devil.

Cotton afterwards published many other works, both original and translations from the French; but his most celebrated work is the "Scarronides, or Virgil Travestie," a mock poem on the first and fourth books of Virgil's "Æneis," in English burlesque.

The 15th edition of this poem was published in 1771, the first having been printed in 1678. It is a work of considerable merit, but contains no small portion of the common alloy of the times—indecency, shameless indelicacy. Many of his poems, however, are replete with elegancies of thought, and the long friendship and unfeigned esteem of such a man as Izaak Walton is strong evidence of Cotton's moral worth. That he should have written "The Complete Gamester," a work which appeared in 1674, with a portrait of the author, seems quite fitting. That it went into a second edition in a few years indicates that it found readers.

He also published a little work, which has likewise passed through several editions, called "Burlesque upon Burlesque; or the Scoffer Scoffed, being some of Lucan's Dialogues newly put into English Fustian." These poems partake of the same merit, and are marred by the same licentious blemishes as his others.

His first wife being deceased, Charles Cotton married the Countess Dowager of Ardglas, who was possessed of a jointure of fifteen hundred pounds a year. It was after this he became acquainted with Izaak Walton, whom he called his "dear father"; both men possessed the same rage for the recreation of angling, and both were just as ardently given to literary pursuits. There was then a primitive and pleasant practice of adepts in various arts adopting their most promising pupils as "sons" in their special pursuits—hence the epithet "father."

The second part of Walton's "Angler," containing "Instructions how to angle for Trout
or a Grayling in a clear stream," was written by Charles Cotton. It is now uniformly printed as part of Walton’s book, to which it forms "a judicious supplement." Though Walton was master of his art in the slow-running, soil-coloured, weed-fringed rivers of the south, Cotton could undoubtedly teach his angling parent many of the intricacies of fly-fishing in the rapid sparkling streams of the north country.

The situation of Charles Cotton’s house, which he himself says, was "upon the margin of one of the finest rivers for trout and grayling in England," was remarkably well situated for the exercise of his favourable diversion.

Near this place he built a small fishing-house dedicated to Anglers. Over the door of this little edifice the initials of his own name and Izaak Walton’s were placed together in a cypher. This building is thus described in the Notes of the “Complete Angler” :—"It is of stone, and the room in the inside of a cube about fifteen feet, it is paved with black and white marble.

“In the middle is a square black marble table, supported by two stone feet. The room is wainscotted with curious mouldings, that divide the panels up to the ceiling; in the larger panels are represented in painting some of the most pleasant of the adjacent fences, with persons fishing; and in the smaller the various sorts of tackle and implements used in angling.

“In the farther corner on the left is a fireplace, with a chimney; and on the right, a large beaufet, with folding doors, whereon are the portraits of Mr. Cotton, with a boy servant, and Walton, in the dress of the time; underneath is a cupboard, on the door whereof are the figures of a trout, and also of a grayling, which are well pourtrayed.”

It was erected in 1674; but having been little care taken of, especially since the time when the description just given of it was made, it has fallen into dilapidation. The monogram, however, is invisible, though the inscription, “half filled with moss, was almost obliterated.”

The inscription, "Piscatoribus Sacrum, 1674," cut in relief on a tablet over the circular-headed door, addresses all anglers, and is above the entwined initials of the two friends, who many times smoked their pipes together in this secluded little temple. To Charles’s quaint description of this fisherman’s sanctum, his friend Izaak adds the postscript—"Some part of the fish-house has been described; the pleasantness of the river, mountains, and meadows cannot, unless Sir Philip Sydney were again alive to do it." Though indeed many have essayed the task—painters, poets, travellers—the old angler is quite right; to describe Dovedale with justice to its natural beauties is an impossibility.

No traces of Walton remain on his favourite fishing river, the Lea; it is the Dove, flowing through his native soil, which has become the Mecca of the angler.

Cotton published his "Wonder of the Peak," a poem, in 1681; and in 1685, his very admirable translation of Montaigne’s Essays, which he dedicated to George Saville, Marquis of Halifax. Besides these works, he translated "Memoirs of the Sieur de Pontis," which his son, Mr. Beresford Cotton, published in 1694.

He is said to have died in 1687, somewhere in the parish of St. James’s, Westminster; and it may be accepted that he died insolvent, although the money brought him by his second marriage had relieved his most pressing necessities. The wife’s money, however, had been tied securely upon her. His son, Beresford, already mentioned, had been given him, as some sort of provision, a company in a regiment of foot, raised by the Earl of Derby, for the service of King William.

One of his daughters, Olivia, was married to Dr. George Stanhope, Dean of Canterbury, well known for his various excellent works of devotion, though for none, perhaps, more so than for his imperfect and inaccurate translation of Thomas à Kempis’s "De Imitatione Christi."

Charles Cotton stands high on the roll of the minor poets. Brought up to no profession, he passed the early part of his life in poetical studies, and the society of the leading literary men of the day. It was not till after the Restora-
tion that he began to publish the production of his muses.

A long list of his published works will be found in Simms' "Bibliotheca Staffordiensis"; but beyond the poems, his translation of Montaigne, and his share in "The Complete Angler," are all that one needs to remember of them. Strangely enough, though his life was led amidst lawsuits and the worries incidental to the management—or mismanagement—of an impoverished estate, his poems are always hearty and cheerful, reflecting nothing whatever of the souring or depressing effects such circumstances would have upon ordinary natures. To sample one or two here is a description of Morning:—

The fore-horse jingles on the road,
The waggoner lugs on his load,
The field with busy people sines (teams)
The city rings with various cries.

Nor is there anything less happy in his description of Night:—
The rail now creaks in fields and meads,
Toads now forsake their nettle-beds,
The tim'rous hare goes to relief,
And wary men bolt out the thief.

He is even lively at the expense of his own misfortunes:—
'Tis in this sense that I am poor
And, I'm afraid, shall be so still;
Obstreperous creditors besiege my door
And my whole house with clamorous echoes fill;
From these there can be no retirement free,
They will not let me eat, nor sleep, nor pray—
From room to room they hunt and follow me.

His rollicking spirit no monetary tribulations could ever subdue; though, it must be confessed, his cheerful optimism sometimes reflected the too rosy colours of the wine cup:—

There's nothing but Bacchus
Right merry can make us,
That virtue particular is to the vine;
It fires every creature
With wit and good nature—
Whose thoughts can be dark when their noses do shine?
Cotton's philosophy of life may perhaps be best gathered from his lines addressed to the Clepsydra or water-clock:

Why let it run? Who bids it stay
   Let us the while be merry;
Time there in water creeps away
   With us it posts in sherry.
Time, to define it, is the space
   That men enjoy their being,
'Tis not the bour, but drinking-glass
   Makes time and life agreeing.
Come ply the glass, then, quick about
   To tittilate the gullet;
Sobriety's no charm, I doubt,
   Against a cannon-bullet.

Charles Cotton, at his worst, was a bibulous, reckless, out-at-elbows country squire; at his best a well-bred country gentleman, courteous, urbane, and hospitable, a cavalier of the old school, a scholar and a poet. We honour him as Staffordshire's Cavalier Poet.
Henry The Seventh's "Wolf"

Edmund Dudley, the eminent lawyer and statesman, is always included among the distinguished men of Staffordshire, though the actual place of his birth is in doubt. His place in English history is well defined, for there is not a school-boy who is not familiar with the names of "Empson and Dudley," the extortionate tax-gatherers of that avaricious monarch, Henry VII.

Murray's "Guide to Staffordshire" (1892 edition) states that "at Willingsworth Hall, which was regarded as the principal seat of the Dudleys, Henry VII.'s 'wolf' is said to have been born in 1462."

The earliest reference to Willingsworth by name seems to be a grant of land there made by Philip and Mary to Edward, lord of Dudley, about the year 1555. If the house were in existence in 1462, it would scarcely have been the principal seat of the barons of Dudley; though as a grange or farm it might well have been the birth-place of this cadet of the lordly house of Dudley.

What authority there is for dubbing him, as he has been by local writers, the "Wolf of Willingsworth," is not known. Willingsworth Hall, demolished fifty years ago, was a Tudor building; it stood in an outlying portion of Sedgeley parish, but within three quarters of a mile of Wednesbury church, with which it was anciently connected by an avenue of trees. The most notable occupants of the Hall were the Parkes family, ancestors of the present Lord Dudley, whose tombs are in Wednesbury Church.
Edmund Dudley was the son of Sir John Dudley, second son of John Dudley, baron of Dudley, and knight of the garter. At the age of sixteen he entered the University of Oxford; and having studied the usual time there, removed to Gray's Inn, in London, with the intention of following the profession of the law.

His diligence in prosecuting his studies could not be exceeded; and, as the reward of his industry, no sooner did he commence practice than business increased upon him with the utmost rapidity.

Polydore Vergil asserts that he was so much remarked for his singular prudence and fidelity, that the king appointed him one of his privy council in the twenty-third year of his age.

In 1492, having accompanied his Sovereign to France, he was one of the great men who were chiefly instrumental in bringing about the peace of Boulona, signing the ratification of that instrument as an appointed Commissioner. Two years subsequent to this he obtained the wardship and the hand in marriage of Elizabeth, the daughter of Edmund Grey, Viscount L'Isle, sister and co-heiress of John, Viscount L'Isle, her brother.

Dudley, who was Member for Staffordshire, was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons in the Parliament held in 1504, and in consideration of his great services in this station the King granted him the Stewardship of the Rape of Hastings, in the county of Sussex. This was among the last favours conferred upon him by his royal master, who is said to have felt some compunctions for his arbitrary proceedings against the liberties of his subjects in the matter of tax-collecting.

He had long been in the highest favour with the king, whose coffers he replenished, with the aid of his coadjutor Empson, at the expense of the opulent, and often enough by methods contrary to all equity and justice. This point is elucidated by Lord Bacon in the following passage:—"As kings do more easily find instruments for their will and humour than for their service and honour, he had gotten for his purpose two instruments, Empson and Dudley, bold men and careless of fame, and that took toll for their master's grist."
“Dudley was of a good family, eloquent, and one that could put hateful business into good language; but Empson, that was the son of a sieve-maker, triumphed always in the deed done, putting off all other respect whatever. These two persons being lawyers in science, and privy counsellors in authority, turned law and justice into wormwood and rapine. For first their manner was to cause divers subjects to be indicted for sundry crimes, and so far forth to proceed in form of law, but when the bills were found, then presently to commit them; and, nevertheless, not to produce them in any reasonable time to them, ‘but to suffer them to languish long in prison, and by sundry artificial devices and terms to extort from them great fines and ransoms, which they termed compositions and mitigations.”

Dudley’s activity in these nefarious practices soon made him odious to the people; and though it was quite natural he should retain the confidence of the Court, it is somewhat surprising he should have obtained the Speakership.

Henry VII., dying in 1509, both Dudley and Empson were sent to the Tower by his son, Henry VIII., in consequence of the public clamour against them, on account of their unjust and illegal oppressions. In July the same year, the former of these gentlemen was arraigned and condemned for high treason, before commissioners assembled in Guildhall; Sir Richard Empson was likewise tried the following year, and convicted.

These convictions were followed by an act of attainder, passed in Parliament against both, but the king was still unwilling to execute them; and Stow, the historian, informs us that it was believed Queen Catharine had interposed to save Dudley. At any rate the execution of both these State prisoners was deferred.

The clamour of the people, however, continuing to increase, partly on account of the vigorous treatment of their adherents, while they themselves escaped, the king found himself ultimately compelled to sign their death warrant, and accordingly they were both beheaded on Tower Hill on the 16th of August, 1510.
Concerning the propriety of this execution, in as far as regarded the king, some doubts may justly be entertained. Dudley had unquestionably been guilty of crimes deserving the punishment he met with, but before yielding to the virulence and fury of the mob Henry should have remembered that these crimes were perpetrated to gratify the passions of his late father, and under the cover of his royal authority.

Edmund Dudley was a Rosicrucian, one of those philosophers of olden days who used alchemy in a visionary sort of way, and had many secrets and mysteries in their pretensions to a deep and profound knowledge of nature, such as the permutations of metals, the prolongation of life, and an intimacy with the spirit world. This philosophy was founded in the fourteenth century by a German baron named Rosenkreuz (i.e. "rosy cross"); but so well guarded were the secrets of the Order that the professed aims of the Brothers of the Rosy Cross, beyond a general declaration for the improvement of humanity, have never been divulged.

During his confinement in prison Dudley wrote a very extraordinary treatise, addressed to the king, and entitled "The Tree of the Commonwealth, by Edmund Dudley, Esq., late counsellor to King Henry VII., the same Edmund being at the compiling thereof prisoner in the Tower, in I. Henry VIII. The effect of this treatise consisteth in threee special points:

"First, Remembrance of God, and the Faithful of His Holy Church, in the which every Christian prince had need to begin.

"Second, Of some conditions and demeanors necessary in every prince, both for his honour and assurance of his continuance.

"Thirdly, Of the Tree of Commonwealth which toucheth people of every degree of the conditions and demeanours they should be of."

This book, which was probably written with a view to his own pardon and liberation, never reached the king's hand, and therefore was not instrumental in securing the royal clemency. It is somewhat strange that though many copies of it were handed about in manuscript it was not published.
Many years after the death of the author, the MS. was discovered by Stow, the historian and antiquary, who was grandson to Dudley. For this labour and favour Warwick loaded honest John with many thanks and good wishes. Long after the death of Stow, the original MS. was purchased by Sir Symonds D'Ewes.

It afterwards fell into the hands of that enthusiastic bibliophile, the Earl of Oxford. What is now become of it is not exactly known; probably it is still in the same collection. Several copies are to be met with in other libraries. It was at last printed in Manchester, 1859, for the Brotherhood of the Holy Rosary.

The work displays much knowledge of the world, and of the ways of royal courts; it certainly leaves the impression that the writer had debased very high talents in an ignoble service. Dudley's career is one which strikingly enforces the scriptural admonition, "Put not your trust in princes!"

It only remains to recall the facts that Edmund Dudley was the father of the notorious John Dudley, one time Earl of Warwick, afterwards Duke of Northumberland, and protector of Edward VI.; and grandfather of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the favourite of Queen Elizabeth. Pitt's "History of Staffordshire," published a century ago, repeats the absurd tradition that the Protector, Northumberland, was the grandson of a Dudley carpenter; one authority states that he was born near Okeover, and another that his father (Edmund), first saw the light at Willingsworth Hall, but the probability is that though his father may possibly have been born at Willingsworth, he was born in Hants or Sussex, with which parts of the country his parents were more nearly connected about the time of his birth.
IV.

A Learned Antiquary and Virtuoso.

No nobler or more fitting memorial exists to any man's life work than is found in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford.

Elias Ashmole, the son of a saddler, was born at Lichfield on 23rd May, 1617; he was brought up as a chorister, and educated in the Grammar School of that city. His aptitude for music secured his admission to the Cathedral choir.

At the age of sixteen he commenced to study law. His mother's sister being married to James Paget, Esq., puisne baron of the Exchequer, he was taken at this age into the baron's family, where he continued for some few years in his dependence, having about this time lost his father. To the Paget influence he was much indebted for that start in life by which he was enabled to win a career for himself. His father, Simon Ashmole, had married Ann Bowyer, daughter of a Coventry woollen draper, and at his death left only a small property.

During this time he made considerable progress in the law, and was admitted a solicitor in chancery in 1638. In the same year he married Eleanor Mainwaring, of Smallwood, Cheshire. He was sworn attorney in the Court of Common Pleas in the February of 1641; a few months later his wife, of whom he left an affectionate memorial, died suddenly.

When the troubles of the great Civil War set in Ashmole avowed himself a strong loyalist; he became in 1645 one of the engineers or gentlemen of the ordnance in the Royal garrison at Oxford, and presently was made a captain in Lord Ashley's regiment of infantry and Comptroller of the Ordnance.
He was appointed in 1644 a Commissioner of Excise in his native city, and in the following year was removed to Worcester in the same capacity. This was at a time when the Royal revenue was very uncertain, and when he had to exercise considerable business tact in the discharge of his duties.

While located at Oxford his love of learning impelled him to enter himself at Brazenose College, where he applied himself diligently, in what moments he could devote to his own inclination, to the study of the "sciences"—mathematics, natural philosophy, astronomy, astrology and alchemy.

After the surrender of the Royalist garrison at Worcester, and the King's affairs had become desperate, Ashmole withdrew to Cheshire, the county in which he had met and married his late wife.

From Cheshire he returned to London, and there became acquainted with William Lilly, the famous astrologer; with Sir Jonas Moore, and a coterie of other well-known men who were esteemed as the greatest philosophers of the day. These men welcomed Ashmole, who had a passion for the "occult sciences," into their inner circle, failing not to recognise in him a highly desirable recruit. However, he retired to Berkshire in 1647, where, he confesses, he spent in the privacy he there enjoyed the sweetest moments of his life. Here, by the aid of able masters, he was pursuing the study of botany. While living at his Berkshire seat, Englefield, he met and married for his second wife the widow of Sir Thomas Manwaring, recorder of Reading, and one of the Masters in Chancery. At the close of 1649 he once more settled in London, where his house became the rendezvous of all the remarkable and ingenious men of the day. His second marriage had brought him considerable fortune. His domestic affairs, however, were most unhappy, and eventually reached extremities as the following entries in his diary disclose—

"1657, October 8. The cause between me and my wife was heard, when Mr. Serjeant Maynard observed to the court that there were
800 sheets of depositions on my wife's part, and not one proved against me of using her ill, nor ever giving a bad or provoking word."

The decision was against the lady; the Court of Chancery refusing her alimony delivered her to her husband. "Whereupon," says Ashmole, "I carried her to Mr. Lilly's, and there took lodgings for us both." In the congenial society of the famous astrologer he doubtless found some degree of comfort, and the end of the wife's troubled life is recorded in these terms:—"1668, April 1.—2 Hor ante merid, the lady Manwaring, my wife, died."

In 1646 he had been elected into the Society of Free and Accepted Masons, which he took as a distinguished honour; and he has given us a very illustrious character of the lodge established at Warrington, in Lancashire. This was the year, too, in which his mother, the object of his filial affection, had died. About this time (1650) he was giving himself to the serious study of chemistry, as it was then known, intending to publish a work of several volumes on the subject. He prepared the unpublished works of several English alchemists for the press; amused himself by learning the craft of the goldsmiths, by engraving seals, and even found time to get a competent knowledge of the Hebrew language.

At the Restoration of Charles II. various honours and emoluments were bestowed upon Ashmole. He was made Windsor Herald, and in the following year he was admitted a Fellow of the Royal Society; and in February following the King signed a warrant for constituting him secretary for Surinam, in the West Indies. On the 27th of June the White Office was opened, of which he was appointed commissioner. The June of 1668 saw him appointed Accompant-General and Country-Accompant in the Excise.

Ashmole had reckoned Selden, the eminent lawyer and author of the famous "Table Talk," amongst his friends, and was at this time intimate with Dugdale, herald and historian, whose daughter he won for his third wife. His diary entry of the alliance is again spiced with technical jargon of the astrologer—"1668, Nov. 3. I married Mrs. Elizabeth Dugdale, daughter of William Dugdale, Esq., Norroy King-of-Arms,
at Lincoln’s Inn Chapel. Dr. William Floyd married us, and her father gave her. The wedding was finished at 10 hor. past merid.’’

The University of Oxford created Elias Ashmole a Doctor of Physic by diploma about this time; and when, soon afterwards, he revisited his native city, he was splendidly entertained by the Corporation, to whom, as well as the choristers of the Cathedral, he made valuable presents. His present to the Corporation of Lichfield consisted of a silver bowl; to the Cathedral he had given a set of Services and Anthems, and £20 towards repairing the edifice.

In May, 1672, Ashmole presented his great work, the labour of many years, on “The Most Noble Order of the Garter,” to King Charles II., who, as a mark of his approbation granted him a privy-seal for £400 out of the Custom on paper. He was now a courtier, high in the esteem of his Sovereign.

After the completion of this, his magnum opus, he devoted himself almost entirely to heraldic and antiquarian studies. That impostor, Lilly, calls Ashmole “the greatest virtuoso and curioso” England had ever known.

In 1675, owing to the infirmities of age creeping upon him, he resigned his office of Windsor Herald, which was bestowed on his relative Dugdale. In 1677, Sir Edward Walker, Garter-king-at-arms, dying, a controversy arose between the King and the Duke of Norfolk, as Earl Marshal, about the right of disposing of his place, on which Mr. Ashmole was consulted, who declared in favour of the King. He afterwards refused this office, and it was conferred on his father-in-law, Sir William Dugdale.

In January, 1679, a fire broke out in the Middle Temple, next to his chambers, by which he lost a noble library, with a collection of 9,000 coins, ancient and modern, and a vast repository of seals, charters, and other antiquities and curiosities; but his manuscripts, and his most valuable gold medals, were fortunately at his house at South Lambeth.

Four years later, the University of Oxford having finished a magnificent repository near the Theatre, Ashmole sent thither his curious collec-
tion of rarities, and this benefaction was considerably augmented by the addition of his manuscripts and library at his death, which happened at South Lambeth on the 18th of May, 1692. He was interred in the church of Great Lambeth in Surrey, where a tombstone of black marble, with an encomiastic Latin inscription, was placed above his grave.

The nucleus, if not the bulk, of this fine collection, now lodged in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, had been bequeathed to him by his old friend Tradescant, a naturalist, and the son of Charles I.’s Dutch gardener. It has been said that he “possessed himself of Tradescant’s museum in a manner which rather showed his love of antiquities than of poor old Tradescant.”

Ashmole, in presenting his collection, made it conditional that the University should provide a suitable building in which to house it; and the edifice, begun in 1679, was completed in four years. It contains many objects that are indeed rare and curious. Among these are the “Alfred Jewel,” an undoubted relic of that monarch; A Cypriot vase forming a link between Phoenician and early Greek art; a unique pair of Danish stirrups, dating from 1,004, found in the Cherwell; and the identical lantern taken out of the hands of Guy Fawkes.

The learned and garrulous Dr. Robert Plot, who wrote “The Natural History of Staffordshire” in 1686, be it remembered, was director of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford.

At the beginning of the year 1685 Dr. Ashmole was invited by the magistrates and the Dean of Lichfield to become a candidate for the Parliamentary representation of the city, and he would probably have been elected without opposition but King James II. sent an intimation to him that he wished another individual to be returned; on which Ashmole not only declined the honour offered by his fellow citizens, but successfully exerted his influence in favour Mr. Lewson, the candidate named and approved by the King.

On the demise of Sir William Dugdale the offer of Garter-king-at-arms was for a second time offered to Dr. Ashmole, and again declined by him. From this time he spent the remainder of his life in honourable retirement, having lived
through a period of remarkable political vicissitudes—the dethronement of Charles I., the rule of Cromwell, the restoration of Charles II., the abdication of James II., and the revolution of 1688, which placed on the Throne of England, that Protestant champion of Europe, William of Orange.

Elias Ashmole, notwithstanding his early predilection for the absurdities of astrology and alchemy, is entitled to respect for the subsequent attention he gave to the antiquities of his country, and for his wide range of learning. He was a man of high character and liberal mind, as befitted one of his high intellectual attainments.

Dr. Ashmole's published and unpublished works, including translations, are seventeen in number:

1. — Fasciculus Chemicus—a collection of "the most famous authors" on the subject of "hermetick science."
2. — Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum—pieces by "famous English Philosophers who have treated the hermetique mysteries." (London, 1652).
3. — The Way to Bliss—a treatise in which Ashmole took leave of the astrologers and alchemists. (London, 1658.)
5. — The Antiquities of Berkshire—written 1666.
6. — Familiarum Illustrium Imperatorumque Romanorum Numismata Oxoniæ.
7. — A Description and Explanation of the Coins and Medals belonging to King Charles II.—a folio MS.
8. — A Brief Ceremonial of the Feast of St. George, held at Whitehall, 1661.
9. — Remarkable Passages in the Year 1660.
10. — An Account of the Coronation of Our Kings.
11. — Proceedings on the Day of the Coronation of King Charles II.
12. — Arms, Epitaphs, etc., in Some Churches in Staffordshire.
13.—Arms, Epitaphs, Inscriptions, etc., in Cheshire, Shropshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, etc.

14.—Memories of the Life of that learned Antiquary, Elias Ashmole, Esq., written by himself by way of a Diary.

This remarkable Diary is exceedingly quaint in many of the entries which relate to personal matters and the occurrences of daily life. For example, we may read—"Sep. 5. I took pills.—6. I took a sweat.—7. I took leeches; all wrought very well." Again, under date 1687, we obtain a similar insight into the medical treatment of the time—"April 16. My wife took Mr. Biggs vomit, which wrought very well.—19. She took pulvis sanctis; in the afternoon she took cold."

In his "Theatrum" Ashmole has built a curious monument of the learned follies of his times. But the depth of his own credulity may be plumbed by the following entry in his diary, from which it will be seen that at one time he actually believed that a miserable wretch who had always lived as a beggar, knew the grand secret of making gold—

"May 13th, 1653. My father Backhouse [he was an astrologer who had adopted him as a 'son,' a common practice of these men with their favourite disciples] lying sick in Fleet Street, over against St. Dunstan's Church, and not knowing whether he should live or die, about eleven of the clock, told me, in syllables, the true matter of the philosopher's stone, which he bequeathed to me as a legacy."

The other three of Ashmole's literary works are of too little importance to need specifying here. In Simm's "Bibliotheca Staffordiensis," the works by, and having reference to, Ashmole, fill more than two closely-printed double-column pages. For instance, in his young and callow days, when he was superstitious and credulous, he edited a work of Dr. Dee, the alchemist, on "The Philosopher's Stone," to which he subjoined a treatise of his own.
And in conclusion, it is worth mentioning here that in a letter to Dugdale, Ashmole gives an interesting account of The Watling Street between Lichfield and Weedon, the local section of the old Roman road mentioned in the Itinerary of Antoninus.

Staffordshire is justly proud of her famous antiquary, herald, and virtuoso. The name of Elias Ashmole is not likely to be forgotten in England as long as learning exists.
In the city of Oxford, and adjacent to the Ashmolean Museum, stands the Sheldonian Theatre, erected nearly twenty years earlier. This building is also a monument to the erudition and munificence of a Staffordshire man.

The Sheldonian Theatre perpetuates the name and memory of Gilbert Sheldon, who was born of humble parents at Stanton, in the north of this county, near the close of great Elizabeth's reign, 1598.

This worthy was the youngest son of one Roger Sheldon, who served in some menial capacity in the household of the Earl of Shrewsbury. By the patronage of this nobleman, who stood sponsor to him at his baptism, young Gilbert received an excellent education, entering Trinity College, Oxford, at the age of sixteen, and taking his M.A. degree before arriving at the age of 21.

After being elected a Fellow of All Souls College (1622), he took holy orders; and having at this time attracted the attention of the Lord Keeper Coventry, he became domestic chaplain to that statesman. On the authority of Lord Clarendon we have it that Sheldon soon became so distinguished for his uncommon abilities and attainments that he was considered by competent judges to be fully qualified to shine in any ecclesiastical position to which he might be preferred. Lord Coventry, finding his protege as well versed in political as in theological knowledge, recommended him to Charles I, from whom he received many signs of favour. He was first presented with the rectory of Ickford, Bucks., and then appointed rector of Newington by the Archbishop; after obtaining his B.D. degree, the King presented him with the
important vicarage of Hackney; in 1634 he obtained his D.D., and the following year was elected warden of All Souls College. In 1635 Dr. Sheldon became chaplain in ordinary to the King, and soon afterwards Clerk of the Closet. At the outbreak of the Civil War he adhered stedfastly and conscientiously to the cause of his Royal master, and was sent in 1644 as one of the Royal chaplains accompanying the Commissioners to treat with the Presbyterians at Uxbridge; and though the learned doctor argued earnestly and eloquently in favour of the Church and Episcopalianism, the negotiations ultimately fell through, as they were no doubt foredoomed to do.

While attending on the King at Oxford, Dr. Sheldon was witness to a vow made by his Majesty in April, 1646, that if it should please God to re-establish his throne, he would restore to the church all lands, impropriations, and other ecclesiastical properties which he had taken from any see, cathedral, or church. A copy of this vow was afterwards carefully preserved as one of the most treasured possessions of the learned churchman.

In close personal attendance on his Sovereign, he was with Charles I. at Newmarket, and afterwards in the Isle of Wight, in 1647. At the beginning of the following year he was ejected, through the ascendancy of Presbyterianism, from his wardenship of All Souls, and by order of Parliament was imprisoned, with his colleague, Dr. Hammond, at Oxford. After six months' confinement he was released on condition that he did not rejoin the King in the Isle of Wight, did not come within five miles of Oxford, and should appear any time, when called upon, before the Reforming Committee.

At this low ebb in his fortunes Dr. Sheldon retired to Snelston, in Derbyshire, where he collected money by contributions amongst his Loyalist friends, and sent it from time to time to his closely-guarded master. His retirement lasted perforce till the Restoration, and he spent most of this prolonged period in a pleasant renewal of his studies.
With the restoration of Charles II., new hopes and accumulating honours came to Gilbert Sheldon. He met his recalled Sovereign at Canterbury, and as one who had remained ever faithful to the Royal cause, he was most graciously received. In the October of 1660 the bishopric of London fell to him, and presently the Mastership of the Savoy—it was in his lodgings there that the famous Savoy Conference between the Presbyterian and the Episcopal clergy was held in 1661. At this conference Dr. Sheldon exerted himself with all his customary zeal and ability on the side of the Established Church; and when the see of Canterbury fell vacant two years later, on the death of Archbishop Juxon, no man in all England was deemed more worthy to fill the vacancy than Bishop Sheldon. Thus by a series of preferments honourably won, this Staffordshire man of humble origin became primate of all England.

In 1667 Archbishop Sheldon was elected Chancellor of the University of Oxford, but did not hold that highest academical distinction long, resigning it less than two years afterwards.

After a long, active, and well-spent life, the venerable prelate died at Lambeth in 1677, in his eightieth year, and was buried in Croydon Church, where a monument was erected to his memory by his nephew and heir, Sir Joseph Sheldon, the son of his eldest brother, Ralph Sheldon, of Stanton, Staffordshire.

Dr. Plot says that, "going to visit the house of his nativity, in the very room where he was said to have drawn his first breath, he found the following iambics:

``Sheldonus illæ præsulum primus Pater,
Hos inter ortus aspicit lucem Lares,
O ter beatam Stantonis villa casam!
Cui canita possunt invidere Marmora."

These lines, it seems, were left there by Dr. John Hacket, Lord Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, who, out of his extraordinary devotion to this great prelate, had purposely made a journey thither, not many years before, to visit the place of his birth, "where, after he had given God thanks for the great blessings he
had afforded the world in that place, he sate him down and wrote these verses."

Archbishop Sheldon certainly left behind him a high reputation for piety and benevolence, but whether this could be justified in every respect is open to doubt. He lived an exemplary life, and bore a tranquil mind, which served him as well in adversity as in prosperity; during the great plague of 1665 he remained at his post in London, and exerted himself to the utmost on behalf of the sufferers around him.

But in the matter of religious toleration, his character for moderation does not so obviously appear.

When the King would have granted toleration to the Nonconformists in general, he interposed to prevent it; and, in fact, to procure a rigid enforcement of the Corporation Act, a law that does not add to the liberal character for which our constitution is supposed to be famed.

Charles II. seemed at one time more than half willing to reconcile himself with the Presbyterians, who constituted a powerful body in the nation, and who, from the time of the Reformation, had been unjustly treated. In this attempt at reconciliation, in which Sir Orlando Bridgeman took a prominent part, a number of points were agreed upon, and almost settled—they related to ordination, the administration of the sacraments, to a modification of the liturgy, and were altogether so reasonable that Lord Chief Justice Hales undertook to draw up a bill for Parliament to embody all these mutual concessions and agreements. Upon this coming to the knowledge of Archbishop Sheldon, he immediately set to work to collect information from his clergy concerning every conventicle, in every diocese throughout the land.

Having received all the information he could procure on the subject, he exaggerated every circumstance to the King, and obtained, from his easy disposition, a proclamation ordering the laws against Nonconforming ministers to be put in execution.
These were for a time rigidly enforced, though it would seem to have been contrary to the King's personal inclination; and in this policy at least Archbishop Sheldon does not stand out as a man distinguished for prudence and moderation. He was, before all things, a Churchman; and if not bigoted and intolerant, was at least illiberal and somewhat narrow-minded.

A more pleasing phase in the life of this worthy is the practical expression of his gratitude to his alma mater; that home of learning to which he owed so much of his success in life, and from which he actually had been expelled during the Cromwellian period.

His munificence in expending the enormous sum of £15,000 for building the theatre at Oxford, besides £2,000 for the purchase of lands for its perpetual repairs, will ever entitle him to the esteem and regard of the learned world.

In this structure, which was erected in 1669, is an admirable full length portrait of its worthy and liberal founder. It appeared, by his private accounts, that in fourteen years he had bestowed £60,000 in public and private charities. He remitted in fines over £17,000 on his accession to the bishopric, and left by will to Lichfield Cathedral £453.

The theatre was erected whilst he was Chancellor, Sir Christopher Wren being the architect. The first stone was laid in July, 1664, and the building was opened just five years later. The grotesque heads on pillars (exterior) represent the sages of antiquity, though they are commonly called the "Twelve Caesars." In one apartment, for a very long period, the University printing press was established. In the Sheldonian Theatre is held, every June, "The Encaenia," or Commemoration of Founders, when the Prize Compositions (essays and poems) are recited, and honorary degrees are conferred. The scene in the theatre during Commemoration must be seen to be realised. The popular men of the day are cheered, and the unpopular ones are—teazed. The proceedings, however, though violently demonstrative, are always conducted with thorough good-homour.
The very essence of Oxford life is associated with foundations of Staffordshire origin; for of a verity, if the "Ashmolean" be outside consideration, the tang of the true 'Varsity flavour is decidedly to be found in the "Sheldonian" every Commemoration.
VI.

A Pseudo-Shakespeare.

Richard Barnfield, the Elizabethan poet, some of whose lines have been mistaken for Shakespeare's work, cannot precisely be claimed as a native of this county—he was born about 1570 at Norbury Manor, just over the Shropshire border—but his maturer life was spent in Staffordshire, where he settled down as a country gentleman, at Darlaston, near Stone.

Young Barnfield was "rusticated" from Oxford in 1590, but was allowed to return on condition of paying a fine of 6s. 8d., or of publicly delivering a declamation in the hall of his college—Brasenose—where he took his B.A. degree in 1592. Two years later he published his first poetic effusion, a gracefully written work, entitled "The Affectionate Shepherd"; but the one which attained greatest popularity was his "Encomion of Lady Pecunia; or the Praise of Money."

Then a curious thing happened. In 1599 appeared "The Passionate Pilgrim, by W. Shakespeare," a small volume containing some of that poet's sonnets and verses, a piece or two known to be the work of Marlowe, and others taken from Barnfield's "Lady Pecunia."

It surely must be accounted to Barnfield as nothing less than a great honour that he could produce work which has been accepted as Shakespeare's; and it is interesting to note that his publisher in 1599 was also Shakespeare's publisher for the folio of 1623—"John Laggard"; also that he dedicates "The Affectionate Shepherd" to Sir Philip Sydney's immortal Stella. As to the former circumstance, it is said to have been a publisher's trick to issue the work of 1599 as "The Passionate Pilgrim," by
W. Shakespeare, notwithstanding these beautiful verses had appeared in 1598 in "Lady Pecunia," by "Richard Barnfield, graduate of Oxford." The authenticity of the disputed work was first challenged in 1844.

Did Barnfield either unscrupulously, or unconsciously, appropriate Shakespeare's work? The smoothness of the versification, whoever produced it, is delightful.

As it fell upon a day,
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade,
Which a grove of myrtles made;
Beasts did leap, and birds did sing,
Trees did grow, and plants did spring,
Everything did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone.

Equally charming is the other piece:

Whilst as fickle Fortune smiled
Thou and I were both beguiled.
Every one that flatters thee,
Is no friend in misery.
Words are easy like the wind,
Faithful friends are hard to find.
Every man will be thy friend,
Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend.

As a result of searches and researches, it is now authoritatively ruled that those pieces of superlative merit included in "The Passionate Pilgrim," as it was issued in 1599, were the work of Shakespeare, and consequently they are now usually omitted from published editions of the works of Richard Barnfield.

The last appearance of Barnfield in print was in 1605, when he re-published "The Encomion of Lady Pecunia," altering all the parts which had applied to Queen Elizabeth, and rendering it a vehicle for the gross flattery of her successor. The edition is labelled "newly corrected and enlarged"; but it is significant that the disputed poems, fine work as they are, do not re-appear.

Barnfield's style was distinguished by a picturesqueness and a sweetness of melody, though sometimes marred by an exaggerated sentimentality. Though quaint and dainty his
verses are often over-luxurious. His books are now extremely rare. Richard Barnfield is mentioned in Fuller’s "Worthies of England," first published in 1662.

The poet continued to reside at Oxford after taking his degree there, and it was not till 1599 that he took up his residence in Staffordshire. He was the son and heir of Richard Barnfield, of Egmond, Salop, and of his wife, Mary Skrymsher, of Norbury, Co. Stafford. He died at Darlaston in 1627, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Michael's, Stone.

His will, dated the year of his death, is in the District Probate Court at Lichfield. It is very quaintly worded: "Richard Barnfield, of Dorlestone, in the Countie of Stafford, Esquire," bequeaths a number of legacies to his relatives and friends; thus it may be read: "I give to mistris Doodie my Truckle bedd—" "to John Goodale, of Waulton, my blue breeches and friese Jerkine—" certain sums to the poor of Darlaston and the poor of Stone, as well as "five pounds to bestowe of a Dinner at my Buriall."

Mrs. James Meakin, the present occupant of Darlaston Hall, is of opinion that the manor house associated with Richard Barnfield stood nearer the banks of the Trent than the two buildings which since his day have succeeded it. Barnfield's residence was not improbably built by the Orme family, who owned Tittensor Manor, and built the manor house there, which is now in ruins. Three years before the poet came to Stone, the Darlaston estate was purchased by the Collier family.
VII.

A Modest Collaborator in a Great Work.

At Shelton, to the north of Newcastle-under-Lyne, was born Elijah Fenton, an eighteenth century poet of some merit. He was descended from an ancient family, whose estate had once been very considerable; and his father was the Coroner for the district. Elijah, born 1683, though the youngest of eleven children, proceeded to Cambridge, where he was admitted a pensioner of Jesus College, and where he took his bachelor's degree in 1704.

It was the intention of his friends that he should take orders; but having, while at Cambridge, professed unorthodox opinions, he became disqualified for the Church, by refusing the necessary oaths.

Being excluded from the regular modes of profit and prosperity open to a man of his attainments, and reduced to pick up an uncertain livelihood, he engaged himself as usher to Mr. Bonwicke, a celebrated schoolmaster of that time, at Headley, in Surrey; in which situation, however, he only remained for a short time, having secured appointment as secretary to the Earl of Orrery, who likewise placed his only son, Lord Boyle, under his tuition.

The machine for demonstrating the movements of the heavenly bodies in the solar system, known as the "orrery," is generally supposed to be the invention of this nobleman, whose name it bears; though it is worth while here to note that its invention has been ascribed with more show of justice to Mr. Rowley, of Lichfield.
The young nobleman came to entertain a degree of friendship for his tutor, almost amounting to veneration, and regretted when the time arrived that his tutorial services were no longer required.

After this Fenton for some time kept a school for himself at Sevenoaks, in Kent, which he brought into good reputation; but he was persuaded by Mr. Henry St. John, the great Tory statesman, with promises of a more honourable employment, to relinquish this means of livelihood.

The promises so glibly made to him by this charming but shifty politician were never performed. This patron of literature was the associate of Swift, Pope, and other men of letters; and in religion was a pronounced Deist, which was possibly one of the reasons the unorthodox Fenton was attracted to him.

Elijah Fenton, as a poet, rendered Pope very valuable assistance in his translation of the Iliad and the Odyssey, but was very inadequately rewarded for these services, though the poet was a little more helpful than the politician had been.

It may have been that Pope considered it an honour to Fenton to associate him with the translations; there can be no doubt that the latter caught the trick of Pope's versification to such a nicety that it is all but impossible to distinguish their respective lines. The First, Fourth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Books are his acknowledged translations.

By the recommendation of Alexander Pope, he for some time was placed in a situation which held out to him the most flattering prospects. This was to assist Mr. Craggs, then Secretary of State (1718), in the studies which he found necessary to supply the deficiencies of his education. The death of that statesman, however, very shortly subsequent to his introduction, blasted the hopes which he might otherwise have entertained.

Pope again proved serviceable to his collaborator by recommending him to conduct the education of the eldest son of Lady Trumbal, at whose
seat, in the neighbourhood of East Hamstead, Berkshire, he died on the 13th, July 1730.

The death of Fenton was a subject of deep regret among all men of taste, not omitting even his brother bards. Pope, in particular, was severely affected by the event, and honoured him with the following epitaph:—

"This modest stone, what few vain mortals can,
May truly say, here lies an honest man,
A poet, blessed beyond a poet's fate,
Whom heaven kept sacred from the proud and great;
Foe to loud praise, and friend to learned ease,
Content with science in the vale of peace,
Calmly he looked on either life, and here
Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear;
From nature's temperate feast rose satisfied,
Thank'd heaven that he had lived, and that he dy'd."

The first publication by Elijah Fenton, which made its appearance in the year 1707, was a volume of poems intituled "Oxford and Cambridge Verses," and it at once established his reputation. In 1717 another volume was produced, and in 1723 his tragedy of Mariamne, having received the approbation of the managers, was performed with great applause at one of the London theatres.

This piece is founded on the story related of that lady in the third volume of the "Spectator," which the ingenious writer had collected from Josephus.

Dr. Johnson tells us that when the play was shown to Colley Cibber, he rejected it with the unnecessary insolence of advising Fenton to engage himself in some employment of honest labour than indulge himself in the hope of living by poetry. When the play was acted at the opposition house, and received the approbation of the public, Cibber's opinion was manifestly stultified.

Fenton, working in another branch of literature, wrote a life of "Milton," of which Dr. Johnson speaks in terms of high commendation; and he edited a fine edition of the works of "Waller," accompanied by very valuable notes by himself.
Such of Fenton’s poems as were not published in the last edition of his works are preserved in “Nichol’s Select Collection,” given to the public in 1780.

The personal appearance and moral character of Fenton, as well as his merits as a poet, are thus given by Dr. Johnson, with that force and discrimination for which his name is so justly celebrated:

“Fenton was tall and bulky, inclined to corpulence, which he did not lessen by much exercise, for he was very sluggish and sedentary, rose late, and when he had risen, sat down to his books or papers. A woman that once waited on him in a lodging, told him, as she said, that he would ‘lie abed and be fed with a spoon.’ This, however, was not the worst that might have been prognosticated, for Pope says in his letters, that he died of indolence, but his immediate distemper was the gout.

“Of his morals and conversation, the account is uniform; he was never named but with praise and fondness, as a man in the highest degree amiable and excellent. Such was the character given him by the Earl of Orrery, his pupil; such is the testimony of Pope; and such were the suffrages of all who could boast of his acquaintance.”

It will be seen Fenton is always spoken of with unqualified affection, for he was as amiable as he was indolent; the assertion that he was ungrateful to Pope is absolutely groundless.

The germ of the great Darwinian philosophy of Natural Selection may be claimed to have originated in this county; in opposition to the evolutionary hypothesis there, curiously enough, is a couplet of our Staffordshire poet (Fenton) which inverts the now generally accepted origin of the human species—

Foes to the tribe from which they trace their clan,
As monkeys draw their pedigrees from man.

Another biographer gives the following anecdote of Fenton as illustrative of his character and temperament.
"He used, in the latter part of his time, to pay his relations in the country a yearly visit. At an entertainment made for the family by an elder brother, he observed that one of his sisters who had married unfortunately was absent, and found, upon enquiry, that distress had made her thought unworthy of invitation. As she was at no great distance, he refused to sit at the table till she was called; and when she had taken her place, was careful to show her particular attention."

His collection of poems is now to be considered. Says one critic, "The Ode to the Sun is written upon a common plan, without uncommon sentiments; but its greatest fault is its length. No poem should be long of which the purpose is to strike the fancy, without enlightening the understanding by precept, ratiocination or narrative. A blaze first pleases, and then tires the sight.

"Of Florelio it is sufficient to say that it is an occasional pastoral, which implies something neither natural nor artificial, neither comic nor serious.

"The next ode is irregular, and therefore defective. As the sentiments are pious, they cannot easily be new; for what can be added to topics on which successive ages have been employed?

"Of the Paraphrase on Isaiah, nothing very favourable can be said. Sublime and solemn praise gains little by a change to blank verse, and the paraphrast has deserted his original by admitting images not Isiatic or at least not Judaical, as—

Returning Peace
Dove-eyed, and rob'd in white.

"Of his pretty poems some are very trifling, without anything to be praised either in the thought or expression. He is unlucky in his petitions; he tells the same idle tale with Congreve, and does not tell it so well. He translates from Ovid the same epistle as Pope but I'm afraid not with equal happiness."

Elijah Fenton, nevertheless, was a writer of real distinction, and had he been blessed with
more energy, might have climbed the slopes of Parnassus to a much higher point, and been worthily numbered with the elect.

In 1894 was published *Elijah Fenton: His Poetry and Friends*, by William Watkiss Lloyd (Hanley: Allbut and Daniel). This well-get-up volume contained a portrait of the poet, and a view of Shelton Old Hall, his birthplace; and altogether is of considerable local interest.
VIII.

An Ecclesiastical Lord Chancellor.

Not only has Staffordshire produced, as will be seen in the following chapter, a lord chancellor of the modern type, one who has climbed to the highest rung on the ladder of the law, to that eminence which gives a man precedence over every temporal lord in the realm; but in the old days, when few possessed even the ability to write and none but an ecclesiastic was capable of the office which always demanded of its occupant some amount of learning, the distinction was achieved by a native of this county in the person of Edmund de Stafford.

Edmund de Stafford, second son of Sir Richard de Stafford (summoned to Parliament as baron Stafford of Clifton in 1371), was born near Stafford, his mother being Isabel, daughter of Sir Richard de Vernon, of Harlaston, Staffordshire, and Haddon, Derbyshire. Ralph de Stafford (of Drayton, in this county), first earl of Stafford, and one of the founders of the Order of the Garter, was his great-uncle.

Entering holy orders, Edmund's advancement, owing to family influence, was rapid.

As an ecclesiastic he was collated rector of Worthen, Salop, 1369; Prebendary of Ufton, at Lichfield, 1369—1377; of Weeford, 1377-1399; Prebendary of Welton-Paynshall, Lincoln, and of Knaresborough-cum-Bickill, York. Then he became Dean of York, and, according to some writers, was made Bishop of Worcester, and ultimately Archbishop of York. Though
this is extremely doubtful, there is no disputing that Boniface appointed him to the bishopric of Exeter, to which see he attained in January, 1395, his consecration taking place at Lambeth on June 20th. It was some time before he visited his diocese, affairs of State detaining him in London, he having been made keeper of the privy seal in 1389.

On October 23rd, 1396, Edmund de Stafford was appointed Chancellor of England, the highest office of state in the realm, and the keeper of the King's conscience.

His first tenure of the Chancellorship lasted till the abdication of Richard II., in the autumn of 1399, the administration of his diocese being committed to the dean, Ralph de Tregrisiou. He was a fierce partisan, and sternly registered decrees of vengeance against many of his political opponents.

In the Parliament of January, 1397, he sat as Chancellor, and swore to observe all the arbitrary acts then passed. In all the stirring events which led up to the coup d'état, he and his party kept the Traitors' Gate of the Tower extremely busy.

Although he lost the Chancellorship at Henry IV.'s succession, he remained a member of the privy council, attended Henry's first Parliament, and was one of the prelates who assented to the imprisonment of the deposed king. He was also one of the witnesses to Richard II's will.

Early in 1400 he devoted himself to his episcopal duties in right good earnest, making visitations to every part of Devonshire, and Cornwall. At this time John Searle was nominally Chancellor, but was soon swept by the fierce current of events into an obscurity from which he never afterwards emerged.

Returning to London in the following January, Edmund de Stafford became once more Chancellor, and, by the powerful influence of his family, held that office till February, 1403.
In succeeding Parliaments he was trier of petitions and a member of the King's council. In May, 1402, he was named first in a commission to examine into the propagation of certain malicious rumours against Henry IV. As, however, in the course of these factious struggles the office had been stripped of much of its power, the Chancellorship no longer had any attraction for de Stafford, and he therefore resigned it.

In his later years his time was so fully occupied by his episcopal duties, that he rarely absented himself from his diocese, in which he laboured with the utmost zeal and diligence till five years before his death, when his health began to fail him. At his episcopal castle he exercised baronial hospitality, and took a keen pleasure in hunting. He constantly lived in the hope of once more mixing in the strife of faction, in which his soul so much delighted; but he died just before the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses, in the stirring events of which this daring and reckless politician would have been in his element.

Edmund de Stafford died at Clyst, Devon, in 1419, at the age of seventy-five, and was buried under an alabaster tomb in his own cathedral; his will dated 24th July, 1418, was proved on September 18 of the following year.

If not himself a learned man, this prelate was a zealous patron of learning. He was a great benefactor to Stapledon's Inn, founded at Oxford by his predecessor, and now known as Exeter College; he settled fellowships on it, and furnished liberal endowments for their support. He also made extensive additions to the college buildings, and presented it with a library of valuable books.

But the enemies of Edmund de Stafford have traced all his success in life to his noble descent, and the political influence wielded by his family; declaring that though a bishop he had little or no theological learning, and that he became Chancellor of England without the slightest knowledge of the law.

In a succeeding reign another Stafford, also an ecclesiastic, filled the same high office. This
was John, son of Sir Humphrey Stafford, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1443. John Stafford was appointed keeper of the privy seal to Henry VI. in 1428, and four years later became Chancellor. In those times the high ecclesiastic was a lawyer and a man of affairs; and there was no better way of rising to eminence in the state than through the Chancery. John Stafford held the great seal till 1450, a longer period than anyone before had continuously held it, and he was the first holder of the office to be designated Lord Chancellor.

This distinguished statesman cannot be claimed as a native of the county, but about this time there was a John Stafford who was born at Stafford town towards the close of the fourteenth century, became a Franciscan friar, and attained to some eminence. According to Fuller he was "no contemptible philosopher and divine" and his principal work was a history of England, written in Latin. The same authority, after informing us that he was born in "the shire town," says, "He must have lived before John Ross who flourished anno 1480 under Edward IV., and maketh honourable mention of him. Therefore with proportion and probability he is collated to have written about 1380."
IX.

A Corrupt Judge.

The nation is justly proud of the integrity and impeccability of the English bench; but while glorying in the honesty and uprightness of Judge Gascoigne, whom Shakespeare holds up to honour, and of Sir Matthew Hale, who inspired confidence in those directly opposed to him, we are apt to forget the sullied reputations of Bacon, of Jeffries, and Macclesfield.

That distinguished lawyer, Lord Macclesfield, was the son of Thomas Parker, an attorney at Leek, who left him about £100 a year. He was born in the Market Place, Leek, 23rd July, 1666, educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and called to the bar 1691.

The family name was anciently Le Parker and they came originally from Norfolk, where they held an estate in 1271, but were afterwards settled, through a marriage, at Norton Lees, in Derbyshire. Thomas Parker's mother was a daughter of Colonel Robert Venables, who has been previously mentioned as the author of "The Experienced Angler."

Thomas Parker, under the direction of his father, applied himself to the study of the laws, and became so eminent in his profession that he was appointed one of the Council of Queen Anne, and in 1705 was called to the degree of Sergeant-at-law, and presently had the honour of Knighthood conferred upon him. On the Midland Circuit he was known as "Silver-tongued" Parker," or "the silver-tongued Counsel."

From 1705 to 1708 he was member of Parliament for Derby, of which borough he was Recorder, and in 1710 was constituted Lord
Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench. On the demise of the Queen he was one of the Lords Justices till the arrival of her successor from Hanover, who in March, 1716, created him a Baron of the Kingdom, by the style and title of Lord Parker, Baron of Macclesfield, in the County of Chester, giving him at the same time a pension of £1,200 a year to support the dignity.

Being attached to the Whig party, he was appointed one of the managers of the impeachment of Dr. Sacheverell in 1710. It was for his exertions in this great partisan struggle that he was elevated to the Queen's Bench. Bishop Burnet has left it on record that none of the managers had treated Sacheverell so severely as Parker had done; the gossip of the time said that though Queen Anne acted the part of one who was pleased with the same, "she really disliked it all, and would take the first occasion to show it."

As one of the Lords Justices to act whilst George I. was in Hanover, he won the confidence of that monarch, who in May, 1718, was pleased to deliver to him the Great Seal as his Lord Chancellor, in which office he was sworn before the King in Council at Kensington. The University of Cambridge congratulated him on his promotion; and in 1721 he was raised a step in the peerage with the dignity of Viscount Parker and Earl of Macclesfield. Then the tide of honour was suddenly interrupted; all at once the noon-day sun of prosperity was clouded.

He resigned the Chancellorship in January, 1725, and almost immediately afterwards was charged with selling offices contrary to law, and with taking extortionate sums from the persons appointed, with the knowledge that the payment was to be defrayed out of the suitors' money.

It was an extraordinary event that one of the greatest ornaments of the peerage, and one who had so long presided at the administration of justice, should himself be arraigned as a criminal, be convicted of mal-practices, and sentenced to pay a fine of £30,000 as a punishment for his offence; that a second Lord Chancellor of
England should be impeached by the grand inquest of the nation for corruption of office; and be, like his great predecessor, Lord St. Albans, found guilty of the charge.

The prosecution was carried on with great virulence; and though rigid justice indeed demanded a severe sentence, yet party zeal and personal animosity were supposed to have had their weight in that which was passed upon him.

The trial lasted thirteen days, and the lords unanimously found him guilty.

The whole fine was exacted and actually paid by his lordship and his son, notwithstanding the favourable disposition that was shown in some quarters to relieve him in part by a considerable donation.

It is certain there had been gross mismanagement in the offices of the Masters in Chancery by which the suitors had been great sufferers; and it appeared that those places had been sometimes conferred upon persons who had paid for them a valuable consideration. The public cry against corruption in high places was loud and long; so much so, it was not thought prudent to stay proceedings against the supreme judge of the kingdom.

The Statute on which the Chancellor was impeached had, indeed, grown into disuse, but it was still the law of the land.

After the verdict the Earl retired to Sherburn Castle, Oxfordshire, between which place and his town house in Soho Square he spent the remaining seven years of his life.

Lord Macclesfield was rather great than amiable in his general character. He was eminently skilled in his profession, a man of learning, and a patron of it. He was austere, and by certain Courtiers was looked upon as uncompromisingly harsh and ungracious; yet at home, in his retirement, he was esteemed for his virtues as a husband, parent, and master.
The close of his life, passed in retirement, is said to have been "devoted to the studies of religion, of which he had always been a strict and uniform observer." This is quite in keeping with human nature; a man who has no morals is often full of "religion." For this eminent character was proven guilty of criminal mal-practices, the abuse of exalted trusts and privileges, and of offences which in a smaller man would have been visited with severer penalties, and have carried the execrations of society.

This Staffordshire "worthy," who had held the rank of the first lay person in the realm after the blood-royal, died at Soho Square, on April 28th, 1732—a great, but a disgraced Lord High Chancellor.

During the height of the sensation caused by his trial, Lord Macclesfield had hurled at him, among other vulgar abuse, "Staffordshire has produced the three greatest rogues ever known in England, Jack Sheppard, Jonathan Wild, and Tom Parker!" So far as the first-named is concerned, this honour is confidently repudiated.
A Great Navigator.

For a midland county, right in the heart of the land, and remote from the haunts of those who "go down to the sea in ships and do business in great waters," Staffordshire is remarkable in having produced more than its quota of mighty seamen. There was Sir Richard Levison, that gallant old sea-dog of Elizabeth's spacious days, whose monument is such a conspicuous feature in Wolverhampton Church. He was really a representative of an ancient Willenhall family. (See "Staffordshire Stories," p. 31.) And of other names which stand out in the naval history of the country, few are more conspicuous than those of Anson, Gardner, and St. Vincent.

The Anson family, to which belonged the first of these naval heroes, had long been connected with this county, first at Dunston, near Penkridge, and then at Shugborough. The latter estate was purchased in the reign of James I. by William Anson, a lawyer of some eminence, and it was here the future admiral and circumnavigator was born at the close of the seventeenth century.

George Anson was born at Shugborough Manor House, in the parish of Colwich, 23rd April, 1697; and, having an early passion for a naval career, in his nineteenth year was made second-lieutenant of His Majesty's ship, the Hampshire. The year following, 1717, he was with the Baltic Squadron, where also the Hampshire had been in the fleet commanded by Sir George Byng, and at this time he saw, on the Danish shore, the illustrious Czar, Peter of Russia, and the famous Catherine, afterwards Empress.
Shortly afterwards he was appointed second-lieutenant of the *Montague*, employed by the unfortunate Sir George Byng in the expedition to Sicily, and was present in the celebrated action near that island, in which he distinguished himself by his skill and bravery. In 1722 he was made master and commander of the *Weazle*, sloop-of-war, and in the following year was made post captain, and appointed to the command of the *Scarborough*, man-of-war.

While holding this appointment he was ordered to South Carolina, and, during his station there, which was three years, he erected the town called Anson Bourgh, and gave name to the province still called Anson County. His expectations respecting this town and estate were never fully realised, probably because his pecuniary resources were insufficient to develop a project which involved the bringing out of settlers and equipping them for a pioneer life to the smallest detail.

After being repeatedly in and out of employ, and having thrice been appointed to the station of South Carolina, where he held considerable property, and to which place he was much attached, he, in consequence of an order dated December, 1734, returned to England in the following June, and was paid off at Woolwich.

In all these services he gave perfect satisfaction to the Board of Admiralty; and, after his return from the Carolina station, remained at home some two or three years.

In December, 1737, he was placed in command of the *Centurion*, and in this ship he was ordered, in the February following, to the coast of Guinea, to prevent French cruisers annoying our merchantmen. He returned in 1739 by the course of Barbadoes and South Carolina.

Then came the great opportunity of Captain Anson's life, which he was not slow to seize, and which placed his name on the national scroll of fame.

On the breaking out of the Spanish war in this year, he was appointed to the command of a
fleet of five ships, destined to annoy the enemy in that dangerous and then unfrequented water which lies beyond America, the Great Pacific Ocean. This voyage laid the foundations of his future fortunes, and the history of it is well known.

He did not depart before September, 1740, when on the 18th of that month he set sail from St. Helena. He stopped at Madeira, then at the island of St. Catherine's, on the Brazil coast, and next at Port St. Julian, in Patagonia. He encountered prodigious difficulties in doubling Cape Horn; and in this perilous passage his fleet was separated, and part of it never rejoined him.

At length he arrived at the Island of Juan Fernandez, and during the three months that he remained there he sowed the seeds of several culinary herbs and a variety of plum, apricot, and peach stones. From thence he proceeded to Peru, took the town of Paita, anchored a few days at Quibo, then sailed to the coast of Mexico, taking a number of prizes and doing the Spaniards much damage. After stopping awhile at the harbour of Chequetan, he determined to cross the Pacific Ocean, though his squadron was now reduced to a single ship, the Centurion.

His course was shaped to Tinian, one of the Ladrone Islands, in the hope of securing wood, water, and fresh provisions. No harbour was found there sufficient to afford anchorage for his ship, which was driven out to sea, leaving Anson, several of his officers, and part of the crew on the island. His fortitude was now put to the test indeed, for it seemed hopeless to expect ever seeing the vessel again. Animated by his example, and cheered by his words, the men set to work to build themselves a boat; but, luckily, the Centurion eventually made her way back, took up the forlorn party, and all was well once more.

Be it here remembered that Australia was practically unknown at that time; parts of it had been visited by Portuguese and Dutch sailors, but Captain Cook did not explore that
great southern land till 1770.

Resuming his voyage across the ocean, he made his way, almost as a matter of course, to Macao, in China; and presently sailing back from this place in quest of the Manilla Galleon laden with treasure, he had the good fortune of meeting with it, and of taking it on the 30th of June, 1743, although during the hottest part of the action his ship was found to be on fire near to the powder magazine.

How the intrepid Englishman, having once obtained scent of the golden prize, cruised the Manilla waters week after week with sleuthhound persistency, in search of the Spaniard; how having at last sighted his quarry, he gave chase, overhauled her, and fought her desperately at pistol-shot distance till she was blown almost to pieces, and all this with great loss to the enemy and but marvellously small damage to himself; how he gripped his prey and navigated its shattered hulk through unknown waters into the harbour of Canton—this is precisely the kind of exciting sea-story schoolboys revel in, only in this instance it happens to be quite true.

If there was one quality more than another which characterised the British seamen of that piratical old school, it was a boundless measure of audacity. Anson's attitude towards the Chinese authorities whilst engaged in repairing and provisioning his ship at Canton was one of sublime effrontery. Having first placed his treasure out of harm's reach, he blandly claimed that the King of Great Britain's warships were exempt from all port dues; and he so impressed the Celestials with his Britannic Majesty's puissance, that they not only accepted the Commodore on his own terms, but accorded him a formal reception that was almost regal.

The gallant enterprise was well terminated by Anson's sale of his prize to the Chinese. Having repaired, re-fitted, and provisioned at Canton, he set sail on his homeward voyage by way of the Cape of Good Hope. On June 15th, 1744, he safely arrived at Spithead (after
an absence from England of nearly four years) with one ship and less than 200 men, but a vast amount of Spanish treasure. At Portsmouth he was received with great acclamation.

The "cargo"—as the booty was euphemistically designated—which was landed from the Centurion, comprised 2,600 pieces of eight, 150,000 ounces of plate, 10 bars of gold, an immense quantity of gold and silver dust, the whole valued at £1,250,000 sterling.

From Portsmouth to London the conveyance of the captured treasure was not unlike an ancient Roman triumph. On a glorious summer day—to be precise, on Wednesday, July 4th, 1744—a procession of 32 baggage waggons, heavily laden with the rich spoils of conquest, paraded along St. James's Street, the Strand, and Cheapside, on its way to the Tower, amidst the roaring plaudits of London's overjoyed citizens; the ship's swarthy crew forming a grim and determined-looking guard, and preceded by their officers with drawn swords, they marched with flags flying and bands playing; and as a triumphal parade of Britannia's naval prowess even the streets of old London had never seen a more characteristic and significant procession.

This memorable voyage round the world Anson executed with singular honour and advantage to himself, his officers, and the men, under his command; though from original errors of calculation and defects in the embarkation, and from other causes in which he was in no wise concerned, the grand design of the expedition was not fully carried out. It was a triumph for British seamanship, nevertheless.

Lord Anson, though a man of many virtues, did not escape calumny. He was accused of extravagant gaming; but he lived in an age when gaming was the common amusement of "people of quality," and his character was satisfactorily vindicated in this respect. Other slanders were uttered against him and as warmly repulsed. It is an undoubted fact that when his "Voyage round the World" was published
it met with a very favourable reception, and four large impressions were sold off in a twelve-month, no slight evidence of the hero's popularity.

The work was translated into most of the European languages, and in each form supported its reputation. It was published under the name of Mr. William Walter, chaplain to the Centurion, though it was generally understood to have been written under his lordship's direction, and from materials furnished by Mr. Benjamin Robins.

The fame which Commodore Anson gained by this voyage, which lasted three years and nine months, will never lose its lustre in the minds of Englishmen, while the great humanity, prudence, and generosity which he showed towards the non-combatant Spaniards, particularly to certain young and beautiful females taken in the Manilla Galleon, even popularised his name throughout Spain, whose natives long spoke of him as the model of a perfect English gentleman, and a man of the highest honour and humanity.

A few days after his return to his own country he was made Rear-Admiral of the Blue and one of the Lords of the Admiralty. In April, 1745, he was appointed Rear-Admiral of the White, and in July, 1746, Vice-Admiral of the Blue. He then sought and secured election as Member of Parliament for Heydon, in Yorkshire, being regarded by the electors as quite a national hero.

The same winter, 1746-7, he commanded the Channel Squadron in a long and tempestuous cruise. The success of this expedition was frustrated by the accidental intelligence communicated by the master of a Dutch vessel, to the Duke d'Arvill's fleet, of Admiral Anson's station and intention.

The following summer, being then on board the Prince George, of 90 guns, in company with Admiral Warren and twelve ships more, he intercepted, off Cape Finisterre, a powerful French fleet bound to the East Indies, laden with trea-
sure and warlike stores, and by his valour and conduct again enriched himself and his officers, and thus strengthened the British Navy with six men-of-war and four East India-men, not one of the enemy's vessels of war escaping.

The French admiral M. W. George, of the Invincible, in allusion to two ships which had been taken, viz., L'Invincible and La Gloire, and pointing to these captured vessels, exclaimed, as he presented his sword to the conqueror, "Monsieur, vous avez vaincu L'Invincible et La Gloire vous suit." This opportune victory of Anson's defeated the purpose of a hostile expedition intended to ravage British territories in the East and West Indies.

On the 13th of June following (1747) his Majesty, George II., in consideration of Admiral Anson's eminent services, advanced him to the Peerage, by the title of Lord Anson, Baron of Soberton, in Hants; and his lordship adopted the not inappropriate motto, "Nil desperandum" (Despair of nothing).

The same year he was appointed Vice-Admiral of the Red, and the year following he married Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Lord Hardwicke, the then Lord Chancellor, which lady died without issue on the 1st of June, 1760.

He had frequently the honour of conveying George II. from England to Holland. In 1749 he was made Vice-Admiral of Great Britain, and on the 12th of June, 1751, he was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, in the room of the Earl of Sandwich. In the years 1752 and 1755 he was one of the Lords Justices of the Kingdom, during his Majesty's absence, a sufficient proof of the high opinion in which he was held.

On a change in the administration, in 1756, Lord Anson resigned his post as First Lord of the Admiralty; and some blame having been attached to him by party writers, relative to the relief of Minorca during his management of the Admiralty Board, the new ministers made a particular enquiry into the conduct of Lord Anson and the others concerned in this affair.

As a result, by resolution of the House of
Commons, Ministers were fully acquitted of any blame or negligence in the matter. On the 24th of February, 1757, Lord Anson was made an Admiral, and on the 2nd of July he was again placed at the head of the Admiralty Board, in which responsible post he remained during the remainder of his life.

"All the rest of his conduct, as First Commissioner of the Admiralty, was crowned with success, and that under the most glorious administration which this country ever saw," is a contemporary record of his official services.

In 1758, being then Admiral of the White, and having hoisted his flag on board the Royal George, of 110 guns, he sailed from Spithead on the 1st of June with a formidable fleet, Sir Edward Hawke serving under him; and by cruising continually before Brest, his tactics protected the descents which were made by the British that summer at St. Malo, Cherbourg, and other places on the French coast. After this he was appointed Admiral and Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty's fleets, the highest dignity to which a naval officer could attain.

The last public service he performed was conveying to England the Royal bride, Princess Charlotte, whom he landed after a rough and tedious passage, on the 7th of September, 1761, to be married two days later to His Majesty, George III. In February of the following year he accompanied the Queen's brother, Prince Charles of Mecklenburg, to Portsmouth, to show him the Arsenal, and the fleet that was then about to sail, under the command of Sir George Pocock, for Havana.

In attending this prince his lordship caught a violent cold, which became complicated by gout, to which he was subject, and was the immediate occasion of his death, which took place rather suddenly, just after walking in his garden at his seat, Moor Park, in Hertfordshire. This was on the 6th of June, 1762. He was buried in the family vault at Colwich in this county.

Admiral Lord Anson was a local worthy who undoubtedly lived a life of real distinction, his
achievements not only redounding greatly to his own credit, but doing much to exalt the maritime reputation of his country. He passed away at the age of 65, after an active service, almost unexcelled in the naval history of this country, of no less than 46 years.

In the grounds at Shugborough was erected, at the instance of a proud and grateful brother, a triumphal arch in honour of Lord Anson, and of his great achievements on the high seas; it was a copy of the Arch of Adrian at Athens, embellished with naval trophies to the glory of the British Fleet. Shugborough was enlarged and the estate greatly beautified by this owner.

On the decease of his brother the family fortunes devolved upon George Adams, a nephew, who assumed the name of Anson. This gentleman's son, on succeeding to the proprietorship of Shugborough, was made, in 1806, Lord Soberston in the county of Hants, and Viscount Anson of Shugborough and Orgrave in the county of Stafford. The creation, Earl of Lichfield, dates from 1831.
XI.

A Typical British Admiral.

While Anson was making his famous voyage round the world, there was born at Uttoxeter manor-house another future admiral, who was to make his mark in the annals of the British navy.

This was Alan, fourth son of Lt.-Col. Gardner, of the 11th Dragoons (a native of Coleraine, then settled in Staffordshire), who was born 12th April, 1742, and grew up to be a most distinguished seaman; perhaps not quite so illustrious as Anson or Jervis, but a fine specimen of those commanders of the good old fighting school who were constantly going into action, and never coming out without added laurels.

Having at an early period shown a strong bias towards the naval service, the boy was rated, when 14 years old, as a midshipman on board the Medway, of sixty guns, then commanded by Captain Sir Peter Denis, an officer of distinguished merit.

In this vessel young Gardner remained for two years, during which time he was present in an action in which the Duc d' Aquitaine, French ship of the line, was taken. From the Medway our young midshipman afterwards accompanied his captain first on board the Namur, and afterwards in the Dorsetshire.

In the former he served under Admiral Hawke, during the expedition against Rochfort. While on board the latter he was present at the capture of the Raisable, on which occasion Captain Denis put in practice the newly-adopted plan of not firing a single ball till within a few yards of the enemy's ship.
He likewise bore a share in the general engagement which took place off Belleisle in 1769, between the British and French fleets, commanded respectively by Sir Edward Hawke and the Marshal de Conflan. Gardner having now been five years in constant service, was appointed, after passing the customary examinations, Lieutenant on board of the Bellona.

In this rank he distinguished himself at the capture of Le Courageux, whereupon he was raised to the status of master and commander, and appointed to the Raven, of sixteen guns. After the lapse of four years he was made post-captain in the Preston, of fifty guns, which had been fitted out as the flag-ship of Rear-Admiral Parry, whom he accompanied to Port Royal in Jamaica.

During the whole time of his being stationed here Great Britain was, for a wonder, at peace with all the nations of Europe; a happy circumstance of which he availed himself to marry Susannah Hyde, only daughter of Francis Oake, Esq., a planter, of Liguania, in Jamaica.

This lady having brought him a numerous family, he being always ambitious of rising in the service, made every effort to obtain an appointment as soon as the great American war broke out. He was successful in obtaining nomination to the command of the Maidstone frigate, in which he sailed for the West Indies early in 1778; and, in the course of that year, was fortunate enough to make a rich capture on the coast of America.

On the fourth of November he fell in with the Lion, a French man-of-war, having on board fifteen hundred hogsheads of tobacco, and after a severe action compelled her to surrender. With this prize he sailed for Antigua, and was, soon after his arrival, promoted by Admiral Byron to the command of the Sultan, of 74 guns.

In the drawn battle which was fought some time subsequently with the French fleet under Count de Estaing, off the island of Grenada, Captain Gardner led the van, and greatly distinguished himself. His ship, however, suffered
so much that he was ordered to Jamaica, from whence he shortly after sailed for England, when the Sultan was discharged.

He did not, however, remain long out of commission, being appointed within a few months to the Duke, with which ship he sailed to join the fleet in the West Indies, then under the orders of Sir George Rodney, and was fortunate enough to arrive in time to participate in the glorious victory of the twelfth of April, 1782.

On that memorable day his ship was the first to break through the enemy's line of battle, according to the new plan of attack suggested by Mr. Clark, of Eldon, and then for the first time put into practice. At one period of this action the Duke, in conjunction with the Formidable and Namur, had to sustain the fire of eleven of the enemy's ships.

Soon after this triumph the American war terminated, and peace continued for several years to shed her benignant influence over the several nations of Europe. During this period Captain Gardner was employed in different capacities.

For some time he acted as Commodore on the Jamaica station, and in 1790 was appointed a Lord of the Admiralty, when he likewise obtained a seat in Parliament.

In the year 1793, having been raised to the rank of Rear-Admiral of the Blue, he hoisted his flag on board the Queen, of 98 guns, in which he sailed as Commander-in-Chief to the Leeward Islands.

Soon after this event, finding the disputes between the republicans and royalists in the French colony of Martinico to run very high, and being earnestly pressed by the latter to effect a descent on the island, Major-General Bruce was accordingly landed with 3,000 men; but that officer judged it expedient to re-embark again, almost immediately, being satisfied that the republican party was too strong to afford just hopes of success in the royal cause.

Admiral Gardner now returned to England, and the following year bore a part in the memorable action of the 1st of June, under the gallant
Earl Howe. On this occasion his conduct was conspicuous in the extreme, his ship having suffered more than any other in the fleet, with the exception of the Brunswick.

In consequence, he not only was particularly thanked by the Commander-in-Chief, but was appointed Major-General of Marines, and created a baronet of Great Britain. On the 22nd June, 1795, Sir Alan was present at the action off Port Orient, when the French fleet only saved itself from total destruction by a timely flight.

Two years after this event, when a dangerous mutiny had broken out at Portsmouth, he manifested a degree of firmness and resolution during that trying period worthy of his high character as a British naval officer.

From this time he continued to serve in the Channel fleet, till the close of the year 1799, when he was sent with sixteen sail of the line to reinforce the fleet off Cadiz, and in the Mediterranean. Perceiving, however, that little danger was to be apprehended in these quarters, he returned with nine sail of the line, accompanied by the convoy from Lisbon.

In 1800 we once more find him serving in the Channel fleet, but he was soon afterwards appointed to succeed Admiral Kingsmill, the naval commander in Ireland. He was now raised to the dignity of an Irish peer, with the title of Lord Gardner of Uttoxeter; in 1806 he was further advanced to the peerage of England.

The Irish command he continued to hold till the year 1807, when he hoisted his flag as Admiral of the Channel fleet, which ill-health, however, soon compelled him to relinquish. He died in 1810, and was buried in the abbey church of Bath, with all the solemnity and ceremony due to his distinguished career.

Lord Gardner's political career was not marked by any circumstance of great moment. He sat in three successive parliaments. His first election took place in 1790, when he was returned one of the representatives for the town of Plymouth. In 1796 he was the colleague of
Charles James Fox, in the representation of Westminster.

On this occasion he was opposed by the celebrated John Horne Tooke, whose wit, satire, and eloquence were more alarming to the Admiral than a shower of cannon-balls from an enemy's fleet.

Notwithstanding this circumstance, however, he once more offered himself as a candidate for the same city, and was again successful.

At this contest Fox, in addressing the electors, said, "A noble Admiral has been proposed to you. I certainly cannot boast of agreeing with him in political opinions, but whom could the electors pitch upon more worthy of their choice than the noble lord, in his private character universally respected, and a man who has served his country with a zeal, a gallantry, a spirit, and a splendour that will reflect upon him immortal honour."

Surely this was a tribute from a political opponent of which any man might justly be proud.
XII.

The Hero of Cape St. Vincent.

At Meaford Hall, near Stone, in the year 1734, was born John Jervis, second son of Swynfen Jervis, of Darlaston, and grandson of James Jervis, of Eccleshall. He entered the navy in his tenth year; was made a commander in 1793; and on 14th February, 1797, obtained over the Spanish fleet a signal and glorious victory, from which he derived his title of nobility, a triumph in which Nelson, Collingwood, and Troubridge took a share. In honour of this great achievement, and in recognition of his skill as a commander, he was created Baron Jervis of Meaford, and Earl St. Vincent.

John Jervis entered the navy as a boy, and in 1759 served in the expedition against Quebec. Ten years later he had the honour of conveying to the King of Naples the congratulations of the British Court upon his marriage. Having been promoted to the rank of Post Captain in 1760, he early distinguished himself in his profession; particularly as commander of the Foudroyant in the action fought by Admiral Keppel off Ushant in 1778; and again in 1782, when, after a fierce fight, he captured the Pegase, a Frenchman of 74 guns. For the latter service he was made a Knight of the Bath.

Seeking Parliamentary honours, he was returned first for Launceston, and subsequently for Yarmouth. In 1787 he obtained the rank of Admiral, and hoisted his flag on the Prince, of 98 guns.

Towards the close of 1793 it was determined to send a formidable armament for the reduction of the French West Indies, and Sir John Jervis
was placed in command of the naval force in this expedition. The island of Martinique was captured, and St. Lucia surrendered, as did also, after some protracted fighting, the island of Guadeloupe. A French relief squadron appearing on the scene, and the British force having suffered fearful ravages from yellow fever, some reverses followed.

Vice-Admiral Jervis returned to England in the January of 1795, and the same year succeeded to the high command of the Mediterranean Fleet, about the same time that Napoleon was sent by the Directory to take charge of the French Army in Italy. The success of French arms and French diplomacy in that country compelled Sir John Jervis to content himself with watching the enemy's ships in Toulon, a tedious and inglorious service which lasted upwards of six months, and yet was the most effective course which could have been taken under the circumstances. His vigilance was unremitting, and it redounds to his highest credit that though cruising with fifteen sail of the line, all repairs and provisioning were accomplished without going into port. Nothing availed him, however. The brilliant success of Napoleon's military operations in Italy, and the ill-support Sir John received from the authorities at home, rendered all his efforts nugatory. The blockade of Toulon had to be raised, Elba and Corsica evacuated by the British, and the fleet to retire to Gibraltar. The Mediterranean, in fact, was abandoned. Our half-hearted allies, the Spaniards, then went over and allied themselves to the French.

In Cartagena, at that time, lay a grand Spanish fleet, numbering 27 sail of the line, and 10 frigates, whose admiral proposed on the first favourable opportunity to sail forth, effect a junction with the French and Dutch, and sweep the British fleet from the sea. On the 1st February, 1797, the Spaniards sailed confidently out of Cartagena, bound for Cadiz. Sir John Jervis, with ten sail of the line, was stationed off Cape St. Vincent, and on the 6th was joined by five sail more. On the 13th Commodore Nelson also joined in the Minerve frigate.
At daybreak on the 14th the Spanish admiral, with his 27 ships, left the Mediterranean, intending to make for Brest and there join the French fleet. Admiral Jervis, by carrying a press of sail, came up with the enemy at half-past eleven; there was no hesitation about numbers, enormous bulk, or weight of metal; all inequalities were disregarded by the British, as in those days they always were, and the fifteen attacked the twenty-five as a matter of course. Nelson, now on board the Captain, with his usual sound judgment and high courage, seeing that an implicit regard to the orders of his superior would allow of six outlying ships of the enemy effecting a junction with the main body, manoeuvred to prevent this, and brought into action seven of the largest vessels of the Spanish fleet. Captain Troubridge, in the Cullodon, joined Nelson, and these two for nearly an hour sustained the unequal fight, when Collingwood, commanding the Excellent, and accompanied by the Blenheim, came to their timely succour. Nelson's ship by this time was utterly disabled, and the Cullodon was badly crippled.

Yet mauled as the Captain was, Nelson suddenly ordered the helm to be put a-starboard, hooked himself to the San Nicolas, of 80 guns, at which he had been firing at twenty yards distance, and gave the order to board, an order obeyed with the utmost alacrity by the soldiers of the 69th regiment. Briefly it must be told here how Nelson captured the San Nicolas, and received the officer's swords, when suddenly the Spanish admiral's ship, the San Josef, of 112 guns, opened fire upon the conquerers. Instantly the daring determination was taken to board this "first-rate," and no sooner resolved upon than done, Nelson being amongst the first to jump into the Spaniard's main-chains. The Spanish admiral was found dying of his wounds, and in but a few minutes the Spanish officers, standing on their own quarter-deck, were yielding up their swords to Nelson, who, as he received them, handed them to one of his seamen, to be tucked unceremoniously in a sheaf under the arm of that stolid Englishman, in the most matter-of-fact way possible—as is shown on a well-known popular picture of the historic scene.
The two ships, taken, as it were, by Nelson's own hand, were the most remarkable trophies of the victory; for, when concluded, the battle of St. Vincent was not marked by that complete destruction or conquest of the enemy's ships which usually characterised British successes of that period. Sir John Jervis, on the quarter-deck, embraced the Commodore, though Nelson's name is not found in the Commander's despatches.

It is said that the admiral's attention had been drawn, by Captain Calder, to the fact that Nelson had acted without orders, and that Sir John replied, "I forgive him, and if ever you disobey me in the same way, Calder, I'll forgive you." The splendid service rendered on this occasion by Nelson must not be allowed to obscure the glory which justly belongs to his superior. To Sir John Jervis alone belongs the honour of having attacked such heavy odds, as well as the correct combination by which a victory could be snatched from such greatly superior numbers. He was heard to say in the dull morning light of that memorable St. Valentine's day, "A victory is very essential to England at this moment." Though he was happy in having such a lieutenant, so right a man in so right a place at so critical a moment, Jervis had already staked everything on his own judgment. And had he lost, who can estimate the disaster of that loss? The blockade of British ports? An invasion of England? Who can say?

Only four vessels were captured, the remainder being in full flight. "Jervis was not the man," says that acknowledged authority, Mahan, "to risk a substantial success, securely held, for a doubtful further gain." The utter worthlessness of the Spanish fleet had been revealed, and the ancient naval glory of Spain was entirely wiped out, a few years later, at Trafalgar.

"After Nelson," says Captain Mahan, "Jervis, though of a different order, stands first among the British Commanders-in-chief. Sir John Jervis's conduct on the occasion must make the battle of Cape St. Vincent ever illustrious amongst the brilliant sea-fights of all ages."
The Spaniards of a truth fought bravely, but with very little skill; they lost 693 prisoners, while the British losses from death and wounds were exactly 300.

For this victory Admiral Jervis was raised to the peerage, as previously mentioned, and granted a pension of £3,000 a year. In 1801 the Earl was created Viscount St. Vincent of Meaford, which title was allowed to pass to his nephew, Edward Jervis Ricketts. At the voting of his honours and rewards many eulogies were passed upon him, among the speakers being Mr. Pitt (on behalf of the Ministry), Mr. Fox, and the Duke of Clarence (afterwards King William the Fourth).

In 1800 Lord St. Vincent was placed in command of the Channel Fleet; in 1801 he was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty. In the latter capacity he became a great reformer of naval abuses, and carried a policy of retrenchment and economy to such lengths to lay himself open to a charge of neglectful parsimony. During a debate in the House of Commons in 1806 he was roundly charged with "gross negligence, misconduct, and dereliction of duty," For even a century ago there were croakers who complained "the service was going to the devil," and unscrupulous partisans who assailed political opponents with more acrimony than a strict regard to truth. How groundless were the charges and how harmlessly the denunciations fell may be gathered from the fact that the resolution moved by Mr. Fox, and agreed to without a division, recorded the opinion of the Commons that the Earl "in his recent administration has given additional lustre to his exalted character, and merits the approbation of the House."

Retiring from the command of the Channel Fleet in 1807 he was appointed, seven years later, General of Marines, and in 1821, being then in his eighty-seventh year, was made Admiral of the Fleet.

The noble and gallant veteran died in 1823, and was accorded a State funeral at St. Paul's, where a monument, voted by Parliament, was erected to his memory.
At Meaford still remains the old room, panelled in oak, in which the Admiral was born; and in the marble hall of the mansion (beautifully rebuilt) may be seen the jewelled sword presented to him by the City of London, and other interesting memorials of this great warrior who holds high rank among the shire's most illustrious sons.
XIII.

A Great Controversialist.

Why did Staffordshire offer such dogged resistance—a resistance in intensity next to that of Lancashire and Yorkshire—to the advances of the Reformation? Why did this county cling at that era with such tenacity to the ancient faith of the land?

Is there any innate conservatism in the Staffordshire man—particularly any temperamental distaste to religious innovation? Has his inland seclusion and comparative remoteness from contact with the outer world so affected his character as to make him less responsive to the approach of new modes of thought?

Local history claims that the prehistoric Druidism of the land lingered its latest on the wooded heights of Barr; that Wednesbury, in the heart of pagan Mercia, was one of the last strongholds where the great Norse deity Woden defied the oncoming of the White Christ; and that even in modern times the peaceful evangel of Wesley found no fiercer opponents than among the sturdy colliers of Staffordshire.

At the earliest dawn of the Reformation movement John Wyclif found no more active and vigorous opponent to his new doctrine than in a worthy native of this orthodox county, one Thomas Asheburn.

Asheburn was born at Stafford, and educated chiefly at the University of Oxford, where he afterwards obtained a fellowship and entered into orders. In his controversy with the great reformers, this distinguished man, not contented with exerting all his talents and knowledge in endeavouring to prove their falsity, actually caused a convocation to be called at London, in the year 1382, where the writings of Wyclif were solemnly condemned.
Fuller's Worthies says "that at this synod Asheburn was one of the forty-four divines who, with ten bishops and twenty lawyers, condemned Wyclif's heresies." "Yet once," continues Fuller, "he did some good, or rather diverted much evil. It happened that one Peter PatishaU, an Augustinian, preaching in London, had some passages in favour of Wyolif, which so displeased those of his own order that they plucked him out of the pulpit, dragged him into the convent of Augustines (near Broad Street), intending more violence to his person. This alarmed the Londoners (amongst whom were a considerable party of Wyclifites) to rescue poor PatishaU. In their rage they would have burnt the convent about the friars' ears had not our Asheburne, with his tears and intreaties, seasonably interceded."

Later, at the very high noon of the Reformation period, we have another ingenious writer and learned controversialist in Thomas Fitzherbert, who was also born in the vicinity of Stafford in the year 1552. He was the son of William Fitzherbert, Esq., of Swynnerton, and a grandson of Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, justice of the Common Pleas.

Sir Anthony was a notable man. As a lawyer he wrote authoritative legal works; and as an authority on farming and estate-management he is now generally acknowledged to have been the "Master Fitzherbert" who wrote "The Boke of Surveying" (1523) and "The Boke of Husbandry" (1534). Sir Anthony's connection with Staffordshire came through his second wife, who was the co-heir of Richard Cotton, and brought her husband the Hampstall Ridware estate. He directed his heirlooms to be kept at Hampstall; his will was proved at Lichfield in 1538.

The place of Thomas Fitzherbert's early education is unknown, but in 1568 we find him removed either to Exeter or Lincoln College, Oxford, where he continued to improve himself, till disgust at the heresy of the times, as he called it (being a zealous Catholic), induced him to quit public life and retire to his patrimonial estate, where he lay in concealment two years.
Here, however, he did not escape the oppression which so much affected him at the University, for, having refused to attend divine service in the parish church, he was thrown into prison as a recusant in 1572.

Having effected his discharge soon after he became more ardent than ever in supporting his faith, publicly declaring that he deemed it criminal in Catholics to frequent or even to enter a Protestant Church.

In consequence of this violent conduct the enmity of the clergy was particularly directed against him, so that he found it necessary to withdraw himself into obscurity. But notwithstanding this, when the Jesuits Campian and Parsons came over to England, he set out for London, found them out, and contributed liberally to their support.

This conduct having again attracted notice, he thought it prudent to retire to France in 1582, where he advocated the cause of the beautiful, but unfortunate, Mary Queen of Scots.

After the execution of that Princess, and the death of his wife, which occurred about the same time, he proceeded to Madrid to claim the protection of Philip II; but upon the defeat of the Spanish Armada, left Spain, and accompanied the Duke of Feria to Milan. That nobleman, who was for some time resident in England, had married an Englishwoman by birth, and in consequence was a warm patron of the English in Spain.

As an English Catholic Fitzherbert found himself in high favour in Spain. About this time, while on a visit to Brussels (1595), he was charged before the State of Flanders, with holding a correspondence with the English Secretary of State, and with a design to set fire to the magazine at Mechlin. It was the Duke of Feria who extricated him on this occasion.

Thomas Fitzherbert remained at Milan for a considerable period, after which he set out to Rome, where he devoted himself entirely to literature. Here in 1601 he was ordained priest, and in 1607, when the Court of Rome had some thought of sending a Bishop to England, Fitz-
Herbert's name was on the list with those of three other candidates. In 1614 he became a member of the Society of Jesus, and an ardent propagandist of the Jesuit cause. After this event he departed for Flanders, and presided over the mission at Brussels for two years.

From that situation he was recalled to fill the station of governor or Rector of the English College at Rome, for which distinguished mark of favour he was solely indebted to the abilities and judicious conduct he had displayed at Brussels. This office he enjoyed till his death in 1640, being then in the eighty-eighth year of his age, and the twenty-second of his rectorship.

Anthony-a-Wood says that Thomas Fitzherbert was "a person of excellent parts, had a great command of his pen and tongue," was a noted politician, and "a singular lover of his countrymen, especially those who were Catholics."

As will be gathered, he rose to a European eminence, and might have become a Cardinal had he desired it. His portrait was formerly in the English College at Rome, and a copy of it, by Munch, was in the Sacristy of Wardour Castle.

Simms' "Bibliotheca Staffordiensis" has a column of interesting matter under the name of Thomas Fitzherbert, most of whose works were on religious subjects, particularly on the Catholic faith. His "Defence of the Catholycke Cause" (St. Omer, 1602); "A Treatise concerning Polity and Religion" (Douay, 1606 and 1610); "The Admirable Life of St. Francis Xavier" (Paris, 1632) will perhaps serve to indicate the nature of his writings, which exhibit the possession of a keen judgment, an alert mind, and a wide range of reading. He was a great controversialist, and the second of the volumes named was an attempt to disprove the principles laid down by the celebrated Machiavel.

To the family of Fitzherbert, of Swynnerton, also belonged (by marriage) the famous Mrs. Fitzherbert, wife of George IV. Born in Hampshire, as Maria Ann Smith, she married, first
Edward Weld, of Lulworth Castle, who died the same year; and secondly Thomas Fitzherbert, Esq., of Swynnerton, who died 1781.

She was a Roman Catholic, and in 1785 was secretly married by an Anglican clergyman to the Prince of Wales. This marriage contract was perfectly illegal under the Royal Marriages Act, having been effected without the King’s consent. The Prince afterwards denied there had been any marriage at all, and on his union with the Princess Caroline in 1795, the connection was interrupted. It was, however, resumed with the Pope’s consent, and finally broken off in 1803. Mrs. Fitzherbert died at Brighton in 1837.
XIV.

"The Beauty of Holiness."

Two eminent divines, both men of high culture, who made some claim to literary ability, and both of whom refused a primacy, were produced by this county in the eighteenth century. One was Richard Hurd, who on account of his comeliness and piety came to be dubbed by the wits of the day, "The Beauty of Holiness."

Several miles south-east from Billington, in the neighbourhood of Penkridge, stands the village of Congreve, which had the honour of giving birth to the celebrated Dr. Hurd, bishop of Worcester. This accomplished and erudite prelate was born 13th January, 1719.

He was the son of a respectable farmer there, who shortly afterward removed to Pendasford; he received all the rudiments of his education at Market Bosworth, Leicester, under the tuition of Anthony Blackwell, distinguished in the world of books as the editor of the Sacred Classics, and from whom he no doubt imbibed a taste for polite literature.

Leaving this academy he was next entrusted to the care of the Rev. William Budworth, of Brewood Grammar School, of whose kindness the Doctor always retained the most grateful remembrance.

From hence he removed in 1733 to Emanuel College, Cambridge, where he formed an intimate friendship with Dr. Warburton, and several other characters of literary celebrity, and continued to prosecute his studies with uncommon assiduity, till a vacancy having taken place in the Rectory of Thurcaston, he was presented to that living by the fellows of the college.
While at the University he formed a close friendship with his old school-fellow, Sir Edward Littleton. The poet Gray was also among his contemporaries there.

The first work from his pen was on "The Rejection of Christian Miracles" (1746). Presently he commenced authorship in good earnest by the publication of an English commentary and notes upon Horace’s "Ars Poetica." The Commentary was distinguished by a new consideration of the subject, and a fancied discovery of a systematic plan, which he supposed to have been adopted by the Roman poet.

In 1753 an edition of Horace appeared with notes, and a commentary on the fine epistle to Augustus, which were no less honourable to the Doctor’s talents. These were accompanied by two critical dissertations, one on the province of dramatic poetry, and the other on poetical imitation.

The next noteworthy publication by Dr. Hurd was an essay on the "Delicacy of Friendship," which, while it gave the most heartfelt satisfaction to his friend, Warburton, severely hurt the feeling of Dr. Jortin. This circumstance Dr. Hurd afterwards so much regretted, that he expressed the most earnest wish that the essay should be suppressed.

"A Dissertation on the Marks of Imitation" came out in 1758, and in the same year also, "Remarks on Hume's essay on the Natural History of Religion." The greater portion of this latter work was from the pen of Dr. Warburton.

It was issued forth to the public in an anonymous form; but it was soon discovered that Dr. Hurd had some share in it, and in consequence he received a severe reprimand from the Scottish philosopher, who declared, with justice, that it was "written with all the illiberal petulance, arrogance, and scurrility which distinguished the Warburton school."

Dr. Hurd was throughout a consistent supporter of that famous controversialist, Dr.
Warburton, who wore out his days in endless warfare with Hume, Jortin, the Deists, Voltaire, and Wesley. Hurd had gained the patronage of Warburton by subtle flattery, and in his controversy with Jortin had displayed a spirit that was as caustic as it was clever.

After the lapse of years, Dr. Hurd published his "Moral and Political Dialogues," which purported to be the substance of different conversations between several eminent characters of that and the previous century, arranged and digested by the parties themselves, and then first published from original MSS.

A second edition of these "Dialogues" appeared in 1764, when the Doctor's motives for concealing their real origin having ceased, he declared himself the author of them in a preface on the manner of writing dialogue.

This work gained him extensive fame, and operated in no small degree to promote his advancement in the church. The King, it is said, pointing to one of them, after he had been elevated to a bishopric, declared that it was the cause of his preferment to so dignified a station.

Three years previous to the publication of this second edition, Dr. Hurd was presented by Lord Northington to the sinecure rectory of Folkestone, and soon after received the Archdeaconry of Gloucester from his friend Warburton.

In 1772 he published a volume of "Sermons," which he dedicated to Lord Mansfield, who returned the compliment by exerting his influence to procure him the appointment of preceptor to the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York.

Shortly after this event he appeared in a new character, viz., as editor of "Select works of Abraham Cowley." That publication does him much less credit than most of his other productions; for it may be affirmed that many poems replete with marks of taste and genius are omitted, to make room for some of the poet's most paltry and trifling effusions.
In the year 1775 the Bishopric of Lichfield and Coventry, with that of Bangor, being offered by his Majesty to his acceptance, he chose the former. From this See he was translated to that of Worcester in 1781, when the Honourable Dr. Brownlow North was preferred to the Bishopric of Winchester.

This appointment Dr. Hurd continued to hold till his death, which happened at Hartlebury Palace on the 28th of May, 1808, he having declined the highest dignity of the Church, the See of Canterbury, offered to him in 1783.

In whatever point of view Dr. Hurd is regarded we perceive much to praise and sometimes a little to blame. His friendship for Warburton no doubt sometimes led him to write after the keen and arrogant manner of that celebrated character.

In private life, however, he was free from violence in his animosities, while he was no less warm and constant in his friendships than his great and learned patron.

Dr. Warburton having died in 1777, he left the settlement of his domestic affairs to Dr Hurd, and likewise enjoined him protector to his wife, by a letter dated the 6th April, 1776, and endorsed "To the Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, to be opened and delivered to him at my decease. W. G."

Besides the works already noticed, Dr. Hurd published a considerable number of well-written Sermons. In 1785 he brought out a sumptuous edition of all the works of Dr. Warburton which he conceived it proper should meet the public eye, omitting, however, the essay on "The Delicacy of Friendship," in which it has been seen he had a considerable share.

The omission of a memoir of the author gave offence to Dr. Parr, and induced him to republish the essay above-mentioned in a work entitled "Tracts by Warburton and a Warburtonian," the dedication to which is not inferior to any paper in the whole compass of English controversy.
The reappearance of this work was highly resented by Dr. Hurd, who found himself under the necessity of answering it, and did so with much ability, but unhappily without being successful in wholly extracting the venom of the attack, though he sufficiently exposed the pretensions of his opponent to elevation of mind and purity of intention.

It will be seen that Richard Hurd, like our last subject, Thomas Fitzherbert, was, before all things, eminent as a controversialist. In to all that he was ever a man of courtly manners, and a favourite with the King. He was a Moderate Tory and Churchman, and perfectly orthodox in his theology.

The bibliography of Bishop Hurd, as given by Simms, is formidable. That eminent authority on literature, Isaac D'Israeli, writes:—"Hurd once proposed to write a book of literary parallels, and has furnished a specimen in that of 'Petrarch and Rousseau.'" He then quotes Hurd's parallelism—the conclusion of which is that both Petrarch and Rousseau "were mad, but of a different nature"—as an amusing instance of how a lively and subtle mind can strike out resemblances and make contraries accord.

On Warburton's death, Bishop Hurd had bought his books, which, added to his own, compelled him to build a new library at Hartlebury castle.

Hurd died unmarried, and was buried in Hartlebury churchyard; his funeral was without pomp, and his tomb very plain, both by his own desire. An engraving of his portrait, by Gainsborough, is prefixed to the collected edition of his works.
XV.

A Place-Hunting Bishop.

The other eighteenth century prelate which Staffordshire produced was Thomas Newton, bishop of Bristol. He was born at Lichfield, the son of a brandy, wine, and cider merchant, 1703. The earlier part of his education was received at the Free Grammar School of that city; at the age of thirteen he was removed to Westminster, and the following year became "a King's Scholar" in St Peter's College there, where he was a contemporary of the future Lord Mansfield.

In 1723 he was elected to Trinity College, Cambridge, where, having taken the several degrees in arts, he was chosen fellow, and went into orders; soon after which event he set out for London, and was appointed curate to Dr. Trebeck, a distant family connection, at St. George's, Hanover Square; he also became rector and preacher of Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street.

While in this curacy he acted as tutor to the son of Lord Carpenter. After passing through some inferior gradations, Newton arrived at the dignity of rector of St. Mary-le-Bow, by the interest of the Earl of Bath, in whose family he was first chaplain, and whose interest he had attracted by the eloquence and perspicuity of his sermons. This happened in 1744; and a few months subsequently he took his degree of doctor of divinity.

During the period of the rebellion of "forty-five" he greatly distinguished himself by the spirited loyalty of his sermons; and on that account had many threatening letters sent to him, which, by the advice of Lord Bath, he transmitted to the Secretary of State. At a time when party spirit ran very high
he was ever a strenuous champion of the House of Brunswick. After preaching some fervidly loyal sermons at the chapel in Spring Gardens he was again the recipient of a number of Jacobite threats.

In 1747 he was chosen lecturer of St. George's, Hanover Square, where he preached a most pathetic sermon on the death of Frederick, Prince of Wales, which was so highly acceptable to the Princess Dowager that she named him her chaplain. Dr. Newton's zeal as a "Church and State" man was not allowed to go unrewarded when opportunity served. Looked upon as an ornament to the Protestant Church, he was steadily advanced in the Establishment.

About three years afterwards he was made chaplain to the King, then sub-almoner, Prebendary of Westminster, and Precentor of York, and Dean of Salisbury. In 1761 he was elevated by George III. to the bishopric of Bristol, to which was annexed a residentiaryship of St. Paul's, exchanged for St. Paul's deanery in 1768.

As a still higher proof of his Sovereign's esteem he was offered, in 1764, the Primacy of Ireland, which he modestly refused, being content with the clerical honours already conferred upon him. All his ecclesiastical duties were discharged in a scrupulously conscientious manner. He was a personal friend, as well as a fellow-townsmen of Dr. Johnson.

The right reverend prelate was twice married. He married in 1747, Jane, eldest daughter of Dr. Trebeck. It was when she died, childless, seven years later, that he wrote his "Dissertations on the Prophecies," as a method of solacing himself. In 1761 he took for his second wife a clergyman's widow, Elizabeth, the natural daughter of John, Viscount Lisbourne.

Bishop Newton died in 1782 in the 79th year of his age. He was a man of considerable learning and great piety. His principal work, intituled "Dissertations on the Prophecies," believed to have been remarkably fulfilled was thought to possess great merit and ability by all orthodox churchmen. The work has passed through some twelve or twenty editions, the last in 1860.
Both this and his annotated edition of Milton's "Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained," long enjoyed a reputation far beyond their merits. And this is not only the verdict of maturer judgments, for Dr. Johnson, who was intimate enough with him to call him "Tom Newton," once said that the "'Dissertations on the Prophecies' was Tom's great work; but how far it was great, and how much of it was Tom's, was another question."

A few days before his death Bishop Newton completed the writing of his autobiography, which contained many amusing anecdotes, and certainly revealed one curious trait in his character. He does not blush to say he considered it quite right and proper for a clergyman to hunt for preferment by flattery—a confession so remarkable even for a clergyman of that degenerate period, that Gibbon calls attention to it in his autobiography.

Bishop Newton died 14th February, 1782, and was buried at St. Paul's. A portrait of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds was (1867) in the possession of the Archbishop of Canterbury; it was the one engraved by Collier, and prefaced to the 1782 edition of his works. A succinct list of the preferments and dignities he held, and of the writings attributed to his pen, will be found in Simm's "Bibliotheca Staffordiensis."
The Shoe-maker Poet.

James Woodhouse, "the cobbler poet," our English Hans Sachs, was born at Rowley Regis in 1735. He came of yeomen stock, and was brought up as a shoe-maker, his poor earnings from which an early marriage compelled him to eke out with schoolkeeping.

His first poem to bring him into notice was a piece entitled "Ridicule." An elegy dedicated to the poet Shenstone, whose residence, the Leasowes, at Halesowen, was not more than two miles distant from the shoe-maker's cottage at Rowley, the former had printed in Dodsley's edition of his own works. In one of his published Letters—it is dated 1763—William Shenstone thus alludes to his humble neighbour, Woodhouse:

"My health, generally bad in winter and spring, has hitherto been tolerable. The influenza of last spring continued to depress me half the summer. Would you think the verses I enclosed were written on that occasion by a young journeyman shoe-maker; and one that lives at the village of Rowley, near me? He considered my disorder in somewhat too grave a light, as I did not think my life endangered by it; but, allowing for this, and the partiality he shows me, you will think the lines pretty extraordinary for one of his occupation. They are not, however, the only, or perhaps the chief specimens of his genius; and yet before he came to me his principal knowledge was drawn from Magazines. For these two or three years past I have lent him classics, and other books in English. You see, to him, I am a great Mæcenas."

A postscript to this letter adds:

"I will send you some other of Woodhouse's
verses when I can get him to transcribe them."

In 1764 a collection made by the friends of the humbler poet enabled him to publish his first volume, which appeared under the title of "Poems on Sundry Occasions." Two years later the work was re-issued, with a modest "author's apology," as "Poems on Several Occasions."

Woodhouse having now acquired some sort of celebrity as the "shoe-maker poet," Dr. Johnson expressed a keen desire to meet him. In accordance with this wish, Woodhouse received an invitation from Mrs. Thrale, and on the occasion of the meeting of these two Staffordshire worthies, thus expressly arranged, "the great Cham of Literature" is said to have strongly recommended Woodhouse to "study Addison day and night." Shortly afterwards, however, Johnson is recorded to have uttered the opinion, "He may make an excellent shoe-maker, but can never make a good poet. A schoolboy's exercise may be a good thing for a schoolboy, but it is no treat for a man." This judgment Johnson is believed to have modified at a later period.

By this time Woodhouse had given up his trade, and become a carrier between Rowley and London. He next obtained an appointment as land bailiff on the Yorkshire estates of Edward Montagu, where he remained some years, although he seems never to have been on very good terms with the wife of his patron, Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, the famous leader of literary society, and the queen of the "blue-stockings." She was the "Patroness," the "Scintilla," or "Vanessa," of his autobiography, which at his death was found in MS. headed, "The Life and Lucubrations of Crispinus Scriblerus; A Novel in Verse Written in the Last Century." This was a rhymed work abounding in digressions of a pious or a political nature, yet containing a few really good satirical lines. It was for his religious and political opinions he was ultimately dismissed the service of Mrs. Montagu, to whom he had acted, on the death of her husband, as house steward.
He also for a short time acted as land steward to Lord Lyttelton. At a later period of his life, when out of employment, he suffered some privation. But help was soon forthcoming from James Dodsley, the brother of his former publisher, who assisted him to set up a book-selling business in London. It was from 211, Oxford Street, Woodhouse in 1803 issued a volume "Norbury Park and other Poems," dedicated to William Locke, the owner of Norbury, and a well-known art patron at that time.

The last publication of the poet was "Love Letters to my Wife," issued in 1804. His "Crispinus Scriblerus" is a rhymed work of many thousands of lines, giving his birth and education, the narrative of his life, and numerous strongly expressed reflections on the many subjects which interested his poetic temperament.

"The Life and Poetical Works of James Woodhouse" (The Leadenhall Press, 1896) edited by a descendant, the Rev. R. I. Woodhouse, M.A., rector of Merstham, is a complete edition of his works in two volumes, the whole of the first and half the second being taken up by the wordy "Lucubrations of Crispinus Scriblerus." A few extracts from this autobiographical effort, such as are descriptive of local scenery, may be of interest to the reader. Here is Woodhouse's poetic survey of Dudley:

Close on the skirts of neighbouring northern height,  
Let Dudley's crowded domes arrest the sight;  
Where, o'er each sacred fane and social roof,  
Rude feudal reliques lift their heads aloof.

Then comes reference to the adjacent Priory ruins which he intolerently describes as

Once haunts of idols, base, and bigot Pride!  
Where papal Antichrist the sceptre swayed  
And Superstition pld her pagan trade.

Next, Himley is referred to; the terms of reference disclosing that the poet, born a yeoman on the Dudley estate, had partaken of his lord's hospitality there.

Near, on the left, let Himley's woods appear;  
To Health propitious, and to Friendship dear!  
Sweet hospitable seat of Dudley Ward  
Who deigned to countenance our humble Bard!
His feudal baron, but his friendly lord
Not shunned for Tyranny, or Pride abhorred—
With whom Crispinus erst those woods explored
And shared the honours of his noble board.

His poetic vision then takes in "the vast champaigne's expansive sweep," a comprehensive view of the entire countryside, its "peopled spots, wild wastes, and sylvan scenes"; and in the distance he sees

On the broad bosom of surrounding dells,
With sovereign pride, the conic Wrekin swells.

and anon—

Proud, in the hollow of a dreary space
Fair Enville rises, with peculiar grace.

... ... ... ... ... ...

With strong antithesis ascending, by,
Kinver's long sterile ridge benumbs the eye——
Lifts its bleak sterile back, for ever bare,
Embrown'd with burning heat, or freezing air.

After several hundreds of lines, treating of Stourbridge and Old Swinford, of the Leasowes (his friend Shenstone's seat at Halesowen) and Hagley, with passing allusions to the territorial magnates, Lords Ward, Lyttelton, and Dartmouth, the district between Birmingham and Wolverhampton comes in for poetic treatment.

Now, see the Sun, in day's declining race
Each object brighten in Earth's eastern space.

... ... ... ... ... ...

His evening legacies of light imparts
To crowded schools of Industry and Arts.
Exhibits bustling Birmingham to sight
In multiplying streets and villas bright——
Delineates, rear'd aloft, in russet hue
Bar-beacon's barren heights, in obvious view——

Shews Wednesbury's and Walsall's blazing spires
Like metals, fused, before the melting fires;
And Wolverhampton's turrets, fair, unfold
Near Northern boundaries, tipt with burnished gold.

As it is seldom, indeed, a coalfield inspires
the poet, Woodhouse's lines on the Black Country
cannot fail to interest:

Coal's black bitumen deeper still retires;
Like sable clouds concealing latent fires;
Which, when extracted from the hollow'd rocks
To birth, obstetric, brought in solid blocks,
It shines, bless'd substitute for solar powers,
To cheer the heart, to cheat dull evening hours,
And cherish chilly man, with gladdening glow,
When Earth lies shrouded in her sheets of snow.

James Woodhouse died in 1820, and was buried in St. George's Chapel Graveyard, near the Marble Arch. He was a man of stately bearing, six feet six inches in height, and in old age wore a patriarchal aspect. The 1896 edition of his complete works contains an engraving by Henry Cook of a painting of him by Hobday. Another portrait of the poet is believed to be extant. One of his sons realised a fortune as a linen-draper in Oxford Street, London.
“The Wailing Poet of the Leasowes.”

From the intimate references to Shenstone in the last chapter, and the fact that the distance between Rowley Regis and Halesowen is too insignificant to be expressed in miles, the county boundary shall be for the nonce ignored.

Though Halesowen is certainly not in Staffordshire, it was formerly in Shropshire, is now in Worcestershire, and has been claimed by various old writers as being in Warwickshire.

At the Leasowes, Halesowen, Salop, was born in 1714, William Shenstone; his mother, a Penn, being of good family.

The dame school of the village, in which he received the rudiments of his education, and the mistress of which he afterwards immortalised, is pictured in some of the illustrated editions of his work. He went later to Solihull Grammar School, and thence to Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1732; in 1745 the paternal estate, valued at not much over £300 a year, fell to him.

Descriptions of the Leasowes have been written by Goldsmith, and by Dodsley, the well-known publisher of the time. Dr. Johnson characteristically says of it, that from the first, Shenstone began “to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters; which he did with such judgment and fancy, as made his little domain the envy of the great, and the admiration of the skilful; a place to be visited by travellers and copied by designers.”
The place possessed natural beauties, which the poet’s taste manipulated in the construction of shady lawns, sequestered glades, murmuring brooklets, sparkling cascades, and “ruinated” walls.

Beneath one of the walls were these lines from Virgil:—

We dwell in shady groves,
And seek the groves with cooling streams refresh’d
And trace the verdant banks.

When his brother poet, Thomson, died, Shenstone said, “I will erect an urn in Virgil’s grove to his memory.”

As a cultivated farm the estate, though small, had yielded his father a fair living. But adorned with fountains and statues, Grecian alcoves, and summer-houses, lavished with all the prevailing elegance of 18th century classicalism, the income was soon reduced to vanishing point. Undoubtedly the happiest hours of the poet’s life were spent in planning these artificial landscapes; he skilfully disposed his woodlands along the course of the pretty stream which threaded its way down the dingle bounding the demesne.

The poet spent so much money on the embellishment of his grounds, that he became comparatively poor, and compelled to live in “a dilapidated house not fit to receive polite friends.” An unfortunate attachment to a young lady, and disappointed ambition, conspired to make him a dejected and querulous man, benevolent and kind-hearted as he really was by nature. He died at the Leasowes in 1763; his monumental urn will be found in Halesowen parish church, with a graceful epitaph inviting the reader to—

smite thy breast, and drop a tear

For know thy Shenstone’s dust lies here.

Shenstone lived in comparative seclusion for some years, but was always on visiting terms with Lord Lyttelton at Hagley—the “poor Lyttelton” whose “Dialogues of the Dead” or history of Henry II, or his achievements as Chancellor of the Exchequer, have hardly served to keep his name alive. Thomson, the author of “The Seasons,” while on a visit
to Hagley, called upon Shenstone, and admired his landscape gardening with as much interest as his indolent nature could muster.

By Shenstone's advice his intimate friend, Lord Lyttelton, not only introduced "artificial ruins" into Hagley Park, but actually erected a sham cromlech on the highest point of Clent Hills. It was, in real truth, a tasteless age. The grounds of Great Barr Hall also bear the impress of Shenstone's genius for landscape gardening; and in one of the beautiful flower gardens there is a graceful marble urn to the memory of Miss Mary Dolman, who was a cousin of the poet; a medallion of the lady appears on the centre of the urn, and the pedestal bears an elegant Latin epitaph by him.

Dr. Percy, who more than once visited "the wailing poet of the Leasowes," has left it on record that he thought Shenstone a man of unhappy temper. "In his taste for rural pleasures he was finical to a ludicrous degree of excess. In the purchase of a cow, he regarded nothing but the spots on her hide; if they were beautiful all other requisites were disregarded. His manservant, whose office it was to show his grounds, had made a grotto which Shenstone approved. This was always made the test of the visitor's judgment; if he admired William's grotto, his master thought him worth accompanying round the place, and, on a signal from the man, appeared; but if it was passed with little notice, he kept out of the way."

The poet died broken-spirited at the age of forty-nine. "He was a lamp," said Johnson, "that spent its oil in blazing." He wrote pastoral poetry for fame, which was not awarded him by his contemporaries; he received promises of political patronage which were not fulfilled; he retired to the country though he could not bear seclusion, there to ruin himself by his passion for landscape gardening, and always lamenting that his establishment was too mean to receive his polite friends in. He lived a life of disappointment, if not of discontent. The final judgment of his work has been that "he should have burnt most of what he wrote; and printed most of what he spoke." From the sacrificial
fire, however, Charles Lamb would have snatched the MS. of "The Schoolmistress," which is indeed one of the minor gems of English poetry. Horace Walpole dubbed Shenstone a "water-gruel bard"; on the other hand, Robert Burns awarded him a measure of praise where, in "The Vision," Duan Second, he wrote:—

Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape glow;
Or wake the bosom melting throe
With Shenstone's art,
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

Shenstone's works were part of Burn's small library when a youth, finding a place along with those of Thomson and Gray.

From the poems and published letters of Shenstone, we obtain a few brief and fleeting glimpses of life on the Worcestershire side of Staffordshire in the middle of the eighteenth century. From a recorded conversation with his housekeeper, we gather how pleasantly he might have interpreted his impressions of local life; he certainly would have been more extensively read nowadays had he done so. It must be confessed few people now read Shenstone, for though his poems are models of classical grace and elegance, they do not appeal so directly to the heart as if they dealt with the more practical and ordinary phases of everyday life. There is always a feeling that although he wrote in the country, it was for an audience in London. Yet he always posed as a pastoral poet, and his taste was supposed to be idyllic.

Writing in 1747 Shenstone laments that he has but few critical acquaintances come near his home, as he says he "lives amongst the makers and the wearers of hobnails." This is not the only insight we get into the industrial condition of the locality. In a letter dated 1762, he is suggesting that the ornamental brooklet which ran through his beautiful grounds would be a fitting subject for a poem. He says that the stream with its cascade as an ornament to his pleasance, skips along in playfulness with a thousand antic motions, and then a few
hundred yards further along its course proceeds to roll and slit iron for manufactures of all kinds. He explains that the pretty rills of his park-lands are the principal sources of the River Stour, which supplies power to numerous works for the casting, forging, and shaping of iron for every civil and military purpose—that this particular river, in fact, has more ironworks on its banks than any other single river in the Kingdom. The Stour valley, dividing South Staffordshire from East Worcestershire, marks the heart of the old Black Country.

The prototype of the "Schoolmistress"—Shenstone's highest effort—was:—"My old School-dame, Sarah Lloyd, whose house is to be seen as thou travellest towards the native home of thy faithful servant. But she sleepeth with her fathers, and is buried with her fathers; and Thomas, her son, reigneth in her stead." Of the humbler life of the locality we are not likely to glean very many details from a man of Shenstone's habits; he moved too exclusively in the higher social circles, both at home and in London.

Thus in October, 1759, he writes, "I have passed four of five days betwixt this week and last at my Lord Ward's at Hineley" (Himley). Another local allusion occurs in a letter written from Halesowen:—"I drove him (a friend) to Dudley Castle, which I long to show you; I never saw it since I was the size of my pen before; it has great romantic beauty, though perhaps Derbyshire may render it of small note in your eye."

Although to-day the popular memory scarcely ever recalls Shenstone for anything beyond his lines on an inn:—

Who'er has travelled life's dull round
Where'er his stages may have been
May sigh to think he still has found,
The warmest welcome at an inn.

—the poet of the Leasowes was not without his influence on the literary life of the district in which he lived.

His friendship with Dr. Johnson, and his patronage of James Woodhouse, have been
alluded to. He also lent his countenance and encouragement to Miss Whateley, afterwards wife of the Vicar of Walsall. Of this lady he writes in one of his letters—"There has been deposited in my hands a large collection of Poetry, by a Miss Whateley of Walsall; many of the pieces written in an excellent and truly classical style; simple, sentimental, and more harmonious than I almost ever saw written by a lady." Mrs. Darwall (nee Whateley) published her volume of poems in 1794, years after Shenstone's death. (See "A Walsall Poetess," pp. 160—165, "Staffordshire Stories.")

Gray rather uncharitably remarks of Shenstone's correspondence that it is "About nothing else but The Leasowes, and his writings with two or three neighbouring clergymen who wrote verses too."

Writing in 1761, Shenstone says:—"I have assisted my friend, Hull, the comedian, in altering the tragedy of 'Rosamond'; had it brought upon the stage to a full house at Birmingham, where it was well received; put Hull into a way of making an indirect compliment to the present King in the ten last lines of epilogue, which was followed by 'God save great George,' etc., in a full chorus of the audience and actors drawn out abreast upon the stage."

The Leasowes, popularly known in the locality as "The Lezzers," which, with its classic groves, still stands, like an oasis in the Black Country desert, remained for a long time one of the show places of the Midlands. In 1782, John Wesley paid a visit to the place, and thus records his impression of it:—"I have seen nothing in all England to be compared with it. It is beautiful and elegant all over. There is nothing grand, nothing costly; no temples, so-called; no statues (except two or three which had better have been spared); but such walks, such shades, such hills and dales, such lawns, such artless cascades, such waving woods, such water intermixed, as exceed all imagination!"

It was a dictum of Shenstone that the man who planted a tree was a greater benefactor of his species, than he who built a house. And he planted freely, with the result that the Lea-
sowes remains a beauty spot to this day. Yet while the re-afforestation of the Black Country is being urged on the one hand, this beauty spot is now being threatened on the other by the speculating builder—the first act of vandalism would be to cut down some 500 of the stately trees which are the crowning glory of the place.

The residence is a plain white-painted house, on the western slope of Mucklow Hill, overlooking a valley which still retains some of its natural charm. At the foot of the hill lie the ruins of Halesowen Abbey, and the fine old parish church in which is Shenstone's monument. Beyond, rise the two peaks of the Clent Hills, in a veil of misty blue, forming a striking background, while in the purple distance are the highlands of the Wyre Forest.

A portrait of the poet is to be seen in the National Portrait Gallery, London. In Chamber's "Cyclopaedia of English Literature," are woodcuts of three local scenes—The Leasowes (as it was), Hagley Hall, and the Cottage of "The Schoolmistress."

About this period Halesowen produced another worthy who rose to eminence in the "world of letters," though on the mechanical side of it. This was William Caslon, the famous type-founder, born on the Cradley side of the parish, 1692.
The Author of "Pity the Sorrows."

Better known, and more frequently quoted perhaps, than Shenstone's line, "Warmest welcome at an inn," is the hackneyed phrase, "Pity the sorrows of a poor old man." The author of this was a native of Staffordshire; and like Wolfe, the author of "The Burial of Sir John Moore," he was practically a single poem bard.

When, in 1767, a Chapel-of-Ease was erected for the growing population of Brierley Hill, of which Kingswinford is the mother-parish, the first minister appointed to take charge of it was the Rev. Thomas Moss, B.A., who afterwards became minister of Trentham, and domestic chaplain to the Marquis of Stafford.

Mr. George T. Lawley, the historian of Bilston, claims the reverend gentleman as a native of that town—a place strangely enough whose murky atmosphere seems always to have borne a distinctly literary flavour—and as a grandson of the Rev. John Moss, who was vicar of Walsall from 1708 to 1733.

Thomas Moss was educated at Wolverhampton Grammar School, and then at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he took his B.A. degree in 1761.

Two years after his appointment to the incumbency of Brierley Hill chapel the Rev. gentleman published a collection of miscellaneous poems, printed at Wolverhampton by George Smart, but bearing also the names of two great London publishing houses—Longmans of Paternoster Row, and Dodsley of Pall Mall.
The work was a thin quarto, entitled, "Poems on Several Occasions," only twenty copies of which, intended for presentation to his private friends, bore the author's name; the bulk of the edition appeared anonymously.

One piece was eagerly seized upon and copied by Dodsley into his "Annual Register"; and from that time onwards it appeared repeatedly in various literary periodicals, and innumerable collections of fugitive verse. Not only was the authorship of this celebrated little poem wrongly ascribed to various writers, but the versions given often contained alterations which by no means added to the force or beauty of the original.

This oft-quoted and now very familiar poem, which contains much pathetic and natural sentiment finely expressed, is entitled, "The Beggar," or sometimes "The Beggar's Petition," the correct version of which is:

Pity the sorrows of a poor old man!
Whose trembling limbs have borne him to your door,
Whose days are dwindled to the shortest span;
Oh! give relief, and Heaven will bless your store.

These tattered clothes my poverty bespeak,
These hoary locks proclaim my lengthened years;
And many a furrow in my grief-worn cheek,
Has been the channel to a stream of tears.

Yon house, erected on the rising ground,
With tempting aspect drew me from the road,
For plenty there a residence has found,
And grandeur a magnificent abode.

(Hard is the fate of the infirm and poor!)
Here craving for a morsel of their bread,
A pampered menial forced me from the door,
To seek a shelter in a humbler shed.

Oh! take me to your hospitable dome,
Keen blows the wind, and piercing is the cold!
Short is my passage to the friendly tomb,
For I am poor, and miserably old.

Should I reveal the source of every grief,
If soft humanity e'er touched your breast,
Your hands would not withhold the kind relief,
And tears of pity could not be repressed.
Heaven sends misfortunes—why should we repine?
'Tis Heaven has brought me to the state you see;
And your condition may be soon like mine,
The child of sorrow and of misery.

A little farm was my paternal lot,
Then like the lark, I sprightly hailed the morn;
But ah! oppression forced me from my cot;
My cattle died, and blighted was my corn.

My daughter—once the comfort of my age!
Lured by a villain from her native home,
Is cast, abandoned, on the world's wide stage,
And doomed in scanty poverty to roam.

My tender wife—sweet soother of my care!
Struck with sad anguish at the stern decree,
Fell—lingering fell, a victim to despair,
And left the world to wretchedness and me.

Pity the sorrows of a poor old man!
Whose trembling limbs have borne him to your door,
Whose days are dwindled to the shortest span,
Oh! give relief, and Heaven will bless your store.

When the poem had become famous, a discussion commenced in the "Gentlemen's Magazine" for 1800 as to its authorship; and one controversialist positively stated that it had been written by Dr. Joseph Webster, M.D. This brought a reply from Mr. Joseph Smart, son of the Wolverhampton printer, who wrote—"I have a perfect recollection of Mr. Moss calling upon my father with a copy of his poems, and can aver that they were all of the same handwriting, and that they were printed anonymously, solely from a dread which the author had to criticism." The controversy was practically settled by the evidence then produced.

The poet died at Stourbridge on December 7th, 1808, and a memoir of him appeared in the "Christian Moderator" for 1827, written by the Rev. James Scott, of Stourbridge. A vindication of the poet also appeared in "The Monthly Magazine" for 1824.

The second edition of the Reverend poet's effusions was an octavo which appeared with the following title: "'Poems upon Several Occasions.'
Among the references to the author, which are fully given in Simms' "Bibliotheca Staffordiensis," are "Shaw's Staffordshire," and "Enfield's Speaker." It was Dr. Enfield, by the way, who first misquoted the poem; the immense popularity of which may be gauged by the fact that it was early brought out as a chapbook, and hawked about by itinerant ballad-mongers; a bibliographical curiosity, which is thus described:—"Beggar's Petition, with woodcuts done by a boy 10 years old, with a knife and a nail."
XIX.

A Visionary Philosopher.

Some curious Latin manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, preserved rather as literary curiosities than for any intrinsic value they possess, were the work of a native of Bilston early in the sixteenth century. One of his works, “Observationes Astrologiae,” is to be found at the British Museum.

John Robyns, born about the year 1495, early in the period of the Renaissance, was, according to Mr. George T. Lawley, a member of a very ancient Bilston family, whose connection with that town dates back to the thirteenth century. He appears to have been a son of the Rev. William Robyns, of Bilston, and nephew of the Rev. Humphrey Robyns, vicar of Newport, in Shropshire, also a native of Bilston. Intended for the Church, he was entered a student at All Souls’ College, Oxford, in the year 1516; and such were his vigorous genius and his steady application to study, that, according to the compiler of Athenæ Oxoniensis, “by the force thereof being conducted to the pleasant studies of mathematics and astrology he made so great a progress in them that he became the ablest person in his time for those studies, not excepted his friend, Record, whose learning was more general.”

Robyns devoted himself more assiduously to the study of the “sciences” than he did to theology, and as he lived in a superstitious age, it is not surprising to learn that his favourite pursuit was “judicial astrology.” He was a veritable book-worm; a Laputan philosopher of the type which Swift satirised two centuries later.
As a testimony to his abilities, he was selected at the age of twenty-five to a fellowship of his college, and, taking his degree in arts, entered into holy orders. Eleven years afterwards, viz., in 1531, he took the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, and became one of King Henry VIII.'s chaplains.

The King appears to have been so pleased with his new chaplain that within a year he appointed him one of the canons of All Souls' College, Oxford, in which position he still pursued with great diligence and success his astronomical and astrological inquiries, and wrote several profound treatises, among which Anthony A. Wood mentions the following: "(1) De culminatio ne fixarum stellarum; (2) De ortu et occasu stellarum fixarum, &c.; (3) Annotationes Astrologicae, lib 3; (4) Annotationes de Edwardus Sextus; (5) Tractatus de Prognosticat ione per Eclipsin."

All these manuscripts were at the end of the 17th century in the choice library of Mr. Thomas Allen, of Gloucester Hall; but after his death, they came into the possession of the well-known writer, Sir Kenelm Digby, who subsequently presented them to the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

In the year 1543 Robyns was appointed by Henry VIII, Canon of Windsor, upon the death of Dr. Richard Rawson, which canonry he held through the reign of Edward VI., and until the accession of Queen Mary. He was evidently not a pronounced reformer, since that Queen not only permitted him to retain his canonry of Windsor, but appointed him one of her chaplains. Indeed, he appears to have become a favourite with that Queen, both for his personal affability and his great attainments. He did not long enjoy this distinction, for he predeceased her Majesty, dying on the 25th of August, 1558.

The erudite John Robyns was buried in the Royal Chapel of St. George, at Windsor, and a long inscription commemorating his learning and virtues was engraved in marble above his place of sepulture.
In his enjoyment of the royal favours of successive monarchs in those perilous times, when the fires of Smithfield roared for "heretic" and "papist" in turn, the career of John Robyns, of Bilston, was not unlike that of William Paget, of Wednesbury, who was a close and intimate friend of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Queen Mary, one after the other, and died in favour with Elizabeth, as is chronicled in "Wednesbury Ancient and Modern," pp. 70—75. Robyns addressed two of his earliest treatises to Henry VIII., namely "De Portentosis" and "De Accidentibus Futuris."

Anthony A. Wood, in the Athenæ Oxoniensis, mentions this other work of which Robyns was the author. He says this book bore the title of "De Portentosis Cometis"; but of which work he (Wood) tells us he had not seen a copy, from which it is to be inferred, first, that it had been printed, and second, that even in Wood's time it must have become extremely rare. However, at the present time, the work appears to be preserved at Cambridge.

Mr. Lawley obtained from the registers of St. Leonard's Church, Bilston, an item of information respecting Robyns which had escaped the notice of all previous biographers. This item, Mr. Ames, curate of Bilston, states that he recorded from an original document in the possession of the Robyns family, which he had seen, and from which he copied the note. The entry runs as follows:—"There was one John Robyns who was placed at Windsor (this evidently refers to the canonry which Robyns held there), and had a prebend in Wolverhampton, for, in a letter to his brother William, he desires him to look after the profits of the prebend, and speaks of Mr. Hall keeping a court for him there."

This prebend was that of Monmore. It was valued at the time of the Reformation at £9 12s. 6d., derived from the lands, tithes, and other sources—the estates being at that time demised to Nicholas Grosvenor, by indenture, for a term of years for the rent above-mentioned.
The brother, William Robyns, referred to in Mr. Ames's note, was appointed by the Commissioners of Edward VI., to deal with the goods belonging to the Chantry of St. Leonard's, Bilston, when that Chantry was dissolved, as is shown in the following memorandum preserved in the church registers.

"MEMD.—Delivered to the Right Honourable Walter Viconte Hereforde, Lorde Ferers of Chartley, Thomas Gifforde, Knight, and Edwarde Lyttleton, Esquire, Commissioners for Church Goodes, within the Counti of Stafford, to William Robyns, Churchewarden there, iii small belles in the stepull, safeli to be kept until the King's Majestie's pleasure be therein furder knownen. In wittenes thereof as well we the sayd Commissioners as the sayd Churchewarden to the presents interchaungably have putt our handes the xiii of May, anno regni Edwardi Sexti Septimo."

Evidently the Reformation did not bring any violent or stirring change to Bilston Church.

The manuscripts of John Robyns, the outpourings of a learned pundit, are the obsolete treatises of a visionary philosopher on a long descerebed "science," which all but the lovers of ancient manuscripts would consign to the flames. Still, as relics of an old-time local worthy, they are, perhaps, not without some small amount of interest. Compare with the occultism of Edmund Dudley. (p. 17).
Samuel Johnson is a national hero. To rank him in our list as a mere local worthy might almost be termed an irreverence; to allude to his many interesting local associations, however, falls fairly within the compass of this work.

At the "birthplace" in the market square of Lichfield, now fitly preserved as a public memorial of him, Samuel Johnson first saw the light, September 18th, 1709; his father, Michael Johnson, being a second-hand bookseller.

Mr. Aley Lyell Reade, the best authority on the subject of Johnson's ancestry and family connections, records and corrects many points connected with the history of his early years. The erroneous supposition, for instance, that Michael Johnson, the lexicographer's father, was a man of exceptional attainments, rests entirely on a letter written by a Staffordshire parson named Plaxton, a friend of Thoresby, the antiquary, who was evidently a man of humorous disposition.

Thanks to that prince of biographers, James Boswell, who first made the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson in London, in 1763, and at once became his devoted disciple and admirer, the facts of Samuel Johnson's life are known to most readers; here they need but be briefly recalled, with, perhaps, a little emphasis put upon those of local interest.

The infant Samuel, as a child of three, was carried into Lichfield Cathedral, perched on his father's shoulder, when Dr. Sacheverell
preached there. He received the first rudiments of his education from Dame Oliver; his second instructor being a Lichfield schoolmaster named Thomas Browne, who is known to have published a spelling book which he dedicated to "the Universe." Johnson's only rival at school was a boy named Theophilus Lowe. And what school can claim to have had on its rolls names which added greater lustre to the literary annals of the country than Lichfield Grammar School, with the names of Ashmole, Addison, David Garrick, and Dr. Johnson?

Mr. Reade notes that Dr. Johnson's brother, Nathaniel, complains in a letter that his brother Samuel "would scarce ever use me with common civility"; and that he (Nathaniel) did not go to Georgia, as he intended, but died at an early age. Another note alludes to Johnson's relatives, the Fords, especially to his cousin Cornelius, "Parson" Ford, a nephew by marriage of Hinde Cotton, the Jacobite baronet, and at one time Chesterfield's chaplain. Our authority, dealing further with the family connections (and this with the intimate knowledge of one who has studied his subject), declares that it was not Dr. William Falconer, of Bath, who called upon the Doctor in 1782 at Bolt Court, but a Lichfield kinsman. (See also "Handsworth Old and New," p.65.)

Michael Johnson attended the weekly markets of the surrounding towns, such as Walsall and Uttoxeter, with his bookstall; and the story of his great son's penance in the market place of the latter, where as a boy he had once refused to take charge of the stall, is of perennial interest. It tells how, fifty years after, when older and wiser, and grown to eminence, he sought the spot which his father's stall used to occupy, and there stood a long time bare-headed in the pelting rain in expiation of his act of boyish wilfulness.

Willmore's "History of Walsall" claims this anecdote as a local episode; and what purport to be the actual words of the Doctor are thus quoted: "To do away with this sin of disobedience I this day went in a post chaise
to Walsall, and going into the market place at the time of high business, uncovered my head and stood with it bare for an hour, before the stall which my father had used." Walsall's claim to this reflected honour, however, has never been recognised by the biographers.

Young Samuel Johnson afterwards attended Stourbridge Grammar School, from which he went to Pembroke College, Oxford, leaving that University in 1731 without a degree, because he was so "miserably poor." At school and at College he had shown amazing quickness of apprehension, great strength of memory, and had become a prodigy of learning.

After being an usher in a school at Market Bosworth, he removed to Birmingham in search of employment, where he translated Lobo's "Voyage to Abyssinia"; but soon returned to Lichfield, and there married the widow Porter, who possessed a little money.

It has been said, though on doubtful authority, that in his boyhood, two or three years before he had seen the widow, Johnson was enamoured of her daughter, Lucy, and wrote verses to her.

Johnson now opened a school at Ediall Hall, Burntwood (demolished 1809); but that failing, he set out in 1737 for London, with a tragedy and twopence-halfpenny in his pocket, taking his Ediall pupil, Garrick, with him. Later in the year he fetched his wife.

His career as a writer was now fairly begun. His poem, "London," published 1738, won the approbation of Pope; from 1740 to 1743 he contributed the Parliamentary debates to the "Gentleman's Magazine," under the heading, "The Senate of Lilliput." In 1745 he proposed to issue a new edition of Shakespeare, but abandoned the design for that of his great English Dictionary, which he began in 1747, and finished in 1755.

All this time he had been struggling along with a terrible courage, at the first barely making a living, till eventually he compelled the world to recognise him as the foremost writer of his day. It was indeed strange that one in his
starving position should have projected to produce so gigantic and so unremunerative a work, as a new Dictionary of the English Language. Yet it was not only undertaken, it was achieved.

At his house in Gough Square, a flat-faced, red-brick establishment, the Doctor kept six amanuenses constantly at work upon his Dictionary, "in an upper room fitted up like a counting-house."

While this monumental work was in progress he published his "Rambler," which alone would have eternised his name. Previous to the publication of his Dictionary, the University of Oxford conferred on him a degree in arts; in 1765 the University of Dublin sent him the honorary degree of doctor of laws, the Oxford doctor's degree being conferred a few years later.

During these years he had produced also his "Vanity of Human Wishes"; the "Rambler" series of essays were concluded 1752, about the time of his wife's death, which plunged him into profound grief. In 1759 his mother died, and to meet the expenses this entailed upon him, he wrote "Rasselas" in the evenings of a single week. With hack work of all kinds his pen was always busy, and in 1758 he again attempted the periodical essay, this time taking "The Idler" for his title. Yet for all his efforts he was more than once arrested for debt, till in 1762 he was very properly relieved from penury by a Crown pension of £300 a year being granted to him; and he was complimented personally by the young King, George III., on the excellence of his work.

After 1765, when he made the acquaintance of Mr. Thrale and his sprightly wife, his life became very much happier. In 1773 Boswell persuaded him to undertake his memorable tour through the western islands of Scotland. His "Journey to the Hebrides," and his "Lives of the Poets" are the only two works of importance which belong to this period of his "Kingship," when he was acknowledged "the great Cham of Literature"—as Smollett dubbed him.
Dr. Johnson died 13th December, 1784, and was buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. It was the setting of the sun in full splendour.

Such are, in brief outline, the chief episodes of his career. Almost as briefly the chief local associations must be summarised.

Johnson went first to Birmingham in 1731, walking all the way from Oxford, to visit his friend, Dr. Hector. Here he became Hector's guest at the house of Mr. Warren, printer and bookseller, with whom he lodged "over against the Swan Tavern" in High Street, staying there some six months. Stirred out of his excessive indolence, he commenced his first book, which Birmingham had the honour of producing. At this time Johnson hovered a good deal between Birmingham and Lichfield. Mrs. Porter was the widow of a Birmingham mercer; she was forty-eight, and her lean, gaunt, scrofulous bridegroom was only twenty-six. The wedding of this strangely-assorted couple took place at Derby.

To Brewood Grammar School belongs the honour of once having had the learned doctor for one of its ushers. The charming dales amidst the rocky tors on the borders of Staffordshire and Derbyshire, are believed to be the prototype of the wonderful Happy Valley in "Rasselas," described as a Garden of Paradise in the kingdom of Amara, the home of the Princess of Abyssinia, and accessible only through a cave in the rock. In the Salt Library at Stafford is preserved, among other notable examples of the Doctor's works, a copy of "Rasselas" printed at Banbury, "with patent types," 1804. In the Museum Room at Aston Hall are a collection of Johnsonian relics, chiefly connected with Birmingham.

Samuel Johnson loved the city of his birth with a fervid and a loyal affection to the day of his death. He visited it and paid many tributes to its beauty and its charm.

With Boswell he paid a memorable visit in 1776. "We put up at the Three Crowns, not one of the greatest inns, but a good old-fashioned
one, which was kept by Mr. Wilkins, and was the very next house to that in which Johnson was born and brought up, and which was still his property. We had a comfortable supper, and got into high spirits. I felt all my Toryism glowing in this old capital of Staffordshire. I could have offered incense genio loci, and indulged in libations of that ale, which Boniface in the 'Beaux' Stratagem' recommends with such an eloquent jollity"—is a record which leaves the impression that Boswell went to bed mellow.

The disciple and faithful follower was elated and filled with pride as he walked up and down the streets of his illustrious master's native city; he writes of this happy experience: "I cannot say that I ever passed two hours with more self-complacency." In company the pair visited the Cathedral; but on the Sunday morning, Boswell went alone, and was much delighted with the music. In the afternoon, he tells us, "Dr. Johnson went with me to the Cathedral. It was grand and pleasing to contemplate this illustrious writer, now full of fame, worshipping in 'the solemn temple' of his native city."

Before leaving Lichfield, Boswell "went through the house where my illustrious friend was born, and with a reverence with which it doubtless will long be visited." True enough was that surmise of dear, delightful "old Bozzy": the birthplace has become the Mecca of countless pilgrimages.

It must not be forgotten that Boswell called at the Palace to see Canon Seward, and was delighted at being able to see the poetess also. In fact, he and his illustrious friend called on almost all the notables in the city, some of whom will form the subject of a subsequent chapter.

As a writer Johnson was for an age, not for all time. Nobody reads Johnson nowadays. But his great interest is that he so exactly represents the current ideas of his age. He never fully expressed himself in literature, and we should never have known his real greatness but for Boswell's masterly reports of his conversation.
It is through this medium we know of his unique position as the recognised literary monarch of the time; of his personal peculiarities, such as his insatiable tea-drinking and love of late hours; his slovenliness in dress and strange gesticulations; his physical strength and courage; his antipathy to Scotchmen, and love of London streets; his insensibility to music and painting; his hearty Toryism and honest old-fashioned patriotism; his sincere religiousness, yet strange fear of death; his delight in conversation, his marvellous dexterity in retort, and his frequent brow-beating of his antagonists.

No other man could be named who was more typical of the national character. Throughout his life he was a triumphant upholder of the "rule-of-thumb" method, by which Englishmen generally manage to "muddle through things." He was the apostle of practical expediency. As the complete Englishman, of the "true blue" school, he had the national defects of impatience with, and intolerance of, all things he could not agree with. Intellectually, the great doctor possessed a mind which was a store-house of learning, not too well arranged, but somehow easily get-at-able. As one once remarked of him—"The doctor reasons very wittily, but not convincingly."

Johnson exulted in displaying a trampling arrogance, and declared that to treat your opponent with respect was to give him an advantage to which he was not entitled; which, says a modern critic, was characteristic of his underbred narrow-mindedness. He possessed (quoting the same authority) a common-sense of a heavy-handed sort, and was on occasion harsh and brutal, using his strength to crush down the weak. His literary style was as artificial as it was demoralising; it was pretentious and inflated.

But according to Burke, "Johnsonese" was a style characterised by "phrases having the nodosities and strength of an oak"; it possessed pomp with an immense force behind it. Johnson was, indeed, "Pompoo."

"Who wit with jealous eyes surveys,
And sickens at another's praise."
Lichfield, besides being the birthplace of "the Great Cham of Literature," is steeped in literary associations. Ruskin found it "a sweet city with its dreaming spires," though two hundred years previously that frantic prophet, George Fox, had heaped curses loud and deep upon its citizens. After, however, Quaker denunciations had passed harmlessly over it, and when it had fully recovered from the ravages of Civil War, the characteristic calm of a cathedral city descended once more upon its ancient streets, and a coterie of well-known intellectuals found themselves a congenial home there.

Possibly the dignified and cultured society of canons, prebends, and other learned churchmen may have formed part of the attraction. Certainly at a later period Edward Fitzgerald made the confession, "I love a small cathedral town, and the dignified respectability of the church prelates is a part of the pleasure."

It was its delightful quietude which appealed to Erasmus Darwin when he settled there, on his marriage with Miss Howard, a Lichfield lady, in 1757. She died in 1770, leaving him with three sons; and on his second marriage, in 1781, he removed to Derby. It was during his residence in Lichfield, where he occupied one of the quaint old houses in the Close, that he gave his first serious attention to the study of "the origin of species."

Lichfield, too, has been considered as a typical retired country town, into which new ideas penetrate but dimly and darkly; and as such it has been utilised by the dramatist. For, as is well known, the George Inn, at Lichfield is,
made the scene of an episode in Farquhar’s admired old-English comedy, The Beaux’ Stratagem. The character of “Lady Bountiful” in this play is said to have had its original in Lady Biddulph, who occupied the Bishops’ Palace about the time the play was written (1707); and “Cherry,” another character, has been recognised as the daughter of one Harrison, who for some time was landlord of the George.

At the height of the city’s eminence as a brilliant assemblage of literary stars—that is, at the Johnson and Darwin period—the great leading light in Lichfield society was Miss Anna Seward, poetess, upon whom, as we read in the previous chapter, Boswell was careful to call. She, indeed, was the chief source of his information on many points relating to the early life of the great “literary cub.” As a schoolboy Johnson had once been under the instruction of her grandfather, who was Vicar of St. Mary’s, and Master of the Free School. The poetess and the lexicographer, it may be recalled, have been dubbed “The Swan and the Bear.”

Of the members of this famous Lichfield coterie, Dr. Erasmus Darwin was a poet as well as a physician; and among other literary celebrities who moved in the circle of which Miss Seward was the centre, was Thomas Day, author of that famous boys’ book, “Sandford and Merton.” This select community, which embraced scientific as well as literary people, for a long time held monthly meetings at each other’s houses in turn, for the enjoyment of literary, political, and scientific chat.

Among those who attended at one time or other were Darwin, Day, Seward (father of the poetess), Keir (the famous West Bromwich chemist and the biographer of Day), Dr. Priestley, Lovell Edgeworth (father of Maria Edgeworth), James Watt, and his partner Matthew Boulton, Dr. Withering (the eminent botanist of Harborne), Sir Joseph Banks, the botanist who had accompanied Captain Cook on his memorable voyage round the world, Sir William Herschel, the great astronomer, Dr. Samuel
Parr, a writer and brilliant conversationalist, who was sometimes dubbed "the Whig Johnson," the eccentric Lord Monboddo, a Scotch metaphysician whose theory of human affinity with monkeys caused him to be regarded askance by his contemporaries, and Samuel Galton, the Quaker, whose daughter Mrs. Schimmel-Penninck, has sketched all these characters in her autobiography, which was published in 1860. All these celebrities lived within an easy distance of each other, and were able to keep up a friendly intercourse. Surely no city of its size ever gathered together such a galaxy of intellectual talent as were wont to assemble in Miss Seward's salon at Lichfield. And of this august band she has, fittingly, sung the praises in verse.

Anna Seward cannot be claimed as a native of Staffordshire; but the greater part of her life was spent here, and her fame in the field of literature was won as a leading inhabitant of the city of Lichfield. Her birthplace was Eyam, in Derbyshire, where her father was vicar; but at the age of seven she removed with her parents to Lichfield, where she resided for 55 years, remaining till the day of her death, in March, 1809, the family having taken up its residence in the episcopal palace of the then non-resident bishops. Her father was the Rev. Thomas Seward, prebendary of Salisbury and canon residentiary of Lichfield, himself a writer, who in 1750 edited a ponderous issue in ten volumes of the poems of Beaumont and Fletcher; her mother was Elizabeth, daughter of the Rev. John Hunter, master of Lichfield Grammar School.

Anna was born in 1747, and her father, perceiving the child's talents, and fancying he saw the dawn of genius while she was yet in infancy, devoted himself to its culture. When she was only three years old, and before she could read, he had taught her to lisp the "Allegro" of Milton; and in her ninth year she was able to repeat the first three books of "Paradise Lost," with that variation of accent necessary to give grace and effect to the harmonies of the poem. She has been heard to say that its sublime passages, and the noble grandeur and beauty
of its numbers, often filled her infant eyes with tears of delight, while she was committing any of them to memory.

From admiring poetry she soon began to write it; and Dr. Darwin, a constant visitor of the family, having seen some pieces of her composition, doubted whether the child had not received some paternal assistance. In order to put this to the test, he called one evening when he knew her father was from home, and requested Miss Seward to favour him with a few lines on any subject, adding, "Let me write a stanza, and you finish it." He accordingly wrote one and left it with her. On the following morning she presented him with a poem which is said to have convinced him of her merit, and of the injustice of his suspicions as to her talents. Her biographers tell us that on the death of her only sister, a few years after, she wrote an elegy as she was sitting in the garden.

These carefully collated anecdotes of her childhood seem to be not the least absurd of the many flatteries heaped upon her by injudicious friends.

Other poems flowed from her pen; but it was not until she had become acquainted with Lady Miller, of Bath Easton, and contended for the prize bestowed by the poetic institution of that villa, that any of her productions found their way to the Press; but the Rubicon once passed she proceeded rapidly to make her way to the front, till she reached the foremost position among the female poets of the day. Her first noteworthy poetical production was "An Elegy on Captain Cook."

In a full catalogue of her works, given in Simms' *Bibliotheca Staffordiensis*, the attention is arrested by at least three of them—"A Monody on the Death of Major Andre: To which are added Letters addressed to her by Major Andre in the year 1769" (the Major's tragic death occurred in 1780); "An Ode to General Elliot, on his return from Gibraltar"; and "Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin, chiefly during his residence at Lichfield." Her poetical works appeared in three volumes in 1810, just
after her death, "edited by Walter Scott, Esq."—for she reckoned the great romancer, Sir Walter, among her intimate personal friends.

Miss Seward was indeed a formidable personality in the literary world of her time, and she certainly contrived to know everybody worth knowing. With Dr. Darwin (the grandfather of the great naturalist) she collaborated in "The Botanic Garden," the second part of which, called the "Loves of the Plants," afterwards gave rise to a famous parody, "The Loves of the Triangles."

Though few persons are now familiar with her poetry, she won for herself by her graceful turn for verse-making the appreciative appellation of "the Swan of Lichfield." With a literary enthusiasm she combined a taste for the picturesque; she was given to the use of lofty metaphor, and was often florid in her descriptions. Her besetting sins were vanity and affectation, for which, perhaps, the applause of her early admirers were not a little responsible.

Anna Seward was a good and a kindly woman, her faults being mainly her foibles. Her admirers are fond of recalling that her poetry has been praised by Southey, Leigh Hunt, Sir Walter Scott, and Dr. Johnson, stress being laid on the statement that the last-named had declared there was nothing equal to Miss Seward's description of the sea round the North Pole. At a subsequent period she contracted a venomous hatred of Dr. Johnson, possibly because she had had her knuckles rapped by the unconciliatory sage; he had said that "the devil was the first Whig," and he therefore must have regarded a "female Whig" with peculiar abhorrence.

Miss Seward was able to convey much useful information to Boswell, Johnson's great biographer; and her "Letters," subsequently published by Sir Walter Scott, have been widely read. Her correspondence bears evident marks of having been written with a view to publication—it lacks the ease and gracefulness which characterize a good epistolary style.

There were six volumes of her "Letters,"
some of them written with spirit and discrimination. Scott only published them because they had been bequeathed to him specially for that purpose; privately he pronounced them execrable—"a formidable monument of mediocrity." In his younger days Walter Scott had been flattered by the poetess, and "run the risks of a sentimental correspondence" with her. But in the zenith of his fame he bitterly objected to be "advertised for a live poet like a wild beast on a painted streamer."

However, the "great wizard of the north" was particularly gracious to the poetess in the lines he wrote on the Seward family for their monument in the Cathedral.

What poet's voice lies smothered here in dust,
Till wak'd to join the chorus of the just?
Lo, one brief line an answer sad supplies,
Honour'd, belov'd, and mourn'd, here Seward lies.
Her worth, her warmth of heart, our sorrows say,
"Go, seek her genius in her living lay."

A full and interesting account of Anna Seward will be found in "A Swan and Her Friends," by her most recent biographer, E. V. Lucas. This charming book contains reproductions of no less than three portraits of the poetess, one of them by Romney, another by Opie.
XXII.

A Pioneer in Juvenile Fiction.

As was seen in the last chapter, quite a swarm of minor poets and literary ladies buzzed around Anna Seward; and the social atmosphere of Lichfield at that time was well calculated to foster the nascent literary talent of an imaginative child such as little Mary Martha Butt, who afterwards became widely known as a writer for juvenile readers, as Mrs. Sherwood. This worthy, a minor celebrity in the world of letters, though not native born, drew much of her literary inspiration from her intimacy with this county.

It was during the impressionable years of her childhood that the writer of those old-fashioned children's story books, which were once so widely read in the nurseries of England, was for a brief space an intimate in that literary coterie, which has made the social annals of Lichfield so justly famous.

Mary Martha Sherwood (this was her married name by which she is generally known), daughter of Dr. Butt, Chaplain to George III., was born at Stanford, Worcestershire, 6 May, 1775. She was descended from the "Lady Butts" painted by the immortal Holbein, and her grandfather was Dr. Carey Butt, who discovered the great destiny of Dr. Johnson while that sage was as yet an infant Hercules in his cradle.

Her father, the Rev. George Butt, seems to have been a protege of Johnson's friend, Bishop Newton, and he prospered accordingly, to the extent of enjoying, among other pluralities, a fat benefice at Stanford, where the authoress was born. The grandfather resided at Lich-
field at the time of its greatest literary brilliancy, when Miss Seward, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Dr. Darwin, Mr. Day, and the other local celebrities we have noticed, graced the city's social circles, and when it was occasionally visited by Dr. Johnson and David Garrick from London.

She was a beautiful child, and during her earlier years was subjected to a specially rigorous education at home, where she had access to a small but select library of some three or four hundred volumes.

She tells us she was never allowed to sit in the presence of her parents, to come near the fire, or to take part in any conversation, and, according to the preposterous discipline of the time, wore for a number of hours each day, while she learnt and repeated her lessons, an iron collar to which a backboard was strapped, an accoutrement which was supposed to strengthen the spine and give an erect figure. In to all this she declares herself to have been "a happy English child," and such a picture of rosy health her father always called her Hygeia.

In 1790 she was sent away to school, entering the academy of M. and Mme. St. Quintin, conducted in the old abbey at Reading, where she was a fellow pupil of Miss Mitford, and the once popular "L.E.L." (Letitia E. Landon).

Dr. Butt seems to have been warmly welcomed as a member of the Lichfield coterie, which was then approaching the height of its renown. He and his family visited the Palace, mingled familiarly with the Sews, the Darwins, the Edgeworths, and imbibed an earnest cult of the "Ladies of the Vale," as Mr. Edgeworth elegantly nicknamed the twin spires of the cathedral.

Like all the daughters of her family, Mary Butt was a girl of marked piety. Her mother, plain of features and marked with small-pox, was a woman of cultivated mind; but on one occasion she aired her bookishness too ostentatiously, as the following extract from the daughter's biographical fragments will disclose:
Johnson's works were also then much spoken of (between 1770 and 1780), and my mother told me that one day, walking with Mrs. Woodhouse under the trees in the Close at Lichfield, she met the celebrated Johnson. My mother happened to have a copy of "Rasselas" in her hand. Johnson, seeing the book, took it from her, looked into it, and, without saying a word, threw it away among the graves, from which my mother had to rescue it.

Her father impressed on her mind from babyhood the idea that she was to develop into a great writer. She accordingly kept diaries and posted journals most assiduously. Writing of her literary aspirations, she says:—

My head was always busy in inventions, and it was a delight to me to write down these inventions. But I had, from seeing Miss Seward, and reading the papers in the "Tatler" respecting Miss Jenny Bickerstaff, got a horror of being thought a literary lady; it was, I fancied, ungraceful, unlike an heroine, and, in short, I did not desire at all to be known as an authoress. I was far less established in the idea of my own good looks than of my talents, and one word in favour of them was more precious than thousands in praise of any supposed genius.

Young and exceedingly "proper" as the diarist was, she was evidently quite capable of seeing through the feminine wiles of the city's great social leader; the following passage leaves the impression that her father was in some danger at one time of succumbing to the fascinations of the "Swan of Lichfield."

Although through the Divine goodness he never seems to have derived aught but good from this society, yet I imagine it to have been not altogether so correct as the friends of virtue, not to say religion, might have wished. Miss Seward was, at that period, when my father was a young man between twenty and thirty, having that peculiar sort of beauty which consists in the most brilliant
eyes, glowing complexion, and rich, dark hair; she was tall and majestic, and was unrivalled in the power of expressing herself. She was at the same time exceedingly greedy of the admiration of the other sex, and though capable of individual attachment, as she manifested in after life, yet not very particular as to the person by whom the homage of flattery was tendered at her shrine; she was, in short, such a woman as we read of in romances, and, had she lived in some dark age of the past, might have been charged with sorcery; for even in advanced life, she often bore away the palm of admiration from the young and beautiful, and many even were fascinated by her who wholly condemned her conduct."

Mrs. Sherwood has also left it on record that "many of the members of that society were actual infidels; Mr. Edgeworth, for instance, and poor Mr. Day was little better. But the infidelity of that period had not shown itself in the coarse, familiar, democratic form of the present day, and in the circle round Miss Seward there was such a halo of elegant romance and sentiment that it was no wonder, if neither of my parents (for my mother . . . resided at Lichfield at that time) was aware of the serpents which lurked under the flowers of that garden of intellectual delight."

When Dr. Butt died in 1795 these halcyon days at Lichfield came to a close. The widow and children went to reside at Bridgnorth, where Mary first unsheathed her pen to write "Margarita" and "Susan Gray," fictional efforts produced on the plan rendered famous by Hannah More, whose dearest object in life was to "inculcate religious principles among the poor."

In 1803 Mary Martha Butt was married to her old playmate, Henry Sherwood, then a captain in the 53rd Foot, and recently returned from duty in Barbadoes. With her husband she went to India, and gives some interesting particulars of the voyage out, and of life in the east at that time. She is rather severe upon some of the clergymen of her youth, whose ig
norance of the gospel somewhat shocked this youthful censor; but there is much in her picture of the old life at sea, and in India, which is both entertaining and instructive. At this period of her life she was inspired to write "The Indian Pilgrim," an Indian paraphrase of Bunyan's immortal allegory.

This was soon followed by "Little Henry and his Bearer" which, sold to the publisher for five pounds, achieved a world-wide popularity. It was actually translated into the Chinese and the Cingalese languages. While in India, Mrs. Sherwood, countenanced and aided by her husband, busied herself in co-operation with Henry Martyn in founding schools for Indian children, besides personally interesting herself in the welfare of the children of English soldiers out there.

But of the many works which emanated from her busy pen, the most famous was the juvenile book, "The Fairchild Family," published in 1817. Almost every English child brought up in a family with pretensions to "respectability" between 1820 and 1860 began his or her literary education on "The Fairchild Family." The children read it, not necessarily because they liked it, but because they had to; our parents and grandparents were supposed to derive untold mental and moral stimulus from its perusal.

With Miss Edgeworth our authoress shares the honour of being the pioneer writers of juvenile fiction; but while the former concerns herself with the moral faculty, Mrs. Sherwood bases all her educational efforts for the improvement of the child-mind on Christianity, of the type commonly known as the evangelical.

Mrs. Sherwood delineates English rural life of the period with peculiar felicity, portraying life and manners, scenes and episodes, with much freshness, her descriptions being redolent of the woods and lanes. Her characters, too, are clearly drawn, the children especially being life-like, and not the little philosophers in pinafores Miss Edgeworth was apt to portray.
Though three hundred and fifty books and pamphlets have been traced to the pen of Mrs. Sherwood, strangely enough Simm's "Bibliotheca Staffordiensis" enumerates only two; "Life of Peter Thompson of Needwood Forest" (1825) and "Dudley Castle."

A very vivid account of the burning of Dudley Castle, in 1750, has been left by Mrs. Sherwood, taken down as it was recounted to her by her grandmother. This account will be found reprinted in "The History of Tipton," p. 49; and on p. 44 of the same work it appears that Mrs. Sherwood's daughter married William Bagnall, a member of the famous family of South Staffordshire ironmasters.

Although Mrs. Sherwood was not a native of Staffordshire, her local associations are numerous and interesting. She belonged to one of the families of oldest standing in the Midlands.

Mrs. Sherwood died at Twickenham in 1851, amid the affectionate ministrations of her daughters, vigorous in mind and body to the last. Hers was the life of the true English lady, happily spent in the field of Christian usefulness.
A Master Carpenter and Inventor.

At Thickbroom, in the parish of Weeford, near Lichfield, was born in the month of April, 1700, one of those humble individuals whose genius never meets with the recognition it fully deserves, and whose names fail to reach any considerable height on the scroll of fame.

This was John Wyatt, eldest of the eight sons of John and Jane Wyatt, who, as a carpenter and an inventor, did something by his mechanical skill and adaptive ingenuity to advance the industrial reputation of this country during the wonderful eighteenth century which was so remarkably prolific in the production of pioneer inventors.

It was a tradition in the family that he went to school with Samuel Johnson, the lexicographer. This is scarcely possible, as he was nine years older than Johnson, but it is certain that the family of the learned doctor’s mother, Sarah Ford, was connected by marriage with that of the Wyatt’s.

Little is known of John Wyatt till 1730, when at thirty years of age he was still working in his native village as a carpenter. It was then his inventive genius first began to manifest itself. He attempted to make a machine for cutting files, which was to obviate the tedious and laborious method of cutting the teeth on to “blank” files, with hammer and chisel, by hand.

To assist him in carrying out his idea, he sought the financial assistance of a Birmingham gun-maker, named Richard Heeley. This support presently failing him, he fell in with another partner who, in September, 1732, agreed
to take Heeley’s place. This was Lewis Paul, a man of Huguenot descent, who had invented a machine for stamping crape, the need for which he had probably noticed among his compatriots in Spitalfields. “Amongst the women who worked at this machine,” says Wyatt’s biographer, “was Mrs. Desmoulins, the daughter of Dr. Johnson’s godfather, Dr. Samuel Swinfen and the widow of Mr. Desmoulins, a Huguenot, writing-master; she for many years lived in Dr. Johnson’s house.”

Paul does not appear to have been a man of principle, and it is, therefore, not to be regretted that the connection was severed in the following year, owing to a failure in their resources. As to the invention itself, a technical description of it appeared in a Traité de l’Horologie published in Paris seven years later; and that the difficulties to be overcome by any such invention are exceedingly great is apparent from a paper on the subject which appeared in the American Journal of Natural Philosophy for 1799, Vol. II. It may be fairly concluded that as nothing more is to be heard of this machine, which was conceived with so much ingenuity and constructed with so much manual skill, that Wyatt found the practical difficulties of producing an effective mechanical file-cutter altogether insuperable.

Wyatt’s attention was next directed to the desirability of some contrivance by which the process of spinning could be either increased or accelerated. Spinning was then a common fireside industry, and after the invention of the “fly shuttle” in 1733, by which weavers could, without assistance, make cloth wider than their own outstretched arms would reach across, there was a growing demand for yarn. With the inventor’s fertility of resource, he sought to evolve some mechanical operation as a substitute for the rolling action of the finger and thumb, by which cotton wool was drawn out and converted into yarn of any required fineness and strength. If Arkwright first carried out the principle of roller spinning to a successful issue, it cannot be denied that Wyatt first conceived the feasibility of it.
Writing to one of his brothers in 1733, he announces his intention of going to reside in Birmingham, as he “has a Gymcrank there of some consequence.” This was his spinning machine, which he afterwards refers to as “25 Gymcrank,” he having adopted the faddy system of indicating his inventions by consecutive numbers. In the same year we read of his shutting himself up in a small building at Sutton Coldfield, with his little machine about two feet square, and there in secrecy, “all the time in a pleasing but trembling suspense,” spinning the first thread of cotton yarn ever produced by mechanical means. In April, 1735, Lewis Paul appears on the scene again as the necessary financier; and again he exhibits a want of principle, for ere the year was out he is threatening the inventor in these terms—“I know your grand secret, and will use you as I please.” However, the two continued to work together, Paul leaving his crape pinking business to be carried on in London, while he came down to Birmingham; and for four years he paid Wyatt a stipulated weekly sum to enable him to carry on the work of elaborating his spinning machine.

During this time they both paid frequent visits to the Metropolis, the one to raise money, the other to gain technical knowledge. In 1738 Paul made the acquaintance of Mr. Warren, the Birmingham bookseller, with whom Dr. Johnson had lodged. It is understood that the learned doctor had some personal knowledge of Wyatt, and knew what a talented man he was; for it was through his recommendation an arrangement was made between Paul, as representing the machine-making firm, and Warren, under which the latter invested money in the crape-making business, and also advanced the sum of £70 to Paul for his own purposes, whereupon he immediately covenanted with Wyatt, that the latter should work for him for six months, accepting 17s. each week in cash and leaving a balance of 3s. a week to accumulate till the completion and exploitation of the machine should put Paul in a position to recoup himself for all his expenditure. Wyatt accepted these terms, though we read that he was often compelled to
pawn his clothes for food, and to go abroad in rags.

In 1738 the model was finished, and carried off to London by Paul, and patented by him in his own name on June 24th. Licences to work the patent were granted to several persons, amongst others Cave, the proprietor of The Gentleman's Magazine.

By 1744 the sum owing by Paul to Wyatt was £850, and being unable to pay, the latter took out, in consideration of this, a licence for the working of 300 spindles. He started 50 at first, and two hanks of the cotton then spun are preserved to the present day in the Birmingham Art Gallery. On the paper in which they are wrapped is written, by Wyatt himself:

"The inclosed yarn spun by the spinning engine (without hands) about the year 1744. The movement was at that time turned by two or more asses walking round an axis in a large warehouse near the well in the Upper Priory, in Birmingham. The above was wrote June 3rd, 1756." And this latter date, be it noticed, was quite a quarter of a century in advance of the fame and fortune acquired by Richard Arkwright through the process of "spinning by rollers," the keystone of the great cotton trade of England.

To John Wyatt undoubtedly belongs the credit of having conceived the great principle of spinning by machinery, which was carried to such magnificent success by Arkwright, and subsequent inventors a little later. But to our pioneer inventor, no commercial success accrued. Edward Cave's new mill at Northampton, an extensive establishment worked by water power, was closed through failure to make a profit after a fair trial of some ten years duration; and even under the inventor's personal supervision the cotton industry could not be made to take root amongst the metal trades of Birmingham. Nay, even his right to the credit of original invention has been disputed, and that by no less an authority than Dr. Smiles, who, in his volume, The Huguenots, lays claim to it for Lewis Paul. So almost does Mr. R. B. Prosser,
admittedly one of our greatest living authorities
on the subject of inventions and patents, who
in his article on Lewis Paul in the "Dictionary
of National Biography" says that the latter
in bringing out this patent "obtained the as-
sistance of John Wyatt, a skilful mechanic"; 
and while not directly denying the honour to
Wyatt, says that the rival claims have "given
rise to much discussion."

It may be added, on the other hand, that the
Centralblatt für die Textil-Industrie (Berlin,
22 November, 1892) in an historic review of
the textile industry, authoritatively declares that
Lewis Paul was not the inventor, "but was only
present as a witness in the negotiations," and
that there was undubitable proof that in John
Wyatt the world saw the first inventor of the
improvements in spinning machinery.

If the mechanical genius of Birmingham
looked askance at the manufacture of textile
soft-goods, it was always ready to consider
favourably any proposal for the extension or
improvement of its hardware products. Baffled
and ruined by his cotton mill experiments, in
which his brother Samuel had also lost a con-
siderable sum of money, John Wyatt took his
inventive brain to that ready mart for such a
commodity, the Soho works of Boulton and Watt,
where he was readily offered an engagement;
and here a number of his mechanical contriv-
ances were brought to a more successful issue.
It is difficult to trace many of the inventions of
Wyatt's teeming brain, but he invented a ma-
chine for the weighing of carts and similar vehicles,
which is nearly identical with the weighing
machine now in use; he also conceived the idea
of ball bearings, using three or more cylinders,
each revolving on its own axis, as a bearer for
the shafts of wheels, the object being to reduce
the friction which he found attendant on fixed
beds.

While the latter idea was not brought to
fruition till the modern bicycle called for its
advantages a century later, the weighing machine
manufacture has found a home in Birmingham
ever since. Wyatt was undoubtedly impressed
with the necessity of obtaining accurate records of the weights of heavy material in large quantities, such as the loads of coal and iron which were then carted in large quantities from the Black Country to supply the hearths and forges of busy Birmingham.

This simplified machine for weighing heavy loads was soon in demand everywhere; indeed, there was a competition in Birmingham as to who should obtain them first. One, "a town machine for the use of the poor"—for peculation was known to be constantly going on in the supply of coals to the poor—was set up in Snow Hill; and the oldest weigh-ticket in existence is supposed to be one issued from this first weigh-bridge of Wyatt’s, and which is embellished with a wood-cut of the old Birmingham Workhouse which then stood in the vicinity of Snow Hill. One of the earliest uses to which this "Compleat Weighing Machine" was applied was registering the weights of the coal and iron which was delivered into Birmingham by carts and wagons from "Wendaysbury," to the orders of "Mr. Blockley and Comp."

At that time the chief source of Birmingham’s supply was Wednesbury Old Field; and Wyatt, in 1744, undertook not to erect any other machine between Blockley’s, at the north entrance to Birmingham, and the town of "Wednesbury" (Wyatt, in his correspondence, thus spells the name variously). It is believed, however, he was afterwards induced to put another machine at the Hockley Brook boundary; a third one was certainly erected at "Deritend Turnpike."

Besides supplying these new compound lever machines to various local establishments, Wyatt sold them to the Corporations of Chester, Hereford, Gloucester, Liverpool, and other towns where the authorities were determined to check the weights of hay, timber, coals, and other produce sold in their markets by the load. Other early machines went to Coventry, Dudley, Lichfield, and Shrewsbury.

John Wyatt continued in the employment of Matthew Boulton, at the Soho works, and while
there invented the double-headed lathe with lever motion, and the tools still in use for cutting pearl buttons and button moulds. He was twice married; there was no family by his first wife, but by the second there were two sons and four daughters.

Wyatt died in 1766, and was buried in St. Philip's Churchyard, Birmingham, where his gravestone faces the Blue Coat School. Thus serenely ended the life of a man of "the purest probity, the most unaffected humility, urbanity, and benevolence."

Wyatt's brothers were all men of considerable talent; Job and William obtained a patent in 1760 "for cutting screws of iron called wood screws," which is referred to in an article by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain on the Screw Trade. The descendents of the Wyatt's numbered some illustrious names among them; Jeffry Wyatt, architect to George IV., transformed Windsor Castle from a mediaeval fortress into a royal residence of beauty and grandeur, worthy of its high purpose. On the occasion of a stone-laying he was permitted to change his name to Wyatville, and subsequently he was knighted (1828). Richard Wyatt was an eminent sculptor living at Rome, who exhibited some of his fine work in the exhibition of 1851. One grandson of the "master carpenter" was an architect of considerable eminence in his profession, who in 1772 built the Pantheon in Oxford Street, London; and yet another descendant of the family who rose in the social scale was Sir Mathew Digby Wyatt.

The Birmingham Weighing machine industry of which our humble village carpenter was the founder, is still carried on extensively by Messrs. Avery, at Soho, Smethwick, and by Messrs. Pooley and Son, at Deritend. It is also interesting to learn that one of the machines constructed either by Wyatt himself, or by his contemporaries, is still situated near Lichfield, about a mile on the road towards his native village, Weeford.

In conclusion it is worth noting that Dr. Johnson knew Lewis Paul intimately enough
to induce Warren to invest money in the spinning mill enterprise, and that in all probability he was equally well acquainted with Wyatt. By the same token, Johnson evidently knew Rowley, of Lichfield, already mentioned on p. 36, in connection with the construction of the first orrery, a piece of mechanism to represent the motion of the planets about the sun. One writer claims this invention for George Graham, about the year 1700, and says the machine was made by J. Rowley, instrument maker. But in Steele's Englishman (No. 11, which appeared in 1713) we read, "Mr. John Rowley ... calls his machine the Orrery in gratitude to the nobleman of that title." Any way, Rowley was a celebrated mathematician, and a native of Lichfield.
XXIV.

The Poet of the Potteries.

Returning again to the realms of poesy, we now move in a different atmosphere; from the serene refinement of literary, cultured Lichfield, to the rough and rude society of that unlettered community of workmen who constituted the population of the Potteries, which at that time was emerging from its primitive rusticity to the condition of a widely scattered industrial urban district—to a group of undisciplined townships rising into existence under the effete and inadequate village government of the middle ages.

To the emotions and religious instincts of such a community, Methodism, simple, direct, and practical in its teachings, made the strongest appeal. Of other benign influences, there were practically none. Schools were few and far between; and to atone for the deficiency Sunday schools were instituted by the Wesleyans for the teaching of reading, writing, and summing.

In this environment, and with these meagre opportunities for the cultivation of his mind, Noah Heath, son of a working potter, was born about the year 1780, at Sneyd Green, near Burslem.

What little education the boy received he is believed to have obtained at Far Green Free School, which was within a short distance of his father's cottage. But when in 1787 the Methodists opened a Sunday School at Burslem, his father, who was a decent-minded sort of man, caused him to attend this also.

It was here Noah Heath seems to have acquired that taste for poetry and reciting which led him to become the recognised seer and poet of
his tribe. The Sunday scholars were all taught and encouraged to commit to memory not only passages from the Bible, but to memorise and recite poetry, generally well-known and popular extracts from the works of standard poets.

For a career, the lad was put to his father's trade; at first he worked at that branch of potting called hollow-ware pressing; but in the latter part of his life he was engaged as a modeller and mould-maker.

So much did young Noah Heath feel himself indebted to the beneficent influences of the Sunday School, he composed a piece of poetry on the subject, which he recited in chapel at the close of the annual Charity Sermon, one of the great days of the year, when every child was decked out in new clothes, the girls in white frocks and blue sashes, the boys in new suits, all to walk in procession with their teachers, and sing special hymns before the doors of the principal inhabitants. In this environment young Noah found the life that leads to song.

The recitation, in which he first spoke in winged words, began:—

Indulgent friends, accept my humble strain,
Ye kind supporters of the youthful train,
Who laid the basis of this grand design,
And bade fair science through our realms to shine.

Once started rhyming he does not appear able to have resisted the inclination, and his next attempt is on the same subject, written for another Charity School Celebration.

Thrice blessed the day when fair science and truth
First beamed in the bosoms of innocent youth;
And blessed be they who the work first began
That grand institution, the Sunday School plan.

While working in the employment of Joseph Mayer, with whom the young man was a great favourite, he had the misfortune to be bitten by his master's dog. Mr. Mayer persuaded him to have the wound cauterised, an operation which in some way caused paralysis, and made Noah Heath a cripple for the remainder of his days.

Mr. Henry Wedgwood (to whose "Romances of Staffordshire" we are indebted for all that is
known of our poetaster), says that "he was a man of strong individuality," and made an impression on the mind of the district in which he lived and moved. "Feeble as may have been his poetical power, his fame was spread through the whole of this part of the country." All who knew him seemed to have retained a kindly recollection of Noah Heath. He had a "love of conviviality" which always made him the hero of the table. He was fond of reciting his own poetry, particularly the humorous pieces; and having the power to bring out their points, and show them in their best form, he was ever a welcome guest among all conditions of men.

"His sense of the grotesque and the humorous in character was very great, and such models as he had at command he drew to the life. But as may be easily understood his knowledge of character was very limited"; ranging only over the district in which he earned his bread. His humour was somewhat broad and coarse, and occasionally a little vulgar—but then the times in which he lived were coarse.

"His power," continues Mr. Wedgwood, "breathes of the moorlands, the woods, and dales—the rivers, the singing birds, and the beautiful landscape that beamed around him. . . . Deep feeling may be discovered, despite the uncouth and inharmonious character of his rhymes. To him the beautiful sky, whether illumined with the all-pervading sun or gemmed with myriads of stars, revealed, the all-powerful Creator; and to contemplate His works was one of the delights of his life." Here are some of his lines on "Night"

In sweet retirement let me musing stray
And contemplate the scenes of parting day;
And while I muse, O, heav'n my soul inspire
And every thought be wrapt in hallow'd fire.

A poem on "The Wild Rose" he brings to a conclusion in these lines:—

Of all the flowers which nature boasts.
Or spices, sweet from India's coasts;
Nor India's spice nor flower that grows
So fragrant are as the Wild Rose.
But it is in his humorous compositions that Noah Heath best realizes himself. He has one on "The Pig and the Watch," describing how a hog once found a "turnip watch" beneath his favourite oak-tree, and grunted out his porcine dissatisfaction with the glittering toy:

My labour had been better crown'd
Had I a single acorn found.

Another piece entitled "The Doctor and the Parson," turns on a squabble between these two functionaries just named, who find themselves, at the bedside of a patient, in violent disagreement as to the method of treatment. Says the former:

But in cases like these ever silence pray keep—
And if you be the shepherd, preserve well your sheep;
Let us both mind our business, without more control,
For I'll mind the body if you'll mind the soul.

At a time when the sports of the people were essentially brutal—exemplified chiefly in pugilism, bull-baiting, and cock-fighting—the state of public opinion on such subjects was very different from that of the present day. Newspapers openly advocated prize-fighting as tests of strength and courage—perhaps a little excusable during the long and severe strain of the Napoleonic struggle, when British bull-dog tenacity seemed the only likely quality to pull this country successfully through that titanic conflict. In a rhyme called "The Tinker and the Tanner," Heath describes a match at fisticuffs between these two gladiators. Quite as a commonplace incident, it began when—

A tinker and tanner one day met together—
The one works in metal, and the other in leather.

After a description of seventeen hard-fought rounds, the rhyme tells how the gallant tanner has to give way, because

He found the young tinker a man of much metal,
He hammered his hide as he hammered a kettle;
And after all courage and science were tried
The tanner gave up with a double-tanned hide.

To have spoken disparagingly of such sport in those days would have been to be accounted un-English. From the same point of view, "Bull-baiting"—which is the title of our next extract—was a perfectly legitimate pastime. It is quoted in full because it so well reflects
the habits and customs of the people among whom he cultivated his muse.

The stake being fixed, and marked out the ground,
All the vulgar spectators were gaping around,
"Oh, yes!" cries the bullward, 't' the midst of the crowd
To the audience around thus he bawls out aloud,
"I'm to give notice, to young and to old,
To keep at a distance and not be too bold,
Ten yards is the distance to keep from the stake,
And plenty of sport we'll be sure to make,
Here's a good beaver hat, and brass collar likewise,
For the best dog that runs for to claim as a prize,
Three puts at the nose, if none pins him at three
The prize shall be due unto Roger and me."
The sport now begins, and the game they pursue,
And a hell upon earth now exhibits to view.
With yelping and shouting, "Now, Toss," is the cry,
Till the noise of the vulgar ascends to the sky.
"Toss" misses his hold, and aloft now he goes,
For vengeance now falls on the innocent foes;
His belly ripped open, and from the death wound
His warm smoking entrails now fall to the ground.
"Room, Room," now the cry for old Simpson's bitch
"Nettle,"
Who none can surpass for true courage and mettle;
But while she was running, the tinker's bitch "Rose"
Stole slyly behind and got Roger by th' nose.
Round and round now they go all confused in a pother
Some tumbling down this way and some up the other,
Rough Robin, quite drunk, and devoid of all care,
Got a hurt by the bull, and tossed up in the air,
"D— your eyes," to the tinker the bullward he cries
And "D— you again," thus the tinker replies.
So to combat they went, and exchanged a few blows,
But the latter declined with a sad bleeding nose;
The bull breaks the rope and for home again makes,
And knocks down whole standings of gingerbread cakes.
Such, such are the fruits of the bull-baiting sport,
And such do the laws of our country support.
Black eyes, bleeding noses, torn waistcoats and breeches,
Lost lives, broken limbs, and a thousand vain speeches.
But knowledge informs us that brutes for our use
Were never designed for such cruel abuse.
And time will no doubt such vain practice destroy
That man to more wisdom his time may employ,
That the bull with the herds unmolested may reign
And graze the sweet herbs on his own native plain.
Noah Heath's works are now very scarce. Hanley Free Library is fortunate in the possession of a copy of his "Miscellaneous Poems," volume I. of which was printed by James Amphlett, at the office of the "Pottery Gazette," Hanley, 1823, and volume II., by S. Brougham, at Burslem, in 1829. "Lines on the World, from its Chaotic State to the Deluge," appeared in the New Connection Magazine (printed by Tallbut, Hanley) in 1814. The first section appeared in the November number; the concluding lines in the following month's issue, signed and dated from Sneyd Green, allude to his biblical namesake thus:—

The pious Noah now an altar rears,
Offers a sacrifice, pours forth his prayers,
Well pleased, the Lord the offering receives,
And to the Patriarch His promise gives:—
"'Never, for man, shall earth be cursed more;
Nor will I smite the living, as before;
Winter and Summer, heat and cold shall reign
So long as Earth's foundations shall remain;
The great vicissitudes of night and day
Shall never cease till Time shall fade away.'"

Our poet's metre, it must be confessed, is rather monotonous. He never strikes the lyric note, nor can it be said that he has caught the real rhythm of the folk tongue.

The British Museum does not possess a copy of Noah Heath's works, and he is not mentioned in Watt's "Bibliotheca Britannica," where reference to out-of-the-way books is often to be found. Nor is there any reference to Heath in Southey's "Lives of Uneducated Poets."
XXV.

The Moorland Poet.

Near Lake Rudyard, in the "Staffordshire Switzerland," is the charming village of Horton, in the churchyard of which the most notable memorial is a fine Runic cross on which appears this inscription, the pathos of which is not a little enhanced by its simplicity:—

Erected in Memory
of George Heath, of Gratton,
Who, with few aids
Developed in these moorlands
Poetic powers of great promise;
But who, stricken with consumption,
After five years' suffering,
Fell a victim to that disease
May 5, 1869, aged 25 years.

Although dying at so an early age, Heath wrote some sixty or seventy poems, which were collected and published in a book of 350 pages, and met with instant recognition. His death was hastened by a cold caught whilst engaged upon the restoration of Horton church, where he was working at his trade as a carpenter. His writings evinced a deep thoughtfulness, and were usually tinged with a shade of pensive sadness. How the scenes amidst which his brief span of life was spent influenced his pen is seen in a poem beginning:—

Glorious Rudyard, gorgeous picture,
How I love to gaze on thee,
Ever fraught with sunny memories,
Ever beautiful to me.

Whether storms sweep grandly o'er thee
Light or gloom their charms impart,
Ever grand, sublime, majestic,
Ever beautiful thou art.
How sublimely grand the picture
    Stretching out before my gaze,
Deluged with the glowing splendour
    Of the sun's declining rays
Lies the Lake in tranquil beauty
    Like a model mimic sea;
Like a brightly polished mirror
    In a frame of ebony.

Other verses carry the eye further afield to where—

    Rugged cliffs of mouldering sandstone
    Break abruptly here and there,
Like a patch of coarsest fustian
    On a robe of beauty rare—
and so the living eye of our "Moorland Poet" surveys in turn each scene of native beauty.

The humble life of the poet, brief as it was, was not without its element of romance; for there entered into it not only the shadowing foredoom of a hopeless disease, but the poignancy of a blighted affection. The broken vows of the loved one he sang at some length in a poem entitled "The Discarded;" and although the passion he had conceived for her was intense, it will be seen from the following lines, extracted from a poem written on his deathbed, and headed, "True to the Last," that he fully forgave her:—

    Prop me up with my pillows, sweet sister, and then
    Just open the casement, and close the room door,
And let me look on the landscape again
    And breathe the pure air of the summer once more.
Then twine your arm round me to comfort and stay,
    And wipe the big tears from those deep mournful eyes,
And listen awhile; I have something to say
    Ere I pass from the world to my home in the skies.
'Twas summer, dear sister, bright summer, as now,
    And earth wore a mantle of radiant sheen;
A wreath of pure roses encircled the brow
    Of the queen of my bosom—you know who I mean.
At twilight me met 'neath the sycamore's shade,
    And there 'twas she whispered those words "ever thine,"
Her beautiful head on my bosom was laid,
    And her lily-white hand was clasped fondly in mine.
O God! how intensely and madly I loved!
How wildly I worshipped that beautiful one!
You know how inconstant and faithless she proved,
How basely she left me when summer was gone.

You'll see her perchance when affliction has chased
The bloom from her cheek and the light from her eye;
When sorrow's dark signet hath silently traced
Deep lines on her forehead, once noble and high,

Then tell her, sweet sister, that all was forgiven,
And all was forgot, but the bliss of the past,
And tell her I wish her to meet me in heaven,
Where all who have loved are united at last.

Such, briefly, was the sad but uneventful career of one whose name Staffordshire is now proud to preserve amongst its honoured worthies. And better far than any estimate of him we are capable of forming, is the critical appreciation expressed by a brother poet of recognised standing—Robert Buchanan, himself a native of Staffordshire, and one who had already carved for himself a niche in the national temple of fame.

It is within the range of possibility that the lesser poet may have been known to the greater; in any case it is certain that an early copy of the "Memorial Edition of the Poems of George Heath, the Moorland Poet," was sent to Buchanan, and that the latter contributed an exceedingly interesting paper upon it to the Good Words for March, 1871. The little volume contained a portrait, a memoir, and 200 pages of verse. The face depicted on the engraving struck Buchanan as revealing "a look seen only on the faces of certain women—faintly traceable in every likeness of Shelley—and almost obtrusive in the one existing portrait of Keats—a look scarcely describable—but it seems there, painful, spiritual—quite as unmistakable as on poor Kirk White's face. Next came the memoir—the old story with the old motto, 'Whom the Gods love die young.' "Is it worth while," continues Buchanan, "tracing once more the look with which we are so familiar, the consecrated expression Death puts upon the eyes and mouth of his victims?—Genius, music, disease, death—the old weary monotonous tune?..."
After a characteristic tilt at the corrupt and
demoralising school of poetic thought then threaten-
ing to overrun this country from Italy and
France, the intrepid author of "The Fleshly
School of Poetry" proceeds:—

"The stranger who first sent me George Heath's
poems, with a letter telling how tenderly some
thoughts of mine had been prized by the poor
boy in Staffordshire, and how, under God,
I had been able to influence him for good, after-
wards procured for me, at my particular request,
the 'Diary.' It now lies before me—four
little volumes purchased by Heath for a few
pence, filled with boyish handwriting, in the
earlier portions clear and strong, but latterly
nervous and weak, and ever growing weaker
and weaker. Every day, for four long years of
suffering and disease, George Heath wrote his
thoughts down here. However dim were his
eyes with pain, however his wasting hand shook
and failed, he managed to add something,
if only a few words; and let those who upbraid
God for their burdens read these pages, and see
how a poor untaught lad, stricken by the most
cruel of all diseases, and tortured by the wretch-
edest of all disappointments, could year after
year, day after day, hour after hour, collect
strength enough to say unfalteringly, 'God,
thy will be done, for Thou art wiser than I.'
"One of his early pieces, entitled 'The
Discarded,' written on New Year's Eve, is ad-
dressed to the girl he loved, after she had played
with his heart, and wounded it cruelly. It
is a boy's production with a man's heart in it.
Those who are now familiar with the musical
ravings of diseased animalism may find freshness
even in some of these lines. They were the ut-
terances of a lofty nature, capable of becoming
a poet, sooner or later."

This was praise indeed, coming from so high
a source. Further on, Robert Buchanan adds
a further measure of commendation: "In
1865 appeared a little volume by Heath, under
the title of 'Preludes,' consisting chiefly of
verses written during the first year of his illness.
These poems, like all he wrote, are most note-
worthy for the invariable superiority of the thought over the expression. They are not at all the sort of verses written by brilliant young men. Their subjects are local places, tales of rude pathos like the 'Pauper Child'—nevertheless there is truth in the verses. The poor boy is not composing, but putting his own experiences into the form that seems beautiful to him, however unreal it seems to us."

Examining some of Heath's pieces, the greater poet says: "The Poem 'Icarus, or the Singer's Tale,' though only a fragment is more remarkably original than any published poem of David Gray's, and in grasp and scope of idea it is worthy of any writer. . . . Nothing is more amazing to me than to find George Heath, an unusually simple country lad. . . . flashing such deep glimpses into the hearts of women. He had loved, and I suppose that was his clue."

Enough has been written to show that the peasant poet of the Staffordshire moorlands was at least a writer of pure and lofty thoughts expressed in the simplest music of a mother-tongue. In some of its features the life-story of the Moorland Poet is not so very dissimilar from that of David Gray, the much beloved friend of Buchanan, of whom more in the next chapter.
Robert Williams Buchanan, poet, novelist, critic, and playwright, was born at Caverswall, Staffordshire, 18th August, 1841, the son of Robert Buchanan, a poor journeyman tailor of Ayrshire, himself a poet and an author.

The life of the elder Buchanan was unconventional, and makes very interesting reading. Attracted by the teaching of the iconoclastic Robert Owen, he became a Socialist lecturer, and one of that reformer's most valued missionaries. He made a romantic marriage with Margaret Williams, the daughter of "Lawyer Williams" (as he was known throughout the Staffordshire Midlands), of Stoke-upon-Trent.

The Buchanans eventually got to Glasgow, where the disciple of Robert Owen became a prosperous newspaper proprietor; and his son, the idol of his mother's heart, received a good education.

The boy was sent to Glasgow High School and afterwards to the University, where his closest friend was David Gray, one of Scotland's little known minor poets. When young Robert was about nineteen, his father's business suddenly came to grief, and the son had to look about him for some means of earning his own livelihood. He unhesitatingly resolved, having already published one or two little poems, to try the thorny paths of literature.

In 1860, much against the advice of his family, Buchanan and his friend Gray set out for London; but gloom and poverty dogged the steps of the two would-be poets, and recognition came all too late for the latter, who passed away of consumption with the closing hours of the year 1861,
The struggle, though brief, had been a severe one; and the friendship of Gray and Buchanan during this period of their early manhood is one of the most beautiful and touching episodes in the history of modern literature. In later life, Gray's place in Buchanan's affection was taken by the Hon. Roden Noel, poet and critic.

With all the leading lights of the Victorian age of letters, Robert Buchanan soon became well acquainted, if not always happily known. His entrance into the Bohemian life of London was made through the introduction of Dr. Westland Marston, the dramatic poet, in whose house at Primrose Hill he met stage celebrities like Hermann Vezin and Adelaide Neilson, H. G. Wills, the playwright, and Dinah Muloch, the authoress of "John Halifax, Gentleman." The last-named, some years his senior, carried him off to her cottage on Hampstead Heath, instilled into his mind the idea that he would become a great man, and in encouragement of the aspiration, placed her small library at his disposal.

Fame and fortune, however, were slow to find the young aspirant. About this time he struck up an acquaintance with Charles Gibbon, with whom he shared the tenancy of a poverty-stricken garret, where the two industriously produced a number of magazine articles which usually found acceptance, if they did not bring much grist to the mill. One day, tired of the awful struggle for bread, Buchanan announced his determination to win instant and certain immortality by killing a publisher. He produced a stout cudgel, and before starting out for the office of Mr. John Maxwell, who then owned "Temple Bar" and the "St. James's Magazine," thus addressed his companion in wretchedness—"I am going to see Maxwell—I will see him, and if he is offensive as usual, I will beat out what brains the ruffian possesses, and offer him up as a sacrifice to the Muses."

Buchanan is said to have meant this seriously; but as it happened, Mr. Maxwell received the young author affably, bought his manuscript, and handed him his little cheque.
Soon after this incident Maxwell gave Buchanan the editorship of one of his publications, "The Welcome Guest;" here he made the acquaintance of the popular novelist, Miss Braddon, who subsequently became the wife of Maxwell.

Though his acquaintances were many, his friends were but few. The one he took closest to his heart was Thomas Love Peacock, the friend of Shelley, to be near whom he took lodgings at Chertsey. Here the monotony of life was occasionally varied by a little boating, in company with Peacock, and the latter's special pet, Clare Leigh Hunt, a bright-eyed girl of fifteen. Under this genial influence Buchanan wrote many of his pseudo-classic poems, which were afterwards collected in his first volume of "Undertones," the publication of which secured for him at one bound the coveted name of poet.

It is interesting at the present moment to notice that one of Buchanan's early works, "The Book of Orm," published in 1870, has recently been adapted by Dr. F. H. Cowen to form the libretto of his new composition for the Cardiff musical festival. The poem is the outcome of the state of mind expressed in the lines:

A hunger for the wherefore of my being;
A wonder from what regions I had fallen;
I gladdened to the glad things of the world:
Yet crying always: Wherefore and oh wherefore?
What am I? Wherefore doth the world seem happy?

The poet takes the name "Orm" as signifying the human race, and the poem is animated by the belief in a personal immortality that filled Buchanan at that time; and it carries out his ideas that an eternal happiness hereafter should reward man for the sufferings he undergoes in this world. In the eerie style usual to him, it tells of the fate of him who denies and resists God; but who, cast into the outside gloom, can be won to grace again by the love of the woman who bore him and of the woman who bore his children. Thus the "Book of Orm" ends with the spirit of human love more fully vindicated than anything else, and the many other great questions left unsolved.
Dr. Cowen's work on the subject is entitled "The Veil," and is undoubtedly that composer's masterpiece. It achieved an unqualified success on its production (1910), and would no doubt have delighted Buchanan's heart could he have lived to hear it.

To resume. Struggling on doggedly through the strident sixties, each succeeding year extended the circle of the young aspirant's acquaintance, which already included Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Edmund Yates.

Whether Robert Buchanan had made a study of "the gentle art of making enemies" or not, his reminiscences give several striking illustrations of the super-sensitiveness of the artistic temperament, and the frequency of literary quarrels.

He tells of Thackeray having Yates expelled from the Garrick Club for the contemptibly trivial offence of making allusion, in his journalistic gossip, to his (Thackeray's) unshapely nose. He relates with contemptuous amusement how George Eliot posed almost as a goddess, to whom her husband, George Henry Lewes, acted as showman, and whom no one was allowed to approach except with reverence, fear, and bated breath. He quotes Leigh Hunt as his authority for the assertion that even the great Browning was greedy of praise.

In the story of literary animosities, nothing perhaps exceeds the bitterness of Buchanan's own experience. One of his articles contributed to the Contemporary Review of October, 1871, under the pseudonym of "Thomas Maitland," on "The Fleshly School of Poetry," earned an unhappy notoriety. The writer was severely taken to task for his bitter, if merited, attack on Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Swinburne, and the rest of the "school." The attack was undoubtedly violent; yet it may not have been entirely without justification. It appears that some little time before it was penned, Swinburne had gone out of his way to print, in a note to one of his prose essays, an insulting allusion to David Gray, the friend of Buchanan's boyhood. The rage and indignation which boiled up in Buchanan's loyal heart may be imagined.
After showing the spiteful note to Lord Hough- 
ton, who had been a friend and helper of poor 
David Gray, he vowed his vengeance; and 
"The Fleshly School of Poetry" was the result. 
"It was a torrent of invective which for destruc-
tive power has no equal in the whole range of 
English literature." Its effectiveness was as 
deadly as it was immediate. Before that 
trenchant blow the coterie collapsed like a house 
of cards; but from that day forth its members 
ever forgave Robert Buchanan, and did 
everything in their power to prevent him from 
making a literary name.

That he suffered from wilful misconstruction 
and deliberate persecution more than most 
men is certain; but, on the other hand, 
Buchanan knew that he could wield the literary 
bludgeon more effectively than any of his con-
temporaries, and he sometimes took a fierce 
pleasure in displaying his prowess. Toward 
the close of his stormy career, for instance, 
he made a savage onslaught upon Mr. Rudyard 
Kipling, in whose defence Sir Walter Besant 
took up a more generous pen.

It is gratifying, after all, to know that no ill-
natured attempt at repression could keep 
Buchanan out of his rightful inheritance; he 
attained to the very foremost rank in the king-
dom of letters.

Between 1863 and 1900 he poured out volumes 
of verse, though he declared that he could 
never do anything unless he "felt the afflatus." 
Physically he was not so robust as he appeared 
to be; he suffered from a weak chest, to which 
often was added the distracting pain of 
nearalgia.

It was not till he had passed his fortieth 
birthday that he obtained any real success on 
the stage. The state of his health precluded 
his making himself thoroughly familiar with 
stage-craft. His first play was "The Witch-
finder"; then his "Madcap Prince" was 
produced in 1876, at the Haymarket Theatre, 
by J. B. Buckstone. At last "Stormbeaten," 
a dramatised version of his novel, "God and the 
Man," brought him an adequate money reward. 
But it was the production of "Sophia" at the 
Vaudeville Theatre which was the real beginning 
of his dramatic success. Other happy theat-
rical experiences were afterwards associated with his "Joseph's Sweetheart," and "A Man's Shadow."

For four years he collaborated with Mr. George R. Sims in the production of such melodramatic plays as the "The English Rose" and "The Trumpet Call."

With all this hard work and prolific output, Robert Buchanan never became one penny the richer. He was always given to reckless speculation; but it was the signal failure of a play, entitled "A Society Butterfly," written for Mrs. Langtry, which precipitated his bankruptcy.

In 1869 he had, in imitation of Charles Dickens, given public readings; but though they were successful the strain upon his constitution was too great, and the first great breakdown in his health occurred. From this severe attack he was nursed slowly back to strength again by his brave and beautiful young wife; and his genius was recognised by Mr. W. E. Gladstone, through whose efforts he was granted a pension of £100 a year, which he received to the day of his death.

His plays and novels subsequently brought him a large income, and he might have become a wealthy man had he been careful. But he was of luxurious habits; he was foolishly given to speculation; and he was ever most generous in extending a helping hand to his poorer brethren of the pen. The result was inevitable, especially as his wife was equally thriftless—she was a sister of Miss Harriet Jay, who afterwards wrote his biography. And, as she puts it, "they just muddled through life."

In 1899 Robert Buchanan exhibited marked symptoms of heart disease, and in the October of the following year he was struck down by paralysis. For eight weary months he lingered on, in considerable suffering, finally passing away on June 10th, 1901. The poet's last cry was the beautiful one of an expectant hope—

\[
\text{Forget me not, but come, O King,} \\
\text{And find me softly slumbering} \\
\text{In dark and troubled dreams of Thee.} \\
\text{Then, with one waft of Thy bright wing,} \\
\text{Awaken me!}
\]
XXVII.

A Prolific Playwright.

Another modern dramatist native to Staffordshire soil was the late Henry Pettitt, born at Smethwick in 1848. He may have inherited his propensity for romancing from his father, Edwin Pettitt, who, though he followed the prosaic calling of a civil engineer in that town of whirring wheels and clanging machinery, had published several works of fiction under the nom de guerre of “Herbert Glyn.”

Young Pettitt was sent to a private school in Smethwick, kept by the Rev. William Smerdon, at Shireland Hall.

The elder Pettitt, having lost his money in an unsuccessful attempt to perfect a patent in cotton spinning machinery at Manchester, the boy was thrown upon his own resources at the early age of thirteen.

His first essay in theatrical work was made at Sadlers Wells Theatre, London, where he secured an engagement to play a small part in a pantomime called, “The Rose of Blarney, or Dannymanoranyotherman”; but he became so excited over the stage business of his part that the blow he had to give to a super nearly cracked the fellow’s skull, a piece of realism which brought about his instant dismissal.

He next tried his hand at literature, writing poems and short stories for various boys’ papers. Though he busied himself mightily in this line of work, he never received any remuneration for it till he won the prize offered by the Boys’ Miscellany for the best Christmas story. The prize consisted of a microscope, which he and a chum—a lad of his own age, afterwards a well-known and successful artist—had no sooner obtained from the publishing
office, than they promptly pawned for ten shillings, and with the proceeds enjoyed a sumptuous feast of chops and tea, and then went to the Strand Theatre, where they spent the balance in cakes, oranges, and ginger beer.

A more serious effort to earn a livelihood was made as a junior clerk in the London head office of Messrs. Pickford, the well-known carriers. But as he spent most of his time in writing songs and essays, or love-letters for his fellow clerks, his rapid promotion in the commercial world was not likely. One afternoon, at the end of two years, the head of the department, dropping into the office suddenly found young Pettitt delivering a burlesque lecture to his fellow clerks on the advantages of less work for higher wages. The chief at once requested a private interview. “Mr. Pettitt,” said that gentleman when they were alone, “I believe you are a very clever lad, exceedingly well informed, for your age, on all literary, poetical, and historical subjects, besides being a ready debater and speaker.” Pettitt blushed, but remained silent. “But unfortunately,” continued the manager, in not unkindly tones, “these are not qualifications for service with Messrs. Pickford and Company; so if you can obtain more congenial employment before my monthly report goes up to the principals, I should advise you to do it. You see,” he added, “it will be an advantage to say you resigned.”

During the two years he had been in Pickford’s Office, Pettitt and a few congenial spirits had founded a sort of mutual improvement club, which they grandiosely dubbed “The Cicero.” Of this club he had been secretary, and afterwards president; and his association with it was now to serve him in good turn.

At one of the evening meetings of the coterie, among the invited guests was one of the classical masters of the North London Collegiate School, at Camden Town, who having heard Pettitt read an essay, and then defend his views so ably in the debate that followed, conceived a friendship for him. Through this timely acquaintance Henry Pettitt now obtained a post as junior
English master in the classical department of the College (1869). It was a school of 500 boys and 24 masters; and as the majority of the latter were university graduates, Henry Pettitt found his post no sinecure; for the next year or two his life was one of hard work and close study, generally inseparable from that of the schoolmaster's profession. He remained six years at the college, of which he was made secretary, and where he won the high regard of the headmaster, Dr. Williams. He became a prime favourite of the boys, too, owing to the touch of romance he gave to his lessons in history, geography, and kindred subjects, which he illuminated and made interesting by his inimitable gift of story-telling.

Notwithstanding the close application of such a life he had not given up his writing for the papers, and his attempts at dramatic authorship. It was in 1873 he achieved his first success in the latter direction, when he won a prize of five pounds for a drama entitled "Golden Fruit," which was produced at the Pavilion Theatre in the East End of London.

While at the College he was strongly advised by Andrew Halliday and George Honey to persevere in his efforts at play-writing, and shortly before this he had collaborated with Mr. Paul Merritt in a play called "British Born," produced at the Grecian Theatre. For the Grecian he next wrote two plays in conjunction with Mr. George Conquest, "Dead to the World," and "Sentenced to Death"; and a third play staged there that year (1875) called "The Promised Land, or the Search for the Southern Star," he wrote independently.

It was his early association with Mr. George Conquest, with whom he formed a sincere and lasting friendship, which laid the foundations of his fortune. He gave up his appointment at the College in order to travel with the "Grecian" plays; and for two years he was "on tour" gaining at first hand practical experience of every variety of stage craft requisite for dramatic, operatic, and equestrian companies. On his return to London he became treasurer of the Grecian Theatre.
Next year his facile pen gave no less than four plays to the same house in association with Mr. George Conquest; namely, "Snatched from the Grave," "Queen's Evidence," "Neck or Nothing," and "The Sole Survivor"; while working in collaboration with G. H. Macdermott, of "Jingo" fame, he supplied the Britannia Theatre with "Brought to Book." This, it may be noted was, just before "the great Macdermott" had made the judicious grieve by singing his inflammatory war songs in music hall and pantomime.

A complete list of Pettitt's plays cannot be given, but as the years progressed his output certainly never diminished. In partnership with Mr. George Conquest he wrote for the Grecian Theatre in 1877 "Shriften the One-eyed Pilot," "During Her Majesty's Pleasure," and "Bound to Succeed, or a Leaf from the Captain's Log-book"; and in 1879, "Notice to Quit," "The Green Lanes of England," "The Queen's Colours," and "A Royal Pardon"; while working independently he produced "The Black Flag, or Escaped from Portland." It will be observed that his forte lay in melodrama, in the production of which he showed extraordinary fertility of invention. He now began to vary his work a little by writing a one-act comedy, entitled "An Old Man's Darling."

The early partnership which had been so signaljly successful was now resumed, and a play called "Brought to Justice." staged at the Surrey Theatre in 1880, came from the joint pens of Pettitt and Merritt. The same year there was produced at the Grecian Theatre a pantomime called "Harlequin King Frolic," written by Pettitt alone, which is said to have enjoyed the longest run of any pantomime known.

Pettitt's ability as a playwright was now generally recognised, and his services were being sought by theatrical managers of repute. In the July of 1880 there was produced at Drury Lane Theatre a great spectacular play entitled "The World," the joint production of Henry Pettitt, Paul Merritt, and Augustus (afterwards Sir...
Augustus) Harris, which inaugurated an era of prosperity for both that playhouse and for Pettitt.

As may be imagined he was now a busy man, and both in 1880 and 1881 he had to pay visits to America, mainly to look after his royalty interests, and incidentally to superintend the staging of a version of "Le Voyage en Suisse," which he had written for the Hanlon-Lees troupe.

The year 1881 saw his play "The Nabob's Fortune" presented to an American audience; and his "Taken from Life" produced at the Adelphi. Another Adelphi play was "Love and Money," in which he collaborated with that marvellous romancer, Charles Reade.

Except for two plays written in conjunction with Sydney Grundy in 1887 for the Adelphi, namely, "The Union Jack" and "The Bells of Haslemere"; and "A Sailor's Knot," which he wrote independently for Drury Lane in 1891, most of his other work was undertaken in collaboration, either with George R. Sims, or Sir Augustus Harris.

Pettitt's plays when partnered by Sir Augustus were "Pluck, or the Story of Fifty Thousand Pounds," "Human Nature," "A Run of Luck," "A Million of Money," "A Prodigal Daughter," and "A Life of Pleasure," all produced at the great national theatre in Drury Lane, between the years 1882 and 1893. The last-named of them was transferred to the Princess's Theatre, in order to make way for the pantomime, where it ran till February 1894.

The partnership with George R. Sims produced those popular Adelphi plays, "In the Ranks" (1883), "A Spider's Web" (which was first staged in Glasgow), "The Harbour Lights," "Silver Falls," and "London Day by Day." The same joint authorship produced, in 1889 "Master and Man," which had a good run at the Princess's Theatre, after having been first tried in Birmingham. Pettitt was often in Birmingham—he was proud of being a native of Smeth-
wick—and was one of the original members of the Birmingham Arts Club, which had its home in the old Bijou Theatre there.

The same collaborators were equally successful in supplying burlesques to the Gaiety Theatre, "Faust up-to-date" (1888) and "Carmen up-to-date" (1890) being from their facile pens. The latter musical frivolity was first seen in Liverpool.

Pettitt's last play, "A Life of Pleasure," was still running with unabated success when his many activities were stilled for ever. He died in London on the Christmas Eve of 1893.

This was the period of the "nailed up" melodrama, when the stage carpenter was a leading character in every popular production. The kind of plot which was most relished by playgoers has been humorously described by an American satirist:

"If they can have an operator climbing a real telegraph pole to tap the wire and telegraph the girl he loves that he is dead, so that she can marry his rich rival and go to Europe and cultivate her gift for sculpture, they feel they have got real life."

A mere list of Pettitt's plays suffices to show his immense productiveness. His knowledge of modern stage-craft was unequalled, and no man had a keener eye for a "situation," or knew better how to give it dramatic effect. His characters are all conventional, if not "stagey"; and his writing was without literary distinction. Still he was a commercial success, his will being proved for upwards of £48,000. Fully conscious of the fact that his plays were devoid of that literary merit by which alone they could survive their ephemeral popularity, he always purposed, when he had made himself "a competency," to sit down and write drama that would live. He was one

To whom in vision clear
The aspiring heads of future things appear—but, alas, for the vanity of human hopes and aspirations!
Upwards of sixty years ago there stood in the High Street of West Bromwich, then "half town and half country"—for this great thoroughfare had only been cut across the heath by virtue of an Enclosure Act of 1802—a small printer and stationer's shop, which would also have been a bookseller's establishment had there been any customers to buy books.

Here was born on April 13th, 1847, David Christie Murray, the famous journalist, novelist, and sometime dramatist, actor, and war correspondent.

Of the vicissitudes in his very varied career, David Christie Murray has given us many vivid glimpses in two of his works which are of an autobiographic nature, "The Making of a Novelist," published in 1894 and "Recollections," which appeared in 1908, just after his death.

Not only did he introduce many local scenes and Black Country characteristics into his fiction, but in his reminiscences he never fails to linger lovingly on the mention of those scenes which were endeared to him by childhood's memories. He recalls his frequent childish walks along Bromford Lane, alludes to well-known localities like Ten Score, Pearl Well, Church Vale, Jacob's Ladder, and the Fairy Rings, not even forgetting the Police Station and the "Lewisham Arms" towards Handsworth, or the "Horns" at more distant Queenslett. One of his youthful schoolmates was Sir Ernest Spencer, who afterwards represented West Bromwich in Parliament.

His way to school led him past "The Champion of England" public-house, kept by William Perry, otherwise the "Tipton Slasher," the most celebrated of the many prize-fighters which the old-time Black Country produced. From his
youth upwards David was a keen admirer of the fistic art, and he reverts to the subject with real fervour in his "Making of a Novelist," the last chapter of which is filled with glowing reminiscences of the local prize-ring.

Till he was eighteen David Murray worked in his father's ramshackle printing office; in 1865 he suddenly took himself off to the great Metropolis, where he obtained casual employment in the printing offices of Messrs. Unwin Brothers. His experience at case in London was very brief; and then stress of circumstances induced him to enlist. The reminiscent chapters in which he recalls his trials as a raw recruit in the Irish Dragoons afford very entertaining reading; but it was indeed a happy release for him when, at the end of three years, an amiable old aunt purchased his discharge. Still, his military experiences served him in good turn in after life; his reporting of the army manoeuvres on Cannock Chase for a London daily were thought by many to have been written by some great military expert; and he undoubtedly found his knowledge of soldiering extremely useful when he became a war correspondent.

Christie Murray was destined from the first to roam widely over the field of letters. His introduction to journalism was made in the office of The Wednesbury Advertiser, which he describes as an "ineffective, inoffensive little weekly"; a paper which still exists, though not under this name, a title to which indeed some lustre might have accrued through his association with it. For he records how proud he was when he was allowed to write the political leaders for it—this was during the stirring election of 1868, when Dr. Kenealy was one of the candidates for the new borough of Wednesbury.

With this small experience of journalism he went to join the staff of George Dawson on the newly-established Birmingham Morning News. The great preacher had once very kindly noticed some juvenile verse of his; and now here he was installed as junior reporter under the
editorial direction of his hero—at twenty-five shillings a week. The office of the News was conducted in a very loose, amateurish sort of way, and Murray's work lay chiefly in police court reporting, which, though not on a very elevated plane of journalism, was a good school for a potential novelist, where life could be studied at close quarters. George Dawson utilised his services as amanuensis, and had bargained that he should learn shorthand; but Murray never perfected himself as a stenographer, which was the reason he afterwards proved a failure in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons. But as compensation for this deficiency in his professional equipment he always had a memory "with a grip like that of a steel rat-trap," as he tersely expressed it.

It was not long ere his rapid execution and the vivid style of his reporting brought him into notice, and secured for him promotion to the dignity of "special correspondent," to which was attached a substantial salary of six guineas a week. He was sent to report the Pelsall Colliery Disaster, a notable Black Country tragedy, some of the episodes of which are commemorated on the panels of the Sister Dora statue in Walsall; and his efforts on this occasion drew attention to his extraordinary abilities. His encounter on the scene of action with that prince of Special Correspondents, Archibald Forbes, and how by his superior knowledge of the topography of the district, and his acquaintance with the Black Country dialect, he was able to achieve the greater feat of journalism, must be read in Murray's own words. Forbes, let it be said, was too true a man to resent this; and a year or so after befriended Murray in London, when he was in dire need of assistance, by giving him an introduction to The World and The Daily News.

One outcome of the Pelsall affair was "an unspeakably bad novel" called "Grace Forbeach," of which it formed the central episode, and which Murray wrote for the columns of The Morning News every Saturday—a serial
attempt which in after years he elaborated into the novel, "Joseph's Coat," the locale of which is fixed amidst "artificial alps of slag and cinder," as he describes the scenery of his native county. In "Grace Forbeach" he got his characters so inextricably entangled that, to wind up the tale, he brought all of them together in the last chapter, and remorselessly drowned them in a flooded coal mine!

David Christie Murray married a Black Country lady for his first wife; and he records that he afterwards held in trust for his infant daughter some cottage property in the neighbourhood of Rowley Regis, one of his tenants being James Smith, the hangman, a "character" whom he worked into one of his magazine articles. He used local colouring with the hand of an adept. Among the fictitious names he gives to real places in his novels, "Castle Barfield" may be identified as West Bromwich, "Beacon Hargate" as Great Barr, and "Quarrymore" as Rowley Regis.

It was in 1872 he set off, as thousands of literary aspirants have done, to try his luck in London. With that buoyancy of spirits inseparable from the confidence of youth, it mattered not at first that he was without funds and without friends; till at last there came a morning after four days of pinching hunger, and four nights spent on the Embankment, that he found himself dejected, if not nearly hopeless. At this critical juncture, while he was still in the "Hotel of the Beautiful Star," as he playfully calls his open-air quarters, an old friend came across him, took in the situation at a glance, and promptly rescued him. It was the manager of the Press Association, who invented a journalistic job on the spot, and paid two guineas down for it. No timely visit of an angel from Heaven could have done more, and there was no obligation either—it was just strict business. Enabled to face the world again, it was then that he came across Forbes, as previously mentioned.

How Murray was engaged to go out in 1875 to the Russo-Turkish War as correspondent to
the Chicago Times; how that American paper abandoned him when he got there, and by what a marvellous stroke of luck he became the authorised representative of The Scotsman; and all his numerous adventures in the Near East, there is not space enough here to tell. When it was all over he arrived in London from the siege of Plevna safe and sound, and with an enhanced reputation as a journalist.

By this time he knew every public personage worth knowing; and even interviewed Gladstone at Harwarden. As a fictionist he was also making himself a name. His happiest years were spent, with pen in hand, giving reins to his imagination, at Rochefort in the Ardennes. Then he travelled extensively. At one time a rumour was started in San Francisco that the "eminent novelist was missing." He was travelling for two years in South America where his movements were little known.

He visited the Antipodes on a lecturing tour, and while wandering in the Southern Colonies, he showed his wonderful versatility by writing a play, and performing in it himself. On his return to England, the British public had an opportunity of witnessing at the Globe Theatre, London, in the August of 1891, a popular novelist in the unaccustomed dual character of actor and dramatist; he appeared as the "villain" in his own piece, "Ned's Chum," his part being a carefully studied character of a hard, scheming New Zealand speculator. His appearance on the London stage confirmed the favourable verdict of the New World; several scenes in the play were the subjects of illustration in The Gentlewoman of September 5th, 1891. A fortnight later he appeared in his play at the Grand Theatre, Birmingham.

Murray's rate of working was remarkably rapid. His "Joseph's Coat" was turned out in thirty-six sittings, a chapter at each sitting. "Val Strange," of equal length, was written in as many days. His favourite novel, "Aunt Rachael," was also written at a tremendous
rate. Just as swiftly he produced the play "Chums" in New Zealand.

Though so richly endowed with creative genius, Murray often put real characters into his fiction, and utilised every form of personal experience in the pages of his novels. He had been a printer, a soldier, a reporter, an amateur tramp, a globe trotter, a playwright, an actor; he even fancied himself a landscape painter; and he had played many other different parts on life's changing stage.

The best of his novels were indeed excellent, for he had a natural gift for story-telling, and a strong sense of character and situation. In "Verona's Father" there is a certain glibness and a certain sentimentality which betrays a style as of a literary disciple of Dickens. "His Own Ghost" is sensational and exciting. "A Rogue's Conscience" is a slight story with cleverly managed incidents. "A Race for Millions" is full of ingenuity. Among his other works of fiction not already mentioned are his "Martyred Fool," "Rainbow Gold," "Despair's Last Journey," the Black Country tale called 'A Capful o' Nails," and his posthumous novel "In His Grip." "He Fell Among Thieves" and "One Traveller Returns" were produced in collaboration with Henry Herman.

For "A Life's Atonement" Chamber's Journal paid him £300 for the serial rights; as a book, however, it did not sell well, the word "Atonement" probably being a bar to its popularity.

Among his journalistic achievements he filled the editorial chair of The Morning, one of the first attempts made at a halfpenny daily paper; at another time he was on the staff of The Union Jack, a penny weekly for boys, to which he contributed a capital story for lads, entitled "With Fire and Sword," introducing into it some of his experiences as a war correspondent.

In personal appearance Christie Murray had a manly figure, and a bright eager face; in his younger days he was accounted a handsome
man, with his fair curly-bearded face—the chin trimmed a la Henri Quatre—but as he grew older, he adopted the clean-shaven fashion, and dressed in the picturesque style which so well became him as the last of the Bohemians. Although towards the last his health was but poor, his was no undignified figure as it was seen frequenting the old haunts along the Strand and Fleet Street, his long silvered hair falling from a dome-like head on to shoulders that were still broad, though now somewhat slightly bowed.

His voice was rich, full, and resonant; he had a hearty laugh, and was always full of engaging and interesting conversation. He could even thrill. A fellow "Savage" says:—"He once turned his capacity as a raconteur to good purpose by doing a turn at a London Music Hall, and no one who heard it will readily forget his story of the rescue of the miners by their fellows from a burning coal-pit. An eye-witness of the scene himself, he made every hearer see it, and feel its intense dramatic power."

Among the Bohemian brotherhood of his early days was Hubert Herkomer, then but a little known artist, who entertained the Savage Club one evening with a performance on the zither. This inspired Murray to reel off an impromptu when he got home, of which the following are the opening lines:

I was only an hour ago in the Strand,
With the sociable "Savages" mixing,
When a guest took a musical something in hand,
Which, being unheard by that genial band,
He took slyly to tuning and fixing.
Then sweeping both hands dexterously over the strings,
He set such soft cadences pealing
That brought one the perfume of thirty lost springs.
And set troops of fancies, frail, fairy-like things,
A-caper on walls, floor, and ceiling.

At that time Murray was living in Dane's Court with his old schoolfellow, Mr. Ernest Spencer. A later impromptu is addressed to that genial Bohemian, Wallis McKay, the original "Captious Critic" of The Sporting
and Dramatic News, on being struck with admiration for some charming illustrations drawn by the latter for a child's book of fairy stories. It gushes in this strain:

My dear Wallis,—

God help us! We are old and worn and stale,
Our youth is sold for bald philosophies
Which once looked rich to inexperienced eyes
But now show poorer than a fairy tale!
Than such a fairy tale at least as this
Your Angel o'er these little hearts must dream:
They will not see things only as they seem
Forever, after her transcendant kiss!
Nor will I, looking on your tiny child,
Who breathes the prayer my lips and heart forget,
Fail to remember that there lingers yet
In this harsh life one promise sweet and mild
Here figured by your gracious art, which gives
To one all-friendly soul the grace by which it lives!

Yours,

Christie Murray.

The last chapter of his "Recollections" is occupied by letters written to Christie Murray by his contemporaries in fiction; they are from J. M. Barrie, George Meredith, Conan Doyle, Robert Louis Stevenson, Joseph Hocking (who thought "Aunt Rachael" one of the tenderest and most beautiful things in fiction), and Robert Buchanan. They are all of a friendly and gratulatory character, addressed to a comrade who remained outside the sanctuaries of propriety; who, to the last, clung to the ancient traditions of the craft of letters, and remained unrepentantly a member of the genial brotherhood of literary Bohemia.

David Christie Murray's death occurred somewhat unexpectedly in 1907. A small memorial has since been erected to him in his native town. It is in the Free Library, and was unveiled with some civic ceremonial in December, 1908. A tablet of copper, designed in the West Bromwich School of Art, has a brief dedicatory inscription, and on pewter medallions are a profile portrait of the popular novelist, and two of the local scenes
he loved so well—Jacob's Ladder and Barr Beacon,

The novelist's relations with his second wife had been of such an unhappy nature as to give rise to some little scandal. When the proposal was made to raise this memorial to him, a small Puritanical section of his townsmen, blind to the man's versatile genius in the wide field of literature, and bearing in mind only his human frailties, raised a mild protest, which, to say the least, was "a regrettable incident."

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone."
XXIX.

A Born Diplomat.

For upwards of sixty years there has stood on the Bloxwich side of Walsall, tenantless and in ruins, Birchills Hall, once a pleasant family residence within the boundaries of Cannock Chase, but now gaunt, desolate, and wrecked by mining operations, amidst a wilderness of collieries and iron-works.

Its last tenant was Mr. Harry Parkes, a South Staffordshire ironmaster; and here was born in the year 1828, his youngest son, Harry Smith Parkes, destined to spend in a far-away land a long and useful life in the service of his country, a life crowded with stirring events, all of great historical significance.

Four years after the birth of this boy the ironmaster died, and his four children then went to reside in Birmingham with his brother, a retired naval officer. Harry Parkes was sent to King Edward’s school in that city, where he was educated under the famous head-master, Dr. James Prince Lee, his school-fellows including J. B. Lightfoot and B. F. Westcott, both of whom subsequently became bishops of Durham.

In 1841 young Harry Parkes went out to China to join his two sisters who were already settled there, At Macao he took up his residence with a cousin, the Rev. Charles Gutzlaff, an explorer, and a man of some note in those parts, who afterwards became secretary and interpreter to the British Chief Superintendent of Trade in China.

Under him young Parkes diligently studied the Chinese language, and in the following year obtained a post in the office of John Robert Morrison, the secretary and first interpreter to the British plenipotentiary at Hong Kong, Sir Harry Pottinger. The political outlook in that part of the world was at this time dark and ominous.
It was indeed a period of much difficulty and danger for all foreigners in China. Here was a great, if semi-barbarous nation, wishing to close its doors against all strangers, while opposed to this policy of exclusion, British interests were demanding that the Chinese should allow the unrestricted importation, by British merchants, of that noxious and poisonous drug, opium, with which the people of China were wont to debauch and demoralize themselves.

As early as 1839 hostilities had broken out between England and China, when all the British merchants had been driven out of Canton. Sir Henry Pottinger was now resolved to take decisive action, and set out with an expedition up the Yang-tse-kiang, taking the youthful Parkes in his suite. The expedition sailed in June, 1842, its object being an attack on Nanking, the great capital.

At this time Parkes, though a mere lad of fourteen, and but imperfectly acquainted with the Chinese language, was full of pluck and energy, and capital service he rendered, being often sent ashore for forage, cattle, and other provisions. He took part in the capture of various junks, was present at the assault on Chinkiang, and on August 29th witnessed the final signing of the peace made at Nanking.

In 1843 Parkes entered the British Consulate at Canton, and in the following year he was present at the delivery of the instalment of the three million dollars, war indemnity, which the mandarins had agreed to pay, besides ceding Hong Kong, and throwing open five of their ports, though resolutely declining to legalise the obnoxious opium-traffic. The same year he was moved to Amoy, one of the new treaty ports, where he became interpreter in the British Consulate.

In those early days of our relationship with China, a consul's post was one of ever-present danger and great responsibility. Young Parkes, however, devoted himself to all his duties with positive enthusiasm; he always gave great satisfaction.
tion, and rose steadily in the service. At Foochoo, another of the treaty ports newly opened, to which he was removed in 1845, some outrages were perpetrated by the natives upon foreign subjects; whereupon Parkes promptly took vigorous action, suppressed the disturbances, and received the official commendation of his superiors.

He was next transferred to Shanghai, and though the port had been opened to foreign trade but three years, his energetic administration soon developed its immense capacity for trading. One of the improvements he affected here was the erection of a very requisite sea beacon.

In 1848 a characteristically fanatical attack was made by some Chinese junkmen upon three missionaries, who were all brutally murdered. One of them, named Lockhart, was the husband of Parkes' eldest sister, a man of much strength of character, who had particularly devoted himself, in various Chinese ports, to the establishment of hospitals for natives. In this critical situation Parkes was again to the fore; he took a prominent part, at great personal risk, in compelling the reluctant authorities to bring the criminals to punishment; and his vigorous action in the affair won the approbation of Lord Palmerston.

After a brief visit to England in 1850, the youthful diplomatist returned to the scene of his former labours, and there undertook a mission of negotiation into the interior. The hostility of the natives to "foreign devils" was still sedulously fomented by the mandarins, and though the right of entry into Canton, where Parkes was located, had been conceded ten years before, it had so far been successfully evaded. Canton was the official metropolis of Chinese relations with all foreigners; yet even the British Consul there was forbidden to enter the gates, or hold direct personal intercourse with the Chinese dignitary who presided over the department of foreign affairs. It must be borne in mind that it was the province of Kwantung alone—
the Chinese Empire is an immense territory—which carried on the opium war with England, and that Canton is its capital, the name of the City being a corruption of that of the province.

The European community dwelt here penned up in their "factories" on the river bank. The Chinese authorities invariably pleaded the danger of a popular outbreak, and even the determined Parkes failed to make any impression on them. In other directions, however, he continued to distinguish himself. A valuable report prepared by him on Chinese Emigration was published in the Blue Book of 1853; while his report on the Russian Caravan Trade with China found a prominent place in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society for 1854.

In the last-named year Parkes was transferred to Amoy, where he was appointed full consul "as a special mark of satisfaction" with which H.M. Government had watched his conduct in the public service.

In 1855 Mr. Harry Smith Parkes accompanied Sir John Bowring on a special mission to Siam, the outcome of which was the conclusion of the first European treaty ever made with that country. This was very largely the triumph of Parkes, who acted as secretary to the Mission; by his firm, tactful, and resourceful diplomacy he broke down every prejudice of the Siamese ministers. On the 18th of April the treaty was duly signed, and was at once carried home by Parkes for ratification, on which occasion he was very graciously received by Queen Victoria on July 9th, 1855.

He remained in England six months, during which, although busily engaged from time to time at the Foreign Office, on important Chinese and Siamese affairs, he married Fanny, fifth daughter of Thomas Plumer, late Master of the Rolls. Eight days after the ceremony the newly-married couple sailed for Bangkok, where the ratified treaties were duly exchanged
with much curious pomp and ceremony. Parkes gained no little credit in diplomatic circles by this notable achievement.

Important events were now looming ahead. The policy of native intolerance and exclusiveness culminated in an attack on a British vessel, and an unmistakeable insult to the British flag. When the Chinese authorities were approached, their representative, Commissioner Yeh, refused either reparation or apology. Prompt action was taken, laconically reported by Commissioner Yeh in these words:—"Consul Parkes has opened fire upon us." And there was no doubt that Parkes, though nominally a subordinate, was responsible for these vigorous measures. While Canton was being stormed by a British force, and shells were flying over the Consulate, he still unconcernedly maintained his position there, and this notwithstanding that the Chinese had placed a heavy price upon his head. While accompanying the admiral in one of the attacks he was wounded by an explosion.

Although an entrance into Canton had been enforced, the small British column was too weak to hold it. Then, unfortunately, the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny intervened. Eventually, in December, 1857, Canton was bombarded, and the first to enter the forbidden city after its capture was the dogged Harry Smith Parkes, who succeeded in tracking Commissioner Yeh to his hiding place, and actually arrested him with his own hands.

The prisoner was sent away to Calcutta, and Canton was placed under the control of a European commissioner. It was Parkes, however, with his superior knowledge of the people and the language, who for the next four years acted as virtual governor of the city.

With energy unceasing and personal danger unheeded, he administered the government of the city, through treacherous Chinese officials, with a price of 30,000 dollars on his head; reviving trade and restoring order, till (as was
“a corporal with a switch in his hand kept order in the crowded streets of Canton.” He rode unconcernedly through disaffected villages, tearing down hostile proclamations, and conciliating the natives while he ruled them with a rod of iron. For these magnificent services to his country he was made a C.B.

The third war with China broke out in 1858, and again Parkes’s services were found indispensable. Through him Kowloon, a useful peninsula on the mainland opposite to Hong Kong, was acquired. In the campaign which ensued Parkes acted at chief interpreter, arranging the transport and supplies for the forces, and being present at the taking of the Taku Forts. After having apparently settled the preliminaries for a peace, Parkes was treacherously arrested in company with Mr. Lock (afterwards Sir Henry Brougham Lock) and a number of English and French civilians. They were all carried prisoners into Pekin, where Parkes was loaded with chains, and subjected to torture. Most of the other prisoners died under their treatment, but Parkes and Lock were, at the end of eleven days, removed to a Chinese temple, where they received a secret message from their friends, worked on the embroidery of some linen which had been allowed to reach them. On the day they were to have been executed, the Prince of Kung suddenly pardoned them and permitted them to return to British headquarters. Only a quarter of an hour after their release an express arrived from the Emperor himself, ordering their instant execution.

On his restoration to liberty Parkes’ first duty was to negotiate at the gates of Pekin for the surrender of the city. Lord Elgin, as punishment for the torture of the unhappy prisoners, ordered the burning of the Summer Palace, which had already been thoroughly looted by the French. When the British Embassy proceeded to its new residence within the Chinese Capital Parkes accompanied it, and so took a part in the last scene which ended this great historical drama.
Parkes now returned to his duties as Commissioner of Canton, but was almost immediately called away to select the new posts up the Yang-tse-Kiang, which had been conceded in the newly concluded treaty of Tientsin—the opening up of the river, with its enormous trade, being no small achievement for British diplomacy.

Before the British occupation of Canton came to an end Parkes had acquired the new site for, and laid the foundations of, the British settlement which was to take the place of the burnt "factories" of former days. Then, having handed over the city to the native officials, he took a well-earned leave of absence, and on January, 1862, sailed for home, where, in addition to much official and social lionising, he received the K.C.B. at the early age of 34.

When he got back to Shanghai in 1864 to take up his consulate there, he found the Taiping rebellion just in the course of suppression by the renowned "Chinese Gordon," whose admirable policy, with which he found himself in perfect harmony, at least relieved him of some anxiety.

The next year (1865) saw Sir Harry raised another step in the imperial hierarchy, when he was honourably and deservedly advanced from the Consular to the Diplomatic Service. He was appointed Minister to Japan.

Here, within the first six months, his usual bold and vigorous policy won the most signal victory for British diplomacy ever gained in the Far East, by securing the ratification of the treaties of 1858. Japan, however, was in a state of civil war and anarchy, from which it did not emerge till 1868, when the over-shadowing sovereignty of the Tycoon was abolished, and the Mikado was induced to abandon his former seclusion and receive ministers in person. During this long period of anarchy Parkes had been more than once attacked by fanatical Japanese swordsmen, but had always managed to defend himself and escape scatheless. The Japanese
Government now made him every reparation.

It was in May, 1868, that Sir Harry Parkes formally presented his credentials to the Mikado. Thenceforward, till 1872, he was identified with every forward movement which Japan made in the assimilation of western civilisation. During the eighteen years he represented Great Britain at the Court of Japan he encouraged schemes by which railways were introduced, light-houses erected, the national currency re-organised (Lady Parkes in 1870 struck the first Japanese coin ever made by modern machinery), and he achieved a personal triumph when, in May, 1871, the Mikado, for the first time in history, granted a private interview to a foreigner—it was to the redoubtable Sir Harry Parkes, to express profound gratitude for the invaluable assistance he had rendered during the reconstituting of the Japanese State.

When Sir Harry returned to Japan, after a two years' leave of absence, he found he had to combat a number of crude ideas which had been absorbed, western ideas having lost ground while he had been away. In a very short time he had succeeded in restoring native confidence, and in 1875 the English guard, which had been maintained in Yokohama since 1864, was withdrawn. In 1875 Lady Parkes died while on a visit to England, and Sir Harry remained at home till 1882, busily employed in advising the Foreign Office on Japanese affairs. When he returned to Yokohama, it was with the Grand Cross of St. Michael and St. George, and he met with an enthusiastic reception from the foreign residents of all nationalities who, to repudiate the attacks of certain English and American merchants, who wished to supplant him with a more compliant envoy, presented to him a formal address of welcome.

Shortly afterwards Sir Harry Parkes was gazetted Minister to China, and when he took his departure from Japan he left amidst the general lamentations of the entire foreign community, while the Mikado expressed his regrets personally.
Within two months of the new Minister’s arrival at Pekin he was off to Seoul, where he proposed, negotiated, and concluded an honourable and just treaty with the Corean Government, by the provisions of which the ports of the country were to be thrown open to British trade. For this remarkable feat of diplomacy Sir Harry was appointed minister plenipotentiary to the King of Corea, in addition to his Chinese legation.

Accumulating honours brought additional responsibilities, and during the period of the French aggressions in Tongking, Sir Harry Parkes had another anxious time. His last public service was the acquisition of Port Hamilton, as a coaling station for the British fleet, in the North Pacific. Worn out by over-work and restless mental activity, he succumbed, at the age of 57, after a brief illness, to Pekin fever, on 22nd March, 1885.

His body, after every mark of honour paid to it by China and Japan, was brought to England, and interred at Whitchurch. A memorial bust of him was erected in St. Paul’s Cathedral, and in 1890 the Duke of Connaught unveiled a statue of Sir Harry at Shanghai.

Sir Harry Smith Parkes had two sons and five daughters. In personal appearance he was short and slight, of a fair complexion, with blue eyes set under a broad brow. In character he was particularly tenacious of purpose, zealous, and masterful; he was restlessly active and prompt, full of courage and daring to a fault; and he never lost his presence of mind in difficulty or in danger. His great imperial duties became the passion of his life. He stands in the front rank of Staffordshire’s eminent natives.

His life, by S. Lane-Poole and F. V. Dickins, appeared in 1894, in two volumes, with portrait.
A Poet of Imperialism.

Half a century ago the vicarage of St. Mary's, Bilston, was occupied by the Rev. Henry Francis Newbolt, who has been described by one who knew him intimately as a man of truly saint-like disposition. It is still remembered in Bilston how indefatigably he laboured in that unlovely parish, and what a powerful and beneficent influence he wielded over the rough elements of humanity constituting the bulk of his parishioners; for, indeed, at that time there were no rougher in any part of the country. With wonderment it is recalled that some of the worst of the ironworkers and colliers were turned from their brutal ways and induced, by his gentle influence, to lead honest, sober, and cleanly lives. His appearance in the turbulent streets of Bilston never failed to be greeted with every mark of respect; and no matter what brawls and fights were going on—and the regular Saturday night scenes in weird Oxford Street, its background lit by the fitful gleams of foul furnaces, would have rivalled the most lurid of Dante's "Inferno"—a few softly spoken words from him calmed the raging storms of passion, and in a brief space, a space that was indeed miraculously brief, all the trouble had ceased, the anger subsided, and the strife completely dispersed. Unhappily for Bilston the useful ministry of this reverend champion was brought to a sudden termination by his untimely death in 1866. As is recorded on the memorial tablet which his attached people raised in the church to his memory, "his sun went down while it was yet day;" for he was but 42 years of age at the time of his call.

By his congregation he was simply revered, and "eyes unused to weep" wept copiously
when he was buried. The funeral of Henry Francis Newbolt was the occasion of a manifestation of sorrow such as had only been seen once before in Bilston; and that was at the funeral of John Etheridge, the Bilston philanthropist, who was the hero of the historic cholera visitation.

The Rev. H. F. Newbolt had married Emily, daughter and co-heir of George Bradnock Stubbs, and during the five or six years of their residence in Bilston were born their two sons, Henry John Newbolt (1862) and Francis George Newbolt (1863). The father's name occurs in Lawley's "Bibliography of Wolverhampton" (p. 50), and all three names are noticed in Simms' "Bibliotheca Staffordiensis."

Henry Newbolt left Bilston immediately after his father's death, and before he was four years of age, though he lived from that time until he was fourteen on the outskirts of Walsall, four of those years being spent, except at holiday times, away at school on the Lincolnshire Wolds, at Caistor.

Though his connection with it since has been entirely broken, the Black Country cannot be robbed of its proud boast of being the place of Henry Newbolt's nativity. The drab, sordid, murky town of Bilston gave him birth, and the classic shades of Oxford gave him learning; for his later school days, spent happily and successfully at Clifton College, ended in his winning a scholarship at Corpus Christi, where he ran a brilliant university career.

On leaving Oxford in 1887 he went, as so many other literary lights have done, to the bar, and practised law till 1899, afterwards editing the "Monthly Review" till the end of 1904. Inclination in the meantime drew him back to the worship of the Muses, and he became a master of metre.

Henry Newbolt is acknowledged to be one of our greatest contemporary poets. He has edited Froissart, the "Ingoldsby Legends," and done other high-class prose work, but it is
his verse which has brought him fame; sterling verse of the camp-fire and the quarter-deck, with now and then something of rarer and finer fibre. He has been called the poet of modern Imperialism, and some of the critics have suggested that this patriotic impulse has been derived from Mr. Rudyard Kipling. But this is entirely a mistaken notion. The patriotic impulse in Newbolt was marked from a very early age; and being three years older than Kipling he had begun writing heroic ballads before he had heard the name of his supposed prototype, in fact, while he was still a schoolboy. Nor is there any real resemblance between, say, Newbolt's "The Island Race" and Kipling's "Barrack-room Ballads;" and if there were, it would be a mere coincidence. The outlook of the two poets is quite different.

Perhaps the best-known of his poems is "Admirals All," though "The Fighting Téméraire" and "Drake's Drum" will also live in English literature. The reputation won by "Admirals All" in 1897 was established by "The Island Race," which appeared the following year. Here is a fair sample of his spirited style which is always full of fire and dash and movement:

"'Trumpeter, sound for the Light Dragoons,
Sound to saddle and spur,' he said;
'He that is ready may ride with me,
And he that can—may ride ahead.'"
Fierce and fain, fierce and fain,
Behind him went the troopers grim;
They rode as ride the Light Dragoons,
But never a man could ride with him.
Their rowels ripped their horse's sides,
Their hearts were red with a deeper goad;
But ever alone before them all
Gillespie rode, Gillespie rode.

And so the narrative continues. It is the story of the mutiny at Vellore. Gillespie galloping ahead of his men is swung over the locked gate by the remnant of the sergeant's guard under a heavy fire.
He dressed the line, he lead the charge,
    They swept the wall like a stream in spate;
And roaring over the roar they heard
    The galloper guns that burst the gate.

The magnificence of the effect which the poet obtains here is obtained, it will be seen, by the iteration of phrases that give a suggestion of galloping movement. He has a peculiar knack of weaving a rhythm into a burden.

The "Sailing of the Long-Ships," which appeared in 1902, also shows real feeling for the music of words, and maintained the same high standard which he had set up for himself. Hear the last words of Murray of the Grenadiers:

This alone he asked of fame,
    This alone of pride;
Still with this he faced the flame,
    Answered Death, and died.
Crest of battle sunward tossed,
    Song of the marching years;
This shall live though all be lost—
"Forward, Grenadiers!"

Much of this volume was directly inspired by the incidents and emotions of the Boer War. One poem, "Wagon Hill," commemorates the episode which probably had a greater bearing on the issues of the war than any other single event—the charge of the Devons through the storm at the day's end. Another striking poem is entitled "On Spion Cop." Mr. Newbolt invariably affects themes of a popular nature; his cult is that of the country and the sword. His imperialism is always of a kind that those who dislike some of his ideals may at least appreciate and respect. His verse has an individual fibre of its own, and his lines seldom fail to strike the imagination. In "The Volunteer" he teaches, as one having authority, the futility of condemning evident self-sacrifices as recklessness.

He leapt to arms unbidden
    Unneeded, over bold;
His face by earth is hidden,
    His heart in earth is cold
Curse on the reckless daring,
    That could not wait the call;
The proud fantastic bearing
    That would be first to fall.
O tears of human passion,
    Blur not the image true;
This was not folly's fashion,
    This was the man we knew.

In the lyric mood Mr. Newbolt displays a mind both vigorous and sensitive. His "Clifton Chapel and Other School Poems" is a collection dealing with English school life, mainly in its imperial aspect. His "Songs of Memory and Hope" have the effect, says one critic, of "bracing a reader up with all the freshness of a morning breeze." There is certainly about them that virility of expression one would naturally expect from his pen. And music withal.

Mr. Newbolt sat for ten years on the council of the Navy Records Society, and his connection with this learned body finds an echo in the nature of many of his more heroic themes, though the fact that his grandfather, Charles Newbolt, was a naval officer in Nelson's time, may have already determined the bent of his mind. Some of these sea-faring subjects have already been named; in 1905 he wrote "The Year of Trafalgar," just previous to which had appeared his "Songs of the Sea," followed in 1910 by "Songs of the Fleet"—both produced at Leeds Festivals, with music by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford.

Among the writer's later prose works are "The Old Country," a romance of the days of the Black Prince; and "The New June," an historical novel of the period of Richard II. The latter subject may possibly have been inspired by the pages of Froissart, but the treatment is entirely novel. A tournament of the Middle Ages is treated as if it were a modern cricket match; and this is actually accomplished in the truest historical sense, and with absolute archaeological exactitude. Throughout the work Mr. Newbolt abandons all the old romantic conventions, yet never fails to arrive
with consummate artistry at historic truth. By a literary tour de force the speech and manners of to-day have been successfully imposed on a background of the reign of Richard II., young knights and squires of the Middle Ages being made to act and talk like modern undergraduates, and that without any sense of incongruity, or any failure to preserve the unities.

Among the last works which came from Mr. Newbolt's desk is "The Book of Cupid," illustrated by Lady Hylton, and published in 1909. It is an anthology from the English poets, in which he has collected the flower of the praises and chidings to which the chubby god has been subjected, from Chaucer to Keats, from Blake to Isaac Watts.

As a poet Mr. Newbolt has achieved the record of a twenty-eighth edition; and his countless admirers are firmly convinced that it is in the realm of poesy his name will be handed down to, and honoured by, posterity. Beyond this statement—Mr. Newbolt is still living—it would be improper to go. The ultimate verdict is with Time.
XXXI.

A Popular Lady Novelist.

No writer of fiction can produce work of greater local interest for Staffordshire readers than the Hon. Mrs. Felkin, better known by her maiden name of Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.

Mrs. Felkin is a daughter of that eminent statesman, Henry Hartley Fowler, first Viscount Wolverhampton, who in 1857 married Ellen, daughter of G. B. Thorneycroft, a famous Staffordshire ironmaster, who was first mayor of Wolverhampton, and who died in 1851.

Henry Hartley Fowler was a son of a Wesleyan minister, and G. B. Thorneycroft was the most prominent Wesleyan in the Wolverhampton circuit, a trustee of the Wesleyan chapel in Dudley, a supporter of the chapels at Tipton, Willenhall, Bradley, Ladymoor, and Moseley, and a man high up in the councils of Wesleyan society.

The authoress was born at Summerfield, Wolverhampton, but remembers nothing of that place, as the family removed to Woodthorne, Lord Wolverhampton's present residence, while she was very young.

Mrs. Felkin tells us she began to write as a child, producing short stories and verse with comparative ease; but confesses she had no faith in her ability to write a long and sustained narrative, till urged by a friend (which friend subsequently became her husband) to make the effort; her first essay in that direction resulted in the novel "Concerning Isabel Carnaby," which met with instant success. Her book was an audacious admixture of delightful light comedy with high-toned Methodism, than which nothing like it had ever appeared in English literature. This clever first novel appeared
in 1898; her previous publications had been principally in the domain of poetry—"Verses Grave and Gay," which appeared in 1891; "Verses Wise or Otherwise," in 1895; and "Cupid's Garden" (a volume of short stories), in 1897. These still enjoy a considerable vogue.

From the age of seven Miss Fowler was given to versification. She remembers composing a ballad at that tender age, the hero of which was one Vouchasafe. This name she got from the Te Deum, concluding it was a man's name because it began with a capital V. As at that time she read long words but imperfectly, she made three syllables of the name; and she tells us that whilst ostensibly engaged in public worship, she was generally inventing stories about this interesting gentleman. Although Miss Fowler still finds occasional recreation in writing poetry, she says she now infinitely prefers fiction.

In 1903 Miss Fowler married Mr. Alfred Laurence Felkin, in collaboration with whom one of her more recent works has been produced, "Kate of Kate Hall" (1904). It may be mentioned that another member of the family has also literary tendencies, her sister, Edith Henrietta Fowler (now the Hon. Mrs. Robert Hamilton), having written several charming books, namely, "A Corner of the West," "The World and Winstow," "For Richer for Poorer," "The Young Pretenders," and "The Professor's Children."

Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler is a born teller of stories, and excels in her delineation of the Black Country character, chiefly as it is exemplified in the old Methodist circles, in the homes and families of those whose ancestors were the personal friends and devoted disciples of John Wesley himself.

Our authoress told an interviewer that her intimate knowledge of Methodist society came to her through her upbringing, her grandfather having been a Methodist minister, and she having been brought up in the faith, she could not help becoming acquainted with all
the modes of thought and habits of life of this people, although both her grandfathers died many years before she was born, and she herself is now a staunch member of the Church of England. "You see," she said, "Methodists have changed much from what they used to be; for instance, many of the old-fashioned ones went to the Parish Church in the morning, and once a month they went to Holy Communion, there." The old-fashioned Methodists, she claimed, possessed an unequalled power of introspection, a power which was assiduously cultivated; and hence it came about that the habit of introspection, which with her ancestors was spiritual, had become literary with her; in like manner as it had with Adeline Sergeant, George Eliot, and Rudyard Kipling, all of whom came of old Methodist stock.

Successfully started as a novelist, the next year saw the publication of "A Double Thread," the popularity of which had called for an issue of fifty thousand copies, before the appearance of "The Farringdons," in the following year (1900). This was Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler's third novel, the one which is generally the supreme test of a novelist's popularity. With what high honours our authoress came through the ordeal of that crucial test ten years ago is known to most readers.

By most critics "The Farringdons" has been acknowledged to be a novel of high literary distinction; in the present connection its interest is enhanced by its local associations, the scene being laid in the midst of the Black Country, right among the chimney-stacks and coal-mines of the busy South Staffordshire coal-field. Being the romancer's native county—this brilliant society lady still lovingly retains her intimate knowledge of the Black Country character, drawing her most interesting types from the life of its sturdy workaday world—the conversations she puts into the mouths of her characters are life-like in the fidelity to the types she portrays. Take, for instance, the dialogue which is illustrative of the all-pervading, all-
sufficing nature of the old-fashioned religion of the Methodists, a religion not put on like a sabbath garment, but a something for every-day use, something to enter into and guide the ordinary transactions of daily life.

The religion of this folk was so much a part of their nature, and so much filled their minds, they could not possibly keep it out of their ordinary conversation. It is thus that the art of the novelist photographs this trait in their character—

"This pork pie is just beautiful, Mrs. Bateson," said Mrs. Hankey, "What a light hand for pastry you always have. I'm sure I've said over and over again that I don't know your equal either for making pastry or for engaging in prayer." Mrs. Bateson, as was natural, looked pleased. "I doubt if ever I made a better batch of pies than this. When they were all ready for baking, Bateson says to me, "Kesia," he says, "them pies is a regular picture, all so smooth and even-like, you can't tell which from t'other." "Bateson," said I, "I've done my best with them; and if only the Lord will be with them in the oven, they'll be the best batch of pies this side Jordan."

It was originally proposed to call "The Farringdons" by a name which would have identified the scene of its incidents even more definitely to local readers. The title at first intended was "The Osierfield," a thin disguise for the real name, "The Osierbed," near Horsley Fields, Wolverhampton. Wolverhampton in Miss Fowler's stories is always "Silverhampton"; Tettenhall is "Tetleigh"; Wrottesley Hall is "Baxendale Hall"; and Tong Castle is "Pembruge Castle." "Slipton and Studley" cannot well be mistaken for Tipton and Dudley, nor "Sedgehill" for Sedgley. In "A Double Thread," "The Farringdons," "Place and Power," "Fuel of Fire," "Miss Fallowfield's Fortune," and "The Wisdom of Folly," descriptions of Staffordshire can also be found. All
readers who know their Staffordshire will have no difficulty in identifying the places thus described, and will need no key to guide them; while readers who are not entitled to wear the Staffordshire-knot as a badge of their birth-place will not care to have the places identified. They will find no special interest in them. But the authoress herself considers that "The Farringdons," and "Miss Fallowfield's Fortune," contain her best portrayals of Staffordshire scenery and Staffordshire character.

"Mershire," the land where "the stones were of iron, and whose foundations were of coal," is, of course, Staffordshire. Those who know the "bleak high road" between Wolverhampton and Dudley can best appreciate Miss Fowler's descriptions of this scenery, as given in "The Farringdons"; particularly at nightfall, when the reflection of the blast furnaces, "the weird aurora borealis of the Black Country, was beginning to pulsate against the darkening sky."

As she truly says, this much maligned district is not so black as it is generally painted—indeed, from this very high-road, dreary and uninviting as it is in itself, with the dark valley on one side of the ridge crowded with yawning collieries and belching furnace stacks—may be witnessed at times, throughout the year, sunsets of unsurpassed beauty, where on the other side the sun goes down behind the distant Welsh hills, with a golden glory that richly gilds even the western borderlands of Mershire.

But Staffordshire readers will best enjoy the novelist's own word-picture of Sedgley, in painting which she has laid on the colours with the unerring hand of true artistry:

In the middle of Sedgheat, which is in the middle of Mershire, which is in the middle of England, there lies a narrow ridge of high table-land, dividing, as by a straight line, the collieries and ironworks of the great coal districts from the green and pleasant scenery of the western Midlands. Along the summit of this ridge runs the High Street of the bleak little town of Sedgheat, so that the houses
on the east side of this street see nothing through their back windows save the huge slag mounds and blazing furnaces and tall chimneys of the weird and terrible yet withal fascinating Black Country, while the houses on the west side of the street have sunny gardens and fruitful orchards, sloping down towards a fertile land of woods and streams and meadows bounded in the far distance by the Clee Hills and the Wrekin, and in the farthest distance of all by the blue Welsh mountains. In the dark valley lying to the immediate east of Sedgehill stood the Osierfield Works, the largest ironworks in Mershire, in the good old days when Mershire made iron for half the world.

Sedgehill High Street is nothing but a part of the great high road which leads from Silver-hampton to Studley and Slifton, and the other towns of the Black Country; but it calls itself Sedgehill High Street as it passes through the place, and so identifies itself with its environment after the manner of caterpillars and polar bears and other similarly wise and adaptable beings. At the point where this road adopts the pseudonym of the High Street, close by Sedgehill Church, a lane branches off from it at right angles and runs down a steep slope until it comes to a place where it evidently experiences a difference of opinion as to which is the better course to pursue—an experience not confined to lanes. But in this respect lanes are happier than men and women, in that they are able to pursue both courses, and so learn for themselves which is the wiser one, as in the case with this particular lane. One course leads headlong down another steep hill—so steep that unwary travellers usually descend from their carriages to walk up or down it, and are thus enabled to ensure relief to their horses and a chill to themselves at the same time, for it is hot work walking up or down that sunny precipice, and the cold winds of Mershire await one with equal gusto at the top and the bottom. At the foot of the hill stretch the
breezy common, wide enough to make one think "long, long thoughts"; and if the traveller looks backward when he has crossed the common, he will see Sedgehill Church, crowning and commanding the vast expanse, and pointing heavenward with its slender spire to remind him, and all other way-faring men, that the beauty of this present world is only an earnest and a foretaste of something infinitely fairer. The second course of the irresolute lane is less adventurous, and wanders peacefully through Badgering Woods, a dark and delightful spot, once mysterious enough to be a fitting hiding-place for the age-long slumbers of some sleeping princess. As a matter of fact, so it was; the princess was black but comely, and her name was Coal. There she had slept for a century of centuries, until Prince Iron needed and sought and found her, and awakened her with the noise of his kisses. So now the wood is not asleep any more, but is filled with the tramping of the prince's men. The old people wring their hands and mourn that the former things are passing away, and that Mershire's youthful beauty will soon be forgotten; but the young people laugh and are glad, because they know that life is greater than beauty, and that it is by her black coalfields, and not by her green woodlands, that Mershire will save her people from poverty, and will satisfy her poor with bread.

This was well said, as became the granddaughter of George Benjamin Thornycroft, ironmaster, coalowner, and industrial magnate of the old South Staffordshire coalfield.

The more recent works of Miss Fowler are "Love's Argument" (a volume of verse), which appeared the same year as "The Farringdons"—for she says she "can write anywhere and everywhere," and is therefore a quick worker: "Sirius and Other Stories" (1901); "Fuel of Fire" (1902); "Place and Power" (1903); "In Subjection" (1906); "Miss Fallowfield's Fortune" (1908); and "The Wisdom of Folly" (1910).
There is a passage in "Miss Fallowfield's Fortune" in which the character of its inhabitants as well as the scenery of Staffordshire is described. It refers to the western part of the county, between Weston-under-Lizard and Cannock Chase, which is traversed by the great Watling Street:

On the great high-road that runs from London to Chester, straight through the heart of the Midlands, stands the village of Dinglewood. It is a fine old road, and has seen fine old doings in its time. It has echoed to the tramp of the Roman legions, as they thundered forth on their triumphant way; it has watched the knights and ladies of the Middle Ages ride by on their armed steeds and their white palfreys. Hereward the Wake made use of it as he rode home on Mare Swallow after playing the potter; and Charles the Second found it his friend when he escaped to Boscobel after the Battle of Worcester. Now it no longer bears the tread of armies, or guides the steps of fugitive kings; it has fallen upon more peaceful and less eventful days. Instead of Hereward the Wake seeking the merry greenwood, or Charles fleeing from the Parliamentary hosts, tired huntsmen jog along its grassy edges on wintry evenings, wanting rest after a good day's sport; instead of gay post-chaises with their postilions, or mail coaches with their smoking teams, hay-carts rumble in summer along its broad white path, and farmers drive in their gigs to and from market; and instead of the clash of arms and the tramp of armies, its silence is now broken by the hideous trumpetings of motor-cars. Other days, other manners—sometimes better, sometimes not so good; a truth that has been well trodden into the old road—called by some the Streetway and by others the Watling Street—which runs from London through the heart of the Midlands straight to the western sea.

We have seen that there are special voices of the forest, and of the sea, and of the mountain; and there is likewise the special voice
of the road. As the spirit of the forest is the spirit of love, and the spirit of the sea the spirit of sorrow, and the spirit of the mountain the spirit of prayer, so the spirit of the highway is the spirit of hope.

The spirit of a place must inevitably exercise a marked influence upon the characters of the people who are born in it. The inhabitants of densely-wooded regions are as a rule inclined to poetry and romance; sea-faring folk are rarely gay or light-hearted, but have a sad far-away look in their eyes, as those who see strange and terrible wonders in the deep; they who dwell upon mountain-tops and in the high places of the earth are prone to ponder over the mysteries of the Unseen, even to the verge of religious melancholy; and those whose lot is cast in the habitable parts which fringe the great highways are generally a hopeful and progressive people, who have learnt the secret of success.

The spirit of the road is the prevailing spirit of Mercia, for Mercia is the land of roads, leading from north to south and from east to west. And the typical Mercian is cheerful and progressive, practical and sensible, not given to the seeing of indescribable visions, nor the dreaming of impossible dreams, but devoting his working hours to the tramping of those dusty highways which lead to professional proficiency and commercial success; and taking his pastime in those green and grassy lanes—hidden sometimes under snow-drifts of blossom and sometimes under canopies of fruit—which will eventually bring him to a cosy and comfortable homestead of his own.

These extracts will suffice to illustrate the literary style of Hon. Mrs. Felkin.

To be the daughter of a great statesman, who has been a famous Secretary of State, is a somewhat doubtful advantage for one who attempts to rise into eminence by native ability. This fact must not be lost sight of when the final
estimate has to be made of Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler's position in literature. For the present it cannot be denied that she is in the foremost rank of contemporary novelists, and—what is of importance in the present connection—she has made Staffordshire scenes, human types, and homelife, known to, and popular with, hundreds of thousands of readers.
XXXII.

A Serious Humorist.

'Tis nought but mirth
That keeps the body from the earth—
wrote the old dramatists, Beaumont and Fletcher.

And surely no contemporary writer has added
more to the gaiety of his fellow countrymen
than the light-hearted, laughter-laden Jerome
Klapka Jerome, that past-master of quips and
jests whom the ancient town of Walsall is proud
to claim among its illustrious sons.

It was at Belsize House, Bradford Street,
Walsall (now occupied by Mr. Sidney J. Williams,
dentist), that our popular humorist first saw the
light of the sun, on a bright May morn, in 1859.
His father, the Rev. Jerome Clapp Jerome,
came from Appledore, in Devon, and although
he preached occasionally, was at this time prin-
cipally engaged in a mining enterprise on Cannock
Chase. He had started a colliery at Norton
Canes, near Cannock, in association with some
local friends; but owing to trouble with the
water which found its way into the pit, though
more perhaps to a miscalculation of the cost
such an enterprise invariably entails, he and his
friends lost all their money before they reached
the coal. The venture was afterwards taken up
by the Holcrofts, and they apparently made a
very profitable concern of it. Sir Charles Hol-
croft now owns it, and the business is carried on
in the name of "The Conduit Colliery Company;"
though the miners and the natives know it to
this day by the name of "The Jerome pit."
Although White's directory for 1855 makes no mention of the name of Jerome, under Walsall, in Cornish's Directory for 1861 appears the entry, "J. C. Jerome, coalmaster, 23, Lichfield Street."

There are still Walsall people who remember the Jeromes living amongst them. Mr. J. C. Jerome had all the manners and bearing of a Nonconformist minister, and was a staunch anti-Corn Law man, in which cause he spoke at several Manchester meetings in the early forties. His wife, a lady of refined manners and delicate constitution, was of Welsh birth, but without the least trace of the conventicle. She kept a diary, from which may be gleaned the names of one or two of their Black Country intimates—Mr. Cartwright, a collector of pictures, from Wolverhampton, Mr. Richards, a Nonconformist minister, at Stourbridge, and a Mr. Wood. Mr. Jerome was a man of strong convictions, many talents, and indomitable energy. He is generally credited with having, in the late fifties, led a secession from the Bridge Street Independent Chapel, and established the Wednesbury Road Congregational Church (adjoining the Cottage Hospital), a red brick building, made ornate with a plenitude of white stone dressings, of which he was the amateur and unpaid architect. It was modelled on a Bideford Chapel.

The Bridge Street Independent Chapel was built in 1791, and at the time the Jeromes were residing in Walsall, the minister was the Rev. Alexander Gordon, LL.D., whose residence was in St. Paul's Close, Bridge Street. It was in 1857 the rupture occurred, which resulted in the entire withdrawal of 60 communicants from the congregation, and the opening, two years later, of the Congregational chapel in Wednesbury Road.

On the failure of the colliery enterprise, Mr J. C. Jerome left Walsall for London, where he sought to mend his fortunes. One child, a boy named Milton, had died and was buried in Wal-
sall; the other, Jerome, was but three years of age when they took their departure, and consequently remembers nothing of his native town.

Mr. Jerome Klapka Jerome was educated at the Philological School, and has seen life from many sides, but he always tries to keep on the brightest. He has had his struggles and his trials like many others, but has come triumphantly through them all. He has been in turn clerk, school-master, actor, journalist, editor, and dramatist.

For his first publication, "On the Stage and Off," which appeared in 1888, his information was obtained by the best of all methods, actual experience; three years of provincial touring, during some parts of which he played as many as seven different parts in one week, supplied the material.

Having once tried the role of author, he determined to drop that of actor, and in 1889 appeared that delightful book by which he at once leapt into fame, "The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow." This was capped the same year by the issue of "Three Men in a Boat," which was even a more conspicuous success. It was a new kind of humour, which took the public fancy immensely.

From "The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow," which appeared in 1898, we may perhaps be permitted to offer a few samples of his quality as a jester. Talking of things sartorial, he writes:

Speaking of purses reminds one of another essential difference between the male and female human animal. A man carries his money in his pocket. When he wants to use it he takes it out and lays it down. This is a crude way of doing things. A woman displays more subtlety.

He then describes with delightful humour the efforts of a lady in search of her pocket.

The purse is there, she can feel it, the problem is how to get at it. The quickest
way would, of course, be to take off the skirt, sit down on the kerb, turn it inside out, and work from the bottom of the pocket upwards. But this simple idea never seems to occur to her.

Later on he remembers an indignant busman who has very slowly collected his fares. The busman grew confidential:

I've seen one woman, he said, pull from underneath her a street door key, a tin box of lozenges, a pencil case, a whopping big purse, a packet of hairpins, and a smelling bottle. . . . . . Talk about a poor pickpocket.
What I say is, that a man as finds his way into a woman's pocket—well, he deserves what he gets.

Here's another sample—there are a dozen essays in "Second Thoughts"—on a different subject:

I was once drinking coffee with a novelist who happened to be a broad-shouldered athletic man. A fellow-member, joining us, said to the novelist, "I have just finished that last book of yours; I'll tell you my candid opinion of it." Promptly replied the novelist, "I give you fair warning—if you do, I shall punch your head."

No sooner had Mr. Jerome ceased to strutt his hour upon the stage than he redoubled his interest in it, and since that time many plays have come from his pen. It is upwards of fifteen years since he leased the Comedy Theatre (London), and there successfully produced, amongst other things, his laughable "Prude's Progress."

All his plays, most of them bright comedies or pleasant domestic dramas, in which there is an equal admixture of tears and laughter, a happy blending of humour and pathos, never fail to find appreciative audiences in America; and not unfrequently he has two or three running there at one time.
From the editorial chair, Mr. Jerome has also reached a large and an appreciative public. In 1892, in conjunction with Mr. Robert Barr, he founded The Idler, which they edited jointly till 1897; about the same period he was also editing To-day, one of the brightest and wittiest papers that ever enlivened a railway journey.

Then there came a time when Mr. Jerome seems to have tired of the ties and responsibilities of newspaper work, and play-producing, and to have longed for greater freedom. And so he devoted himself to literature solely; and as the writing of books can be done anywhere, he fluttered his wings in the pleasant places to which his fancy lured him, wherever mental recreation was to be obtained, or inspiration to be drawn—as from noble picture galleries in Dresden, or from the grandeur of natural scenery in Switzerland.

It has been thought that Mr. Jerome's novel, "Paul Kelver" (published in 1902), is to some slight extent autobiographical, because its hero, when a boy at school, has the gift of amusing his school-fellows by his story-telling and funny sayings, and in the later scenes becomes an actor, a journalist, and a writer of humorous fiction. It is a tale of east-end life, perhaps allusive to his father's London experiences, and slightly reminiscent in some of its phases of "David Copperfield"; and from beginning to end it is pervaded with an irrepressible spirit of good humour, and yet leaves behind an impression that the author desires to be recognised as something more than a humorist and a jester. There is, for instance, an episode of a Whitechapel butcher who became a millionaire, whose daughter married a Spanish count, and afterwards eloped with an Englishman, one of the finest characters in the book—all told with a vivid realization of life's pathos and tragedy.

The serious side of Mr. Jerome's writing is best seen and universally recognised in that powerful and entirely original play, which he placed on the stage three years ago,
"The Passing of the Third Floor Back." This piece was an instant success in London; it is now being played nightly in various quarters of the globe. The idea so daringly worked out in it is the setting forth of the spirit of Christ in the midst of our modern everyday life. This is all done as reverently as the great religious drama is produced at Oberammergau. The plot is quite simple. It is the story of a London boarding house, the inmates of which are of the old familiar type; the landlady, a cheat; the servant, a slut; and the lodgers, comprising a painted lady, a shrew, a bully, a hussey, a coward, a rogue, and a cad. When the audience has fully made the acquaintance of these, the central figure of the play is introduced in the "Passer-by," a stranger who is really the personification of Christ, and who comes to dwell amongst this motley company, occupying a back room on the third floor. The working out of the scheme is the wonderfully beneficent influence the new lodger exercises upon the different characters of this very unpromising company. The play abounds in morals; it shows the triumph of the Better Self, which does not leave one of these people untouched with human gentleness and self-sacrificing love.

It was no small testimony to the ethical value of this play when, on its first visit to Birmingham, the whole house was taken for one performance by the Chairman of the Education Authority, who invited to witness it an audience composed of teachers, professors, and others interested in the work of education. Everywhere people have flocked to see this remarkable play who have never been in a theatre before.

Some of Mr. Jerome's other plays are "Fennel" (1888); "Sunset" (1888); "New Lamps for Old" (1890); "Wood Barrow Farm" (1891); "The Rise of Dick Holward" (1896); "Miss Hobbs" (1900); "Tommy and Co." (1904); and "Fanny and the Servant Problem" (1908). Some of his sketches have been re-prints, as "Novel Notes," from the
Idler. His latest work, "They and I," is a humorous novel which has been described as a maturer "Three Men in a Boat."

But whatever Mr. Jerome writes, his work bears the impress of an optimist; his cheerfulness is never failing, his outlook on life is never overcast. His writings are often classed with those of two other modern humorists, Mr. Pett Ridge, and Mr. W. W. Jacobs; but there is in the work of Jerome K. Jerome a something undefinable, an underlying seriousness to all his jesting, a something that seems to reveal the soul of a man very much in earnest.
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