

ENGLISH VILLAGE LIFE.

INTERESTING TYPES OF IT TO BE FOUND BY THE TRAVELLER.

Homes of the Workmen and How They are Arranged—Quaint Stone Farm Houses and Their Occupants—Glimpses of Old Cornwall and Its People.

LONDON, April 17th.—Many of the comparatively modern villages of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire, the village homes of operatives in mines, mills and potteries, are far prettier and more comfortable than even many Englishmen would have us believe. A half dozen different religions fighting tooth and nail for their piety and pence, the vague unrest that comes through almost unlimited access to newspapers and books, and the changed standard of necessities and luxuries pressing sorely upon the highest limitations of even largely increased wages, have given the villagers of this type of hamlets an entirely different mental and material mold. I would not say they are happier for the change; but their homes, food, labor, wage and environment are, as we measure things, infinitely superior to those of the same class from a half century to a century ago.

Many of these hamlets are massed about by trees, have architecturally beautiful little churches, chapels, club-houses, libraries and the neatest of shops. Nearly all are tidy and clean. The potters' villages of Staffordshire are good illustrations of them all. Within a five-mile radius of Hanley, Burslem and Stoke, you can find 10,000 homes of potters, nearly all in pretty hamlets or in shady village lanes, and villages of long, single streets. The poorest potter of the district lives as snugly as did the master-potter manufacturer of forty and fifty years ago.

His cottage is of brick. It has two stories, and the blessing of perfect drainage. On the ground floor are a parlor with a pretty fire-place, a large living-room provided with a huge grate, hobs and "jockey-bar" for swinging pots and kettles; and behind this is a scullery, with a fine little garden at the rear. The upper floor comprises two large sleeping-rooms.

This gives every family a five-roomed, completely detached house and garden. Ordinary workmen earn from 25 to 30 shillings weekly. It there happen to be daughters, one may be a "paintress," coloring the cheaper wares and earning eight shillings, and perhaps another a "burnisher," earning six shillings, per week. Many families thus secure from 35 to 40 shillings per week, while their rent and rates do not exceed five shillings per week for such a home.

Nearly all of these workmen's village homes have front-area flower-plats. In the gardens of all are mazes of flowers and vines and beds of vegetables in summer. Every parlor has its solemn-voiced "grandfather's clock." It also boasts chests of linen, drawers of comfortable clothing, and many cheap and pretty pieces of furniture; while on the mantle or bureau-top is always found some fanciful sketch, painting or curious model, the result of emulation to win prizes for invention in new processes, or for unique and original designs in modeling and decoration. The murderous "truck" system is unknown in England, as it should be in America; and every penny due every man is paid him each Saturday noon. We are very fond, about election-time, of telling our workmen what lucky dogs they are. I wish they truly possessed the home comfort and pleasant environment that English workmen's villages almost universally disclose.

Another and most interesting type of villages and village life may be found in the region comprised in southwestern Warwickshire, northern Gloucestershire, eastern Herefordshire, and southern Worcestershire, between the towns of Stratford-on-Avon, Hereford, Worcester and Gloucester. The antiquity of most of these villages is as great and their characteristics as distinctive as those of the stone hamlets of Cumberland. Like the latter most are of stone and from 300 to 500 years old. Here is everything curious and ancient in old oak doors and hinges, fanciful chimney-pieces, massive oak lintels, doors and balustrades, mullioned windows and panelled rooms. When the habitations are not of stone they are the still more picturesque ancient Tudor half-timbered houses. These in their gables with crowning pinnacles, their odd porches, small but massive doors, mullioned windows and huge chimneys, overhanging stories and jumbles of projecting windows, are no less quaint and curious than their interiors, with their spacious, low-ceilinged rooms panelled with oak or ebony blackness, often elaborately carved and ornamented, and with passages, nooks, niches, cupboards and presses, bewildering in arrangement and number.

Each stone farm-house and cottager's village home stands in its own orchard, brilliant with sprays of pink and white, or with balls of russet and gold, according to the season. Chaffinches and robins are among the mosses in the thick garden shrubberies and in the tangled coppices and hedgerows. The stage-coaches are here just as of old. So are the carrier, the cartier, the thatcher, the tiler, the drainer, ploughman, the shepherd, the common field laborer, and even the poacher; all as heedless of Reform as Cuban guajros, and all with kindly faces and speech betokening sturdy pride in their vocations which were the toil of their fathers before them. There is no elbowing, no jostling, no hurrying or hurrying. Everybody saunters, dozes or labors

as though content never paid penalty to want. An atmosphere of unconstrained amiable broods over all. Hundreds of the olden English villages are surely here a region that knows no change.

Unless one has really wandered in rock-battered old Cornwall it is hard to believe that outside the picturesque coastwise fishing hamlets there is such a thing as characteristic village life. To the casual observer from the railway train, the whole face of the land seems torn and scarred as if by tremendous elemental struggles. A myriad hissing fragments of exploded planets, hurled in awful upper rain upon its face could have left no more unsightly hurts. But it is full of entrancing hidden nooks, where, sloping from ragged moorlands are beauteous little valleys with ample farms, lessening into tinier checkers of hedge and lane-broidered fields and these into mossy old hamlets, where the white Wesleyan chapel and the Norman-towered parish church, are the only two structures showing through a wealth of trees; but where are curious old homes, and always a bawling moorland stream turning the gray, huge wheel of some trembling old mill.

Here, miles perhaps from their "pairdner" work "below grass" in the mines on the moors, live swarthy "Coden (cousin) 'ack" with scores of cottager laborers upon the farms. Wherever these village cottages are, their walls are of everlasting stone, embowered in brilliant Cornish creepers and roses, with cement floors, and thatched roofs subject to interminable repairs from onslaughts of scores of busy sparrows, tiny miners themselves, endlessly sinking shafts and drilling "cross-cuts" and "levels" in the soft and yielding straw. There is one room below; sometimes two; and a half-story garret beneath the thatch. There is only a front door. A window is at either side of this, and sometimes directly above these, tiny panes to light the garret. Each cottage is provided at the end or back with an open fire-place in the center; a sort of range at one side, covered with brass ornaments which the housewife is endlessly polishing with growder; while at the other side is the "ungeoner" with "helps" or upper and under doors, for storing faggots or fure for fuel.

The furniture though scant is honest and useful. At the fire-place are the "branderes," a triangular iron on legs on which, over the coals, the kettles boil, the circular cast-iron "baker" is set, and the fish or meat, when they can be luckily had, are "scrowled" or grilled. There are perhaps four chairs, singularly enough with solid mahogany frames, but the seats are of painted pine and are waxed weekly. These are for "best" and all the best. For every-day use one or two "firms" or rude benches are provided. The single table is of pine, an unpainted side for daily use, and scrubbed daily, and a painted side for Sunday. The table ware is something startling in cheap goods, for the Gipsy hawkers frequent Cornwall, and each member of the family is provided with a real "chany" cup and saucer with a gorgeous gilt band.

For his class the Cornish villager is a generous liver. The young folk have an unusual fund of games distinctive of Cornwall; marriages provide extraordinary festivals; the dead are "watched" from disease to burial and funerals provide subdued diversions with heroic feasts; leaping, wrestling, running, cricket and "putting the stone," are the principal amusements of youths and men, in which they excel; and their countess endeared hobgoblins and "buccaboos," which Wesley and Whitfield along with the railways and telegraph were never able to "lay," draw these sturdy Cornish villagers closer together around the flashing village smithy forge, the Cornishman's chief place of evening resort, or within the home-glow of their blazing ingle-nooks, during the long winter nights when the cruel fogs pound in over the moors from the seething Channel or the tempests howl across the dreary, shuddering moors.

Practically all English village folk are laborers, whether operatives, shepherds, wagoners, thatchers, drainers, or common field laborers, just as they have been for hundreds of years. There may be a publican or innkeeper, a shopkeeper who is postmaster or postmistress, a carpenter, who is often a painter, undertaker, verger and gravedigger in one, a baker, a tailor, a blacksmith and a poacher, for the latter is in every hamlet in Britain, all great oracles in their way. But three families of quality, and frequently not that many, are known—those of the lord of the manor or the Squire, the rector or the curate and the schoolmaster; for the doctor is always summoned from a near city or town.

English village life is therefore found to lie within a wonderfully close horizon. I have been much with these folk in their labor, their diversions and their homes. After looking at them long and earnestly with my own eyes, I have tried to get, as nearly as possible, into their personal environment and then look out of the windows of their minds and their habitations upon the everyday world about them. In this way a good deal that is not hopeless and much that is gratifying can be discerned. It is certainly true that an infinitely higher standard of life and living is enjoyed than in the "good old days" whose departure the wise writers so bitterly deplore.

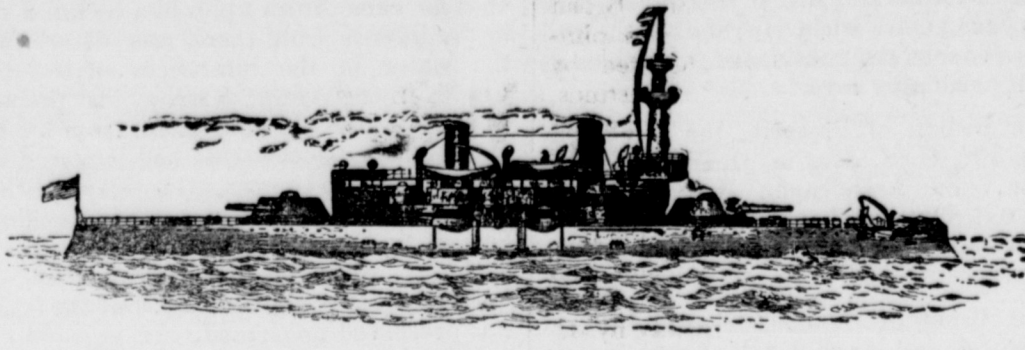
Universal education has certainly caused universal discontent. But I do not think it carries from youth to old age. By the time these folks are twenty or twenty-five years of age the fermentation period is passed. Some go to the cities, as with us, or to America or Australia; but those who remain, are better laborers, villagers and citizens. The English peasant class has thus almost entirely disappeared. You will not see very much knee-crooking, head-ducking and tuff-pulling to superiors, while there is no less genuine kind-heartedness and respect. Smock-frocks and corduroys are less frequent. So are the feasts and gorgings and guzzlings. But these villagers are less gross. They are of better stuff. They have more wholesome food to eat, and a great variety. They know something about hygiene. They insist on good drainage. In humble fashion they beautify their habitations without and within. What has been lost in the rough and often brutal amusements of the olden time has been more than gained in and for the home. There are books and newspapers and prints in the fireside is even a grander place than in a word, without having lost a jot of their value as laborers and servants they have emerged from a condition of sordid male and female hinds to that of self-respecting men and women.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

AT THE WORLD'S FAIR.

The Unique Exhibition by the United States Naval Department.

Unique among the other exhibits is that made by the United States Naval Department. It is in a structure which, to all outward appearance, is a faithful full-sized model of one of the new coast-line battleships. This imitation battleship of 1893 is erected on piling on the Lake front in the northeast portion of Jackson Park. It is surrounded by water and has the appearance of being moored to a wharf. The structure has all the fittings that belong to



U. S. COAST LINE BATTLE SHIP.

the actual ship, such as guns, turrets, torpedo tubes, torpedo nets and booms, with boats, anchors, chain cables, davits, awnings, deck fittings, etc., etc., together with all appliances for working the same. Officers, seamen, mechanics and marines are detailed by the Navy Department during the Exposition, and the discipline and mode of life on our naval vessels are completely shown. The detail of men is not, however, as great as the complement of the actual ship. The crew gives certain drills, especially boat, torpedo, and gun drills, as in a vessel of war.

The dimensions of the structure are those

SOME SMART PEOPLE.

Monarchs of Fame in Various Queer Kinds of Kingdoms.

There died at Sydney not long ago an old gentleman of the name of Watson, who had long been famous throughout Australia as "the Gold-Digger King." Born in Paisley, when quite a youth he emigrated to Sydney and took up the humble occupation of a butcher; but, desiring to try his hand at gold-digging, by dint of great exertion he saved enough money to buy a puddling machine, with which instrument he managed to become possessed of several thousand pounds.

At his death, amongst other properties he left the celebrated Bendigo Mine to his family. From this mine alone the fabulous quantity of thirteen tons of gold has been taken, while the weekly turn-out is about 6,000 ounces. One of "The Gold-Digger King's" daughters is married to Mr. Murdoch, the well known cricketer.

Another interesting monarch was the notorious George Barrington, "King of the Pickpockets," who had picked pockets all over the United Kingdom, had been in prison innumerable times, and served two terms of imprisonment on the hulks at Woolwich for being caught playing his nefarious trade in the Lobby of the house of Commons and at the Royal Drawing Rooms.

Strange to say, though sentenced in the end to seven years' transportation, on the voyage out he was mainly instrumental in quelling a serious mutiny amongst the other convicts on board. He was rewarded with an almost immediate ticket of leave on arriving in the Colony, promoted to be Superintendent of Convicts at Paramatta, and ultimately became a justice of the peace, and died at a ripe old age.

The metallic monarch, known in the police-courts as "the King of the Pot-Stealers," deserves mention amongst other peculiar regal personages. A painter by trade, and aged forty-one, it was stated at his last conviction that in the comparatively short space of eighteen months he had stolen no fewer than 2,000 pewter pots. His regular practice was to make himself up as a plasterer's laborer well bespattered with whitewash, drop into a public-house, purloin a pot, and wrap it quickly in a sheet of brown paper.

Emerging into the roadway, he would then place his plunder under a wheel of the first heavy van that passed, and then hide it in his pocket. From one London house alone he stole no fewer than seventy pots, and at his lodgings was found a frying pan in which he used to melt them down.

Fifty years ago the peculiar sport of knocker stealing was one of the favorite amusements of Oxford undergraduates, who would sally forth at night armed with stout pokers, and wrench their own professors from the doors of even their own professors. There was one undergraduate named Cartwright who proved himself such an adept at the game that he became known as "The King of the Knockers." When the fountain in the Tom Quad of Christ Church was cleaned out, it was found to be literally chock-full of knockers of all sorts, designs, and sizes, thrown there by the purloiners to escape detection.

In the last century there flourished the revered William Huntingdon, sometimes called the converted Coalheaver, but better known as "The King of Prayer" at an early stage in his career, being in need of a pair of leather breeches, he offered up a public prayer for them, and in the course of a few days there arrived at his dwelling a brown paper parcel containing that very attire. Shrewdly recognizing the efficacy of the process, the "Converted Coalheaver" continued to adopt these tactics, and by persistent praying became at last the proprietor of a most extensive wardrobe, and eventually married the widow of a deceased Lord Mayor.

It will hardly be credited that such a calling exists as that of tier of cravats, but in Paris, Vienna, and St. Petersburg there are persons who make quite a lucrative business of it.

Paul Latreille, one of its professors, recently deceased, rose to such eminence in his profession that he was known as "The King of the Knot-makers," and in the season, earned quite £2 per night. He used to make a regular round every evening in a cab just like a popular physician, and for the two minutes' work that each of his patrons required, charged from two to five francs, according to the position and wealth of his employer. In the sum-

mer he either stayed at home and dressed people for weddings, baptisms, etc., or followed his patrons to the fashionable water-places.

The battery mounted comprises four 13-inch breech-loading rifle cannon; eight 8-inch breech-loading rifle cannon; four 6-inch breech-loading rifle cannon; twenty 6-pounder rapid-firing guns; six 1-pound rapid-firing guns; two Gatling guns, and six torpedo tubes or torpedo guns. All of these are placed and mounted respectively as in the genuine battleship.

On the starboard side of the ship is shown the torpedo protection net, stretching the entire length of the vessel. Steam launches and cutters ride at the booms, and all the outward appearance of a real ship of war is imitated.

The Vice-President of Switzerland.

Emil Frey, who was recently elected Vice-President of Switzerland, is a devoted friend of America. During the war of the rebellion he left the Swiss University, where he was studying, and came to America, enlisting in the Twenty-eighth Illinois. In 1862 he resigned his lieutenantancy and raised a company, serving as captain in the Eighty-second Illinois. He was made prisoner at Gettysburg and received the brevet rank of major on his release.

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