

while at breakfast the printed rules of that day's vegetable, fruit, and flower-show, the competitors in which were all to be labourers living in cottages rented from Mr. Wall, in Broughton, the two Tytherleys (East and West) for which show a liberal and comprehensive scale of premiums were awarded—having breakfasted, and also read at breakfast the catalogue of the Norman Court Lending Library, which library consists of 500 or more volumes, provided at Mr. Wall's expense, the only qualifications to obtain which is a desire to read, and a request to be allowed to borrow a book—the books consisting of the best periodical and serial works of the day, and of the standard works in religious, moral and scientific biographies, poetry, instructive tales, and so forth; having also when at breakfast, listened, as I have often done since, not only in Broughton, but in all the villages and districts around Norman Court, to the respectful, grateful, almost reverential remarks on Mr. Wall, as a kind landlord and liberal helper of all who need a rich man's help—as an employer of many men, and a payer of good wages—as the protector, not only of the living, but of the dead—the restorer of gravestones of churchyards and of churches—having breakfasted, read, listened to all these things, I, with some other friends, drove off in a “trap” for Norman Court.

Up Broughton-hill, westward, we toiled, one or two getting out, that the horse might have less toil; up Broughton-hill, a portion of the chalky ridge crossing the country, we went and got to the top of it, and upon the old Roman road from Winchester to Salisbury, (Winton to Sarum,) locally called the “Devil's Walk,” which road in part was altered and amended by the Socialists of Harmony Hall, who are now in difficulties with their property, difficulties which some venerable fathers and mothers of the villages say were to be expected to befall anybody who meddled with the “Devil's Walk;” having surmounted Broughton-hill, and left the wide expanse of woodless farm fields behind, turning only round to look down upon Broughton in its nest of trees for a minute, and upon the three Wallops, in their bourne farther north, and upon “Lennard's Grove,” (the cross roads which so named tell their own tale,) between us and the villages of the Wallops, we looked westward and southward, into a country all different from that east and north of us. A succession of woodlands, now in hollows and now on heights; now with open fields, and elsewhere, with winding glades; now humble and copse-like, and again lofty and majestic, lay before us and below us, over a distance of six miles, bounded by another bold range of chalky hills, resembling that which we had just come over.

By turns we went down and again up: to the left and to the right, and on forward, turning again and again. Elderly men and women were standing aside to let us pass in the narrow woodland roads, or setting down to rest themselves with their baskets of vegetables which they were carrying to the show. Boys with clean “smocks” on, or new jackets, were pushing on as fast as they had breath to Norman Court, and shouting as we passed: old and young, male and female, rich and poor—most of the rich, who had horses at home, walked as well as the poor, lest there might be no stabling for all the horses expected there: all these peopled the roads: and each gave the other joy of the fine day, as they journeyed onward.

To linger long enough to tell how the ripening filbers hung upon the bushes which bordered us in clusters: how the glittering wet in the morning sun gave freshness to the autumn leaves: how the dark woods towered aloft, and the stealthy rays of the sun, as if it crept into a solemn cathedral silently and softly to worship: to linger long enough to describe all these would be to leave neither space nor time for what is coming.

We arrived near the front of the mansion, commanding a magnificent view southward over woods and meadows, and fields: dells, eminences, openings, thickets, and through noble park trees, amid which the carriage roads led off, and lost themselves. On the side of the mansion next us, extending over a dozen acres or so backward, and now on our right hand, was a green smooth sward embosomed in lofty lines of trees, these lines being but the front rank men of deep thickets. Into this we turned, and drove to the tent of Mr. Lane, from Broughton, which stood fronting downward and towards us.

On our right hand, at entering under the trees, was the sign of the Lion, Mr. Beauchamp, from West Dean: and half way up, in front of the trees, was the Black Horse, Mr. Fowkes, from West Tytherley. Varieties of other smaller tents with confectionary, and exhibitions of natural curiosities and such like, were in the intermediate spaces. But the grand attraction were two tents of Mr. Wall's, on the left hand side, near the centre: one was for the show of vegetables, fruits, and flowers: and the other was a kind of store, at which Mr. Wall himself presided, furnished with a variety of fancy and useful articles, to be given as prizes to those who might win them at such games as archery, for which there were six targets, with bows and arrows in abundance: such games also as cricket, and nearly all kinds of ball playing, puff and dart, quoits, hurdle racing, leaping, and so on. There were generally such chances as 12 shots for a penny: the men attending to the targets, &c., receiving the pennies, and giving a ticket to the winners, who carried it to Mr. Wall, and received prizes according to its amount. If it was a 2s. 6d. or 3s. ticket, there would be a silk handkerchief, and a knife perhaps, or a hat, or a waistcoat. For the children there were swings and roundabouts: and ropes with seats on them

were suspended between the venerable trees, that young people who wished to swing might swing there.

The vegetable and fruit show was exceedingly good, and would have done credit to many professional gardeners. It certainly did credit to Mr. Wall's cottagers, of whom about one hundred were competitors. The judges were Mr. White, the gardener, at Norman Court, and two other gentlemen, whose names I now forget. The beautiful fuchsias, and other flowering plants from the cottage window, showed favourably for the domestic neatness and taste. So did the garden products tell for cottier industry. But if all dwellers in humble houses had as good dwellings and gardens, with as good a squire, and as good a steward between them and the squire, as they have, there would be more comfort and more industry exercised to obtain it throughout England than there now is.

As visitors arrived, some in carriages some in vans, and some in holiday wagons, others in gigs and trap-carts, from distances varying from one to ten miles, those who were known had tickets given them by Mr. Sergeant, the land-steward, to the dinner. A yeoman cavalry band, in their uniform, mounted about and played music, which the woods re-echoed, or would have re-echoed, had their been less din of human voices, and a lower breeze of wind. There were several policemen of the county constabulary on the ground, but, as it was observed at the time, every man was his own constable; no mischief was done.

The chief dinner was spread in the court-yard of the mansion twice, from 250 to 300 dining each time. The great body of the people, however, dined in the tents on the green, having tickets which paid for their admission and their fare. Each party dining in the court passed into the mansion, and went through the splendid suite of rooms on the ground-floor by way of exit. On a former occasion, the house was left open to every person indiscriminately. They did no wilful damage, but there being many thousands of them going in and out for a whole day, they did damage to elegant furniture, whether intending it or not. On that occasion a gentleman, staying on a visit with Mr. Wall, had left his bed-room door open, not expecting that any of the strangers would penetrate there: also, he left his money in sovereigns, and his jewelry lying open on his table. The staring wonderers, who had never before been in such a house, went, hundred after hundred into that room, as well as into others: but there was not there, nor in the house, a single act of theft committed. Yet these people had the full compliment of poachers, petty thieves, and loose reputations among them: persons who were honest against their inclination, because they saw and felt they were trusted.

On the present occasion, Mr. Wall sat down at one of the tables but did not preside: the presidency and several other offices of honour devolved on some of the principal tenants and the farm steward. The domestic servants, from the house steward downward, waited on and served the visitors with alacrity and kindness: as much so, indeed, as if the kind spirit of their master was thoroughly infused into them.

On Mr. Wall's health being given, he delivered a short address, *thanking the people for coming to see him and dine with him*, and hoping to see them again and again, and to see a closer bond of friendship established between persons of all ranks than there ever yet had been.

The sports upon the green went on. Every minute some prize was won at one or other of the games. The floor of the tent in which the vegetable show had been was boarded for dancing, with a platform for the band. Accordingly there was dancing. And when night closed in, there were fireworks; and these were on a scale of grandeur rarely excelled, if ever excelled at all. Artists of first-rate ability were brought from London to conduct their exhibition. Fire balloons went off and away; and rockets went up and shot off, and showered down brilliancies that illuminated the wondering country. While the multitude gazed and admired, devices in fire of all shapes and colours, and of many meanings, succeeded each other, rockets firing all the time, with a magnificence that would have made Vauxhall clap hands and shout. But there was little shouting here, and not a hand was clapped. The excessive wonder at such prodigies done in fire constrained to silence. And the silence of the human tongues was all the deeper, and the grandeur of the fireworks all the greater, that the black shadows of the trees started back, and struggled to be out of sight, each behind his own tree, as if affrighted; while the lofty branches showed themselves in the red glare and in the blue, as if the giants of the forest stood with heads erect and hair on end.

The fireworks at Norman Court were sublime; and the people who looked upon them, upwards of 2000 in number, seemed at a loss whether to have most gratitude to Mr. Wall for his kindness, or most admiration for his unrivalled liberality. They gave him the best return they could give; they went all to their homes, without mishap or disturbance, all pleased with the day's entertainment, and pleased with one another. The only exception, if so it may be called, was that some of the labourers from the railway, forming through West and East Dean, from Salisbury to Bishopstoke, came up at night, after leaving off work, and seemed as if “they would not go home till morning.” But even they, considering they were “navvies,” were not so far amiss.