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THE BORDERLANDS OF SURREY.

SHOTTER MILL, a quaint hamlet of Southern England, is the key to three counties. It is at the point of a wedge of Surrey, that thrusts itself between Hampshire and Sussex, and there, on the meeting-ground of the three, are gathered its church, flour-mill, weather-beaten gray-stone tavern, village green, gentleman's house, three primitive shops, and a mere handful of cottages. The village grew up with the way-side flowers, and borders a country road leading from Guildford to Liphook. Several dwellings are scattered hither and thither to right and left, but most of them keep pretty much in a line, following the windings of the road and rising and descending with it. One triumphant, red, raw-looking house lifts itself a story higher than the low roofs of the good neighbors. It is the post-office and postal savings bank. The mail is brought by a little red cart twelve miles over the hills every day. The post-master also keeps a general country store, and rooms in the upper stories are let to summer visitors. No motley mingled wares are exhibited in the windows, as at the less pretentious shops next door. The shelves are adorned with a stately frieze of Florentine sweet-oil flasks, and there is a dado full three feet high of biscuit or cracker boxes. Our American term cracker is unknown in England, except in connection with gunpowder and the 5th of November. Entering a grocer's store a few days after our arrival in England, we asked the apron-smothered young man behind the counter what sort of crackers he had. The youth replied, eyeing us suspiciously:

"We don't keep fire-works, mum."

Shotter Mill church is not a characteristic English edifice, with old grave-yard and ivy-covered tower. It is plain and Puritanic, white-washed within and gray without. Sun-

day is a delightful day on the borders, providing the weather be warm and fine. All is quiet on hill and highway until Sabbath-school time, when the cottagers and farmers' children pass down the lane. A glimpse at the green hat and purple dress of the first girl is enough in itself to assure us that only the "seventh day" could warrant such richness of color, while the boys all look dreadfully uncomfortable in their best clothes, which are generally made to allow for growing; whereas, when they pass on Monday morning the case is reversed, and many of the little fellows seem to be painfully long as to leg and arm. An hour after the children pass, their parents join the stream to one of the three churches—Episcopal, of course—within walking distance. Traversing the same road on a Saturday evening we would frequently meet two picturesque figures returning from work, who always touched their hats with a respectful "Good-even' to yer"; one, an old fellow in a finely embroidered smock frock and leather gaiters, the other a cheery, red-faced man, with a faded velveteen coat, old felt hat, and bag of tools over his shoulder. On Sunday morning we meet the same couple on their way to service, but how changed! The old man in a high silk hat, and suit of badly cut, shiny black; the other wearing plaid cloth, squeaking boots, and emerald-green neck-tie. Then for the first time we notice that their faces are coarse and their figures heavy.

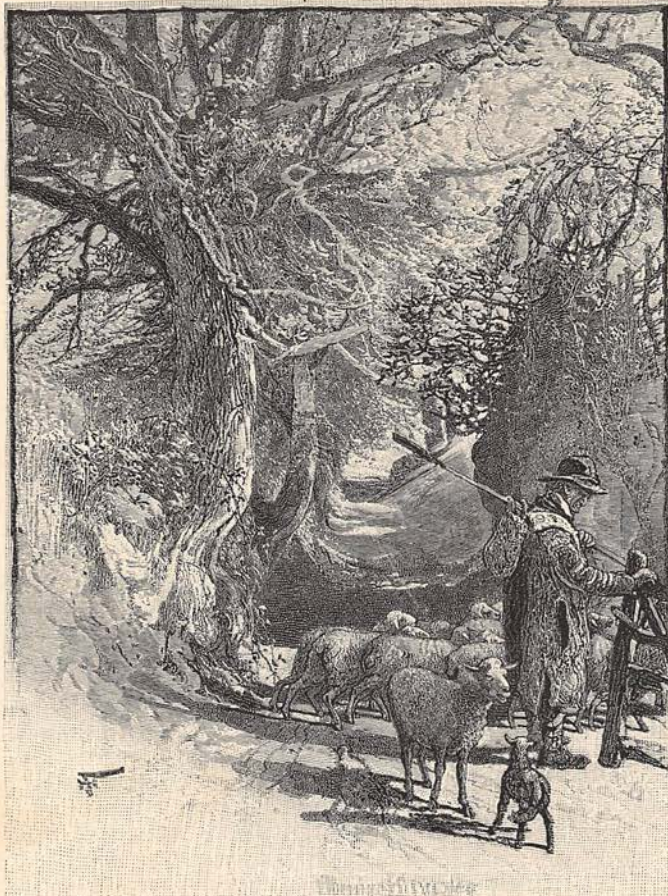
Many of the farmers have to drive in some distance, and arrive fresh and rosy at the church gate. They, too, appear very much pomaded as to the hair, and very much starched as to the shirt; not as their fathers, who used to come to church dressed, like Mr. Poyser, in a Sunday suit of drab, with red and green waistcoat, knee-breeches, and thick

drab stockings knitted by Mrs. Poyser's own nimble hands, a yellow silk neckerchief, and green fob-ribbon with a large carnelian seal attached. Fickle fashion has dismissed fancy waistcoats. Mrs. Farmer has the best chance now for color, and turns out bristling with bugles, a bright, cheery dress, and tasteful bonnet of blue silk and roses.

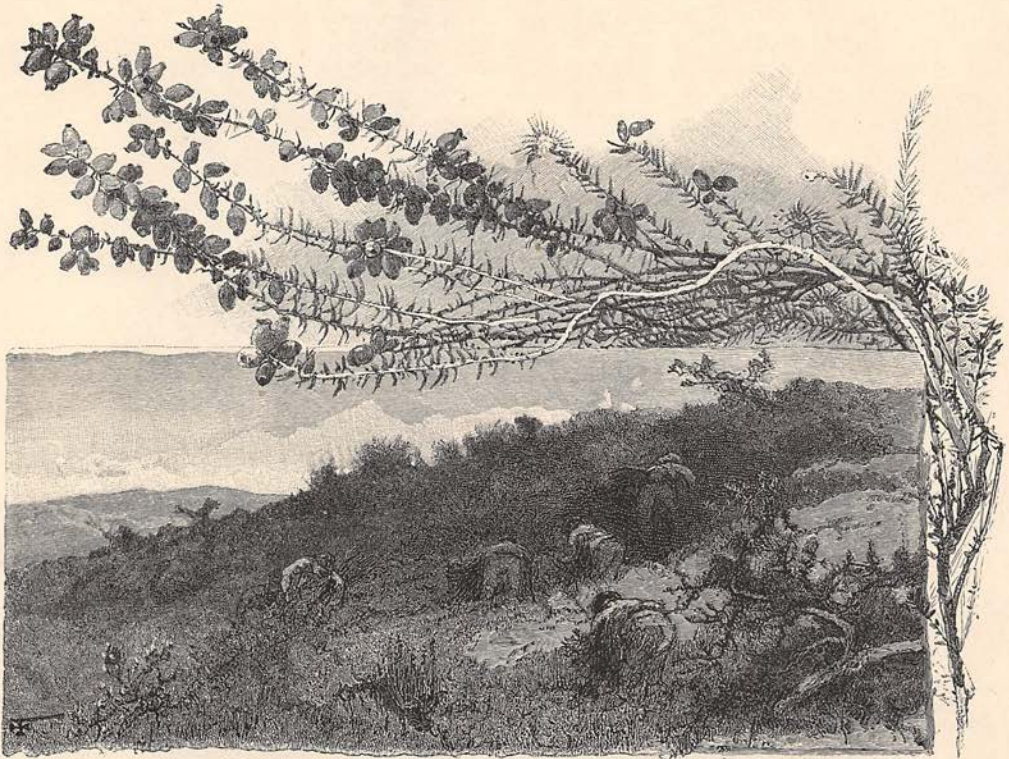
English air is always resonant with sound on Sunday mornings, and long before we reach the village we can distinctly hear the bells, and a faint echo of chimes over the western common, which often reminds us of Rabelais' description of Britain, as an island "ever filled with the corybantic jingle, jangle of great, middle-sized, and little bells, wherewith the people seem to be as much charmed as a swarm of bees with the clanking of brazen kettles and drums"; and so we are charmed, providing the bells are good and we have one chime at a time.

On reaching church, we generally find a crowd of men around the gate discussing

crops, between the arrival of the various carriages which bring the neighboring gentry. Two good old maids usually come early in a little donkey-chaise; then a pretty landau, several phaetons, and a heavy brougham follow in turn; the last and not least in importance being a coach and four with Sir John H——'s party. The venerable clergyman is a tall, robust, clean-shaved man, with bald head and upright carriage with all his three and seventy years. He belongs more to the last generation of fox-hunting parsons than to the present style of Church of England clergy—a good, hearty English gentleman, who doffs his ministerial black for six days in the week, and visits his parishioners on horseback, looking more like the squire than parson. All the country folks love him, and touch their hats respectfully as he passes with bright smile and cheery word for each, even to the smallest child, who bobs a curtsy and mumbles back a reply to the inquiry after mother, not a



A SURREY LANE.



A STRETCH OF HEATH.

trifle awed by the dancing and pawing of the rector's high-mettled mare, who objects to being pulled up for every little rustic that comes along. Indeed, it is whispered that the reverend gentleman was once seen down on his knee, taking aim—not at a buck in the Scottish Highlands—but at “five in a ring,” or, in other words, “knuckling down” at marbles among half a score of boys on the hard Surrey road.

The rectory being just opposite the church, the parson often comes out and chats with the early members of the congregation on Sunday morning, as they loiter about. At the proper moment he retires to don his surplice, in which he walks from the house to the reading-desk in the chancel, the church possessing no vestry. He preaches his simple sermons both morning and afternoon, and reads the grand old prayers in a full, clear voice, the congregation joining heartily in the responses. The characteristic of country services, as of country manners, is simplicity.

In the heart of the village lives the Squire, a real English country gentleman, who possesses hounds and hunters, Alderney cows and tracts of meadow land. He is also

justice of the peace and captain of the fire brigade. This makes the poorer classes stand in awe of him, though he is their good friend in time of need.

The quaint, antiquated look of an English village is only a part of its charm. The red tiles and thatch roofs give richness of color. It is the rarest thing to see a frame house through the length and breadth of Britain; brick or stone are almost invariably used. There were only two ugly wooden buildings on the outskirts of Shotter Mill, one a braid factory, and the other a tannery, which reminded us of American village architecture. The scenery surrounding the village is beautiful and varied. The peculiar landscape features of the three counties all show themselves more or less in the immediate neighborhood. From the hills that hem in the village, when one looks into Hampshire, there is a long vista of upland waste, hill and down, a blaze of reddish-purple heather, the monotony only broken here and there by solitary white birch-trees or clumps of pines; in fact, so wild is a spot several miles from our temporary home, that in wading through the deep bracken we have several times startled a genuine Scotch black



CARTING HEATHER.

DEAD BRACKEN.

cock, the place itself being called Little Scotland. Turning our faces toward Sussex, the foreground is the same—tracts of common land overrun with gorse, heath, and bracken. Beyond one sees undulating hill and dale, and in the far distance the Sussex downs, looking very bald and dark with their short herbage. Sometimes of an afternoon the buttresses of the downs stand out with mar-

velous distinctness, furnishing one of the natural barometers of the peasantry, who after that sight always prepare for heavy rain on the morrow. We have to cross the valley and climb another hill to procure a good view of Surrey, which displays itself in a long stretch of fertile fields, that look like a chess-board on account of the regularity of the bright dividing hedge-rows and the variety of color. One can see also green wooded slopes, church spires, the chimneys of great manors nearly buried in foliage, low, rambling barns, and red-tiled cottages. Such is the vicinity of a village whose rural quiet and beauty have attracted many people who are prominent in the literary and artistic world. George Eliot, Tennyson, White of Selborne, and Thomas Hardy; Alma-Tadema, Boughton, and Birket Forster have sojourned or lived on these borderlands.

The most picturesque house at Shotter Mill is just opposite the Squire's. It was inhabited

at one time by George Eliot. Brookbank, as it is called, is an old two-storied cottage, with tiled roof and lattice-paned windows, the front of the house being half-covered with trailing rose-trees. The rooms are low but pleasant, like all country dwellings of this kind, and furnished in a simple, comfortable manner. A thick hedge of laurel borders the garden, and is formed into an arch above the little wooden gate.

vegetables eaten at Brookbank were sent from the farm, and we have heard the old lady in speaking of it say: "It were wonderful, just wonderful, the sight o' green peas that I sent down to that gentleman and lady every week." They evidently knew what was good! Our old friend the farmer, who owns a neat horse and trap, was employed to drive them two or three times a week. They occa-



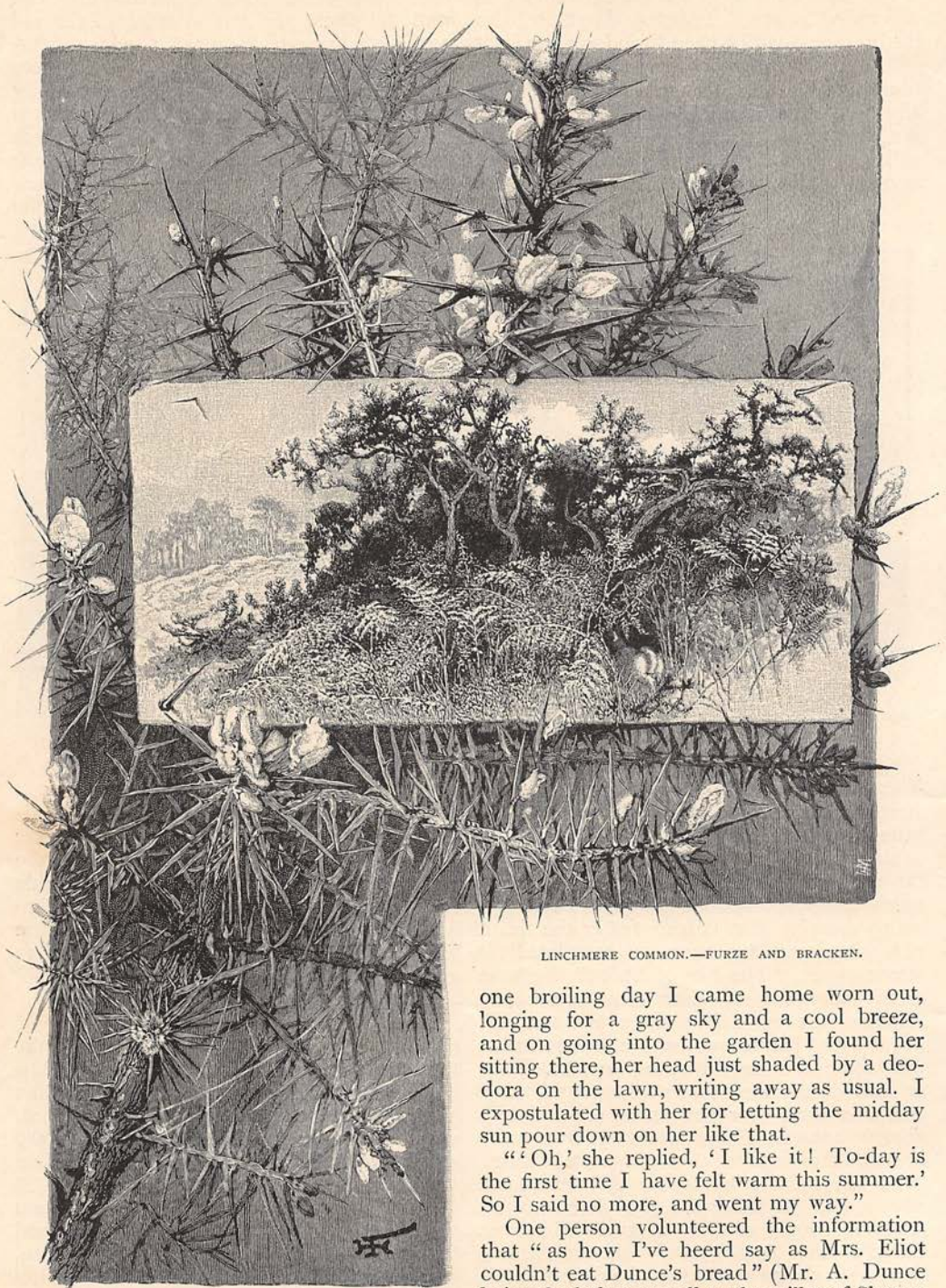
BROOKBANK, THE HOUSE IN WHICH GEORGE ELIOT ONCE LIVED.

Brookbank receives its name from a noisy little stream, which turns the flour-mill but a few yards below, and then rushes across the road on its way to another mill several miles farther on. Brookbank was occupied for many years by Mrs. Gilchrist after the death of her husband, and here she completed his famous work, "The Life of Blake." We have often endeavored to glean some information regarding George Eliot's life at Shottes Mill, but she and Mr. Lewes lived in such seclusion that there was very little to be told. They seldom crossed their threshold during the day, but wandered over the commons and hills after sundown. They were very anxious to lodge at the picturesque old farm, ten minutes' walk beyond Brookbank, on the same road, which was our home for two years, but all available room was then occupied. However, George Eliot would often visit the farmer's wife, and, sitting on a grassy bank just beside the kitchen door, would discuss the growth of fruit and the quality of butter in a manner so quiet and simple that the good country folks were astonished, expecting very different conversation from the great novelist. All the

sionally visited Tennyson, whose house is only three miles distant, though a rather tedious drive, since it is up-hill nearly all the way. George Eliot did not enjoy the ride much, for the farmer told us that, "withal her being such a mighty clever body, she were very nervous in a carriage—allays wanted to go on a smooth road, and seemed dreadful feared of being thrown out."

George Eliot was writing "Middlemarch" during her summer at Brookbank, and the term for which they had the cottage expired before they wished to return to London. The Squire was away at the time, so they procured permission to use his house during the remainder of their visit. In speaking of them to us he said:

"I visited Mr. and Mrs. Lewes several times before they went back to town, and found the authoress a very agreeable woman, both in manner and appearance; but her mind was evidently completely absorbed in her work; she seemed to have no time for anything but writing from morning till night. Her hand could hardly convey her thoughts to paper fast enough. It was an exception-



GORSE OR FURZE.

LINCHMERE COMMON.—FURZE AND BRACKEN.

one broiling day I came home worn out, longing for a gray sky and a cool breeze, and on going into the garden I found her sitting there, her head just shaded by a deodora on the lawn, writing away as usual. I expostulated with her for letting the midday sun pour down on her like that.

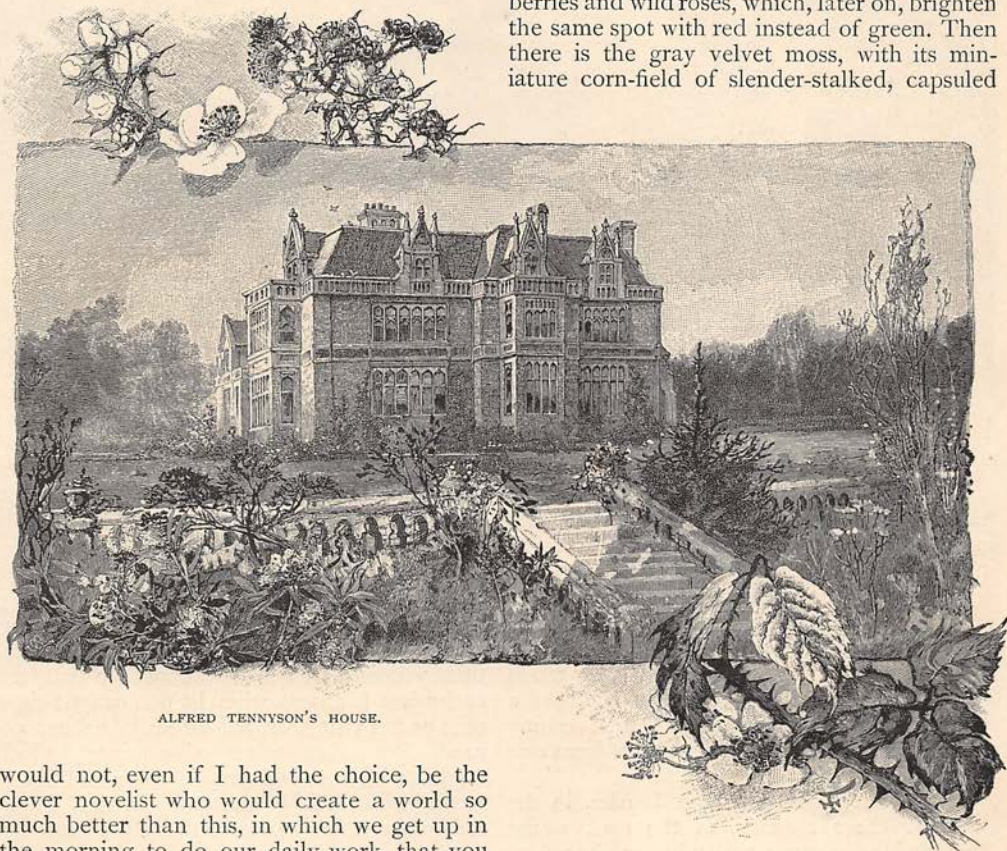
"Oh," she replied, "I like it! To-day is the first time I have felt warm this summer." So I said no more, and went my way."

One person volunteered the information that "as how I've heerd say as Mrs. Eliot couldn't eat Dunce's bread" (Mr. A. Dunce being the baker as well as the miller of Shotter Mill), and no wonder! We well recollect the pang with which we saw one of those solid "quarterns" on the dinner-table, on our arrival at the farm.

ally hot summer, and yet through it all Mrs. Lewes would have artificial heat placed at her feet to keep up the circulation. Why,

And thus nearly all we could learn about George Eliot was that she loved to bask in the sun, and liked green peas. She visited some of the cottagers, but only those living in secluded places, who knew nothing of her. Just such people as these she used in her graphic and realistic sketches of peasant life, for she writes, in "Adam Bede": "I find a source of delicious sympathy in these faithful pictures of a monotonous, homely existence." And again: "I

its season, and no artificial garden, however lovely, could rival the natural flora of upland or lowland. In early spring the hedge-rowed lanes are starred with primroses and violets. Later, the hedges themselves burst into May bloom. Then comes the intense green of summer, with here and there a shadowed spot where we rest with relief from the glare of color, amid quivering shadows on the sun-checked sandy road, lined with daisies and blue-bells. Higher up are blackberries and wild roses, which, later on, brighten the same spot with red instead of green. Then there is the gray velvet moss, with its miniature corn-field of slender-stalked, capsuled



ALFRED TENNYSON'S HOUSE.

would not, even if I had the choice, be the clever novelist who would create a world so much better than this, in which we get up in the morning to do our daily work, that you would be likely to turn a harder, colder eye on the dusty streets and the common green fields—on the real healthy men and women who can be chilled by your indifference, or injured by your prejudice, who can be cheered and helped onward by your fellow-feeling, your forbearance, your outspoken, brave justice."

With regard to the surrounding country, George Eliot said that it pleased her more than any she knew of in England. The landscape is so varied it is difficult to give a clear idea of its attractions. One season of the year the woods and lanes seem the most beautiful, and at another time the hills and commons outshine them, for each blooms in

seedlets, which lasts when all other vegetation has withered, and clings through the winter to the bare stones and trees.

The uplands, as a whole, are most beautiful in early October, when their garment of heath-bloom is fading into a dull purple, and the bright bracken is transformed from green to delicate yellow and burnt sienna, diffusing a softness of color which the more gorgeous American autumns lack. It is the marvelous blending of tint that lends such a charm to these long stretches of hill, in contrast to the even line of continuous woods on the left. Then there is the delightful sensation of elastic turf under foot, the sweet, fresh odor im-



BURNING THE FURZE.

parted to the breeze, and the hum of busy insects. We have no substitute for bracken in America, for, although our woods produce luxuriant ferns and finer wild flowers, there is nothing to take the place of the English and Scottish brakes, which are fairly carpeted with bracken. In appearance it is very much like a hardy fern, but branches off from a main stalk instead of each frond coming straight from the ground. It grows from one to three feet high.

Somewhere, just over the border, in the heart of these uplands, is the spot where Thomas Hardy came to study the phases of the land which he has so marvelously reproduced in "The Return of the Native."

The gorse commons extend for some miles on the Sussex border, and are one of the characteristics of the district. Furze and gorse are synonymous terms, one being used in the north and the other in the south. It is a low, shrubby, hardy evergreen plant, with numerous branches, spiny leaves, and yellow flowers, the fruit consisting of an inflated hairy pod, scarcely longer than the calyx. The broom and furze are perpetually associated; indeed, the latter is sometimes called the thorny broom. It has a larger flower than the furze, and is rather deeper in color, being a smooth, graceful plant. The twigs and young branches

have been employed as a substitute for oak bark in tanning, and are also serviceable in thatching cottages and corn-ricks. This is the broom which St. Louis entwined with the enameled white lilies as an insignia of knighthood, and the same blossom has given fourteen English monarchs the name of Plantagenet, so it is a right royal flower, though only flourishing on barren heaths.

The gorse in the south makes an attempt to bloom all the year round, but its full glory is donned in June, when whole bushes are sometimes a perfect blaze of the most beautiful yellow, and we do not wonder that the enthusiast Linnæus, when he first caught sight of it on his visit here, fell on his knees enraptured. But often tracts of common, which ought to be in full bloom, lie waste and black, having been entirely consumed by fire. Invariably after a fire, women and children are seen busily employed for days cutting the "smuts" (burnt furze); but, of course, they never know anything about the burning!

Rising from our village on the west is Hindhead, with a long, sloping descent on this side, but precipitous on the other. Over Hindhead runs the old Portsmouth coach road, and many are the local stories of highwaymen attacking the mail as it came over the brow of the hill. Just beyond the reputed spot of attack a great gibbet was erected, in 1786, to hang three murderers. It stood for many years, but is now superseded by a stone raised to the memory of the victim. On the summit of Hindhead the late Judge Erle erected a large Irish cross, which with a powerful glass can be distinguished, it is said,

from Greenwich Observatory, about forty miles distant as the crow flies. There is a very extensive view from the cross looking north, and in clear weather can be seen the camp at Aldershot to the westward. To art-lovers, it may be interesting to know that this afforded a subject for Turner's "Liber Studiorum."

Some twelve years ago Tennyson built a house on the northern slope of Blackdown, a lordly hill two miles to the north-east of our village, and just opposite Hindhead, these

on flying visits to the laureate—the Duke of Argyle and his Scotch gillie being on the ascent when we were last that way.

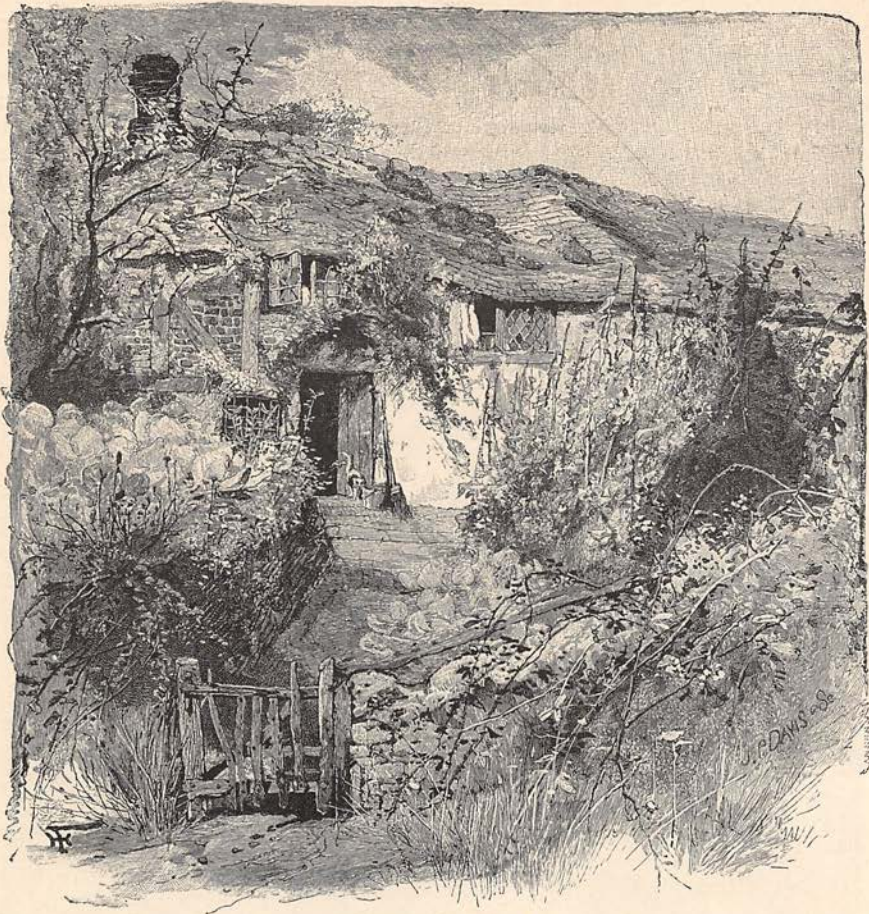
Tennyson naturally dislikes to find persons creeping around his grounds, and plucking leaves from his plants as mementos, as they constantly do at Freshwater. Once, seeing a face peering at him while eating his dinner, the exasperated poet left the table, exclaiming that he could no longer take his meals in comfort without being watched.



WITHERING THE BLOOM.

being the two eminences which guard the valley east and west. The house is a large, imposing stone structure, built in a free treatment of domestic Gothic of the Tudor period, the entrance being a large porch with five pointed arches. The laureate can be as solitary here as the most confirmed anchorite, since his is the only residence on the hill. A carriage road winds up Blackdown on the western side as far as Tennyson's, enabling too many persons to come near the house for the poet's pleasure. Very many distinguished men are slowly drawn up that hill,

Not far from Tennyson's is the house of General Oglethorpe, who in 1732 was made Governor of Georgia. He took John and Charles Wesley out with him for the purpose of instructing the Indians. The General was an important man in his time on both sides of the water. In Parliament, by his opposition to the bill for withdrawing the charter from the city of Edinburgh, in consequence of the Porteous Riots, Walpole withdrew the obnoxious clauses, and a fine of ten thousand dollars was imposed, to be paid to the widow of Porteous. In America, James



BROOM-MAKER'S COTTAGE.

Oglethorpe made war on Florida, in consequence of annoyances received from the Spaniards, took several ports, and laid siege to St. Augustine. This old gentleman, whom Roger describes as having a face like parchment, lived to an immense age, was the friend of Johnson, Goldsmith, and Hannah More, and was eulogized by Pope and Thomson, while a city and county of Georgia bear his name. The house outside is small and very ugly, but delightful within, having a beautiful oak hall and staircase, which are highly appreciated by the present owner, an artist.

The Borderlands of Surrey abound in partridges and pheasants. Birds of all kinds, from the saucy midwinter robin-redbreast to the midsummer nightingale, are heard on every hand. The nightingale entertained us during the long June twilights, except when we were anxious to have a concert for our London or New York friends from the songsters of whom we had boasted so much, and then, no matter how long we listened, there

was never a sound. The nightingale's song bursts out in a fine rich trill, followed by a low croaking sound several times repeated, the compass being eleven or twelve notes. On a bright, joyous spring morning the skylark's sweet song fills the air, and often the little warbler may be seen a mere dot in the sky. Its song can be heard when the songster is invisible among the clouds. We have a large family of chimney-swallows, which flutter busily past the windows all day, with a good deal of commotion, resting occasionally on the old weather-beaten tiled roof of our farmstead. The numerous and audacious blackbirds afford us much amusement in studying their manners and customs.

An industry of the Surrey hills which is fast passing away is that of broom-making, machinery having taken the place of manual work in this as in other industries. The conservative country folk, however, still cling to the ways of their forefathers, and the reign of the birch and heath broom is now confined to



GILBERT WHITE'S HOUSE.

farms and cottages. One always reads and thinks more of the birch than the heath broom, yet in this locality heather was nearly a monopoly. The former is used entirely for out-door or stable work, and the latter for household purposes. The broom-makers are also called "dashers" and "squatters." They gained the latter title about a hundred years ago, when a company of them settled near Hindhead, built canvas huts, and carried on their trade. No one interfered with them for a year or two, so they concluded that the land was theirs by right of possession. Consequently there was a great time when the landlord came forward and demanded rents, or their room. In the broil that followed the owner was shot at and wounded.

It was natural for the "dashers" to settle in Hampshire and Surrey, they being almost the only counties in southern England which luxuriate in heath. Just on the borderland they have built a hamlet, which is occupied almost exclusively by them. Hammer, as it is called, is but a few minutes' walk south-west of Shotter Mill. To reach it on leaving the main road we find ourselves, for a short distance, in one of those shady English lanes with high banks on either side and delightful old oaks, whose branches form a cool and shady avenue.

Hammer is not an imposing-looking place, and does not boast of a single store, though, of course, the necessary beer-shop is found there. This is merely a small house of respectable appearance, with no bar visible. Consequently the owner, who is known as the

King of Hammer, feels justified in hanging out the large sign of "The Prince of Wales' Inn." The hamlet is built on the slope of a hill, up which the cottages straggle for a short distance, but, finding it rather steep, suddenly turn around and straggle down again. The boundary brook runs past Hammer, with a rural bridge for foot-passengers—merely two large rough-hewn stones thrown into the stream.

We made great friends with the broom-maker, who has the most attractive home and shed in the settlement. The cottage is in itself a picture—a long, low, characteristic English half-timbered, red-tiled dwelling. Its many windows are of all sizes and shapes—some square-latticed; others, diamond, the middle section always open. The door, which is propped back by a wooden chair or stone, is framed by a climbing plum-tree. To the left hangs a whistling starling in its wicker cage, and the old cat basks placidly on the sunlit step. The country poor always love flowers around them, and in this garden a deep row of marigolds surrounds the cabbage-bed.

At the end of the garden is the broom-maker's shop or shed, a pretty little thatched hut, at the door of which we find our old friend, week in, week out; and here, sitting on a log of wood, we have often enjoyed a chat with him. The poor man really makes very little money, though he works hard enough. A broom fetches only from two to ten cents, according to size and quality.

In the manufacture of brooms, to gather the heath is naturally the first step, and at

the proper season the men start off hay-making, as they term it. Women and boys are also employed, and a very pretty picture they make, kneeling in the deep heath on a downy upland, with the afternoon sun making happy lights and shadows on the figures. They pick out the heath best suited to their purpose and break off the plant at the root, tucking each piece in succession under the left arm until a bundle is gathered, when it is roughly tied together, thrown down, and the harvester passes on to the next clump. A track is thus left behind each harvester, and this is followed up the next day by a little square cart, drawn by the only animal that will or can do such work—the ill-used though useful donkey. The birch and other wood used for handles is procured from undergrowth in a neighboring copse, the withes for binders also being obtained near home.

The process of making brooms is very simple, although it entails a great deal of labor. Outside the broom-makers' huts are piled stacks of heather, which last through the winter. The heath is first sorted into "longs" and "shorts," according to the size required. It then takes the form of a nosegay, bound about by a strip of willow, made pliable by soaking in the brook hard by, then dexterously split into thin lengths by an odd knife held upon the knee, the withy being drawn rapidly over it. When a large number of bunches are ready, they are put upon rafters. A fire of chips is then lighted beneath to wither the bloom, and what was yesterday the purple pride of the hill-side, now flies off in blinding dust about the head of the broom-maker as he strikes each bunch against the rafters. This dust, by the way, together with small chips of heather, is much esteemed for ham-smoking purposes, and a peep up the spacious chimney in the cottage reveals a goodly array of hams, sent by farmers from a long distance around to be cured, the smoldering bloom imparting a certain delicate flavor unattainable by any other method. Two blows of a sharp hatchet trim off the roots from the heath-stems projecting beyond the binder. A long, pointed stick, peeled with a spoke-shave, forming the handle, is inserted in the cleanly trimmed end, and hammered firmly in on the chopping-block. A peg is fastened through the binders,



BROOM-MAKER'S SHOP.

and it becomes the well-known heath-broom of the market. The birch-broom

is made in exactly the same manner, with the exception of the withering, which is not required. They are not so fine or so pliable as the others, and are used for rougher work.

Packed in bundles of a dozen, the little donkey-cart is laden up with them, and they take their first sweep along the hedge-rows of the winding lanes to the nearest railway station, the destination of many being to sweep the street-crossings of London.

Before leaving the Surrey highlands, we made a pilgrimage to Selborne, a place which would be quite unknown had not Gilbert White lived and died there, leaving his world-famed letters to endear the name of Selborne to every lover of natural history. Lowell calls his books the "Journal of Adam in Paradise." The village is still a quiet, sleepy little place, lying in a sheltered vale, skirted by two rivulets, its one straggling street being nearly a mile in length. White's house is now under process of alteration by the present possessor. Selborne appears to be one of those places where the inroads of time and change make small effect, being left apparently out of the world of bustle and excitement.

Alice Maude Fern.

