

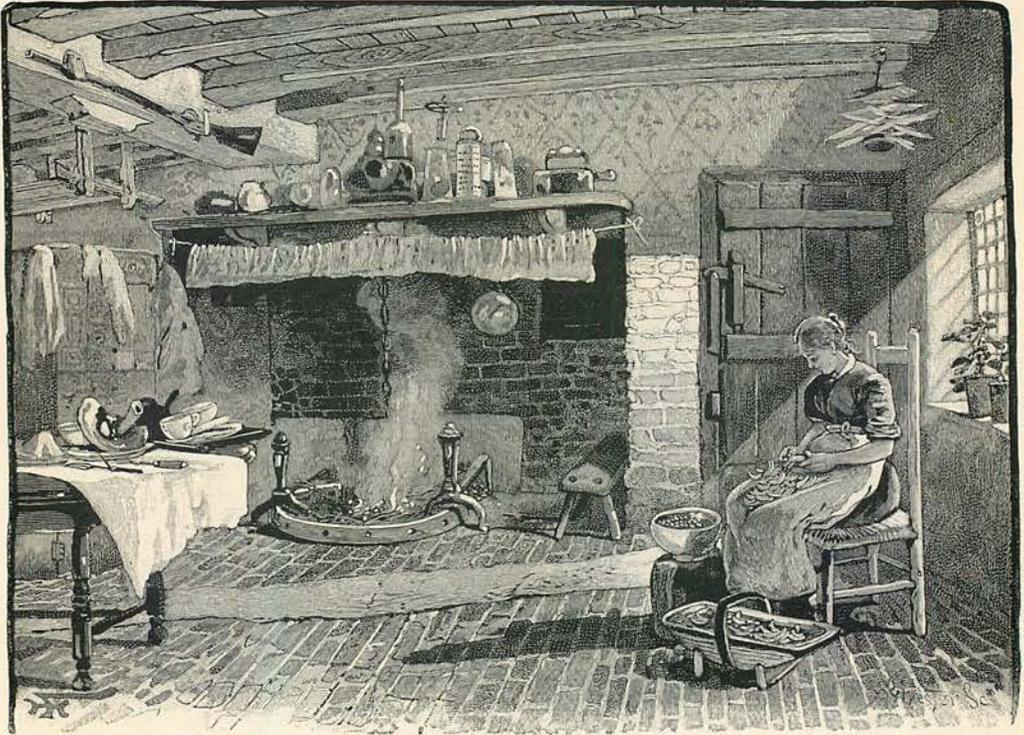
## AMONG THE RED ROOFS OF SUSSEX.



WE had existed through a long dreary springtide in dear, dirty, smoky old London, and grown impatient with the incessant pattering rain, or the dull, heavy clouds that daily met our vision at early morning over the chimney-tops. The leaden skies took no pity on London's millions, who threaded the streets from week to week with ulster and umbrella. Finally June was ushered in with a burst of sunlight, which transformed the well-washed city in a few hours. Men and things instinctively felt that summer had come,—that summer for which we had all longed and planned many a month. None of us knew much of the genuine rural life of England, and we determined to be initiated. Kind friends discovered for us the very desire of our hearts at a picturesque old farm where rooms were to be had; and in a few days two rickety "four-wheelers," well capped with trunks and filled with happy faces, bore our party on the first stage of the journey toward the hills and vales of merrie England. The afternoon express train swiftly sped through straggling environs of the metropolis, through Surrey towns, pastures, chalk hills, birch and pine woods, for fifty miles, and then deposited us at a small, neat station with a long name. In the yard awaiting the passengers were vehicles of all sorts and sizes, from a luxurious landau drawn by dancing bays to a diminutive donkey-cart. We rather expected a grain-wagon to meet us, having been informed by letter that the farmer would bring his own

vehicle to convey us the rest of the journey. What was our surprise, not to say disillusion, when a genial, ruddy-faced man of about fifty-five, neatly arrayed in a pepper-and-salt suit of rural cut, approached, and after respectful greetings motioned us toward a trim carriage drawn by a chestnut mare. Although feeling more comfortable and dignified than would have been possible in a lumbering wagon, one of the party at least experienced a pang at this example of nineteenth-century rusticity. That was soon forgotten, however, when we had left behind us the red-brick box-like houses growing up around the depot, and were speeding on toward low, straggling cottages, which seemed nearly crushed to the ground by the weight of the brown thatched roofs. Then came a village green, and a queer little church round which clustered rustic dwellings, and the conventional smithy, from whose open door issued a glow of light which shot across the road, lit up the diamond-paned Gothic windows with flickering color, and by a final effort illuminated the ancient iron cross. After leaving the hamlet we crossed a noisy brook, climbed a steep hill, then entered a hedge-rowed lane, and were finally deposited at an old wooden gate, with high bramble-covered banks on either side. Here we found a terrace, overgrown with a tangle of poppies, oxeye daisies, flags, and roses. Following a path washed like the bed of a mountain torrent, we came in sight of the farmstead,—a long, low, red-tiled house of stone with great latticed windows and ivy-grown porch. All sorts of clinging plants stayed themselves against the rough walls, roses and nasturtiums in the front, variegated ivy at the side, clinging so tightly to the stones that without breaking the stem it was almost impossible to pluck a piece. Ferns nestled in a cool shady corner, while on the south wing were grape-vines, and peach and plum trees trained to the house.

Entering the living-room, it was a relief to see no monstrosity in the way of wall-papers, though a trifle depressing to find that the ceiling could be touched by the fingers of the masculine members of the family. Through the open window was a delightful dreamy picture. In the foreground lay the farm-yard in shadow, drowsy and noiseless, guarded by giant oaks. Beyond stretched a long green valley, with no sign of life, save small lazily curling wreaths of smoke from unseen cot-



IN THE KITCHEN.

tages. In the distance ranged bald dark hills, over which the sun had disappeared a few moments previous, leaving a soft after-glow to light our little upland world between day and night.

With the glamour still around us we retired early to rest, much pleased at the novelty of antiquated four-post bedsteads with hangings of spotless dimity. To make the charm more perfect, when my candle was extinguished the moonlight shone through the lattice and cast its checkered light upon the floor.

Early next morning I was out in the old-fashioned garden, exploring every nook and corner. Beds of white pinks filled the air with perfume, and in every tree the song-birds were tuning up for the day. On the lawn groups of small spruce-trees were veiled in spiderwebs laden down with dew. In the center bed a stately yucca reared its head in company with a few showy flowers, placed so that the passers-by might have a full view of their beauty, while the rest of the garden appeared to be allowed to follow its own sweet will. Near the kitchen I came upon a colony of bee-hives, each capped with an inverted earthen dish of red. Finding a little path leading from the garden, I mounted the pasture hill, to procure a fuller view of the valley. Surrounded

by mighty oak and beech trees, the farm seemed half buried at my feet,—just a glimpse here and there of red tiles and chimneys amid a wall of green. The long stretch of cultivated valley had wakened into life, though the browsing herds and white-shirted laborers scarcely appeared to move as I looked from my high vantage-ground. The great purple hills on the right, and upland furzy commons on the left, guarded this fertile vale from bleak east winds. A little silver line of water wandering in and out among the willows seemed to spread its fertilizing power to the very foot of the heather-clad ridge, beyond which all was as wild as a highland moor. I strolled back to the farm, with a great sense of delight in realizing that for months and months this calm and beauty were to surround our life.

The kitchen was a quaint old room, paved with red brick, having a low, heavily timbered ceiling, wooden walls, and an open hearth fire, with family chimney-seat. On the walls hung saddles, a couple of guns, a gorgeously illustrated almanac, and several engravings, it being the living-room of the family. Leading from the kitchen were the dairy, scullery, and "out-kitchen." The latter had only a mud floor, and contained an old brick bake-oven. In a dark corner one could just discern a



THE HOMESTEAD.

goodly pile of wine-barrels. The quality and variety of these home-made wines was a source of great pride to the family. They could hardly understand why any one wanted claret, when we could be served with pure currant wine far superior to a suspicious French decoction. Her gooseberry wine, Mrs. Stubble informed us, had a far finer flavor than most brands of champagne, while her rhubarb and elderberry answered to hock and port! Then there was nothing to surpass fine mead. What more could we desire! This wine-making consumed a great deal of time each summer. Several barrels were always emptied at haymaking and harvest time, wine and mead being given the laborers instead of the usual doles of small beer.

Within a stone's throw of the house were the barns and sheds,—old weather-beaten gray-stone buildings, with red-tiled roofs softened by a greenish velvety lichen, which dispersed

itself in a happy irregularity over cow-sheds, grain-barn, and wagon-shelter. During several weeks in the summer the gigantic doors of the main barn were thrown open back and front. Through this dark frame we often saw a bright picture of rural life. Lazy cows gathered around the pond; near by were clustered groups of sheep, some dark in shadow and others warm buff in the sunlight; geese dotted the bright meadows in the middle distance; and for a background there were wooded hill-side and gorse-grown upland.

The farm stock consisted of a large flock of sheep, eleven cows, six horses, half a score of big and many score of little pigs, numerous ducks, chickens, and geese; a heterogeneous stock, but Farmer Stubble liked to try



SHEEP-WASHING.

a little of everything, and consequently had not grown a rich man. At times the farm-yard would be fairly quiet, but when the inhabitants were all at home the noise was overpowering. Daisy, the pet Alderney, would often start them off with a solo; then the cocks and hens, and even the little chicks, set up a rival chorus, the calves introducing a monotonous bleat; and the black sows and brood bringing up the rear with fine staccato notes.

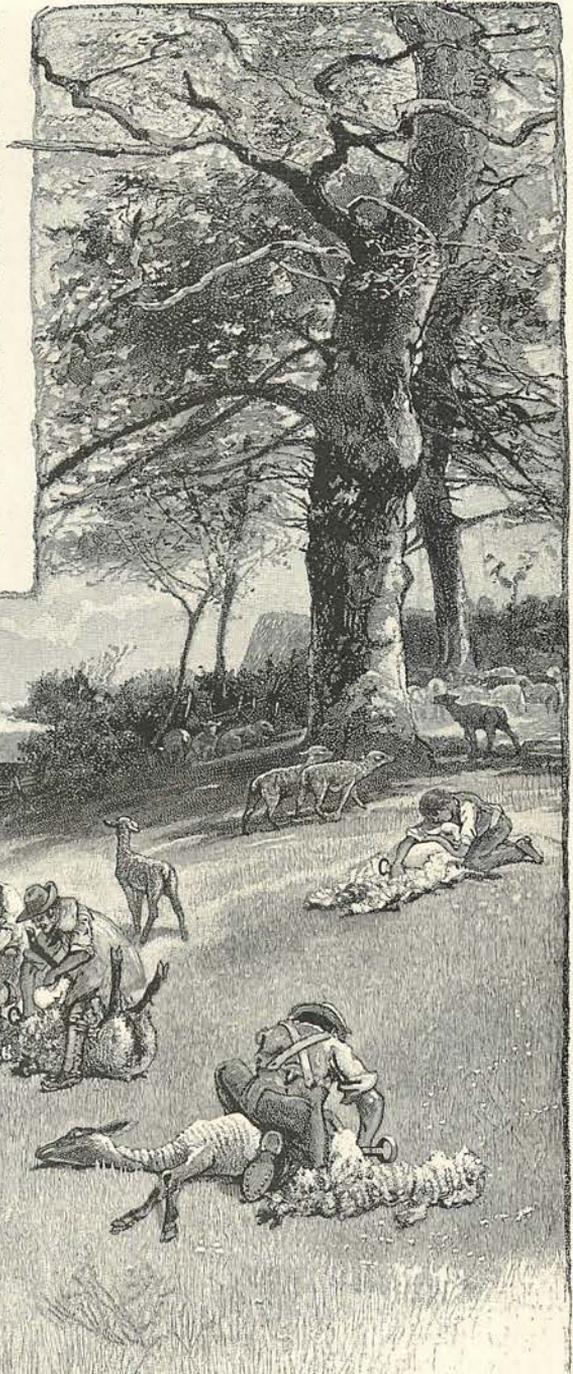
The geese were the only members of the farm-yard colony with whom I was on unfriendly terms. They always exasperated me with their ungainly waddle and suspicious manner. How is it the Orientals can revere and the Buddhists immortalize this sage-and-onioned biped?

We soon came to the conclusion that Farmer Stubble's lot was a trying one. He appeared in continual anxiety about the look of the sky for his crops, or the direction of the

wind for his flocks. Then misfortunes happened to the horses, the potatoes turned out badly, and so on. In March, so we learned, he always had an anxious time among the sheep, often spending whole nights with the shepherd in the fold, coming back at morn carrying half-dead new-born lambs, which had to be laid on straw near a fire. Many of them died, and others were fed for weeks on cows' milk, until they were strong enough to join the flock. What ungainly creatures young lambs are! It was quite pathetic to see the struggles of the sickly ones to take a few steps beyond the shed, the fruitless effort to manage those four long, thin legs, and still keep their equilibrium.

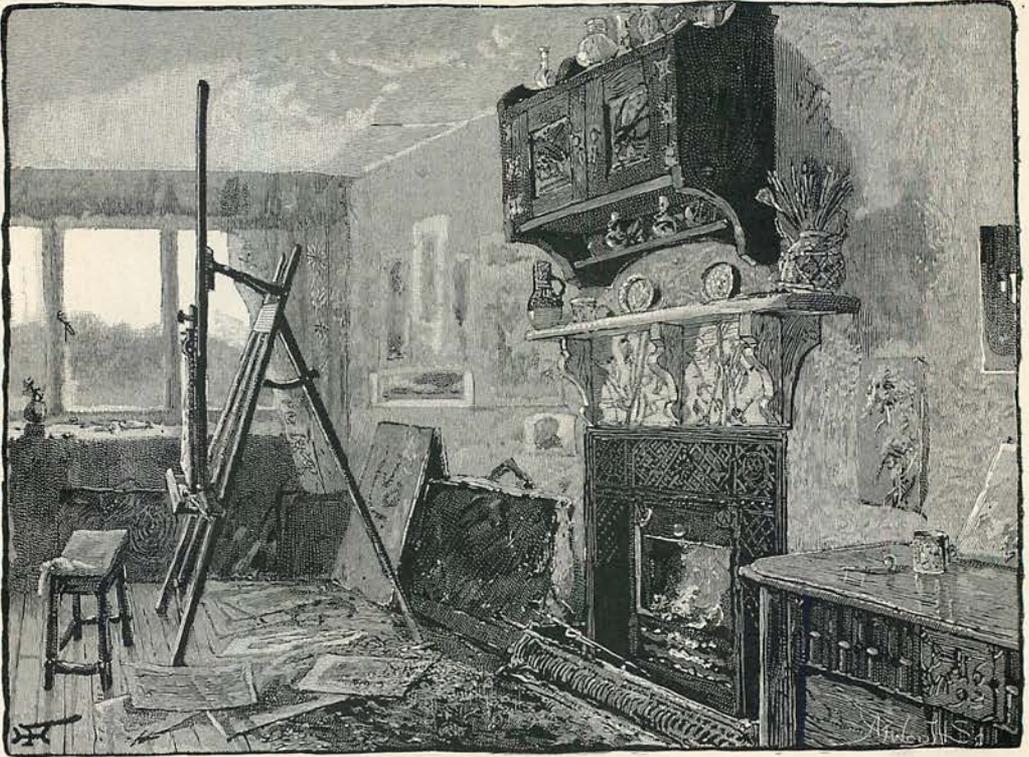
One morning, going down to the barn, I found two of the farm-laborers, Shadrach and Meshach (known among their brethren as Shed and Shach), raising a huge empty barrel into a wagon. In response to my inquiry one of the men said:

"We'se a-going ter wash them ewes, mum." A vision of "them ewes" being tumbled into the barrel and scoured seemed rather peculiar; so, on an invitation from Farmer Stubble, to "come and look on," I followed the procession. First went the lumbering, picturesque old cart, then the sheep were driven from the fold and turned into the lane, along which they crawled until they came to the mill-stream. I then found it was Shed and not the sheep that went into the barrel, which was placed in the water and lashed to the bank. The sheep were driven up on one side and guarded by several men, while the shepherd raised a great ewe in his arms and threw it head foremost into the rivulet. As it rose the watchful Shed, in the barrel, grasped it by the back and ducked it several times. Escaping from his hand, the poor half-drowned creature rushed toward a cut in the bank and so escaped



SHEEP-SHEARING.

to dry land. This process was gone through natural stupidity or the muddling effect of with all the sheep. Whether it was due to their water on the brain, many of them blundered



THE STUDIO.

into the stream again and tried to escape by a steep ascent on the other side. Then came the turn of the ruddy, cherub-like son of Shadrach, who, planted on the farther shore and armed with an iron hook on a ten-foot pole, crooked the wandering sheep to land. Many of them needed assisting up the slippery cut, and very comical it was to see their weak-kneed struggles to regain the meadow. They appeared utterly unable to account for the enormous additional weight of their water-soaked wool; and, as they stood huddled together in the puddles from their streaming sides, the bleating lambs did not appear to know their own mothers. The following day the flock was driven into a new fold in the hillside pasture, where the process of shearing commenced. All of the well-washed sheep were in turn deprived of their heavy winter coats. As they left the shearers' hands it did not seem possible that these poor, lean creatures could be the round balls of wool we were accustomed to see. Every shorn lamb gazed at its clipped and unclipped sisters with a vague, solemn look, wondering what *was* coming next. After the ordeal they were turned into the brightest meadow on the farm, and probably soon forgot the break of those two days in their monotonous life of nibbling. The numer-

ous flocks of sheep in Sussex give a charming pastoral effect to many of the delightful pictures of upland and lowland, so characteristic of southern England.

We soon became conversant with the "ins and outs" of our new life, and though the novelty gradually wore off, we were none the less happy in the old farmstead. With the determination to linger came the desire to make our rooms as homelike as possible. Very remarkable lithographs, representing Cromwell, Charles I., and other historical personages (in attitude and costume greatly suggestive of a "Punch and Judy" show), were banished from the walls to give place to Italian and Spanish sketches. A questionable studio carpet was replaced by Moorish rugs. Cabinets, bric-à-brac, and all an artist's paraphernalia arrived from London. Rooms were repapered, and the furniture covered with a Morris cretonne. With these more congenial surroundings we felt less dependent on outdoor enjoyment.

It was discovered in time that our beloved lattice windows had certain disadvantages! The center portion, which opens and shuts at will, was evidently constructed with an eye to ventilation. Being five hundred feet above the sea, and not a great distance from the

same, the spring and autumn gales from the ocean swept up the valley with great violence, more air than we cared about finding the way in from door and window, while on rainy days little rivulets would chase each other across the broad inner sill. Imagining that a miniature snow-drift would hardly be pleasant in one's dining-room, we hired the village carpenter, before winter set in, to construct an inner window of the clearest glass, to be as inconspicuous as possible, and yet to prevent these inconveniences. The effect was so successful that a few hours after its completion our fine collie-dog, seeing the middle portion open, as he thought, took his accustomed leap into the garden. He was not a little startled when the feat was accomplished, and he landed on the lawn bristling with broken splinters of glass.

In February we welcomed the twitter of the tiny fussy wren as a harbinger of good things to come. Great bunches of snowdrops brightened the winter hangings of our rooms, while the crocuses pushed their yellow buds through the mold to warn the great bare trees above them that spring had awakened from its long sleep. On the commons soon appeared the first burst of blossom from gorse and broom, followed by a transformation in the oaks and chestnuts from winter brownness to delicate greens and grays. Under foot the bracken peeped through the remains of autumn's russet clothing. In a week or so, when young leaves became a little more courageous, primroses and violets followed the example of their more stalwart leaders. Never have I seen such luxuriant growth of spring flowers as this little patch of Sussex woodland produced. It looked its best on a bright May morning, when the gnarled ivy-grown trunks of aged trees and the upright stems of younger ones alike threw shifting shadows across the path which wound up and up the flower-starred hillside until it appeared to meet the sky, where the budding trees outlined a delicate tracery of lace-work against the blue. Then in the meadows sprung the daffodils, and the hedges became laden with hawthorn bloom.

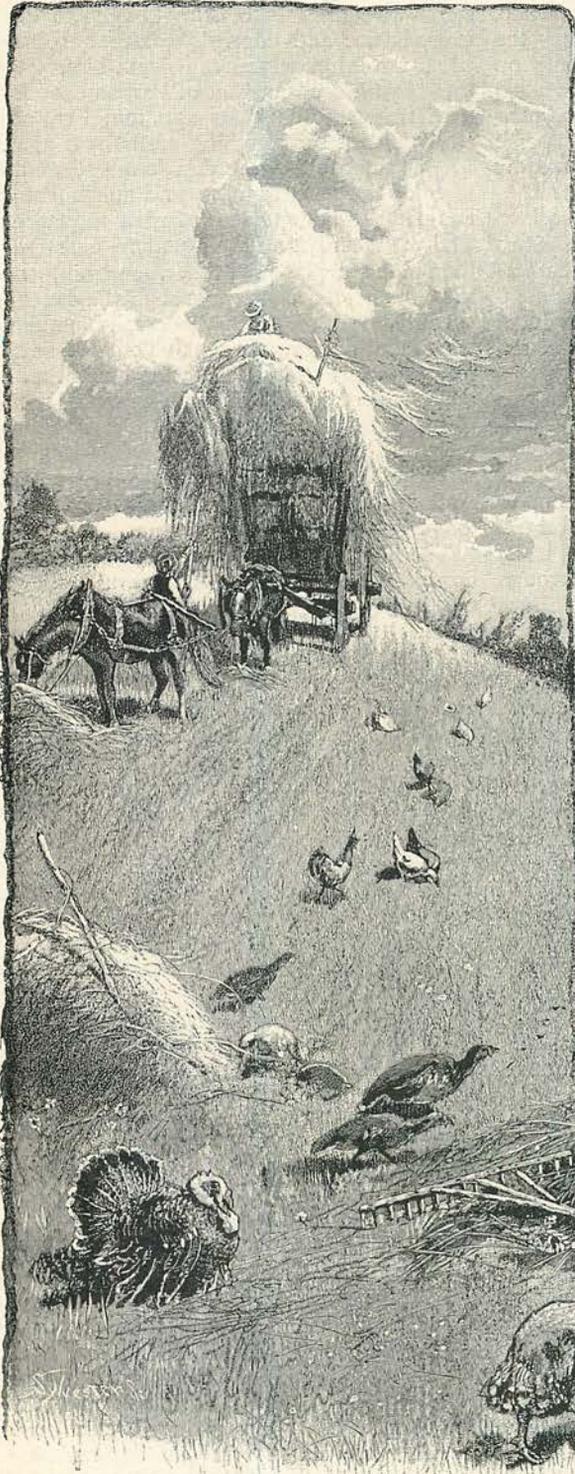
May-day has still a few devotees among the rural folks; children especially cling to its observance. Early on May-morning a party of little ones came to the farm, decked out with garlands and pink-paper rosettes. They sang May-songs, turning and twisting the while to give their audiences a full view of their adornments, and departed, the happy possessors of a dozen coppers. That is all of the good old May festival we ever saw. It would be difficult now to find a party of young people who would rise before dawn, as their grandparents did, to go a-Maying in the woods, and return "with

much blowing of horns ere the rising of the sun," with trophies of May boughs to deck every lattice and door. The harmless May-poles never recovered the death-blow given them by the Puritans' act of Parliament more than two hundred years ago, and I suppose we shall not see anything of the sort again. The country-folk of our day do not seem able to enjoy the reckless jollity and merriment we imagine as characteristic of their forefathers. The men care for nothing more boisterous than pipe and pint-pot at the village inn, while the young folk saunter through the lanes at evening, demure enough generally, until an occasional nudging from the youthful swain, or a suppressed giggle from the buxom maid, betrays the fact that they are enjoying themselves. One cannot wonder that some of the men find small inducement to hilarity, considering the struggle it must be to feed and clothe the many open-mouthed little ones belonging to them.

The little Gothic church over the common possessed quite a charm of its own. At the entrance was one of those characteristic lych gates, with its tiled and weather-toned roof and rusty iron bars and hinges. There was a sense of calm and peace about the elm-guarded grave-yard, that was very restful without being in the least melancholy. A great sun-dial silently measured out the hours on its stone face amid the moss-grown tombs of many generations. One mellow afternoon late in August I found the old sexton trimming the vines on the quaint rustic porch outside the church, and asked him how long the dial had been there. "There, now, mum, I couldn't at all say; long afore my father's time, I knows. I'm old-fashioned maybe, but me and mine allays clings ter the dials."

"You prefer them to clocks?" I said.

"Ay, ay, I do; but my darter's children says I'm fur behind the times. When I'm round here, like to-day, oftentimes I falls a-wonderin' how many more shadars it'll please the Lord ter mark on that old dial, 'fore I'm called home up yonder. My good wife's gone long ago, and though I've had a very good life, I aint never felt no dread 'bout being laid away. Then, yer see, this place is so natural-like to me." And thus the old man rambled on, snipping away the dead leaves from the creepers as we talked. Presently he wandered farther down the slope, leaving me to enjoy the glimpse of valley beyond "God's acre," where glistened a tiny lakelet with browsing cattle and sun-tipped beech-trees, the horizon bounded by the blue Sussex downs. Soon came the sound of the organ through the open door, and I sat for an hour listening to the chants and hymns the rector's



IN THE HAY-FIELD.

daughter was practicing for the next Sunday.

The interior of the church was very small, with vaulted roof and hammered stone walls. A fine time-worn oak screen divided the chancel from the nave. The school-children all sat grouped around the organ, that they might be under the eye of the rector's wife, who led the singing in a pure soprano voice. The tower contained but one bell, which was rung by the sexton from the nave. The strain on its voice in rousing the distant farmers for so many years each Sunday appeared to have had a very deleterious effect, if that account for the unmusical sounds evoked in its old age. One of the churches in a neighboring parish had eight fine bells. They were rung in the same way, the ropes coming down into the body of the church, where eight sturdy, white-jacketed men made the hills reëcho their powerful chimes.

Decorating the church for the yearly festivals was very pleasant work. The crumbling walls and old carved screen seemed always in sympathy with us, and aided all our endeavors. At Christmas we wreathed long trailing sprays of ivy round the pillars and windows, and placed shining masses of holly and evergreens in chancel and pulpit. At Easter-tide banks of moss filled the sloping stone window- ledges, daffo-

dils, primroses, and violets nestled in the worm-eaten crevices of the woodwork and encircled the pulpit. At Harvest all the creepers and foliage were ruddy, sunflowers reared their heads royally from dim corners, a great stack of wheat rose above the altar, while rosy-cheeked apples and other bright fruits were distributed in every available nook. The church kept up its prestige in its wedding garment also. Graceful ferns and hot-house flowers, white lilies and wreaths of spotless blossoms, borrowed a roseate glow from the reflection of St. Peter's red robe in the east window.

The rectory was a roomy, homelike old house. Its large hall, lined with massive bookshelves, contained many valuable works and copious folios of theological lore. Leading from the drawing-room was a bright conservatory, well filled with a fine collection of orchids and rare plants, with a background of passion-flower vine, which completely covered the wall. A great charm of the place was the garden, where every good old-fashioned flower had its place. We were not the only persons who appreciated the genial rector and his velvety lawns. Almost every fine afternoon some members of the county gentry drove over in time for that good English institution, five o'clock tea. Rattan chairs were placed under the huge elm-trees, and there the freshest of country waiting-maids handed round tea and cake in dainty china. The rector threw open his grounds to his little rustic parishioners at their annual school treat, which was looked upon by the juveniles as a great holiday. Early in the afternoon the children collected in groups near one of the rector's fields, all looking very much dressed up and terribly abashed at the phalanx of young ladies awaiting them. It was hard work at first to start the various games, but when the children became more used to us their spirits revived. They were soon laughing and screaming with perfect abandon. At half-past five they were placed in rank and marched through the tennis grounds to the lawn. Here they sang several songs and hymns. At a sign from the school-teacher all hats came off with a jerk, and heads were bowed while the rector said grace. The children responded with a loud Amen! and sat down in rows upon the grass. Then the feeding process began. The rector, assisted by several curates from neighboring parishes, distributed the tea, while the ladies passed round bread and butter. How the children did enjoy their food! Their capacity was something marvelous. Bread with jam was devoured with even more relish than the first course; and still they were ravenous when great lumps of currant cake appeared.

VOL. XXX.—76.



THE MAIL IN SUMMER.

At seven o'clock, after other games, the children were dismissed, and their day of pleasure was over. They wandered home in groups through the gathering twilight, all talking at once of the dissipation.

At Lynchmere the only connection we held with the outside busy world came through the daily visit of the post-boy. The sturdy little fellow trudged up the garden path shortly



THE MAIL IN WINTER.

after seven o'clock each morning. He had a round of some seventeen miles to make in order to reach the far outlying farmers, when they chanced to get a letter. The luxury of a second delivery would have been too startling for the little inland village, but of late years there was an afternoon post for those who cared to fetch it. Although only fifty odd miles from the metropolis, we felt that a hemisphere might lie between us and London. In our seclusion we never heard mentioned either wars or rumors of wars; the printed page of the press was the one and only source of knowledge. Sitting on a stile and reading of the latest play produced at the Lyceum made it seem as far off as the opera in New York. Walking to the post-office afforded a delightful stroll in summer, but a very unpleasant tramp in winter. If it rained the fields and road were muddy, and if it snowed the lane was full of drifts. In the warm weather we swung our Mexican hammocks beneath the oaks and fairly lived out-of-doors. Only two minutes' walk from the house was a little conical-shaped hill capped with larches and pines. The ground was overgrown with a mat of bracken and springy huckleberry. What could be pleasanter than such a couch as this! What luxurious hours were spent in watching the gentle rocking of the pines, with their rich prickly spears telling against the azure sky and feathery flying cloudlets! No sounds but those pertinent to the coppice were round us, the lulling murmurs of the trees, the hum of insects, or the occasional note of a songster. The harmony of color was complete too, for the red-topped

barns just beneath only added richness to the view between the pine-stems. Another favorite summer resort lay in the next valley. Four miniature lakes nestled side by side, with a stream running through them. The many gnarled and twisted trees growing at the water's edge had become undermined, and their trunks were slowly sinking, as if drawn down by magic. Some were three or four inches in the lake and others nearly touching. Woodland paths and little bosky clumps of foliage surrounded the lakes; a more perfect picnicking ground could not be imagined. Many of our party would creep out on the water-wooded trunks and start some well-known glee, which was caught up by each of these would-be birds, until the valley reëchoed with young voices. Coming home, instead of crossing the hill, we would skirt its base amid shadowed lanes, with here and there a glimpse of heathy down. Half-way to Lynchmere was a very quaint mill. Huge royal pines broke the rigid lines of its architecture, without obscuring a view of the powerful old wheel and the mellow-toned pool beneath. The mill had a haunted look by moonlight, though I doubt if that idea struck the inhabitants of the neighboring village, as it was a favorite trysting-place for rustic lovers.

Farmer Stubble took care that we should be interested in his farm as well as in the land surrounding it. At haymaking time it was very pleasant to go through the fields and watch the tossing grasses. On the breezy downs the hay was crisp and light, and flying about under the manipulation of the harvesters as if it were full of life. While the hay was piled in heaps preparatory to carting, after the laborers had departed we could make couches of it. Being far up on the hillside, all the fragrance of the lower fields rose to us as we watched the last golden streak of the after-glow beyond the silhouetted horizon-line before us. As the long English twilight set in, slight wreaths of mist wound themselves around the cottages in the valley at our feet, veiling them in a sort of poetic mystery. The mist slowly crept up, and when it had nearly reached us on the hill we reluctantly strolled home again, to find the evening primroses blown to their fullest, the farm-yard settlement gone to rest, and a light shining from the window to summon us in.

Adjoining the hay-fields were

"red apples in a sleepy orchard,  
Whose trees have branches gnarled and tortured  
By slow west winds that never cease."

In contrast to the still calm life of our summers in Sussex comes the memory of blustering autumn days on the commons. I recollect

very vividly one walk in early November. There had been a heavy rain-storm, followed by strong wind. It was late in the afternoon, and the great rolling masses of gray cloud were still bordered with an angry-looking fringe of yellow as they were hurled along remorselessly. With each gust of wind the glistening russet trees bent and rebounded. A few remaining leaves were torn from the branches, whirled round and round, then dropped. The low-growing rough furze, the golden bracken, and patches of faded heath were hardly moved by the great wind that set the tree-tops waving. The rugged road stretched on and on as far as eye could reach, bounded on either side by great masses of somber undergrowth. Not a dwelling nor a human being was in sight. Finally amid the fast-scudding clouds came a gleam of watery sunshine, which disclosed a vermilion speck in the far distance. That, I knew, must be the royal mail-cart, which was being lazily drawn home by the old white mare after its day's journey across the hills.

As winter approached, the huntsmen awakened into life and donned the "pink." Scarlet coats were seen on every hand, fox-hunting being one of the greatest amusements of life to the county gentry. A favorite place for the meet was a quaint open square of a neighboring village. Six roads met at this place, as if they all led to the Anchor, a flourishing old-fashioned coaching-house and inn. By the way, why should the emblem of Hope be such a favorite symbol of the wayside publicans? Another tavern of the village rejoiced in the name of "The Green Man." The Anchor, however, utterly ignored the existence of the Green Man. The former had several times entertained a full-fledged lord, whereas the latter was merely the rendezvous of the rustic inhabitants. The Anchor was patronized by the best class of farmers on market days, and by weary pedestrians on fishing and shooting expeditions. Here the huntsmen met and took their "snack" in the long, lattice-windowed bar-room before the start. It was a very bright sight to see the sportsmen congregated beneath the huge oak porch of the inn, watching the arrival of the hounds. The pack rushed round the square at a wild rate, giving the whippers-in plenty of work to do to keep them together. There was a great commotion in mounting of horses, but finally all was ready, the signal was given, and the sportsmen trotted off.

About Christmas-time there were several light falls of snow, just enough to cover the brown earth and pile softly layer upon layer over the great, bare oak-branches round our farmstead. The sturdy little spruce-trees

bordering the lawn caught every flake on the wing, and left bare patches of mold beneath them. The saucy robin-redbreasts, who had earlier in the season refused our offers of friendship, now came in numbers and perched at the latticed casement for their breakfast. Later on we had an unusually heavy snow-storm, such a one as England seldom sees. It commenced slowly and quietly as usual, giving us no warning that we were to see a touch of our veritable American winter. Gradually it came thick and fast, creeping up under the doors and windows, and through the old tiles on the attic roof. By sunset the noise of the pines on the hill was borne to us, the wind rose and whirled the falling crystals in swift eddies. All night it stormed, and by morning we were shut in from the outside world by two feet of snow and a drift of ten feet in the lane. Neither butcher nor baker nor candle-stick maker could approach for two days. We were snow-bound. The third day a thaw came, and the villagers waded about to compare notes. They seemed to think they had been transported to the Arctic regions.

The nearest village boasting of more than one shop was between two and three miles distant. All the life and business of the place were centered in High street, a name which designates the principal thoroughfare in half the towns of England. Dividing the commercial and exclusive ends of the street was the White Horse Inn, with the doctor's house on one side and the grocer's shop on the other. It was all trim and prim and English-looking, but not half so picturesque as a road on the outskirts of the village which ran down a steep hill, taking the quaint little red-tiled houses with it. The dwellings were of the humblest, but sweet and clean, with dimity curtains hung at every window. The small gardens in front were filled with sunflowers, marigolds, and sweet-william. I once took some shoes to be mended at one of the houses, and had a very amusing conversation with the old cobbler. Just before leaving I said:

"This country is so hilly, every one ought to wear stout shoes for walking."

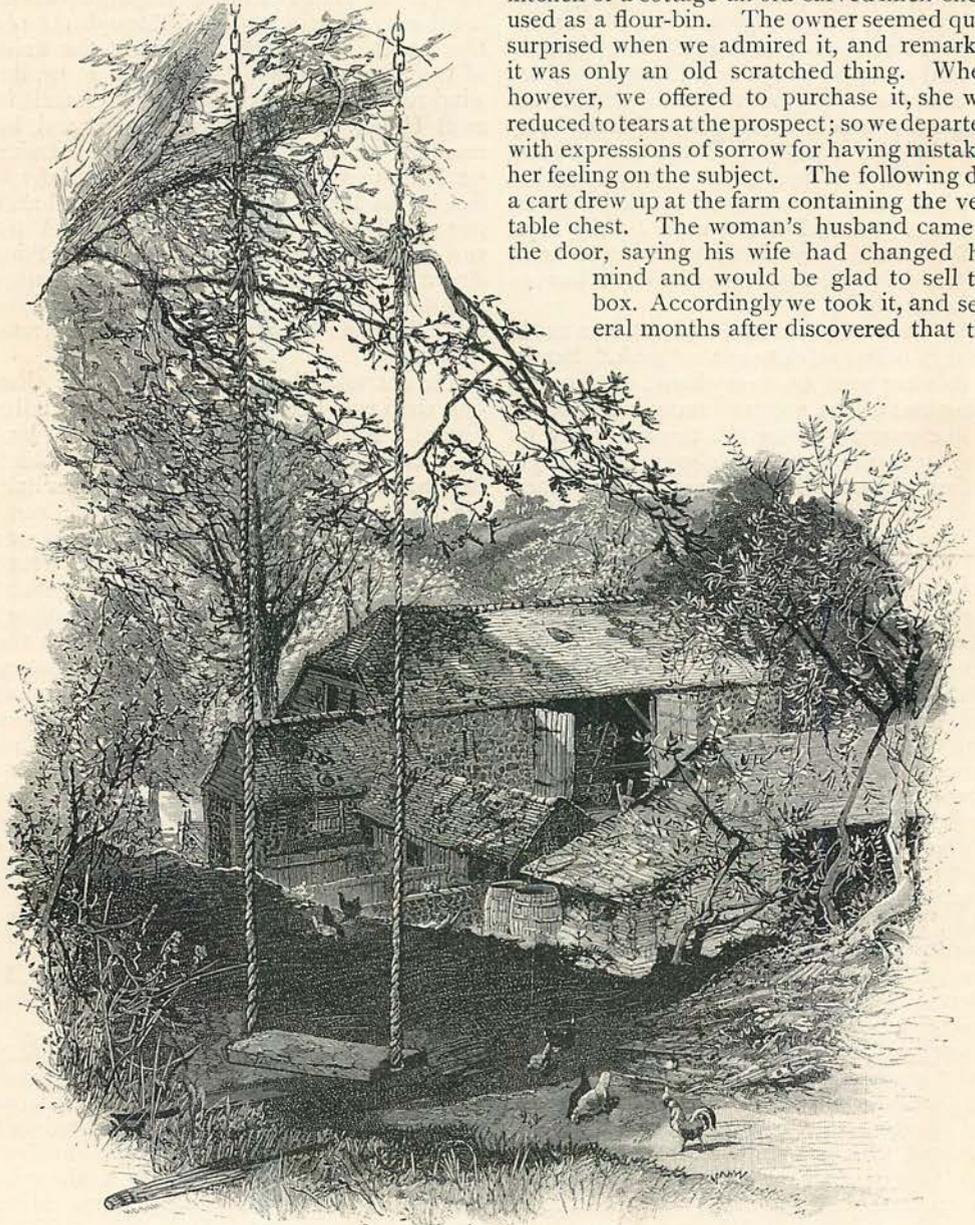
"Yes, mum, to be sure, you be quite right. It be very hilly; in fact, it 'ud be all hills if it wer'n't for the valleys."

All the tradespeople metaphorically pulled their forelock to the gentry, and patronized the peasantry by way of relief. We were treated with the degree of civility meted out to summer lodgers, until one little incident changed it to the servility shown to the aristocracy. I was seen driving down High street with one of the élite county families, and from that day the grocer, obsequious and

smiling, instead of his apron-smothered boy, came out to my wagonette for orders; the butcher touched his cap and carefully wiped his hands on his blue blouse, and the baker's little girl dropped a curtsy. I really believe the next sirloin of beef was a choicer cut because the butcher's cart intercepted a footman with a note issuing from our humble gate. Such is the power of caste!

We found that the indefatigable curiosity-hunters had succeeded in carrying off most

of the old china, carved oak, and quaint objects of household furniture from the neighborhood. In some cases, however, the owners remained obdurate, clinging with tenacity to their property, proof against the golden sovereigns exhibited by any siren who would charm away their heirlooms. It is not so much that they appreciate the beauty of their possessions, but in their conservatism they hate to part with anything used by their fathers before them. For instance, we noticed in the kitchen of a cottage an old carved linen-chest, used as a flour-bin. The owner seemed quite surprised when we admired it, and remarked it was only an old scratched thing. When, however, we offered to purchase it, she was reduced to tears at the prospect; so we departed, with expressions of sorrow for having mistaken her feeling on the subject. The following day a cart drew up at the farm containing the veritable chest. The woman's husband came to the door, saying his wife had changed her mind and would be glad to sell the box. Accordingly we took it, and several months after discovered that the



THE SWING.



THE VILLAGE STREET.

sensitive woman had been heard bemoaning her flour-bin.

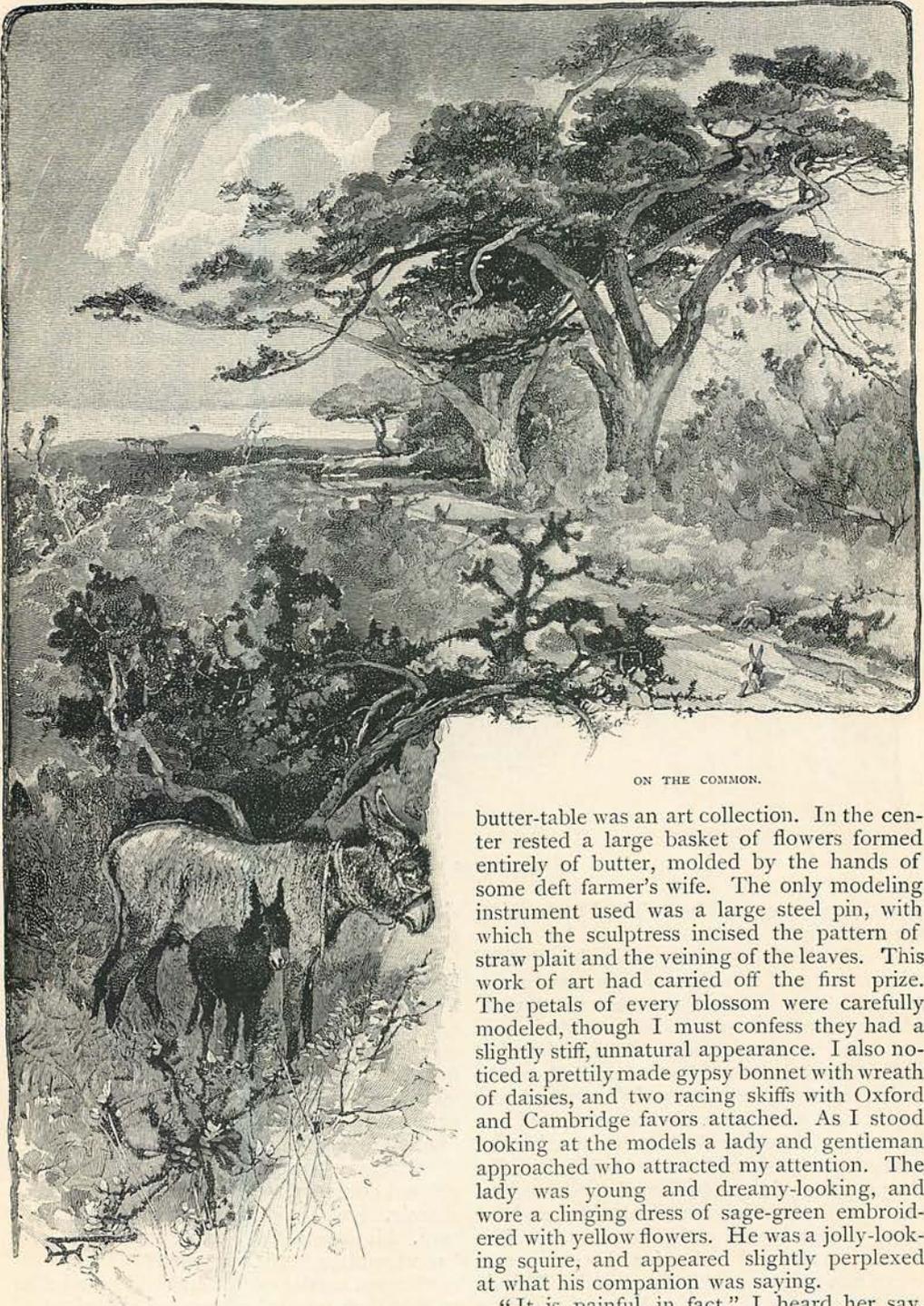
Hundreds of these country people only fifty miles from London had never been near the metropolis. They had lived on from year to year, with no variety except the different duties entailed by change of seasons. One of their few annual treats is the Horticultural Show, to which the richest farmers and the poorest cottagers alike contribute. Tents are erected in a large green or field, and a chosen committee of gentlemen superintend the arrangements. On the morning of the fête-day all the contributions are displayed on long deal tables, and the prizes decided on by the committee. The county gentry all patronize the show, and every one turns out in holiday garb. This is the only chance the rustics have of mingling with the aristocracy, a fact which they fully comprehend and make the most of. The vegetable tent is always filled with rough, sunburnt men, who earnestly discuss the relative

size and merits of rival groups of potatoes, beans, carrots, etc. One burly giant I noticed looking ruefully at a huge turnip cut in half. This Samson had been confident that his turnip would eclipse all the others in glory, but he forgot that quality as well as quantity was to be considered. When bisected, it was found to be hollow and pithy, while the small round solid one by its side had carried off the prize. Samson's brother farmers were good-humoredly chaffing him on the subject.

"Sam, my boy," said a little man in dun-colored corduroy, "you do things on too big a scale. Fact is, you're too big you'self, old man. Mayhap you'd like ter make all them 'ere vegetables ter fit your size."

"Seems, maybe, y'ure thinkin' I'm as holler as that ther turnip," responded the giant, at which all the farmers grinned.

"Say, Sam," broke in another, "I *guess* you better go off ter Amerquey. Them Yankees is the fellers for big things."



ON THE COMMON.

butter-table was an art collection. In the center rested a large basket of flowers formed entirely of butter, molded by the hands of some deft farmer's wife. The only modeling instrument used was a large steel pin, with which the sculptress incised the pattern of straw plait and the veining of the leaves. This work of art had carried off the first prize. The petals of every blossom were carefully modeled, though I must confess they had a slightly stiff, unnatural appearance. I also noticed a prettily made gypsy bonnet with wreath of daisies, and two racing skiffs with Oxford and Cambridge favors attached. As I stood looking at the models a lady and gentleman approached who attracted my attention. The lady was young and dreamy-looking, and wore a clinging dress of sage-green embroidered with yellow flowers. He was a jolly-looking squire, and appeared slightly perplexed at what his companion was saying.

"It is painful, in fact," I heard her say, "this bringing the unbeauteous side of life to the front."

"But, Miss B——," replied the gentleman, "don't you like to look at vegetables? One

I did not stay to hear what followed, but passed on to the next tent, which was full of fruit and dairy produce. In local opinion the

must eat to live, and the better our food the better our life, say I."

"We have no sympathy on this subject, I know," sadly replied the lady. At this moment Miss B—— caught sight of the butter display. "What a beautiful mission it would be," she exclaimed, "to teach these women the true beauty of form."

"Well," responded her companion, "I think all this is very pretty. If that basket were a classic urn, it would be better, you think. Why, you have actually imbued me with a poetic idea! Does not this table look as if the power of Midas had been transmitted to these dairy-maids, that what they touch has turned to gold?" With a hearty laugh at his inspiration the burly squire and fair æsthete passed on. I wonder if she enjoyed his Philistinic mirth?

The flower-tents were really charming, from the collection of orchids and palms of the manor conservatory to the nosegays of wild flowers gathered by the school-children. I was as much interested in watching the people as in looking at the show. Several times I passed the squire and Miss B——, and noted that they seemed mutually bored. Quite late in the afternoon my attention was attracted by an antiquated-looking little gentleman and two equally aged little ladies. Each had an arm of the gentleman and were settling their old-fashioned little shiny silk dresses, which had been ruffled by the crowd.

"Josiah," remarked one diminutive lady, "what is the name of that rose? it is charming, is it not, Dorothea?"

The trio paused in front of me, while obedient Josiah fumbled for his spectacles, and raised the card, on which was printed "Reine d'Angleterre." Josiah looked, then coughed, then looked again; then seeing me standing near, he turned, and with a courtly bow said: "Excuse me, madam, might I trouble you to inform me what this word *Reine* signifies? It is doubtless a French word, but I have long since forgotten the smattering of that tongue gleaned in my boyhood."

I gave the requested information, and Josiah, bending to the lady, said: "Queen! Queen! Why yes, of course. Queen d'Angleterre. Did you ever hear of her, Dorothea?"

Both of the ladies replied in the negative. Josiah stood a moment in deep thought, half turned again toward me, then moved back again, and took a pinch of snuff.

"Can't say I ever heard of her," he said. "Don't suppose there ever was a queen with such a name! Just a fancy idea of the florist's, depend upon it."

About six o'clock there came the distribution of prizes by the ladies of the manor. Each successful competitor, answering to his or her name, came forward to receive an award, sometimes delivered in useful articles, but more generally in the solid coin of the realm. With speeches of commendation and encouragement from several of the leading gentlemen, the people dispersed, and the festival closed at nightfall.

*Alice Maude Fenn.*

"WHOM HE LOVETH, HE CHASTENETH."

EVEN as the sculptor's chisel, flake on flake,  
Scales off the marble till the beauty pent  
Sleeping within the block's imprisonment  
Beneath the wounding strokes begins to wake —  
So love, which the high gods have chosen to make  
Their sharpest instrument, has shaped and bent  
The stubborn spirit, till it yields, content,  
Its few and slender graces for love's sake.  
But the perfected statue proudly rears  
Its whiteness for the world to see and prize,  
The past hurt buried in forgetfulness;  
While the imperfect nature, grown more wise,  
Turns with its new-born good, the streaming tears  
Of pain undried, the chastening hand to bless.

*Owen Innsly.*