

## THE GIPSY CHILD.

**F**ATHERLESS child of a vagabond race,  
With Ishmael writ on thy sad young face,  
What a life before thee lies!

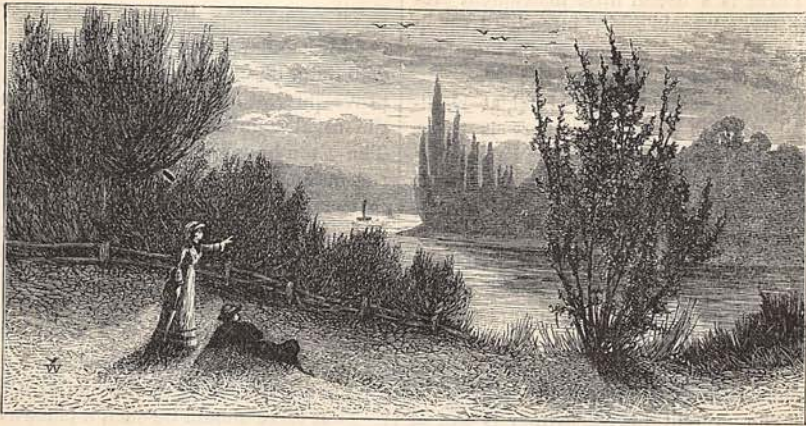
Far and wide through the land to roam,  
With a crowded tent for thy only home,  
And rags for thy only guise.

Trained to lie, to thieve, and cheat—  
Knowing no virtue but cunning deceit,  
No crime but being detected;

Fearing for nothing but blow or gibe—  
Bitterly sharing the fate of thy tribe,  
Despised, derided, suspected.

Scanty indeed are thy joys on earth!  
’Twill be the day of thy death and the day of thy birth  
There’s little to lighten or leaven;  
But, oh, look upward, young Ishmaelite!  
Though ’tis dark below, yet above there is light,  
And thou still hast a “Father in heaven.”

WM. A. GIBBS.



## A VOYAGE ON THE THAMES.



**O**UR object in penning this article is to endeavour to show how, presupposing the blessing of fair health, an agreeable holiday may be spent without rushing into the excitement and rattle of a city, or retiring recluse-like to some unfrequented country-corner. In order to do this, we propose giving a short sketch of a voyage up the Thames as far as Oxford, which was made by us in the latter part of June last year. It is a simple record of a series of delightful days spent on the bosom of our fairest river, of the sights we saw, and of the information we gathered. As lovers of the curious and the picturesque, we devoted a considerable portion of our time to the exploration of odd corners, and interviews with “oldest inhabitants,” and our quests and questionings were often rewarded with unexpectedly satisfactory results. One of the party, it may be mentioned *en passant*, was an enthusiastic antiquary, and to his inquiries and researches many of the notes of ruins, &c., are due. It may also be mentioned that we had ample time at our disposal, and were therefore enabled to make frequent excursions inland, and gather the most interesting facts concerning the towns and villages through which we passed. As already

stated, the start was made in the latter part of June, and many a farewell cheer and good wish followed our boat as we pushed off from the landing-stage at Teddington.

The first place of importance we reached on our upward journey was Kingston, one of the oldest of English towns; indeed, it is said to have been the metropolis of the Anglo-Saxon kings. However this may be, there is no disputing the fact that the first charter was granted to the town by King John, and this event is sufficient to vouch for a respectable amount of antiquity. The most interesting antiquarian object in the town is the “King’s Stone.” This stone used in former days to stand near the church door (it is now in the centre of the town, surrounded by a handsome iron railing), and has from time immemorial been regarded as that upon which the Saxon Kings of Wessex were inaugurated according to the old Teutonic custom. Athelstan, the first of the Saxon kings crowned at Kingston, was the first of the race who placed on their coins the title of King of all England. Bond’s Hotel, with its garden reaching to the river-side, is a very favourite stopping-place for boating men.

Passing through Moulsey Lock, a short pull brings us opposite Garrick’s Villa, which may easily be recognised by the Rotunda standing close to the river-side. This Rotunda once contained the statue of Shake-



spere now in the British Museum; in fact, it was built purposely for its reception. The new church at Hampton, a few furlongs further on, may claim the proud distinction of being the most hideous church on the banks of the river.

Sunbury is not a place possessed of any particular interest, but when we come to Walton there are several points well worthy of notice. Near here is an eminence called St. George's Hill, from the summit of which a most magnificent view may be obtained; in fact, it would be difficult to name a spot in England which commands a more extensive view of the surrounding country. Not only does the eye wander over Middlesex and Surrey, but also over Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, and even Sussex. There is a useful little instrument preserved in the vestry, a "scold's bit," intended to stop the excess of loquacity on the part of certain members of the fair sex. Ladies, beware of Walton!

Not far from Stone's famous Ship Hotel, at Halliford, a delightful piece of artificial scenery is to be met with, in the shape of a beautiful lawn sloping down to the river's edge. It forms part of the grounds attached to the house of, we believe, a member of Parliament, and is generally admitted to be the finest piece of cultivated greensward on the banks of the Thames. From Halliford to Shepperton is only about a mile, but the river is shallow, and the stream very strong, a pleasing combination which calls the biceps well into play.

The site of one of the earliest bridges in England is at Staines. The present bridge, which is not of very imposing appearance, was erected in 1832, and was opened in state by King William IV. and Queen Adelaide. Close to Staines stands "London Stone," the boundary of the Counties of Middlesex and Buckinghamshire, and also the mark of the ancient jurisdiction of the City of London up the Thames. Round the top of the stone was inscribed, "God preserve the City of London. A.D. 1280," and part of the inscription is still legible. A short distance above Staines is Magna Charta Island—the spot where King John is said to have signed the interesting document. The island lies midway between Runnymede and Ankerwycke, the latter of which is now a modern mansion, but was formerly a nunnery, founded in the reign of King Henry II. King Henry VIII. is said to have wooed the unfortunate Anne Boleyn under a yew-tree at Ankerwycke, but why he should have wooed her under any particular tree history sayeth not. The stone on which the Great Charter is reported to have been signed may still be seen, as it now forms a table in the cottage on the island.

Of Windsor—that world-renowned town—so many capital guide-books have been published, that it would be waste of time for us to enter into a description of its manifold beauties. It is true that the grand old Castle is called the only royal residence, for the reason that it is the only one in England which can vie in grandeur with the palaces of other European monarchs; but how far does it exceed in grandeur and beauty of position any other royal residence in

the world! The views of the Castle from the river are exquisite, and its lofty turrets may be seen for many miles. Just at this part the river twists about like a worm in its death-agonies, and when we imagine we are well away from the precincts of the Castle, lo! and behold, we find ourselves almost under its shadow again. It does not need the towering Castle of Windsor to inform us that we are approaching the classic ground of Eton. Swarms of youths in boats, and clad in wonderfully coloured garments, at once apprise us that we are in the neighbourhood of some large public school. *Floreat Etona!* Who does not know this familiar motto? In 1441 the College at Eton was founded by Henry VI., and the poet sings that there—

"Grateful Science still adores  
Her Henry's holy shade."

Old Etonians know what Eton is; to others an elaborate description of the College could scarcely prove interesting. A handsome statue in bronze of the royal founder occupies one of the quadrangles. The Eton boys are famed for "chaff," and woe betide the unhappy tyro who takes his first rowing lessons in that which they consider their portion of the river. No doubt Wellington, Canning, Gray, Praed, Kean, and Gladstone contributed their share of banter in their time, for they were, one and all, Eton boys in days gone by.

The next halting-place for refreshment is Surly Hall, a very good inn indeed, and much frequented by the aquatic young gentlemen of Eton.

That there should be such a place as Monkey Island in this monkeyless land may appear strange, but a spot with such a name does exist about a mile below Bray. The island is so called from a number of pictures, still in existence, said by some to have been painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, but which more probably owe their origin to the active brush of one Clermont, a French artist of some repute. A fishing lodge was built here by the third Duke of Marlborough, and it is now turned into an hotel, and a very good one too. The monkey pictures are preserved at the hostelry. The stream runs past this island more rapidly than in any other part of the river, and the *cognoscenti* going "up" avoid the trying arm-work by a judicious "tow." There is a capital inn about half a mile beyond Monkey Island—at Amerden Bank—a retired spot, where the "gentle angler" may make himself very happy, and be sure of a good catch of fish in the vicinity.

The view from Maidenhead Bridge is very beautiful. On one side rise the trees from the river-bank to the wooded heights that surround Clevedon, whilst on the other the pretty islet, the Church of Bray, the near meadows, and distant hills tempt one to linger long in admiration. A little below Maidenhead is Taplow Bridge, which possesses the largest brick span in the world. It was constructed from the design of that eminent engineer, Brunel.

Leaving Maidenhead, we come upon the grand woods of Clevedon, high up in which is situated Clevedon House, the seat of the Duke of West-



minster. His Grace's grounds are amongst the loveliest, most graceful, and most richly cultivated of the kingdom. Of the beautiful woods it is simply impossible to give an adequate description. Their wonderful beauties cannot be recorded upon paper. The rich variations of colour, the splendid foliage, and the general grandeur of the scene must be seen to be believed or appreciated. There is no scenery in England which approaches so nearly to that of Killarney as that at Clevedon. Clevedon House was originally built by Charles Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the famous Villiers of the reign of Charles II. It has been twice destroyed by fire, and the edifice now standing was built some thirty years since for the Duke of Sutherland, by the architect Barry.

Henley is really a town, and boasts a very substantial stone bridge, which was erected in 1787. The bridge consists of five arches, the keystone of the centre arch being decorated by sculptured allegorical heads of Thames and Isis, the work of the Hon. Mrs. Damer. The regatta, which is held here in the month of June every year, is the aquatic event of the year *par excellence* (excepting only the Oxford and Cambridge boat race), and brings together the *élite* of society. The regatta was established in 1839.

The readers of "Sandford and Merton"—and there are many thousands of them—may perhaps care to learn that the author of that popular book is buried at Wargrave, a pretty little town beyond Henley; the tablet to the memory of Mr. Day is in the old church. At Park Place, in this neighbourhood, is a Druids' Temple, discovered at St. Helier's, Jersey, and carefully removed to the spot where it now stands. Permission can generally be obtained to view this and the other parts of the grounds of Park Place (which are private) if application be made beforehand. We were delighted with our visit.

Passing Shiplake and Sonning, both very charming little places, but which do not call for any special remarks, we come to Reading and Caversham. So far as we could ascertain, the chief product of Reading is biscuits, a vast quantity of which are prepared at the manufactory of Messrs. Huntley and Palmer, whose works we were, by the courtesy of the manager, allowed to inspect. This firm gives employment to over 700 hands. Still more old abbeys. There are the remains of one here, but only the gateway now exists, and that has been turned into an armoury for the local volunteers. The old abbey grounds are now pleasure gardens, and the materials of the crumbling edifice have been used from time to time in the repair of other and more modern buildings.

One of the loveliest spots—if not *the* loveliest spot—on the whole river is Mapledurham. There is a charming old mill, set in a frame of beautiful trees, which is considered by every one to be the most picturesque bit on the Thames; there is the Manor House—belonging to the Blount family—built in the Elizabethan style, with its broad avenue of magnificent elms, nearly a mile in length; and a little further on is Hardwicke House, a fine old mansion, said to have been the hiding-place for some time of Charles II. Well does Mapledurham merit the title which has been bestowed upon it, that of the "Painter's Paradise."

Pangbourne is a pearl of English landscape, and a pearl very difficult to match. The followers of old Izaak Walton are in their glory here, for fish of every kind abound. That much-sought-after fish, the trout, seems to have made this place his head-quarters, for a fisherman told us that no less than 150 had been taken out of the pool in one season.

When we arrive at Nuneham we are not far from Oxford, so near indeed that it is the favourite spot for pic-nics of the Oxford folk. The scenery is lovely, and the beautiful park, over 1,200 acres in extent, is wooded in an exquisite manner. Deer are preserved in the park in large numbers, and thoughts of haunches of venison float through the mind (our minds, at all events) as the eye falls upon the graceful herds. Nuneham is also the possessor of a picturesque bridge, the centre arch of which suffers from the disadvantage of having only about a foot of water under it—some-



THE RETURN HOME.

times less. Boats should therefore avoid the middle channel. Close to Sandford Lock there are some very pretty bathing-pools, but they are very deep and dangerous. Several University men have been drowned there, and an obelisk has been raised to the memory of two Christchurch men who there met with an untimely end. Jack-fishers will do well to note that the water between Sandford Lock and Nuneham swarms with that voracious fish of the genus *Esox*.

From Iffley we can see the spires and turrets of the churches and colleges of classic Oxford, and a short spurt brings us to the end of our pleasant journey.

This is the simple record of a delightful trip, and we can conscientiously recommend those who have not made the journey to take the earliest opportunity of doing so. Fresh air, fresh scenes, and fresh water are three great things in life, and all of them are to be met with in abundance in a voyage on the Thames.

EDWARD OXENFORD.