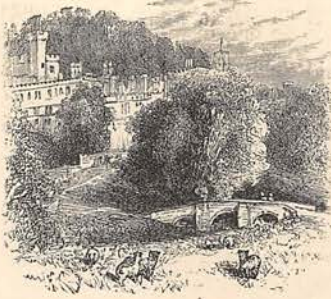


HIGH TOR, MATLOCK.

## A DASH THROUGH DERBYSHIRE ON AN EXPRESS ENGINE.

HERE is a vast and indispensable difference between the driver of the mail of to-day and the driver of the mail of yesterday—that is, of half a century ago. Tony Weller and Toodles are diametrically distinct types of character. A short,

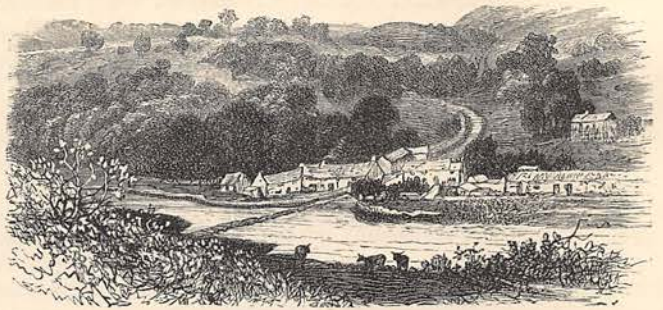


HADDON HALL.

stout, purple-pimple-faced, twin-chinned, red-nosed, many-caped, dram-drinking, jovial Jehu was the driver of "The Commodore," or "The High-flyer:" greasy, grimy, gritty, preternaturally steady, serious, and saturnine is the modern coachman, the man who drives the Midland "Scotchman," the London and North-western "Wild Irishman," or the Great Western "Flying Dutchman." The route traversed by the Iron Horse has none of the characteristics of the old road about it. Instead of pleasant, old-fashioned hostleries, with wide courtyards and rambling galleries, we have now uncompromisingly utilitarian stations, and severely uninteresting junctions. Signal-boxes and level-crossings apologise for the absence of the odd, old-world toll-gates. For stables we have circular steam-sheds, as black as Erebus; and the steed is groomed by a sooty band of Plutonic attendants, more sable than chimney-sweeps, who bear bunches of subtle-smelling oil-waste in lieu of the clean and sweet straw of lang syne. The duties, too, of the driver of yore were easy of execution. His life was a happy holiday existence. He—"good easy man!"—was perplexed with no elaborate code of rigorous regulations. He was guided by only one rule—the Rule of the Road—which has been put into four lines:—

"The Rule of the Road is as plain as one's hand—  
T' explain it I need not be long:  
If you keep to the left you are sure to be right;  
If you keep to the right you are wrong."

But the charioteer of the modern mail is a man signally oppressed. He has to distinguish between conflicting signals of red, white, and green; between disc signals and semaphore signals; between home signals and distant signals; between fog signals and plate-layers' signals. He must possess an amazing memory as to the number of whistles he has to give in passing this junction, and the number required for that. He has to serve a hard apprenticeship to his work. A youth, he enters the engine-shed as a cleaner. He is promoted by-and-by to the duties of a stoker, and passes, in course of a tedious training, to occasional responsibility as a shunting driver. Then he proceeds to regularly drive a goods train, progresses to passenger-engine work, and reaches the highest grade of his calling when he takes charge of an important express train. The Don Phaethon of the past had hardly the cares of the modern cabman: the



VIEW IN MONSAL DALE.

Don Phaethon of the present has responsibility writ large on his anxious face. He is the daily custodian of several hundred lives. He must always be on the alert. A momentary suspension of vigilance on his part might spell the direst disaster. The passing of a signal at danger might result in a loss of life, and a wreckage of property, too appalling to be over-



estimated. The law does not recognise his human fallibility. A verdict of "manslaughter" awaits the indiscretion of his eye, or the weakness of his overwrought frame.

I have been betrayed, reader of mine, into this rather digressive dissertation on engine-drivers and engine-driving, by observing the movements of the driver of the Midland express, as he guides his train along its gleaming path of steel Manchesterwards. The courteous kindness of the chief of the Locomotive Department has provided me with a place on the engine, but the driver is too engrossed in his duties to appear sensible of my presence. His hand never leaves the regu-

busy platforms of Derby Station, admiring this splendid machine which is now throbbing with restless life, as it paused for a few minutes in its journey from London. Its leading "bogie" wheels were pointed out to me with pride, and my attention was also attracted to its coupled driving-wheels, each 6 feet 8 inches in diameter—but now the telegraph posts are flying after each other in an endless chase, and the foot-board on which I stand quivers with motion. Just as a "land-lubber" has to find his "sea-legs" on ship-board, so a landsman riding on a locomotive engine has difficulty in keeping his feet. To move without support is an impossible operation. Before we started the dazzling dog-day



'FLITTING THROUGH THE FIELDS AGAIN.'

lator, save to sound the whistle, and he keeps a lynx-eyed look-out through the glass before him, that never wanders. The fireman, who necessarily wears a very dirty face, and a butcher's blouse, blue-black, and who like Toodles is "besmeared with coal-dust and oil, and has cinders in his whiskers, and a smell of half-slaked ashes all over him," is kept continuously active by the demands of the furnace. The locomotive, like the fat boy in the "Pickwick Papers," is always demanding refreshment. The coal-laden shovel is scarcely ever absent from its hungry mouth, while its consumption of water shows a thirsty weakness for the "crystal spring," which ought to induce the Good Templars to make the Iron Horse their patron saint. But do not let us malign the active animal. A steam-pressure which runs up to 250 pounds to the square inch needs some support, you know.

A quarter of an hour ago I was standing on the

heat was overpowering. A burning pulsation of the air was the only suspicion of a breeze. But now a very whirlwind is rushing past, and if it were not for the gridiron, which is frying my feet to a turn, the sensation of riding on the engine would be one of cucumbrian coolness. Nottingham Road, Saint Mary's, Breadsall, Little Eaton, and Duffield have flown past with startling fleetness. Now Milford Tunnel receives us into its gloom, and presently we are flitting through the fields again, with views before and behind, to the right hand and to the left. The cud-chewing cattle contemplate us with philosophic calmness. Sir Francis Head, in his "Stokers and Pokers," tells us that when railway trains first ran, the startled cows, and sheep, and horses used to scamper away from the sound of the approaching train for their very lives, but now it is a matter of difficulty to keep them off the lines. They heed not the board of "Caution to



Trespassers," and cow-catchers, after the American principle, may yet have to be adopted upon English railways. Only the other day the "Scotchman" lowered the price of beef at Settle by running into a herd of bullocks. But this by the way.

We have torn past Belper. There is something singularly inspiring in this rush at a mile a minute through charming scenic surroundings. One enjoys what De Quincey calls "the glory of motion." Stay! This sudden shutting off of the steam, and the prompt application of the brakes, is alarming; but the precaution, it appears, is only taken for the safe rounding of the severe curve at Ambergate Junction. Behind is our train, winding round the curve like a gliding serpent, a train of long twelve-wheeled "bogies" carriages, and Pullman cars. Before us opens out the Vale of Matlock. A sylvan spot, this valley at Ambergate, with its radiant river rippling under the tinted trees; its wonderful 'wealth of foliage, rising tier above tier in banks of leafy loveliness; and its background of Derbyshire hills swelling in the sunlit perspective. Onward we urge at sensational speed, shooting numberless bridges, whisking over the river here, booming through a tunnel there; now darting through a deep cutting, whose scarp and rugged sides are diversified with feathery ferns and golden gorse; then dashing through the forest growth which skirts the park of Alderwasley, with tall trees casting soothing shadows on either side, and forming an archway of luminous leaves overhead. To our right is the tall, tower-crowned hill, locally known as Crich Stand. Yonder, nestling among the trees on the wooded height, is Lea Hurst, the home of Florence Nightingale. Whatstandwell, in all its wooded beauty, is left behind. Cromford, with its grey church communing with the whispering river—with its Willersley Castle, the residence of the Arkwrights, on the hill-side—and with its naked rocks, like my Lady Godiva, "clothed on with chastity," in the shape of waving flounces of graceful green—is reached, and now we are hissing through the long tunnel which gives access to Matlock Bath. A "hurrygraph" of the Swiss beauties of Matlock Bath, a flying *coup-d'œil* of the Heights of Abraham, of the Derwent tumbling in cascades of foam-flecked water over its boulder-bestrewn bed, and of the white houses perched upon the hill-sides, and then we are burrowing under the High Tor. Soon Matlock Bridge bursts past. Then Darley Dale opens out fresh vistas of Peak scenery. That isolated eminence to the left is Oker Hill. It wears a coronet of two sycamore-trees. There is a tender tradition attached to these sycamores which Wordsworth has recorded in a sweet sonnet:—

" 'Tis said that to the brow of yon fair hill  
Two brothers clomb, and, turning face from face,  
Nor one look more exchanging, grief to still  
Or feed, each planted on that lofty place  
A chosen tree; then, eager to fulfil  
Their courses, like two new-born rivers, they  
In opposite directions urged their way  
Down from the far-sung mount. No blast might kill  
Or blight that fond memorial;—the trees grew,  
And now entwine their arms; but ne'er again  
Embraced those brothers upon earth's wide plain;

Nor aught of mutual joy or sorrow knew  
Until their spirits mingled in the sea  
That to itself takes all, Eternity."

Past Darley Dale Church, which by common consent is allowed to have the oldest yew-tree in the country. The guide-book historiographers say that the tree is 2,300 years old, and that its girth exceeds ten yards, facts which will not send the world into convulsions of doubt. A fugitive glimpse of that Darley Valley whose beauties evoked from the poetic pen of Lord John Manners some stanzas less notorious than the lines—

"Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,  
But leave us still our old nobility."

Rowsley Station slips past in a cloud of steam, and now we pant into a long tunnel which burrows under the time-hallowed towers of Haddon Hall. Out into the genial light of day again. In the hay-scented meadows the winding Wye, shining like a band of burnished steel, wanders about the country with serpentine bendings. Bakewell, a pleasant old town tucked in by the hills, hurries past. Hassop and Longstone succeed each other with startling rapidity. Now Monsal Dale—the Paradise of the Peak—reveals all its bewitching, bewildering beauty. The line runs along the hill-side, and the valley is a great distance below. Soon we are introduced to Cressbrook Dale, where the Wye winds through waving woodland heights; and then, after a tantalising tunnel has created us of views of poetic beauty, Miller's Dale is reached. The picturesque aspect of many of the towering tors in this district is being impaired by the sacrilegious workings of the limestone companies. Utilitarianism would run a siding connection into Arcadia itself, were the project practicable; but we are not yet so depraved as our 'cute cousins "across the ferry." The romantic rocks of this neighbourhood are not yet "coigns of 'vantage" on which to paint or paste advertisements relating to Drake's plantation bitters, or Horatio P. Smith's curling fluid, or Cato R. Browne's two-dollar prize pantaloons. Mr. Ruskin waxed very wroth when the railway was carried through this enchanted valley of the Wye. "That valley," he wrote in "Fors Clavigera," "where you might expect to catch sight of Pan, Apollo, and the Muses, is now desecrated in order that a Buxton fool may be able to find himself in Bakewell at the end of twelve minutes, and *vice versa*." When the Kendal and Windermere Line was projected, Wordsworth was similarly agitated, and selfishly called on the "mountains, vales, and floods" to "share the passion of a just disdain." Both railways, despite the protests of the ruling poet and the rampant reformer, are, however, accomplished facts of substantial proportions; and the one line has opened out all the loveliness of Lakeland to the time-tied tourist, while the other has introduced to town-toilers a district which was one of Nature's sealed and inaccessible books. The Midland engineers have certainly not marred the picturesque passages of these fair valleys, for the work of man fighting with Nature for the mastery adds to, instead of detracting from, the grandeur of the prospect. It



is a line of stupendous works, which compel admiration; of sharp curves and severe gradients, of lofty viaducts and graceful bridges of great strength spanning gaping chasms, of cuttings hewn out of the limestone rock, and embankments rising out of the valley.

We pause at Miller's Dale Station to detach the Buxton passengers. Now the guard blows the whistle to proceed again, and the engine answers with a scream. A stout gentleman, who carries a red nose and a fishing-rod, pants pathetically up the platform in a perspiration and a hurry. But he is just one puff too late, and in waiting for the next train he will have time to moralise on the evils of unpunctuality. We are now running by the side of the Wye, on a terrace on the hill-side. The tunnels rob us of many charming vignettes, but the ride is remarkable for sweet surprises in scenery. The ravine along which we now pass is Blackwell Mill Junction. To the left is the loop line to Buxton. Presently the "chay-chay" of the engine tells that we are climbing up the stiff gradient along Great Rocks Dale. The blocks of limestone, peering here and there through the grass, are liable to suggest petrified sheep to a mind addicted to comparisons. Soon Dove Holes is reached, and the line drops down towards Manchester through a tunnel two miles in length. The black obscurity is now before us—a detonating signal explodes with a loud report under the wheels, and the iron monster gives an unnatural scream, as though it had received a death-wound, and with palpitating heart and quivering sides plunges into the Stygian vault. A caution signal sends us on at slackened speed, then a white light waved in the

darkness puts the steam on again. That scream has sent strange echoes flying. Ten thousand and one noises seem to compete in a clattering chorus of deafening, deadening din. The darkness may be felt. Sulphur fumes are added to the damp earthy smell. The circle of white light, thrown out by the furnace-fire, gives Rembrandt-like portraits of the enginemen at their post, peering through the gloom. A reverberating rumble is heard quite near. Two ogre-eyes are burning their way through the darkness. In another second an avalanche of thunder and lightning is hurled past on the "up line" with awful velocity. With a shriek, and a rattle, and a roar, on and still on. Fantastic flakes of fire flutter from the engine-chimney, and fly fitfully overhead. Now and again an air-shaft in the tunnel-roof sends down a delusive glimmer of day. Right in front is the tunnel-mouth, in size looking like a threepenny bit: it gets larger: now it assumes the dimensions of a sixpence: it grows into a shilling: soon it appears like a florin, and presently resembles a five-shilling piece. Another minute's imprisonment in this vile vault, and then we burst into the summer sunshine again. Viaducts carry us over Chapel-en-le-Frith, and give us Asmodeus-like privileges with regard to peeping down cottage chimneys and into bed-room windows.

New Mills is the next station, and after passing that we pull up at Marple, where the Liverpool portion of the train is uncoupled. We have passed through the Peak now, and the poetry of the railway gives place to common-place prose. So I find a seat in the train for the ten miles which separate Marple from Manchester.

STREPHON.

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## ANGELS OF TWILIGHT.

**F**OLLOWS of purple with golden hem  
Have folded themselves in the clouded west;  
There are dew on every daisy-stem,  
And the rustling grasses sigh of rest.

The lilies that droop by the misty lawn  
Are snowy-hooded and sweet of breath;  
The young moon slings her silver horn  
Where the star of twilight wakeneth.

The toil and the heat are over now,  
My soul shakes off its torpor dumb,  
I lave the earth-damps from my brow,  
And lift mine eyes: behold! they come—

They come! sweet dreams that had slipped away,  
Voices of peace that were drowned anon,  
Visions unseen in the glare of day,  
And saintly shapes from the times agone;

And holy thoughts of holiest things,  
Like spirit-songs from the breadths above,  
And gleams of light from the shining wings  
That circle the throne of the Lord of Love.

Angels of twilight, soft and calm,  
They raise no voice, they lift no cry,  
But their pinions drip with light and balm,  
In the halls of the soul, as they flutter by.

Yonder is home! the whisper comes,  
And the stars repeat it through the night;  
Here upon earth are tents and tombs,  
But there is home, and love, and light.

Angels of twilight! come to us,  
Here in the dusk, when the day is dead;  
Bring to us higher thoughts, for thus  
Our worn, world-weary hearts are fed.

M. M. P.

