

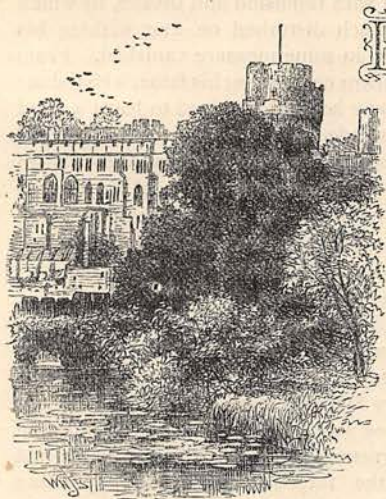
found that this advertisement had never been inserted at all. Over and over again he repeated his examination, but with the same result. It was nowhere to be found. Other advertisements, of previous dates, mentioning Greshaw Hall, but making no reference to Australia, were, as he was already aware, there in plenty. But this one, which would inevitably have been understood by Sir George or any of his relatives, had they chanced to see it, had never been put in. How had that happened? Horace could not understand. He had posted the letter to the editor himself, and he had never dreamt of its miscarrying. But it had evidently done so—how, it was now too late to inquire. Thus, then, the puzzling circumstance of his having received not a single reply to those notices was explained. Horace blamed himself for the unbusiness-like confidence he had felt about them; but he rejoiced to know of their non-appearance, seeing that the suspicion of wilful neglect on his father's part was thus lessened. In fact, he had of late endeavoured to persuade himself that there might have been no wilful neglect at all—that on learning of his existence his father might have sought for him in vain. And now, although for George's sake Horace believed that he would at first be dismayed on his disclosing

himself—after these twenty years' probable ignorance of his fate—he trusted that in time Sir George might learn to regard him with something of the affection proper to a parent.

But, notwithstanding his settled intention of avowing himself on his father's return to England at Christmas, it was only a couple of days ago that Horace had let his secret out of his own possession. John Oliver, he had resolved, should be the first to hear of it. But day after day, restrained by a complication of motives, he had put off writing to his friend. At length, however, he had done so, and by return of post he had received a letter from John overflowing with boyish wonderment and delight, extravagant with congratulations, and finishing up by declaring that he should follow his letter the very next day to Surbiton Park. It was the anticipation—highly delightful to him—of seeing his friend on the morrow which, among other causes, had evoked the pleased smiles that flitted across his face as he now sat meditating by the fire in his bed-room; and he had taken out John's letter to glance it over again for the sixth time, when at last the strokes of the gong announced that dinner, somewhat unpunctual this evening, was served.

END OF CHAPTER THE FIFTY-SECOND.

THE PRETTIEST ROAD IN ENGLAND.



IF I were asked to name the grandest thoroughfare in the world, I should without hesitation say it was Piccadilly, not because of its length, breadth, or any architectural beauties which it may possess, but because it is the highway along which

travels the *crème de la crème* of art, beauty, and talent. But to name "the prettiest road in England" is as difficult a task as it would be to name the most graceful woman in the "Row" on some bright sunshiny morning in the season; there are so many equally entitled to the proud superlative; but with the present rage and the facilities offered for Continental travelling, the tendency is to forget that we have any pretty roads at all, or that this much-abused country of ours is anything but a wilderness of care. The Platonic laws forbade men travelling until they reached the age of

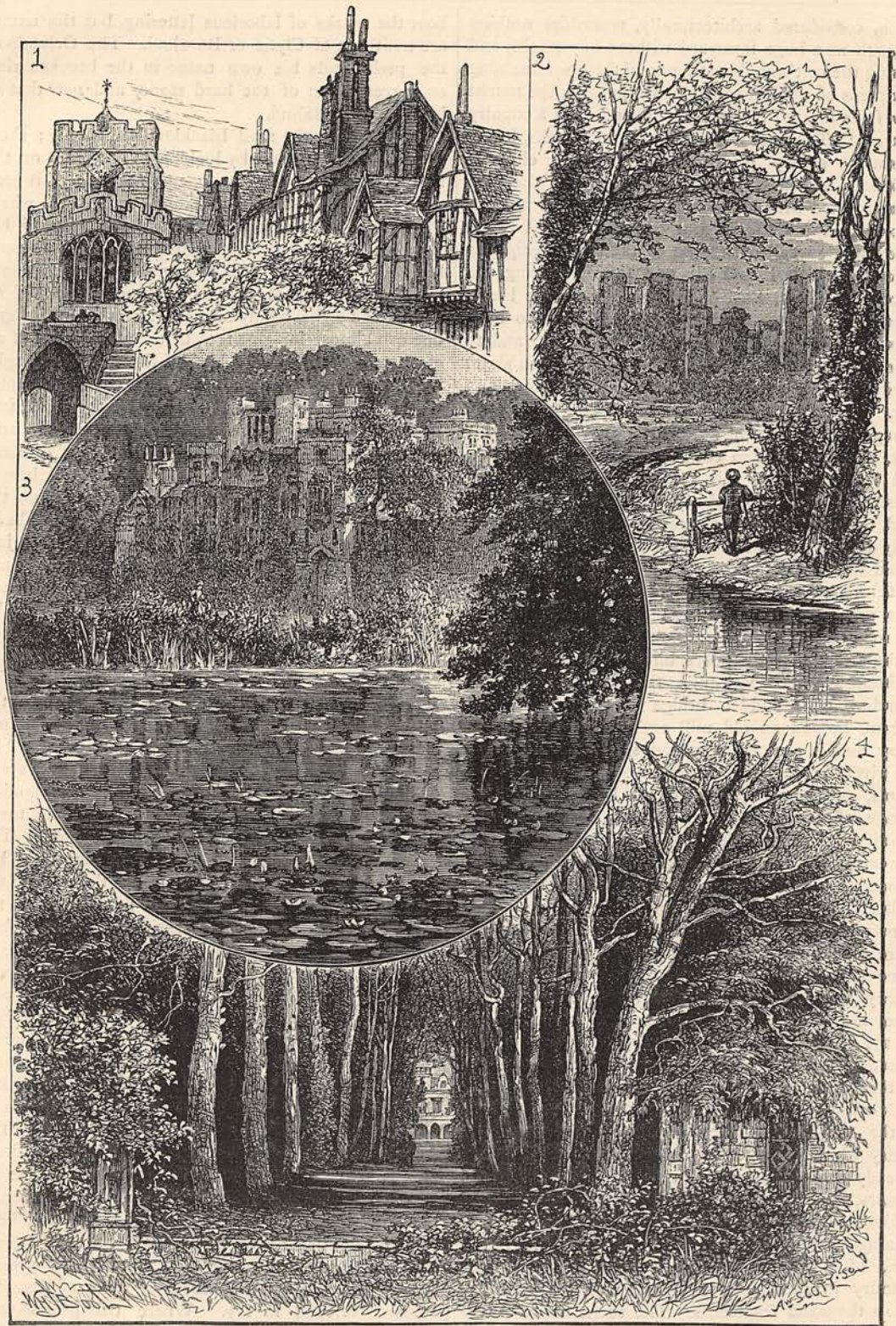
forty or fifty years, so that their travels might be more instructive to them at that age; but in this more progressive age no sooner does any one of us obtain a truce in the struggle for existence than he is off to breezy Boulogne, jolly Jersey, or Paris, the city of frivolity, or else indulges in a trip up the Rhine, regardless of the green lanes and purple heather of the mother country.

Some years ago, at a famous hostelry not many miles from the fashionable town of Leamington, or, as the hotel proprietors and lodging-house keepers call it, "Royal Leamington Spa," a party of wanderers were enjoying themselves one night around the festive board—I do not allude to the Bohemians of the Zingari, but those suave, good-natured, and most obliging members of society who are said to be in possession of the key of the road, and who are known to the world as commercial travellers—when, according to local tradition, a discussion arose as to which was "the prettiest road in England." Being, however, unable to decide the question, it was referred to two of the number, who were to write the name of the road on slips of paper, neither to see what the other wrote. On the two pieces of paper being handed to an umpire for his decision, it was found that one paper contained "The road from Coventry to Warwick," and the other, "The road from Warwick to Coventry." The road in question is about eight miles in length, and is as rich in historic and legendary lore as it is in luxuriant scenery. Leaving the antiquated town of Warwick,

which, considered architecturally, resembles nothing so much as a huge farmyard without any stacks, and passing the celebrated castle, one of the few remaining specimens of ancient grandeur we possess, the tourist soon finds himself in the country, and such a country for trees! The road is shaded with noble oaks, lordly chestnuts, stately planes, and venerable elms of deciduous latitudes. Look where one will, the view is intercepted with glorious trees. The first halting-place is Guy's Cliff, the seat of Lady Charles Bertie Percy, and so called because of the bold precipitous rocks on which it is built, and from its being the place where Guy, Earl of Warwick, lived the life of a hermit till his death in 929. He is said to have been a mighty warrior, nine feet in height, and to have distinguished himself by slaying a Saracen giant, a wild boar, a green dragon, and an enormous dun cow. At Warwick Castle holiday-seekers are shown a huge vessel known as "Guy's porridge-pot," his fork, a rib of the dun cow, a tusk of the wild boar, and other relics of this romantic hero. A pretty telescopic view of Guy's Cliff is obtained from the road, through a stately avenue of forest trees, principally cedars. The turf is so fine and green that it would have charmed the soul of Chaucer, "so small, so thicke, so shorte, so fresh of hewe, that most like unto grene wool wot I it was." A path leads from the road to the back, where flows Shakespeare's Avon in the direction of the poet's birthplace. Here a most enchanting scene well-nigh stuns the imagination. Standing on a ladder bridge crossing the classic stream, behind an old mill embosomed by trees of every hue, is seen the mansion, standing high above the river on the solid rock, smothered in creeping plants, and nearly hid from view by the undulating foliage of towering forest trees. At an immense depth below runs the "soft flowing Avon," with flowery meadows on one side, and trees from its wild wooded banks dappling in the water on the other. Fuller calls it "a most delicious place, so that a man in many miles' riding cannot meet so much variety as there one furlong doth afford." And this is the same spot of which Leland, writing in the time of Henry VIII., says, "It is the abode of pleasure, a place meet for the muses." Here and there the turf on the shady banks is studded with floral jewels, the aquatic plants have sent their leaves to the surface of the water, and the summer sun is just revealing their crowded clusters of flesh-coloured flowers. There is the star-like foliage of the vernal star-wort, the pretty white flowers of the water crowsfoot, a green thready mass of crowsilk, quiver-worts, and quick-mosses, the plate-like leaves of the lilies, and the golden eyes of the bright marsh marigolds. The sun shining on the babbling stream transforms it into a band of silver, until a gentle breeze sets the leafy tapestry in motion, and shivers the bright streak into a thousand fragments. The scene combines the awe-inspiring grandeur of the Trossachs with the Arcadian tranquillity of the English lakes: a dream of the happy valley of "Rasselas" never to be forgotten. Most of the trees in the neighbourhood

bear the marks of laborious lettering, but the names are not those of Clytie or Rosalind. The Orlando of the period cuts his own name in the beechen rind or carves it out of the hard stone, and not that of his faithful Rosalind.

On regaining the road Blacklow Hill is only a short distance in front, and by looking over a gate on the left-hand side, through an opening in a wood is seen the monument intended to point out the spot where Piers Gaveston, the haughty favourite of Edward II., was beheaded, as the inscription states, "by barons lawless as himself." It is just on the edge of a dense forest, full of giant grasses and underwood of an enormous height, highly suggestive of the tropics, and one can almost imagine it to be the playground of an elephant or the lair of a king of the forest, so jungle-like does the place appear. On, past tracts of country where the ripening corn is blown by the wind into mimic waves, valleys and crags, assuming a confused picturesqueness, the charming little village of Leek Wootton is reached. The same picture of beauty prevails. The sun casts a dazzling radiance on the white-washed cottages with their trim flower-beds, and the doors are hung with festoons of roses just bursting into bloom, and filling the air with their delicious fragrance. Another mile or so and we reach the ancient village of Kenilworth, immortalised by the magic pen of Sir Walter Scott, but how altered since quaint old Wayland Smith and the beautiful countess drove through it on their way to the castle! A local board has so modernised it by means of the builder's art, that I question very much if the villainous Varney would be able to find his way, could he by some Rip Van Winkle-like process revisit the scene of his former triumphs. Then it was a mere handful of thatched cottages, now it is quite a little town, rejoicing in the possession of a newspaper. The village has risen like a Phoenix from the ashes, but the feudal glories and regal pomp of the castle have departed to return no more. In passing down the narrow lane leading to the extensive pile of crumbling ruins, which was once the abode of princes, strange visions haunt the imagination. In the palmy days of Queen Elizabeth this road was once blocked with provisions and delicacies being borne to the "Palace of Princely Pleasure," for the festivities in honour of the maiden queen, the magnificence of which became the talk of the world. Laneham says that the daily consumption of good cheer was sixteen hogsheads of wine, forty hogsheads of beer, and ten oxen. The scene of so many legendary and historic associations, after passing from the hand of one favourite to another, and having been used as a royal residence, a royal gaol, the abode of a Papal legate, and been once dismantled by Cromwell, is now, with the exception of one corner, which is used by the present owner—the Earl of Clarendon—a mass of decaying ruins enveloped in ivy. Where trumpeters once walked "clad in long garments and sylke," is now given up to the culture of the practical cabbage, the savoury onion, and the useful potato, and the few houses outside the castle walls are turned into a



1. AT WARWICK.

2. KENILWORTH CASTLE.

3. GUY'S CLIFF.

4. AVENUE AT GUY'S CLIFF.

commissariat department for the supply of "hot water at twopence a head."

Kenilworth is famous for the cultivation of large strawberries. What cotton is to Manchester, pigs to Ireland, coals to Newcastle, and herrings to Yarmouth, strawberries are to Kenilworth, and large quantities of that delicious fruit find their way every year to Covent Garden Market.

The British Isles do not afford a prettier or more stately drive than that between Kenilworth and Coventry, but to thoroughly enjoy it the whole distance had better be walked. The scene is as lovely as the Vale of Avoca, and there is nothing to disturb the serene loveliness of the picture save now and then a carriage full of tourists armed with a guide-book in one hand and a field-glass in the other. For several miles the road runs through a magnificent avenue of trees, like those at Versailles, only this is much longer, and the trees are higher and more natural in their wild luxuriance. Standing at the farthest end,

the lofty trees seem to the visitor to touch the sky. The same delightful panorama continues till Coventry is reached, where the story of Lady Godiva's famous ride, and of Peeping Tom's prying curiosity, is still perpetuated. The country abounds in "beauty-spots," such as Stoneleigh Abbey, Coombe Abbey, Charlcote Park, the drive from Leamington to Stratford, and a host of others. But I have said enough if I can induce the fashionable tourist not to spend so much on German landlords—to forsake for once the fascination of the Italian language and the seductive allurements of foreign capitals, for the healthy invigorating breezes and charming scenery of his own native country. I am persuaded that there are many comparatively undiscovered sights and scenes at home quite as interesting, and that will compare favourably with anything abroad. Let, then, some of the vast multitude of holiday-seekers leave for awhile the well-beaten routes of Continental travel, and do a little home-touring.

J. W. C.

STUDYING THE WEATHER.

BY J. MUNRO, C.E.



IT is not so many years since the study of the weather was considered a very vain pursuit. The wandering gales were either believed to obey no laws, or laws which it was hopeless to try to find out. Far otherwise is the view of educated persons to-day, and those who

make a special study of the subject assure us that only time, observation, and thought are necessary to enable us to comprehend the processes of the atmosphere, and to a certain extent predict the coming weather.

Meteorology, or modern weather-science, is only about twenty five-years old, and dates from the employment of the telegraph in transmitting reports from different places of the state of weather existing there at the same time. The word itself, however, is old, since it was used by Aristotle some 300 years B.C. to name a treatise on water and earthquakes. It does not come, as popularly supposed, from the "meteors," or falling stars sometimes seen in the sky, but from the Greek words *meteoros*, soaring, and *logos*, a discourse. As a science it is of endless practical utility, not only in commerce, engineering, and agri-

culture, but also in pleasure-seeking. At present, however, it is mainly in its relations to shipping and farming that it is valuable. By its aid Captain Maury has pointed out the least tempestuous routes across the Atlantic; and General Myers daily informs Western American farmers what weather they may expect for their crops. These results have been attained by an intelligent scrutiny of ships' log-books, which are now all kept on a uniform system, and by weather observatories planted all over the vast extent of the United States. Great Britain is too limited in area and insular in position to encourage the hope that weather-study in these islands will ever give the same certainty of prediction as it gives in America or India or other continental regions; but nevertheless much may be achieved, even in stormy England, by a proper system of observation carried on for a considerable number of years.

Most civilised nations have awakened to the great importance of the science, and systematic observations are daily made at our national observatories of Kew, Greenwich, Edinburgh, &c., as well as at the weather stations of the Meteorological Office. This office issues daily reports in the newspapers of the recent weather in all the districts of the United Kingdom, and forecasts of the probable weather, besides answering telegrams of inquiry as to the weather in different places. They depend for a good deal of their information on individual observers provided with correct instruments and obeying their instructions, so that valuable assistance may be rendered in this way by persons who have the opportunity at their disposal, and the study of the weather may be made a means, not only of private, but of public good.