



LYDD.

A QUAIN CORNER OF OLD ENGLAND.



NEW ROMNEY, FROM THE MARSH.

WITHIN a hundred miles of the metropolis, within easy reach of half a dozen fashionable watering-places, there lies on our southern coast a complete *terra incognita*. So far away is it from all beaten tracks, so little intercourse have the inhabitants with the outside

world, that they consider it to be the sixth division of the world, and are as proud of their isolation, of their peculiarities, of their old manners and customs, as are said to be the folk of the tolerated Andorran Republic. Yet the name of Romney Marsh is familiar, and now that Hythe has awakened from her sleep of years, and has basked in the smile of Royalty, it is not unreasonable to expect that before very long Romney Marsh will lose much of its sequestered character. Ere the hands of the "improver" and destroyer commence

operations, let us go for a tramp through this quaint corner of old England.

We leave Hythe early, as we have a hard day's work before us, past the shingly rifle-ranges, where squads of red-coated soldiery are being versed in the mysteries of "trajectory," "elevation," and "judging distance;" we bid farewell to hill and dale, to pleasant lane and leaf-embowered cottage, and step out briskly upon the Dymchurch Wall, that sturdy rampart which for so many years has resisted the ceaseless efforts of the ocean to swamp the broad pasture lands lying behind it. There is a strange stillness in the air which seems to tell us that we are entering upon another world; the sea is scarcely audible as it ripples upon the foot of the wall beneath us, and only the shrill cry of an occasional peewit or the distant tinkle of sheep-bells breaks the silence. An hour's walk, during which time the only human beings visible have been two sunny-haired children playing outside a Martello Tower, and we reach Dymchurch, a straggling village with a toy church and a quaint old inn, which lies almost against the wall. Dymchurch is dead, we can see that at a glance, as dead as any of the cities on the Zuyder Zee, or as the old Roman Portus Lemanus on yonder hill-top; so we pass on, leaving the sea, and striking inland. The scenery reminds us of Cuy's pictures, save that there are no windmills, much less trees, to lend animation to the view. Pastures to the right, pastures to the left, pastures in front as far as the eye can reach; fresh green expanses dotted with

white sheep, and at rare intervals a shepherd's hut or a clump of bushes. Our path is plain enough for the present, and we have no inkling of the difficulties yet to be overcome, for it is a solitary road leading straight to the "capital" of the Marshes, New Romney. At New Romney we are in the world of long years back, without a nineteenth-century sight or sound to break the spirit of the dream. When the sea deserted Old Romney, some miles further inland, New Romney became a place of some importance, until in turn it was left high and dry, when it obtained considerable notoriety as a central receiving port for goods which had never paid the king's duties. But duties are low, and smugglers are phantoms of the past, consequently New Romney is silent and deserted; the grass grows in its streets, and the chimneys of its fine old houses give forth no smoke; there are shops, but no customers; huge, rambling old inns, with suites of empty rooms, and ranges of stabling and out-houses abandoned to fowls and lumber. Our host of the "New Inn" tells us of the old days as we munch our bread and cheese, and glad enough he seems to be to get listeners. "There weren't hardly a night," he says, "but a cargo 'd be run in under lee of Dungeness; they'd keep the goods here for the night, and have 'em off inland through Tenterden, Cranbrook, and Goudhurst before daylight the next morning. But that sort o' thing's all knocked on the head; and we've nothing now to keep us going but the August sheep fair." As is the case in so many obscure villages of Kent and Sussex, at New Romney there is a fine old church, big enough for a cathedral town, and we linger about it for some time whilst we transfer its embattled tower and its curious old Norman doorway to our sketch-books. Then we start for Lydd, which lies almost due south.

There is animation at Lydd, for the bishop has been holding a confirmation, and we just catch a sight of his reverend gaiters ascending the steps of his carriage, and as the Lydd folk appear to be in their festal attire, we stand aloof, a little ashamed of our knickerbockers and our travel-stained suits. But the animation dies away with the disappearance of the bishop's carriage-wheels round the corner, and we are soon convinced that Lydd is quite as dead as Dymchurch

or New Romney. There is no ostensible means of gaining a living in Lydd, so we presume that the entire population, men, women, and children, are connected directly or indirectly with the flocks of sheep around the town; and such would seem to be the case from the facts that such scraps of conversation as we can make out are about sheep, that the women are invariably engaged in spinning, and that the larger proportion of shops are saddlers' or butchers' establishments. Lydd enjoyed even a worse reputation than Romney for smuggling, and before sheep-farming became the predominant industry, no one, from the parson downwards, was free from the imputation of being connected with the contraband trade. The roominess of Lydd church tower suggests uses other than what were intended at the epoch of its consecration, and as from its great height an uninterrupted view of sea and land can be obtained, doubtless its bells rang out other signals than those of grief and joy. One is struck, too, by the number of idle, weather-beaten old men—first cousins to the boatmen of Hastings and Brighton—who look keenly from beneath their shaggy eyebrows, as much as to say, "We know a thing or two. Just lift your excise duties a bit, and see if we can't burst into activity." And those cellars beneath the shame-faced old inns, if they could speak, could tell tales of barrels of "right Nantes," Flanders tobacco, and bales of Belgian lace which had never paid duty; depend upon it they could.

Lydd stands alone in this vast marsh-land, and although Romney gives the name, and is called the "capital," it is upon Lydd that the farmers and the inhabitants of the tiny communities scattered around depend for food and articles of domestic use. Very quaint little places are these communities, dignified by the name of "villages," because most of them possess a church and a public-house. The biggest of them, Newchurch, contains but three hundred inhabitants, whilst Eastbridge, Snargate, Brenzett, Burmarsh, St. Mary's, and Old Romney scarcely number eight hundred between them; but some of them, notably Brookland, Old Romney, and Snargate, contain churches astonishingly large in proportion to the places, and not unworthy of a visit.

THE TRICYCLE: A MEANS OF OBTAINING HEALTH AND ENJOYMENT.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



PAPER like the present needs neither preface nor apology. As a means of locomotion, or pedal progression, as one might call it, whether for business purposes or in pursuit of pleasure, the tricycle is becoming every day more common. Not only can young and old easily learn to ride this machine, but both sexes, and that too with equal grace and safety. Indeed the votaries of the three-wheeler do not hesitate to predict that the time is not

very far distant when the tricycle will run the bicycle off the road.

Although very partial to the former, I cannot believe that it will supersede the latter until we have the additional power of either steam or electricity. That this will eventually be the case, no one doubts who gives the matter a thought. The old turnpike-roads will then be kept in better repair, they will be watered, trimmed, and tidied, and the ponderous steam-roller will be constantly seen at work on them. The old-