

days as well as fête days. Pity the individual who is tied to a companion unsuited to either."

At this moment Molly's letter arrived. It ran as follows:—

"DEAR FRIENDS,—I write now from both Charlie and myself to ask Aunt Susan and Mrs. Browne to make mother come and pay us a visit. Now, mother dear, you must come. Charlie says I am to say from him that he insists upon your coming straight away, and that the day after to-morrow he shall meet the half-past four o'clock train, and hopes you will come by it. I feel so delighted since I have allowed myself to think that I shall see you so soon, dear mother. Do you know that we have been married a year to-morrow? I can scarcely believe it, for I feel quite like an old married woman. We have fixed the day after that for turning out the boxes and seeing how we stand in money matters. Somehow it seems like profanation to employ our wedding-day in casting accounts. So, mother dear, when you come you shall have the privilege of counting up our money with us. I am afraid we shall be ever so much behind; they say people always are.

"There is something else I want to consult you about, too. I know that both mother and Mrs. Browne are very strongly opposed to match-making. I am not so sure about Aunt Susan; she is such an advocate for the marriage state—"

"There is an extraordinary statement!" said Aunt Susan indignantly. "Have I not always maintained that people marry in haste and repent at leisure, and does—"

"Molly is teasing you, dear," said Mother, and continued reading.

"I have an objection to match-making, too, but I am very much afraid that, unwittingly, Charlie and I have been doing the very thing we deprecate. You know that I have mentioned a friend of Charlie's (Mr. Malcolm) in my letters. Well, you cannot think how intimate he and Jenny have lately become. They always seem to understand one another; they like the same books, enjoy the same music, hold the same opinions, and, during conversation, their eyes keep

meeting sympathetically in the most aggravating way. The wonder of it is, to me, that all this has come upon us very suddenly. When I was a girl I was a very long time in getting to like Charlie. Don't you remember that I thought he cared for Mary Sergeant (that cross-looking girl who lived over the way), until all at once I found he liked me, and then I began to think about him? But there has been no hesitation about Jenny, and she seems to have got on so very rapidly. So I want you to advise me, dear mother. Mr. Malcolm is very nice; only, when one thinks what a serious business marriage is, and how two people may become united who are altogether unsuited to each other, it makes one tremble. Since I have seen what was coming upon us, I have felt it my duty to keep a strict watch over Jenny. I make a point of going into the room with my work when they look as if they wanted to talk together. I am afraid that I have only succeeded in making myself eminently disagreeable to everybody all round. So, mother dear, come directly to your blundering little MOLLY.

"P.S.—I ought to tell you that Charlie thinks I am quite mistaken in thinking Jenny and Mr. Malcolm care for each other. He says that his sister is not the sort of girl to fall in love; she is made for an old maid, because she is so good. (Compliment to me!) Also that she promised long ago to live with him and keep his house, only I interfered with the arrangement. But you will know, mother."

As Mother finished the letter she smiled, and, on looking up, she saw an answering smile on the faces of her two friends.

"Well," she said, "am I to go?"

"Of course you are," said Mrs. Browne. "You must prepare at once for your journey."

"Since you are going, you might as well take with you the socks I have knitted for Charlie," said Aunt Susan. "Molly asked for them, and so I thought I might as well make them."

A look of great satisfaction stole over Mother's face. "She never knits socks for any but her favourites," she whispered to Mrs. Browne, and the two old ladies smiled again.

TWO FAMOUS YORKSHIRE TOWNS.

I.—HARRÔGATE.



HO does not know the famous old mineral springs of Harrogate, by name at least?

They were the very first known in England, though not discovered till A.D. 1596, by Sir William Slingsby, one of that great Cavalier Yorkshire family, the Slingsbys of Scriven, who did such good service in the royal cause, in the struggles between Cavaliers and Roundheads—even unto death, for the brave Sir Henry Slingsby was beheaded in 1658 for his devotion to the royal cause.

Harrogate itself is of much more ancient date than that: deriving its Saxon name from *Here-gat*—i.e., military road—probably because in the vicinity of the great military road of the Romans to the North of England. It stands on the highest table-land in England, and consists of High and Low Harrogate, the land sloping off into undulations, on which the latter stands in picturesque fashion. Its mediæval character is now wellnigh passed away, for Harrogate has increased immensely of late years, and the modern buildings for the requirements of visitors,

extending in every direction, very soon obliterate the quaintness of an earlier age.

The mineral springs are chiefly in Low Harrogate, and are so numerous that one is amazed at what must have been the volcanic character of the country. There is the old Sulphur Well—the original discovery of the Slingsbys—over which a handsome circular building has been erected for the convenience of water-drinkers. In the immediate neighbourhood of this are other wells, and pump-rooms, and gardens, where you can enjoy various mineral waters, in draught or baths, or any form you like.

But the most curious exemplification of the abundance and variety of these waters is in what is called the Bog-field, immediately above and forming part of Low Harrogate. There are no less than thirty-two springs in this field, seventeen of which are totally different in kind, though springing within a foot or two of each other. The whole field must be serrated and undermined with water, and several of the wells have been spoiled by an inadvertent mingling which mars their special medicinal properties. Spoiling, however, does not always result, as in the case of what is called the Kissingen Water at Harrogate. It is formed by a natural union of two of these springs which rise within the radius of a few feet, quite different in their component parts. They unite almost immediately, and in this union form the nearest approach to the waters of the German Spa, Kissingen. Hence its name.

The Bog-field is clearly the crater of an extinct volcano, whence arise all these sulphureous and other mineral springs directly upwards, as from the funnel of a steamer. It is strange to think, as you stroll along, of the ground under your feet being of that volcanic character, which by its throes, in earlier ages, has transformed the face of the country, and may do so again when nature's wonderful processes have worked out the appointed end. Yorkshire, which at one period had a volcano in its midst, at another was probably one vast glacier, may again, before the new heavens and the new earth appear, be transformed to a totally new scene by the wonderful agencies of fire and water.

In the Bog-field is a neat little pump-room, built for the poorer classes, who come to drink their water twice a day, as their wealthier neighbours do at the fashionable pump-rooms lower down, to which the water is conveyed. The poor have the advantage of the water at its source, and some of the medical men send their richer patients there to drink their daily allowance on that account. Cutaneous diseases, gout and rheumatism, are the complaints specially benefited by the waters of Harrogate. Close by, in this same Bog-field, is a Cottage Hospital for the benefit of those suffering ones who are unable otherwise to afford the expense of a visit to the healing waters, and a very great boon it is to them.

Harrogate is a very amusing place for a visit of a few weeks. Whether you go at the fashionable season, August, September, and October, or during the earlier and more plebeian months, you have rare opportunities

of studying character. In an hour at the pump-well, between seven and eight in the morning, or between four and five in the afternoon, you will see as much variety as will afford you amusing reflection for a month—from the good old maid who gives you her experiences on the matutinal draught, and takes the liveliest interest in yours, anxiously inquiring each morning as to the state of your health and the effect of the waters, to the fashionable beauty and scheming mamma, who make the morning walk the opportunity of weaving fresh webs around the unfortunate moth, who, struggling to escape, yet flutters within reach of the invisible chains which hold him fast.

But space will not allow us to enlarge on the varieties of life at Harrogate, as our purpose is to sketch the place and its surroundings; and it is time we got to Knaresborough, which is the most interesting short excursion in the neighbourhood, between three and four miles from Harrogate.

II.—KNARESBOROUGH.

Knaresborough, *the town on the rock*, justly merits its name, for a bolder or finer situation could not have been selected. As you approach it from Harrogate you face its wooded heights, steeply sloping down to the river Nidd, across which is a most picturesque bridge. The drooping trees, fringing the water's edge, complete the beauty of the scene.

Knaresborough and Richmond are the most beautifully situated towns in Yorkshire. The former has a history and an antiquity that always command respect. As we wound our way through the steep, narrow High Street, we were introduced to the mediæval aspect of it. Here and there some quaint, high-gabled house reminded one of the fifteenth or sixteenth century. It was market-day, and the cattle filled up the narrowest part of the street, as they had done on market-days for the last 500 years, waiting for a purchaser; while the Yorkshire farmers hung about the inn-doors, and filled the long, low-roofed rooms where they dined together once a week. Further on was the market square, where the booths showed off their various wares, and the usual loud talking and chaffing, buying and selling, in simple fashion, were going on. It was a busy scene, and a rare one now in old England, which is being improved up to such a pitch that all the primitive customs of fairs and village markets are disappearing from the land.

The Castle of Knaresborough was built by Serlo de Burgh, one of the Norman barons who came over with William the Conqueror. He chose his point well—a rock on the brow of a steep hill, surrounded on three sides by a deep ravine, and the river Nidd flowing below. By the year 1170, Knaresborough was already a formidable fortified town. The Castle remained in the hands of the Norman barons for some generations, and then became the property of the Crown. Edward III. gave it to his fourth son, John of Gaunt, who rebuilt it in a very extensive form, as its present ruins testify. They cover an area of two and a half acres within the walls, which were



THE PUMP-ROOM, HARROGATE.

strengthened by numerous towers, the massive remains of which still bear witness to the formidable character of the fortress.

The Keep is the only part of the Castle now remaining in any form; and underneath are its gloomy dungeons. You enter these by the descent of a few steps, and, when light is procured for the examination, you are surprised to find the roof supported by one massive pillar in the centre of the dungeon, from which spring some very remarkable Norman arches, whose solid masonry is suited for its heavy duty here. In this chill dark abode, into which the light of heaven never penetrates, were confined the four murderers of Thomas à Becket, who took refuge at Knaresborough Castle when they fled from Canterbury, the scene of their crime.

Above the dungeons is the Guard Room, whose groined roof is supported by a similar central pillar, springing into eight Gothic arches—not the round Norman of the vault below. Here are preserved sundry treasures, whose history we have difficulty in following, from the peculiar *lingo* of the Yorkshire girl who is our guide. There is an old decayed oak chest, bound with iron, said to have come over from Normandy with the Castle's first knightly owner; some stone cannon-balls, dug out of its precincts, and witnessing to the tremendous bombardment of the Parliamentary troops under Lilburne in 1644, when Knaresborough made one of the most gallant defences of the brave county of York, and only yielded under the pressure of famine. The siege and the subse-

quent dismantling finished the active history of Knaresborough Castle, and it was soon afterwards pulled down to prevent further Royalist efforts in that quarter—a pitiful ending after so distinguished a career. Amidst the relics of these brave Yorkshiremen are preserved some battered pieces of armour, said to have been worn at the famous battle of Marston Moor by Sir Henry Slingsby, of Royalist memory, who afterwards paid the penalty of death upon the scaffold.

A relic of a different sort, amongst the more warlike ones, is the staff of "Blind Jack," who was as remarkable a man in his way as his knightly countryman. His history is given in Smiles' "Lives of the Engineers." He was the predecessor of the Stephensons, lived 150 years ago, became blind at six years of age from an attack of smallpox, and was the pioneer of engineering in Yorkshire. He made all the roads and bridges of his neighbourhood—blind though he was—walking and feeling with his stick every foot of the way as he planned the operations which were to overcome the natural difficulties. A stout, sturdy staff it is, and all honour to it!

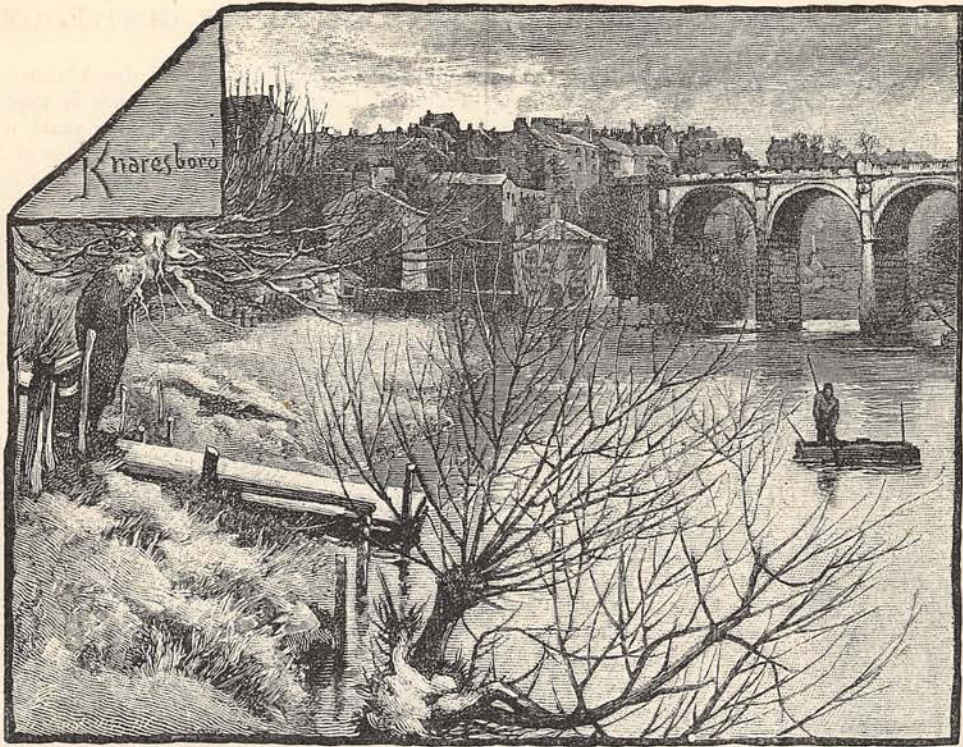
Another treasure, on which our fair guide evidently set much greater store than on the old Castle's ruined remains, was a model of the Dropping Well, a petrifying spring about a mile from the town, and approached by a lovely walk along the river-side.

Mounting the only short staircase that remains in the ruins, you reach what is called the King's Chamber, where Richard II. was confined before he was removed to Pontefract. Near the Keep is a picturesque fragment of the Castle, probably a side-gate and sentry station.

The view from the Castle is very fine, but the day of our visit was dark and lowering, threatening a heavy thunderstorm, and we did not get the full benefit of it. We got, however, the loveliest peeps of the windings of the river, and the beautiful trees clothing the steep sides of the height on which the Castle is built.



KNARESBOROUGH CASTLE.



The Dropping Well can be distinguished on the other side of the river; and still farther off is St. Robert's Cave, the original of Eugene Aram's Cave. St. Robert was the son of the Mayor of York—if mayors there were at the end of the twelfth century. Seized with the desire of a hermit's seclusion, he retired to this cave, and died in 1218. His body was afterwards removed to Fountains Abbey.

Passing through the Castle-gate, a name which the adjoining street still bears, we enter the Kirk-gate, a steep narrow street which descends direct to the fine old church on the line of the ancient fortified walls, of which nothing remains but the names of the gates—a lingering, loving memory of olden times. The church in its various parts dates from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, and is dedicated to St. John the Baptist. The tower is the most ancient part. In it some of the inhabitants of Knaresborough took refuge in the year 1318, when the Scots descended upon the town in one of their raids, destroying whatever they came across. They endeavoured to burn out the townspeople, but the sturdy old church-tower resisted their utmost efforts, though it bears traces of fire to the present day.

You enter through a picturesque porch at the southwest corner. The nave is of that transition period of architecture called Perpendicular; the chancel, Early English, the reredos of which is the Lord's Supper sculptured in relief. On the north side is a

curious old chantry of still earlier date, divided from the chancel by an open screen of carved wood. This chantry contains the most ancient monuments of the church, some of them very quaint. Here also are the tombs of the Slingsby family—of Sir William Slingsby, the discoverer of the wells and waters of Harrogate, and of Sir Henry Slingsby, the brave Royalist beheaded in 1658, whose relics we saw in the Castle.

One of the buttresses of this beautiful old church has the following quaint inscription carved on it:—

“ Christ who died upon the rood,
Grant us grace our end be good.”

Those were the days when workmen wrought at churches from love to God, and their handiwork in stone was the expression of the piety of their hearts.

Knaresborough has long been famous for its manufacture of linen, which is highly prized in the market, it being hand-woven. Hand-loom, which are almost extinct in England now, are still to be found in this country town, standing their ground in spite of machinery and the monopoly of the large neighbouring towns. Some of the finest and most durable linen fabrics are turned out of these simple cottages in Knaresborough. We trust that these relics of a truer age and trade may last as long as old England lasts though we fear that even Ruskin will never thresh us into a general return to hand-work.