

he thought he could prescribe for it without losing his reputation as a conjurer. "The remedy is a simple one," said he, "but I have never known it to fail. *Always treat your husband with a smile.*" The woman expressed her thanks, dropped a curtsy, and went away. A few months afterwards she waited on Mr. Hutton with a couple of fine fowls, which she begged him to accept. She told him, while a tear of joy and gratitude glistened in her eye, that she had followed his advice, and her husband was cured. He no longer sought the company of others, but treated her with constant love and kindness.

If it is necessary for a married woman to smile away unhappiness, it is much more so in the case of the unmarried. They must treat their friends with the smile of good humour. If old maids some times feel *de trop* in the world, and not much wanted by their acquaintances, it must be because they have not tact to please. You may not be able to leap into the favour of others, as the Duke of Grammont did, but you may get a hint which can be applied in other ways from the following anecdote:—The Duke of Grammont was the most adroit and witty courtier of his day. He entered one day the closet of Cardinal Mazarin without being announced. His

Eminence was amusing himself by jumping against the wall. To surprise a prime minister in so boyish an occupation was dangerous. A less skilful courtier might have stammered excuses, and retired. But the duke entered briskly, and cried out, "I'll bet you one hundred crowns that I jump higher than your Eminence!" And the duke and cardinal began to jump for their lives. Grammont took care to jump a few inches lower than the cardinal, and six months afterwards was Marshal of France.

Unmarried people who are so unfortunate that they have not to earn their daily bread should cultivate a taste for art and science. Nothing drives away *ennui* like a good hobby. On the wedding-day of the celebrated M. Pasteur, who made such extraordinary discoveries about germs, the hour appointed for the ceremony had arrived, but the bridegroom was not there. Some friends rushed off to the laboratory, and found him very busy, with his apron on. He was excessively cross at being disturbed, and declared that marriage might wait, but his experiments could not do so. The unmarried could wait more patiently for marriage, and be more happy should they never marry at all, if they would acquire a taste for art, science, and good literature generally.

A RURAL PARADISE FOR LONDON.

BY F. M. HOLMES.



YE please, is there the Vale o' Happiness still about here?"

"The Vale of Happiness? Well, those with happy hearts dwell in that vale always, I suppose, but I know of no place so named about here."

"When I was a child there was a place here called the Vale o' Happiness."

"Oh, the Vale of Health, you mean, I expect."

"Yes, that's it—the Vale of Health, of course."

"Well, there it is, across these meadows, through the brickfield, and over the Heath. There you will find the pond, and the tea-gardens, and so on."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," and the worthy body hurried off.

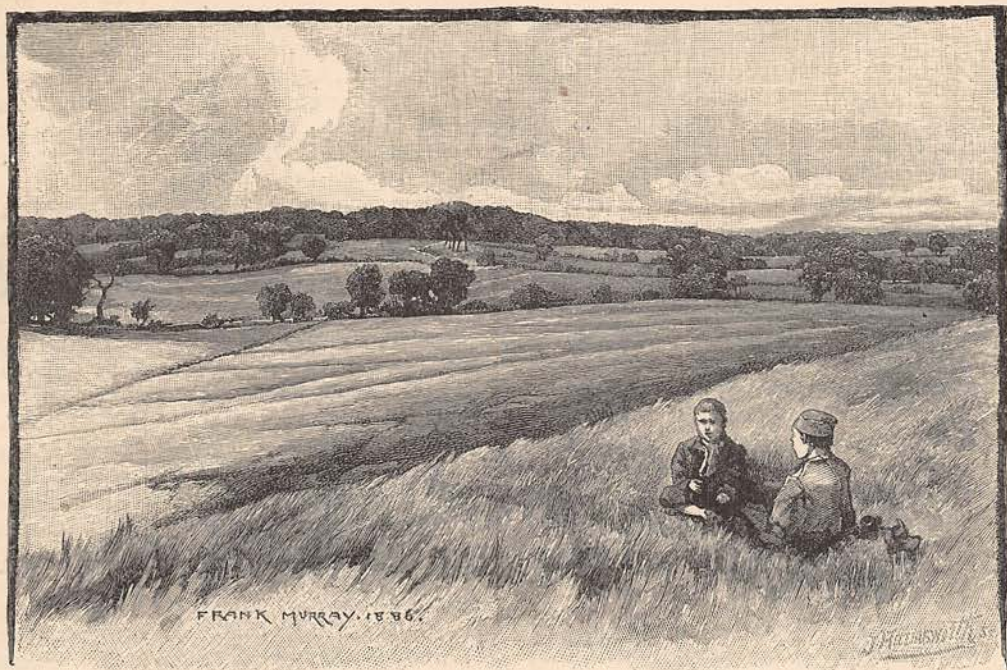
It was an amusing but not unaccountable mistake she had made, for the Vale of Health at Hampstead is truly the Vale of Happiness to many thousands of London's weary toilers.

We are standing on a somewhat steep and fairly lofty hill, giving a fine prospect all around. At our feet, and extending far, far off, until lost in a mist of

gloom and smoke is the mighty City—the metropolis of the great English-speaking people. Behind us is a noble expanse of very undulating pasture-land, gradually sloping both to left and right to a valley on either side; at the further end of the left valley is the Vale of Health, and there also lie those celebrated Hampstead Ponds, teeming still with tittlebats, immortalised by Mr. Pickwick, and from whence flowed the ancient river Fleet, now degraded to a sewer, which gives its name to Fleet Road and Fleet Street. Beyond is a stretch of grassy heath, a line of willows, and then a slightly wooded hill or rising ground thick with houses, and a tall, slender church spire looking over all.

In the valley on the right are the Highgate Ponds, dear to the hearts of skaters and sliders, and yet sadly dangerous withal; above them rises the lovely wood-clothed, tree-crowned height of Highgate—also with a tall church-spire o'ertopping all—and on a splendid summer morning the suburbs of London present few fairer sights—save and except always the view from Richmond Hill down the valley of the Thames—than this western view of Highgate, with the lovely green trees mirrored in the calm, shining surfaces of the placid little lakes below.

Straight before us—looking now away from London almost due north—the expanse of the fields is bounded by a sloping belt of dark woods, which close around and beautify Lord Mansfield's historic mansion.



PARLIAMENT HILL FIELDS.

They are surpassingly lovely, these trees, at all seasons. We have watched them in the winter, when the dark brown boughs—a lace of arboreal network—are outlined against the cold northern sky; in the spring, when they are touched with the tender green of bursting buds; in the sultry summer, when the sun illumines their dark boles, and their foliage is one fine mass of dusky green; and yet again in the autumn, when thousands of tints blend together to make one lovely and variegated whole.

But, still looking north, there is one very distinctive feature that strikes the eye. In the front of these woods rise the bare and naked branches of five gaunt Scotch firs and one weird-looking sycamore; and gazing more closely at them, we find they are planted on a round and grassy knoll, which appears to have a hedge about it, and also a dry ditch. The tops of these trees form quite a landmark for some distance around, and seen against the bright lemon-coloured sky of a summer evening, are sufficiently striking; but why they are there, and how long they have lifted up their bare, gaunt arms in winter storm and summer sunshine, no one knoweth. They mark a notable spot, for the curiously-shaped mound whereon they stand is an ancient tumulus, concerning which no one seems to be able to say anything with certainty. Some persons will have it that this is none other than the grave of that ancient British queen, Boadicea, when, after “bleeding from the Roman rods,” she at length passed from this troublous life and sought her earthly resting-place; others again maintain—according to William Howitt, no mean authority—that a great

battle was once fought here ages ago—just before Cæsar invaded Britain—between the people of St. Albans and the people of London, and that this ancient barrow, or tumulus, is the huge grave containing the bodies of the slain!

Picture the scene this quiet summer evening, when the sun is sinking behind the western hill, and the twilight conduces to meditation. Imagine the savage painted Britons rushing from that wood, which almost certainly was there then as now; call up before your mental gaze the shock of the opposing hosts, the din of conflict, the yells, the flourishing of spears, the fatal blows, the shouts of triumph, and the groans of the dying; and then the gathering together of the corpses with their gaping wounds, and the huge grave! Tell us, O quiet trees, O blades of grass, O silent mound, if such be the dreadful scene of which you are the mute witnesses! But, alas! Nature is silent, and no one knows why the barrow is here.

There is also another barrow in the fields. Let us retrace our steps to that hill—the highest—whereon we first stood. Quite on the top we can discern the low mound and the depression round it like a ditch or fosse, which at one point—almost due north—is filled up as if an earthen bridge had crossed it. Some persons regard it as an ancient fortification, such as may be met with on the Cornish moors and in Wales; others speak of it as a tumulus. It has two names: sometimes it is Parliament Hill, sometimes Traitors’ Hill, but the reasons thereof are by no means clear. It is supposed that elections may have been held here, or that farther back yet in “our

rough island story" the ancient Folk-mote met on this grassy height. Antiquarians tell us that hills crowned with tumuli were often used for such purposes, the reverence attaching to such places being possibly one reason at least for selecting them.

There is another story, however, belonging to the hill: viz., that the Parliamentarians in the days of Charles I. planted cannon upon it, and hence, in the opinion of some persons, it might be Traitors' Hill; but as to the truth or falsehood of these various stories, who shall pronounce a verdict? There are the names, and Parliament Hill seems the most widely adopted at the present time.

Towards London it is a somewhat steep and singular formation, and we may imagine it to be a huge bastion rising sternly against the onward march of the jerry-builder! Thence the ground undulates to the Tumulus Hill, and farther back again to the fine Ken or Caen Woods, the remnant of the great Forest of Middlesex, where once roamed the wolf and the wild boar, and through which the Romans cut two great roads to the north—still existing, we believe, as Edgware Road and Highgate Hill, whereon Dick Whittington heard the bells of Bow.

The picturesque spot, therefore, we have attempted to describe is one of the northern heights of London, of great interest and beauty, lying between Hampstead on the west and Highgate on the east, and separated from each by a valley, in which lie respectively the Hampstead and the Highgate Ponds. The fields are as quiet now—except on high days and holidays—as when the ancient Britons hunted the deer in the wild woods, or strove against each other for mastery. Old, old oaks still stand lonely in them, worn and wasted, as if grieving for far-past days.

In the sunlit silence of a summer morning you may hear the larks' lovely burst of song as they shoot up beyond your sight into the deep blue sky; in damp May evenings we have often heard the peculiar note of the landrail, sometimes called the corncrake; the nightingale still makes melody for ears that can appreciate its song every returning spring; while as for thrushes, blackbirds, and the various finches, they still make the day jocund with their music.

And yet we are but four miles from Charing Cross, and within the parish which has its parish church in Euston Road!

On clear Sunday afternoons, or in early summer mornings, one may obtain such a view of the vast City, lying slumberous almost at his feet, as will wonderfully impress him with its enormous size, its wealth, and its poverty, while across the wide valley of the Thames, where London lies as in a huge cup, the blue, misty hills of Surrey are at marvellous moments discernible, while at rare intervals the Palace of crystal glass at Sydenham stands out flashing in the sun like a diamond, its towers and rounded roof and gleaming upright walls as a miniature, and yet distinct as though there were no London gloom and smoke.

As may be supposed, in the summer evenings and on holidays the fields are full of toilers from the great City. Unfortunately, many of the children get beyond

all control, and the hedges have been torn so grievously that the sweet hawthorn blossoms, which were almost as fine a picture, in their way, as the chestnuts in Bushey Park, have been grievously denuded of their beauty; and the trapping of the birds in the winter is pursued so persistently that there is danger of the "feathered choirs" being seriously thinned, if not altogether destroyed.

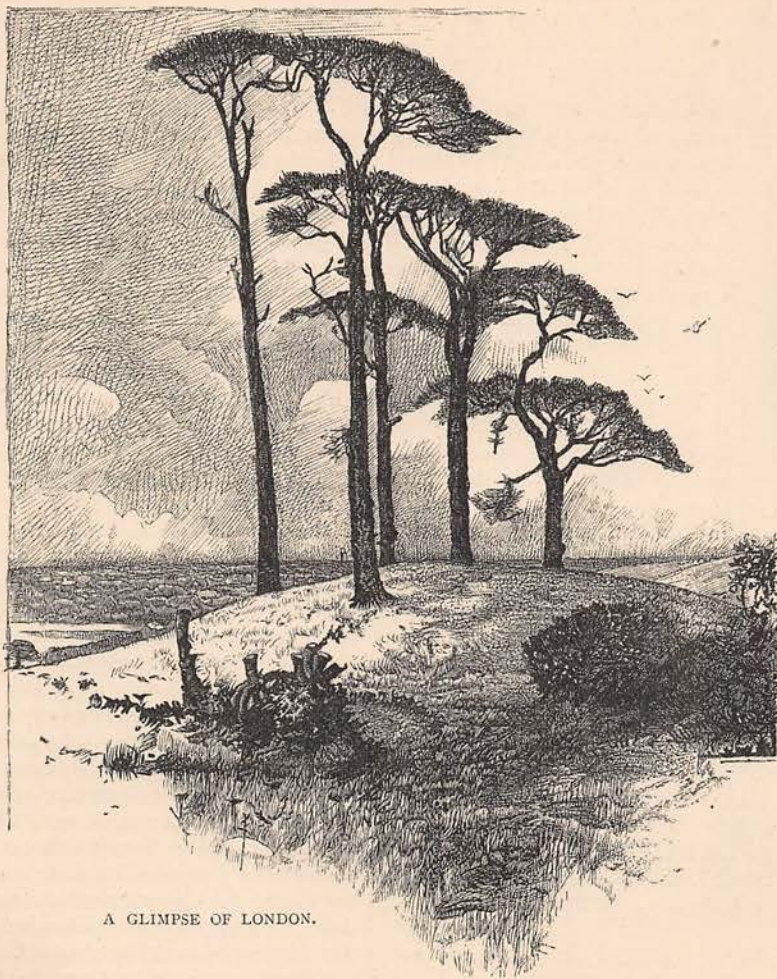
But in the spring and early summer these fields are at their best. They are "put up for hay"—there are very few hayfields now so near London—and their grassy slopes are at times quite golden with buttercups, and anon almost white with daisies. In certain corners bluebells still come up every dewy spring, and the white, fleecy clouds sail over the wide, fertile meadows and hills, as they were wont to do years and years ago, when London was shut up within its thick walls. And then, when hay-time comes, up stream the people almost in thousands, to get if but one glimpse of something like country life—to listen to the swish of the scythe, to tumble on the sweet-smelling hay, and, if the long-suffering farmer permits, to frolic among it to their hearts' content.

But, alas! alas! all these things are in danger of ending. The ubiquitous builder is drawing nearer and nearer. Already boards for letting the ground have made their appearance, and unless steps are very promptly taken, Parliament Hill and its rural fields, its ancient barrows, its birds, its wild flowers, and all its beauty will be but things of the past, and cheap suburban shops may crown the height of "Boadicea's Grave."

Happily, a project is on foot to purchase these fields and dedicate them to the public for ever, but at the time of writing it is not decided whether this scheme will be brought to a successful issue. Some time ago the Metropolitan Board visited the site to view its importance in reference to London, and recorded their opinion in a Report laid before Parliament that of the desirability of this fine tract of high-lying ground being kept open there could be no question. A Bill has since been passed enabling the Metropolitan Board to acquire the site, and the sum at first asked by the owners has been reduced, but naturally there is hesitation to add to the burdens of the already overburdened rate-payers of London. Nevertheless, Hampstead Heath will hardly be the Heath without these fields, for they run beside it for some distance, and if built upon, the Heath would become little better than an over-trodden, walled-in "green." The idea that the Heath in itself is sufficient is a great mistake, for it only consists of some 220 acres. Epping Forest in the east and Wimbledon Common in the south-west are much larger, while in the west are Hyde Park and the Green Park, forming 771 acres.

A glance at any good map of London—or, better still, a visit to the spot itself—will soon show how necessary to the Heath and to the people of London is the preservation of these fields.

The property belongs to two owners: the East Park Estate—between Parliament Hill and the Hampstead Ponds, and consisting of about fifty-nine acres of richly



A GLIMPSE OF LONDON.

wooded grass-land—to Sir Spencer Wilson, and the remainder to Lord Mansfield. Part of the East Park Estate is rendered hideous by particularly ugly brick-fields, yet beyond the bricks are some magnificent trees and a little stream and pond, wherein may yet be picked anemones and marsh-marigolds, betony, valerian, and golden rod. Farther afield are the buttercup and bluebell, while many an artist loves to come here for delightful little “bits,” or to sketch some of the sturdy beeches and oaks that are near by to remind one sometimes of Burnham.

The other and larger part of the site—Parliament Hill and Fields—is Lord Mansfield’s property, and includes the two hills spoken of, the undulating meadow-land, and some ancient public foot-paths—altogether about 205 acres. They are full of old associations—among others, of Keats and Coleridge, Shelley and Leigh Hunt, and many other giants of another day, to say nothing of the thousands of happy lovers who no doubt have wandered here.

But no associations, however ancient, however literary, however sentimental, however time-honoured—no beauty, no rural quiet, no usefulness, merely, will save the fields. They must be paid for in hard cash; and this we fervently hope and trust will be done, and so they will be saved to the public.

If it is done, we would beg the Metropolitan Board not to make too prim a park of the fields. Imagine a smooth, well-kept gravel walk winding up to “Boadicea’s Grave,” or insulting the top of Parliament Hill! No; let us preserve the fields as they are; let us have all the exquisite rural charm which now distinguishes them so pre-eminently from all prim parks; let us have the sweet-smelling hay, the songs of the larks and thrushes, and the peaceful quiet. But place them under strict control, and save the hawthorn, and the wild rose, and the birds from the ruthless grasp of the thoughtless street Arab. The Metropolitan Board have the chance of securing a rural paradise for London, and we fervently hope they will rise to the greatness of the occasion.