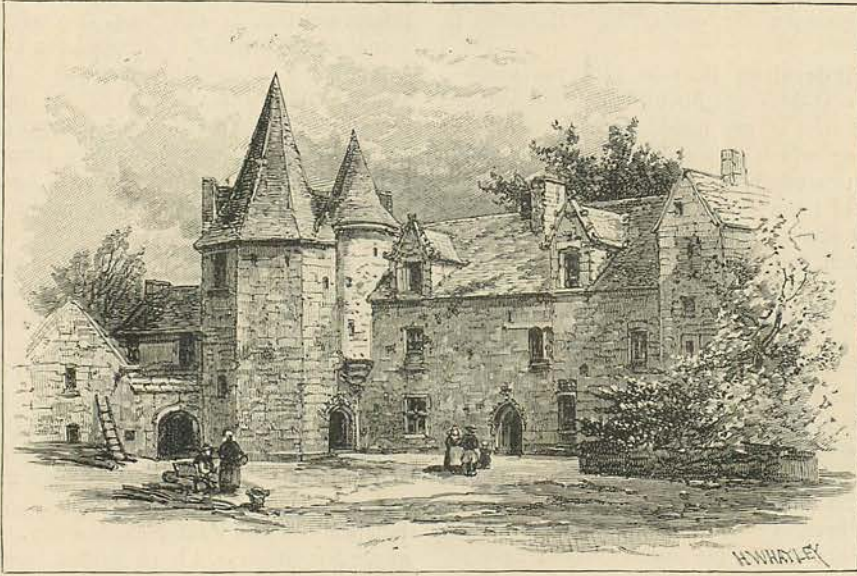


## EASY CONTINENTAL TRIPS.—I.

BY JAMES BAKER, AUTHOR OF "JOHN WESTACOTT," ETC.



CHÂTEAU DU FOLGOËT.

**T**HE pleasure of a Continental trip is oftentimes considered to be a pleasure obtainable by the few, and many a person of limited income hears and reads, with resigned sadness, the description of the Continental tours of more fortunate beings, with the feeling that such pleasure can never be his lot. Our aim in these

"Easy Continental Trips" is to set before the readers of this Magazine such tours as may be undertaken by those whose resources are limited in those items generally considered necessary for Continental touring: money, time, and a knowledge of foreign languages. To those who should undertake any of these trips from an educational, and not merely from a pleasure point of view, our article\* which appeared some time since in these pages may be of service, and will save further preliminary remarks.

One of the most interesting short trips that can be taken upon the Continent is that which carries us through the old-world district that lies between St. Malo, on the north coast of France, on to Brest westward, and to Auray southward. In but few parts of Europe can we so quickly go backward in the centuries and live in an atmosphere of "ages ago." The run from Southampton to St. Malo, and across to Dinan, may be passed over; and Dinan, being a good starting-point for an easterly trip, we may see again; we must not linger there now, but hasten on by road or rail to Caulnes, and thence onward to St. Brieux. In Dinan the people are half-Norman, half-Breton, and the influx of English has modified their customs; but at St. Brieux we are truly in Brittany, and as we walk along the country roads and amidst the people, we feel we are among the same race that peoples Ireland and Cornwall. The very name St. Brieux is that of a saint whose churches are known in Cornwall under the guise of St. Breok. The houses or huts are facsimiles of the huts of West Ireland—no windows, the



BRETON FOLK.

\* "Continental Trips as a Means of Education"—CASSELL'S MAGAZINE, 1884.

half-door, mud floors, and dirt. The people have the dark eyes and straight black hair that marks off the true Cornishman and West Welshman, or Irishman.

The pedestrian with time at his disposal will linger about St. Brieux, but we must push on to Morlaix. The artist might linger for some time in Morlaix, but the ordinary traveller will probably be satisfied with an hour or two spent about its streets, for from here it is a pleasant walk to the famous "dead city" of Brittany, St. Pol de Leon—a name that at once brings up Cornish memories of Tintagel and King Arthur, and tells us we are in the land of Arthurian myth; for is not St. Pol de Leon the veritable Lioness of the "Morte d'Arthur"? The walk at first takes us along by the river, and as there is a pilgrimage church not far ahead, perchance the quaint sight of some hundred women and children, and a few men, may be seen winding up the hill, following a priest with a cross borne before him, singing hymns or chanting responses as they stroll slowly on. Over the ridge to the left the road winds, and then leads up a charming hill with rocks and heather and furze, and at the summit is a capital view of a wide expanse of wooded country. The little village of Pense offers rest and refreshment; and a pleasant walk again by the river-side leads us up a steep hill to join again the *grande route*; and after some little distance a lovely view is ahead, of the open channel and the little bay of Penpoul, with its breakwater, and rocks, and islands defending the port; and away over the level ground tower up the spires of St. Pol.

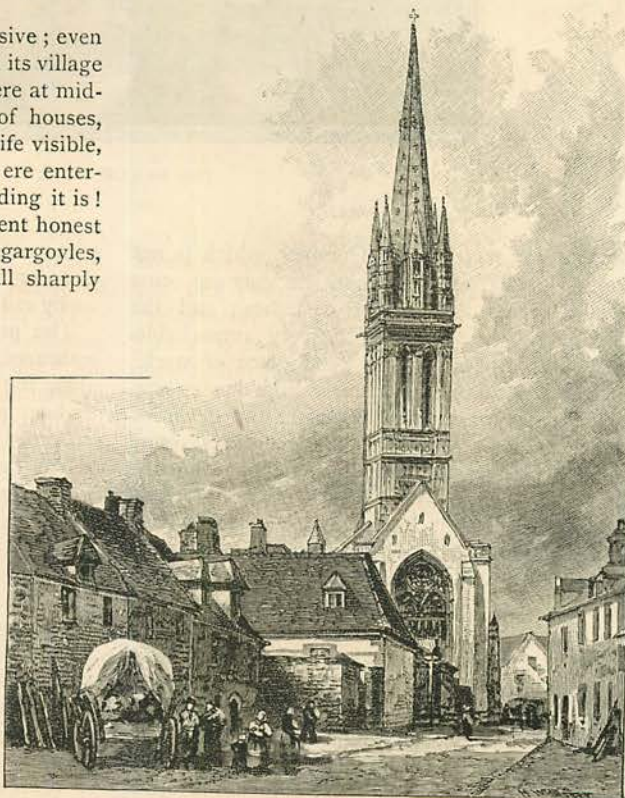
The entry into this city is strangely impressive; even the dead city of St. David's is more living in its village life. To stand in the cathedral square here at mid-day, and to see the wide streets and rows of houses, without one single human being or sign of life visible, is a strange sensation, that makes one linger ere entering the building. And what a glorious building it is!—a monument of art and industry and patient honest work. The mighty towers with the curious gargoyles, the beautiful rose window at the south—all sharply and honestly cut from hard granite. No scamping of work, no shirking of under-cutting; time with these workers was naught; true honest work was everything. The triple aisles of the cathedral give effective groupings of pillars, and the wood-carving is strange and worthy much time to be spent over it. But what will strike the English traveller more strangely than aught else, is the horrible array of little huts arranged all round the choir, looking at first sight like little doll-dogs' kennels, with tiny holes, heart-shaped, carved in them. On nearer inspection, one sees a blanched smooth skull peers out from each little hut, and the inscription that runs round or beneath each kennel says, *Ci git le chef de Marie or Jean* (that

is, "Here lies the head of Mary or John"), the surname following of him or her who in lifetime breathed and thought, and smiled and spoke from within that whitened skull. This strange and awful custom of digging up the skull of father or mother, or dearest relative, when decay has blanched it, and depositing it in these little huts in the church, is met with all over Brittany; but on first seeing it, it is terribly revolting. Here at St. Pol some hundreds of them are piled up.

Another famous piece of architecture in this city is the Church of Kreizker, the highly-decorated doorway and porch of which are richly and sharply carved with strange animals. The tower is a marvel of beauty and workmanship. On entering, it will be seen that the east window is not straight with the nave, but deviates widely; so that only part of it can be seen when standing at the west end. This is said to represent the turn of Christ's head whilst hanging on the cross, and is frequent in France, and here and there to be met with in England.

There are pleasant inns at St. Pol, so that a stay may be made here; but a day, including the walk from Morlaix, will suffice; and in the evening the pedestrian could stroll on to Roscoff, the little port from whence come most of those "Spaniards" who sell "Spanish" onions in our English streets: an historic spot, too, connected with our own history.

Back to Morlaix must go the railway traveller, but far better is it to walk or drive on to Lesneven, so



KREIZKER, ST. POL DE LEON.

getting a peep at Folgoet, with its famous pilgrimage church and mediæval buildings, and Landerneau, noting the quaint villages and crosses *en route*. But as this is a short trip, we take the rail on to Kerhuon. This little town lies on the shores of a wide estuary of the sea, that opens out to Brest and the Biscay Bay; but it is also the best stopping-place from whence to cross over, and climb up the hill to the famous calvary of Plougastel. Of all the calvaries in Brittany, perhaps this is the strangest and quaintest. The dull stone village of Plougastel offers but slight interest; but the sight of the strange mass of the calvary in the churchyard, or a crowd of curious figures grouped upon a stone platform, well repays one for the climb up the hill.

Brest lies within easy reach of Kerhuon, but the traveller who wishes to see more of the *Breton*

here; this is too cramped a space for their evolutions, and all joining hands in two long lines that twist and wave, they dance and glide out, into and down the street; the bride and bridegroom with them, these latter distinguished by the white lace on the bride, and at the end of the ribbons on the groom's hat. The musicians, who play on a sort of flageolet and long pipes, keep beating time with their feet as the long lines twist and turn past them, now in the barn and now in the street; all the dancers looking solemn and decidedly in earnest over this dance of the gavotte. The whole street is lined with onlookers; every woman in the place is there, seated on doorsteps or the cobble stones of the street; and the number of toddling babies that crowd round the dancers' feet seem to prove that the Breton folk are not likely to become extinct.

Quimper and Quimperle and the surrounding dis-



THE BRIDGE, AURAY.

*Bretonnante* will pass on to Quimper, which is not far away. Here, if he is fortunate, he may see some very quaint sights and bright costumes; and the architecture of the churches is very remarkable. The cathedral especially is a good piece of work; its two spires, with their extremely high lancet windows, being everywhere visible. Here the deviation of the axe is most notable. The paintings round the building are worth studying, as illustrating the lives of Breton saints. The Church of Ste. Maria is also interesting. But it is the people especially that one studies in and around Quimper. If a wedding should be celebrated in some of the side or back streets, it is a most picturesque sight. The men are in broad hats and blue jackets trimmed with gold and colours, and the women with white and coloured head-dresses, and large silk aprons of the most vivid hues; great streaming ribbons of every shade float in the air as they move about, and white lace adds to their brilliancy; and over their shoulders are large twilled white capes. The barn or outhouse of an inn is turned into a dancing-room; but the dance does not end

strict would amuse and instruct one for many a day. But our space is limited, and time too; so we pass on by rail to the little town of Auray.

The principal sights in and round Auray may be embraced in a walk or drive out to Carnac, then along the road and across the ferry to Locmariaquer, by boat out to the island of Garvinnis, and returning to Auray by boat up the Auray river.

The first sight of the Druidical stones of Carnac will probably be disappointing, especially to one who holds the greatness of the stones of Stonehenge within his mind: but as one wanders about amongst them and conjures up the complete great lines, and thus rebuilds or replaces this monument to an unchronicled past, the strangeness and importance of the spot grows upon one. But if the size of the stones here is disappointing, the mind receives a shock in the opposite direction at Locmariaquer, for there the stones are tremendous in their immensity. The situation of these Druidical relics upon this out-of-the-way corner of land, surrounded by the ocean, reminds one again of the district round St. David's, and the pre-historic

huts and cromlechs on St. David's Head; but here the scene is more gentle, and not so wild and wind-swept as on that barren headland. The whole district round Locmariaquer is strewn with these great blocks of granite, of enormous size; the greatest, or Grand Menhir, measuring some sixty-six feet in height and about twelve feet broad. This block has been split at some time by lightning, or convulsion, or storm; and the top part in falling has turned a somersault, massive as it is, and now lies with its summit turned to its base. From the top of one of the stones a good view is had of the surrounding district: the little town with its white houses, and the isles all round in the inland sea of the Morbihan; the cornfields and furze-clad moors; and the little boats dotted here and there in the blue calm sea, with their white and red sails. From the little town out to the island of Garvinnis it is but a short row, but through the narrow passage that is called the *trou* is a queer bit of steering, and the boatman may have to wade and haul the boat through. Arrived on the island, at first sight nothing is to be seen: not even dolmen or menhir: only a bare island, and one house and a hut upon it. But on ascending a great mound, and burrowing by a narrow passage beneath it, one has before one the strangest of all these strange, undeciphered, unaccountable remains of a forgotten past. From the summit of the tumulus you look out on the world of to-day, the sea and all the islands and homes of picturesque Morbihan. Within the tumulus you are in a strange building, the home of the dead of untold centuries ago—before the Roman made his home in this western district, and left frequent traces behind him of his homes and occupations. The great

granite blocks that form this building are graved in strange fashion, some with scrolls (much as the markings on the ball of a man's thumb), rude triangles, strokes, and zigzags; all meaning—what? No man knoweth.

One would fain linger for hours in and about this monument, but there is the charming sail up the river to Auray awaiting us, a sail full of interest; and then a pleasant day inland to the pilgrimage church and holy fountain of St. Anne—that saint discovered and first mentioned only six or seven hundred years after her death, but now revered as patron saint of Brittany. We have no space here to describe this strange and even astounding place, but that visit over, our "Easy Trip" is finished. Train must be taken back direct *via* Pontivy to Dinan, and once more we are *en route* for England and busy, busy life.

A fortnight has sufficed to see all we have described; it could be done in a week at a rush. The expense has been about 25s. return fare from Southampton to St. Malo; say 30s. railway expense in France. The pedestrian ought not to spend more than 6s. per day at hotels; and other travellers, say 1s. or so more. The books to be read upon Brittany are numberless, but few give such a good idea of its people as "Breton Folk," illustrated inimitably by Caldecott. Works upon the Vendean War should be studied; and for the home-life of the peasants and their legends, the numerous tales of Émile Souvestre, in French. The "Morte d'Arthur" and Froissart, too, may be read; but our space is more than filled, and we say "Hold, enough," upon this most westerly "Easy Trip."

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## A GOSSIP ON FOLK-MUSIC.

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**F**OLK-MUSIC is not an over-done subject, for neither professor nor amateur gives it due attention, albeit it is a phase of every country's art about which the composer, especially, ought to concern himself, and of which the amateur might well learn something. The unique position that folk-songs and national melodies occupied at a period when Western Europe was without

music-art of any kind; the great blank such must have filled at the outburst of the Middle Ages, and for hundreds of years before the "youngest of the arts" asserted itself; the element folk-music everywhere constituted in the foundation and development of the various European schools of music; its value and aid as a faithful index of the mind, and longings, and fancy of people of every soil where it has sprung up;

Now fate has fill'd the mea - sure of my woes, And rent my heart with grief un - felt be - fore: No  
fu - ture bless - ings wounds like these can close, Or mi - ti - gate the loss I now de - plore. &c.

FRAGMENT OF A SONG ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD I., BY GAUCELM, A FAVOURITE TROUBADOUR TO THAT KING AND HENRY II.  
FROM THE QUEEN OF SWEDEN'S MSS. IN THE VATICAN LIBRARY.