

two ounces, distilled vinegar two and a half ounces, of spirits of rosemary the same quantity, and fill up to a pint with elder-flower water.

Cutting the hair short does little or no good, as baldness is distinctly a constitutional ailment. The head should never be covered in the house, and just as seldom as possible out of doors.

A light, well-ventilated hat is the best head-dress, a close-fitting cap the worst.

Does any one, I wonder, wear a nightcap in this nineteenth century? If so, let him burn it; if he

values the health of his hair and head he will. Next to the folly of drinking nightcaps comes that of wearing them. *Verbum sap.*

Actual baldness is not invariably irremediable, but as a rule it is. The same treatment will prove beneficial, but even stronger stimulants may be needed, and before they are applied the scalp should be fomented with warm water.

When hair begins to grow, frequent shaving does good. But on the whole, as regards baldness, prevention is better than cure.

THE CAPITAL OF OYSTER LAND.



NOT always has the title belonged without cavil or objection to Whitstable. The time was when Colchester might have disputed the claim. But though it is from the "layings"—American, Dutch, or possibly Portuguese—in Essex creeks that the most extensive oyster-gathering still goes on, the quaint Kentish town on the opposite side of the estuary is now, by the election of the multitude, Oysteropolis. How long it will be before this particular fame passes, before the leading business of Whitstable slides into hopeless decadence, is occasion on the spot of very serious and foreboding conjecture. But prophecy is notoriously unsafe, and will not be attempted in this place. Our aim is to sketch Whitstable as it has been and as it is. It is only incidentally that light may be thrown on its fate in the future.

The summer wanderer about Kentish watering-places, or about her glorious cathedral city, or even in

the sequestered villages in the south-eastern section—drawing an arbitrary line from Rochester to Rye—will have the abundant evidence of his eyesight that he is in a country where the succulent mollusc is easy of access and plentiful in supply. To be sure, tradition counts for something. If the Whitstable trade ceased absolutely, there is little doubt that the barrow-man twenty miles away would continue to dispose of his weekly hundreds of royal "Whitstable" natives—if they were brought to him from France or Holland. There is the demand of time-honoured fashion, and, by hook or by crook, it must be met. And as a matter of fact, a large trade is done now in so-styled "natives" which are originally imported from Archachon and elsewhere, and laid down on Whitstable grounds.

Two rival railway companies have stations at Whitstable, and a traveller who enters the picturesque, ancient place for the first time *viâ* the London, Chatham, and Dover Company's line, and then inquires his way perseveringly onward to the South Eastern Station, immediately beyond the harbour, will glean a very definite idea of one of Whitstable's noteworthy features—the seemingly interminable thoroughfare that almost makes it a town of one street. It is a winding, irregular road too, oddly labelled in sections, with here and there quaint and old-fashioned, boarded houses abutting upon it.

That the town is ancient a glance shows. And if to-day it is ambitious, and minded, as some of its inhabitants hint, to strike vigorously out in an unfamiliar direction—



THE ROAD TO TANKERTON.



TANKERTON BEACH.

and assert its claims on the patronage of Paterfamilias in holiday season, it has hitherto contrived with remarkable success to disguise its intention. Whitstable can boast of few palatial hotels or boarding-houses. Aristocratic square and terrace you shall search for in vain. Here is just a homely zigzag of comfortable shops, cottages, and occasional villas, stretching from the sea to the foot of Borstal Hill, and tenanted by a homely, honest population of men, who do business in great waters or live by the local industries. So much the better for the Briton who is tired of the ceaseless bustle of city and suburb, and desires to find a sea-side retreat which is in no immediate danger of earning the title of London-by-Ocean or Manchester-upon-Sands.

The town is old. It follows that it has a history. The country to which it belongs is crowded in every nook and corner with legend and material for the annalist. Is not the Kentish coat-of-arms the famous White Horse, of Saxon descent—the standard which, cut in colossal outline on the Berkshire chalk downs, commemorates to this day the memorable triumph of Alfred the Great over the Danes? Few English shires possess a prouder badge, or one more ancient and suggestive. It challenges patient, retrospective thought. What a long procession of Roman legionaries under famous captains; of Saxon pirates—sturdy beginners at the task of making England; of monkish missionaries, headed by the illustrious Augustine; of kings and

statesmen, and warriors, since the Conquest, passes again before the eye of the mind! But the Kentish motto is "Invicta." The story goes that the men of Kent were prepared, even after fatal Senlac, to confront Norman William, and contest with him the possession of their native soil; that he was impressed with their bravery, and respected their numbers; and that, instead of offering battle, the invader cleverly made terms with the Kentish array, and left that corner of his new kingdom undesolated by the scourge of war—free to uplift its local standard.

Nevertheless, William I. caused, in due season, a survey of the shire to be made, with a view to incorporating the particulars in his notable undertaking, the Domesday Book. And thus we gather that manorial rights over Whitstable were at this time exercised by no less a person than the Conqueror's half-brother, Odo, Earl of Kent, and Bishop of Bayeux, of tapestry fame. Odo fell, through his own misconduct, and so far as Whitstable was concerned his place was taken by Fulbert, Baron of Chilham, who, later on, was authorised, in return for signal services—and William knew how to reward as well as to punish—to adopt the title "de Dover." But misfortune seemed from the first to follow the lords of Whitstable Manor. Only three generations, and the family of Fulbert was represented by an only daughter and heiress. The lawful successor on this lady's demise was for years kept out of his inheritance by a powerful and

unscrupulous rival ; and when at last John, Earl of Athol, came to his own, he was swiftly attainted of treason and lost his estates, finally. The ban of Court disgrace descended also upon at least three later owners of this seignory, two of the number suffering death at the hands of the public executioner. Whitstable Manor, with its acquired residence of Tankerton Tower, ultimately became the property of one of the self-made men whose biographies it is the delight of Dr. Samuel Smiles to compile for the emulation of youth—the late Wynn Ellis, silk-mercator, picture-collector, and M.P.

The Tower, which has just been mentioned, affords the stranger explorer a pleasant shock of surprise, on coming for the first time parallel with the harbour. All round it are the grimy associates of wharves, and railway sidings, and dredging works. In front a vista between stately trees opens out, and embosomed amongst the foliage that crowns a gentle eminence is a grey old castle, compact, conspicuous, and in a notable state of preservation. A little inquiry, and it is discovered that the owners of this fair domain have

and, alas ! few and meagre, speaking eloquently of a shrunken commerce ; the sparkling sea—beautiful, unchanging type of changefulness—to the right, with a vague, hazy shore beyond ; these form a combination full of grace, and winning additional favour from the entire absence of art—of conscious effort—in the arrangement.

Tankerton Tower beyond, once forming part of the properties with which in the reign of the third Edward a *Maison Dieu*, at Ospringe, was endowed, appears to have no records imperatively demanding pause.

From this gem in the woodland, descent may be made by a sharp curve to the quaint beach. A curious scene is here disclosed on any sunshiny summer or autumn day. The strand is like a fair. There are swings, stalls, refreshment booths in—to the juvenile mind, no doubt—enchanting number and variety. Not even on the sands at Ramsgate is there a more open and deliberate attempt at winning the suffrages of lads and lasses.

Fashionable pier or jetty, as those designations are ordinarily used, Whitstable has none. And the



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, WHITSTABLE.

no objection to a nearer approach. Visitors are allowed to climb the hillside, between hedges of choice flowers and shrubs ; to walk round the ancient edifice—the very date of which is uncertain, the secret of a remote century ; and to stand by the miniature cannon on the castle lawn and gaze over the tree-tops to town and bay. It is a charming *ensemble* on which the eyes rest. The green sweep of the hills rising against the distant horizon ; the heterogeneous, snake-shaped cluster of roofs in the foreground ; the group of masts—

“Tracing with rope and slender spar their network on the sky ;”

harbour, though not lacking in interest, is scarcely the place for a lazy, dreamy, pleasure promenade. There are too many lines of rails underfoot ; there is too much coal-dust in the atmosphere. But it does not follow that the visitor is restricted to the undulating coastline ; though many a delightful bower amidst the gorse and the tamarisk is there to be found. The Street offers alternative attractions.

At Whitstable there is sometimes a confusion in terms. By “The Street” is not invariably meant a place for shopping. The name stands for a singular natural phenomenon that is of eminent service and

value to both townspeople and visitors. It is a capital road of shingle, dry on the retreat of the tide, and extending into the sea probably much farther than an artificial pier would do. It is said to lead to the site of a submerged port once called Greystone. But this is conjecture merely.

Mention must also be made of the roads known as the Middle Wall and Outer Sea Wall. These follow the course of the defences by which the ancient fishing port is safeguarded against the inroads of old ocean. On the Wall, in 1869, a terrible fire occurred, destroying nearly ninety dwelling-houses and store-sheds, and causing much destitution that had to be relieved by prompt external aid.

This is a description from personal survey of the capital of Oyster Land. What of the special industries of Whitstable? They are mainly comprised in three classes: oyster-dredging, and the various employments incidental thereto; ship-building; and ship-manning and provisioning. It is gloomy truth to tell, but there is decadence all round. Oysters are not forthcoming in anything like the quantities with which the dredgers of twenty years ago were familiar, and the cost of their production has immensely increased. As the inevitable result the recompense of the men's toil hardly averages now one-half of what it did in the palmy days of abundance of "spat" and a great demand consequent on moderate prices. And not merely do the men and their families suffer, but the trade of the town and district is greatly diminished in volume. What is not earned is not spent, and as these blue-jerseyed, tanned, weather-beaten fishers are a happy-go-lucky class in good times, the difference when economy comes to be forced is very great. By the account of the shopkeepers themselves "things in the recent past have been very bad; we hope they're mending a bit now."

There are two large and important oyster companies that have practically the whole trade in their hands. The principal and older society—the Whitstable Oyster Company—is in the nature of a close corporation. The formal sanction of Parliament was given to it in 1793, when the marine rights attached to the manor were purchased. From this date organisation took a definite form, which it has maintained with but few changes since. The eldest sons of freemen of the company inherit their fathers' rights and privileges. At the age of fourteen they are enrolled; at the legal turning-point between youth and manhood they are admitted as full members. A wholesome rule discourages improvident marriages. To enter holy wedlock before formal reception into the society is to forfeit all title to membership.

The company bears upon its roll nearly five hundred names, the owners of which work a fleet of some fifty boats. There is a class of non-working shareholders, who, in consideration of their invested interest in the concern, take from its coffers one-third



TANKERTON CASTLE.

of a full individual wage. Widows and sick members are adequately provided for under the rules.

The rival association is the Ham and Seasalter Company, also a considerable oyster-producing body. The number of hands employed in its fishery varies with the varying needs of the season. Seasalter, which is linked to Whitstable as Eton is to Windsor, had its own manor with its own manorial fishing rights. And at a very early date these became an appanage of the clergy of Canterbury Cathedral, six miles away. The royalty is now held by a private firm.

Both the great companies were exhibitors and prize-winners at the London Fisheries Exhibition of 1883. And in the local museum—quite worthy of a visit, though it would be well if some other room could serve for the accommodation of newspaper readers—the progressive stages of oyster-growth may be followed, the dangers from marine enemies to which the oyster is exposed be realised by an inspection of captured pirates of the deep, and some idea may be formed of the precariousness of the industry.

The extent to which the chief Whitstable trade has been carried in the past is shown in the fact that in one single season sixty million oysters were despatched to market. But that was a quarter of a century ago, and there is no apparent likelihood of the repetition of such a high tide of prosperity.

Facing gallantly the depression of which so much is heard, and of which they have had unwelcome experience, the Whitstable folk are trying to make their town a rendezvous for the summer tourist. The place has many beauties of environment, and the effort merits success.

** The illustrations to this article are engraved from photographs by Messrs. Poulton and Sons, Lee.