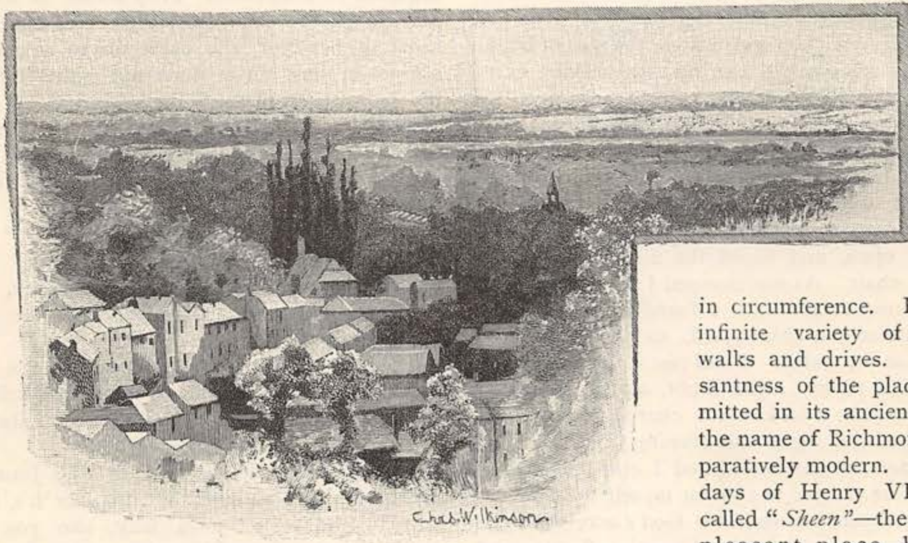
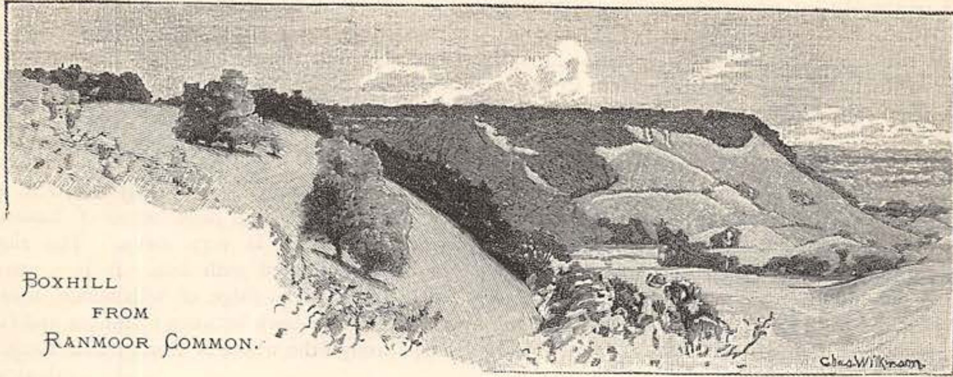
THE PRETTIEST SCENERY ROUND LONDON.

SOPHOCLES, in a magnificent chorus, has sung the beautiful scenery that may be found in the immediate neighbourhood of Athens; Horace, in one of his best-known odes, has celebrated the charms of Tivoli, near to the great city of Rome; but what poet of the first order has told of the lovely country that borders upon London? True, London cannot boast a Colonus, which Sophocles declared to be the fairest seat on earth, nor a Tivoli, the beauties of which surpassed anything that Horace had ever seen in other lands, nor can it from any point command such a view as may be seen from Calton Hill or Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh; but there are in London and around London places of exquisite beauty, of which every Londoner should be proud, but of which very many know absolutely nothing. The present writer met only the other day a cultivated lady who had lived all her life in London, and who visited a good deal the favourite English watering-places—as Eastbourne, Bournemouth, and the Devonshire coast—who, moreover, thoroughly appreciated beautiful scenery, but who had never once seen Greenwich Park. And she is only a typical instance of tens of thousands in West, North, and Central London. Similarly with country visitors to the great metropolis. They go to see the sights of the day, the various exhibitions, the picture galleries, the Crystal and perhaps the Alexandra Palace, but very few visit the beautiful Victoria Park at the East-end, the well-laid-out Finsbury Park, the pleasant oasis at Kennington near the Oval, or Greenwich Park, above mentioned. Yet Greenwich Park, because of its wooded slopes, and other natural advantages, is more beautiful than Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. Except for its limited extent, it is little inferior to Richmond, and the trees are no unworthy rivals to those in Bushey Park. It is a park, too, celebrated in romance, as those familiar with Sir Walter Scott's "Fortunes of Nigel" will remember. Sir Walter was equally acquainted with Richmond. He called the view from Richmond Hill and terrace an "*unrivalled landscape.*" At the top of the hill is the great park, which is about eight miles



HARROW—THE VIEW FROM THE CHURCHYARD.

in circumference. Here is an infinite variety of delightful walks and drives. The pleasantness of the place is transmitted in its ancient name, for the name of Richmond is comparatively modern. Before the days of Henry VII. it was called "*Sheen*"—the bright and pleasant place—but when Henry was securely seated on the throne of England he resided very much at Sheen, and out of compliment to him the place assumed the name of his old duchy in the north of Yorkshire. The palace stood on the spot now known as the Green, but not a vestige of it remains. Is there anywhere in England a more pleasant drive than from Richmond to Hampton Court through Bushey Park, when the chestnut-trees are in full bloom? Or where can one have a more lovely reach of river scenery than on the Thames from Richmond Bridge to Hampton Court? Nowhere in the immediate neighbourhood of London, though higher up the river, about both Pangbourne and Henley, this Richmond scenery is surpassed, as also between Maidenhead and Marlowe, which is the finest reach on the whole length of the Thames. Nowhere in England can three such Paradises of earthly beauty be found in such close and rapid succession as Kew Gardens,



BOXHILL FROM RANMOOR COMMON.

Richmond Park, and the park and gardens of Hampton Court. In these last, besides the chestnuts, are many grand elms and oaks, and the hawthorns are almost as beautiful as the chestnuts.

But not all the beauty round London is confined to the neighbourhood of the Thames, whose glories have been celebrated by Denham in his "Cooper's Hill," and by Pope in his "Windsor Forest." Away from the river, on the north side, there is no superlative beauty. Neither Middlesex nor Essex, so far as scenery is concerned, is an interesting county. But from Harrow Churchyard one can have a view as extensive as that from Richmond Hill. On a clear day Windsor Castle may be seen, the chimneys of Staines, the Chiltern Hills, and all around at one's feet a rich, fertile, and well-wooded country. One associates the place with Byron, who wrote some indifferent lines on a distant view of the village and school of Harrow; and some others, rather better, beneath an elm in Harrow Churchyard. Harrow was the school of Peel and Palmerston, as well as of Byron, and has contributed to the service of the Church and country a fair quota of divines and scholars, of statesmen and men of letters. In Hadley Woods, adjoining Barnet, is some pretty forest scenery, which, though not extensive, is more diversified and irregular than in Epping. By the way, let us remind our readers that if they want to see Epping Forest they should not go to the town of Epping—as some ignorantly have done—but to the village of Chingford, which is close to Queen Elizabeth's hunting-grounds. James Payn has written a bright and clever paper in one of his volumes of essays, on the misadventures which befell him, when by ill luck he went to Epping town instead of to Chingford to see the forest. According to Mr. Besant the forest of Hainault, contiguous to Epping, has some very pretty features. It is the scene of that writer's pleasant story, "All in a Garden Fair." At Chigwell, adjoining this forest, is the inn which figures conspicuously in Dickens's "Barnaby Rudge."

But now let us cross the Thames and turn to the real garden of England—the counties of Kent and Surrey. Perhaps one of the very prettiest walks or drives, or even railroad journeys, that one can take in

EPPING FOREST FROM BALDWIN'S HILL, LOUGHTON.

the immediate neighbourhood of London is to Chislehurst. If one walks or drives one must go through the long, well-planted main street of Lewisham. Omnibuses run continually from New Cross through Lewisham to Rushey Green, Catford. Here we begin to get free from suburban London and to breathe the pure air of the country. A walk of two miles and a half brings us to Bromley, before entering which town we may, if we like, diverge to the left for Chislehurst, or walk through the whole length of Bromley town. Either route is pleasant. Chislehurst is a village embosomed in a luxuriant plantation. The houses, and the gardens which surround them, are in the best possible taste, and show that they are the work of opulence and art. On the common is a column erected to the memory of the late Prince Imperial of the French, the gift of the inhabitants of Chislehurst. There is a delightful walk from Chislehurst Common to St. Mary Cray. The path leads through overhanging woods and fruitful hop-gardens. When one has seen enough of this fair land, it is well to take the main line of the South-Eastern from Chislehurst to Halstead, three stations further down, from which station a stiff walk of two miles brings us to Knockholt Beeches, one of the highest elevations in Kent. You pass through a succession of fruit-gardens which supply the London markets. From the knoll on which the beeches stand you have a splendid view of the surrounding country, in which is conspicuous the dazzling brightness of the Sydenham Crystal Palace, if the beams of the sun happen to be playing upon it. From the Beeches, if you are not too tired, you may take a five miles' walk as far as Sevenoaks, through as fair a region as any in broad England. It would hardly be an exaggeration to apply to the country around Sevenoaks the panegyric passed by an Italian author on one of the loveliest landscapes in his own native land: "*Un pezzo di cielo caduto in terra*" (A piece of heaven that has descended to earth). All this may be seen in one day, and one can return to London in good time by rail. Those who have time to spend a day or two at Sevenoaks may revel in the finest scenery of Kent. There are ten or eleven delightful miles from Sevenoaks through Tunbridge to Tunbridge Wells—the little town of Tunbridge dividing the journey into two nearly equal portions.

OBSERVATORY HILL, GREENWICH PARK.

Another excursion which the present writer is very fond of when he can take a holiday is to Boxhill and Dorking. The London, Brighton, and South Coast line brings us to Burford Bridge, from whence we immediately ascend the hill; or one may leave the train at Leatherhead, and walk to Burford Bridge through a charming country. In this walk we come alongside and cross

"The sullen Mole that runneth underneath,"

as Milton in a facetious moment called it, for grand John Milton had but little sense of humour. The ascent of Boxhill is very steep. The slopes and heights are planted with box. It is a spur of the North Downs, that ridge of hills which, commencing with the Hog's-back between Farnham and Guildford, runs through the whole of Surrey and Kent, and terminates with Shakespeare's Cliff near Dover. Boxhill is a part of the beautiful Deepdene estate, while residing at which Lord Beaconsfield wrote his "Coningsby," and dedicated it to his munificent host, the late Mr. Henry Hope. Below you, a little to the right, lies Dorking, one of the cleanest, brightest, and pleasantest little towns in the south of England. If from Dorking you walk eastward to Reigate, or westward to Guildford, you go through some of the prettiest country in Surrey, keeping all the way under the North Downs. Some of the prettiest bits on the way to Guildford are the Silent Pool, Newland Corner, and the Merrow Downs. Towards Reigate the road leads through a well-timbered country, and the entrance to the little disfranchised town is over a picturesque and irregular common, so characteristic of Surrey.

We have assumed that some of our readers at least take an interest in scenery. There are people who do not. There have been great and good people who did not. The most conspicuous among such were Socrates and Dr. Johnson. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, when asked to walk in the country, "when you have seen one field you have seen all fields; let us take a walk down Cheapside." And when Boswell showed him a magnificent view in the Highlands, he remarked, "Very fine, sir! but not so fine as Fleet Street." In the same way Socrates remarks, when some one expresses surprise at finding him outside the city, "Pardon me, my excellent friend, for I am a lover of learning. *Now the fields and the trees will not teach me anything*, but the men of the city do." Such was not the teaching of One greater than Socrates, who bade men learn lessons from the fowls

of the air and the lilies of the field. Such was not the teaching of the great poet of Nature, with whose words will we close this paper :—

'Thanks to the human heart, by which we live,
Thanks to its sympathy, its joys, its fears,
To me the meanest flower which blows can give
Thoughts which do often lie too deep for tears."

S. C. OVERTON, M.A.

A STRANGE TRADE

ERILY, one half of the world does not know how the other half lives! Never was this brought home to me more fully than one day when, walking in the Salzburg Alps, I caught up an old peasant laden with a sack, and learned from him what was his profession.

Now, the man was evidently very tired and hot with his load ; but what that load was I could not conjecture. I slackened my pace to his, and we began to talk; and I—more than half inclined to give the old fellow a help with his sack — asked what it contained.

"You would never guess," he replied.

"Potatoes?"

"No."

"A pig?"

"I wish it were."

Now I asked, before I offered to relieve him of that sack, for this reason. When I was a boy of fifteen, I was in the South of France on a roasting-hot day, and I, in like manner, caught up an old woman toiling under a sack, which hung on her back. Her grey hair was dripping with moisture, and in an access of pity I said to her, "Tiens ; ma bonne mère, I will carry your sack." I threw it over my shoulder, when the sack began to wriggle, and toss, and grunt. "Wee! wee! wee!" There was a pig in it.

That is why, before offering to carry the old man's burden, I desired to know its nature.

"There is no living being in your sack?" I said to the old man.

"I did not say that. I said I was not carrying a pig."

"Not a cat?"

"No—not a cat."

I knew that when "I" went to St. Ives I met seven wives, each wife had a sack, each sack had a cat, each cat had seven kittens—that is historical ; and that nursery riddle, as well as the saying about letting a cat out of a bag, justified me in asking if there were a pussy in that sack.

"Then—you have a living animal in the bag?"

"I did not say *a* living animal."

"How many have you, and what are they?"

"How many— uncountable. What they are — guess."

We came to a "Schenk," a tavern, and I invited the old man in to have a rest. He put down the sack on the road at a distance from the tavern, and went in with me.

"You have no fear of any one taking your sack?"

"Oh dear, no! no one else would know what to do with my load, except he were an *Ameiser*."

"A what?"

"I will tell you while we rest."

This is what I learned, as we sat in the little inn.

The sack was full of tens of thousands of ants, black and red, along with their eggs ; and the old man gained his livelihood by collecting the pupæ of ants to sell in Salsburg, Munich, and other towns, as food for cage-birds.

The business requires two; each Ameiser has an assistant. In the woods are mounds of the spines of fir-trees, collected by the ants, and the Ameiser goes in search of the ant-hills with a spade, a sack, and an assistant.

When a mound is found, then the Ameiser digs into it and throws it about. At once the ants swarm out, and each ant precipitates itself on one of the white eggs, or pupæ, and carries it off, and attempts to bury itself with it underground in one of the passages already bored for the dwelling of the colony. In a very few minutes every egg would disappear, unless the Ameiser were on the alert. He has, however, his sack of thick or rather close ticking, ready at hand, open, and whilst one man holds the sack, the other collects the pupæ, and pitches them in, as fast as he can, ants and eggs together, for the little creatures, when they have hold of an egg, will not let it go. His hands are rubbed with oil, partly as protection against the stings of the ants, partly to facilitate quick work with the eggs. The sting of an ant, especially of a red one, is not pleasant. I have myself had my hands blistered with them.

From twenty to forty thousand pupæ are got out of each ant-hill.

As soon as one ant-heap is cleared, then the Ameiser goes to another, till his sack is full, when he tightly secures the mouth. It is said that ants always rebuild on the same sites, so that an ant-collector knows where to go, but is careful not to revisit the same hills and disturb them a second time in a year.

In the sack an internecine war goes on. The red ants are the most irritable and pugnacious. They do not understand the situation, and they proceed to attack the black ants, as the cause of their disturbance