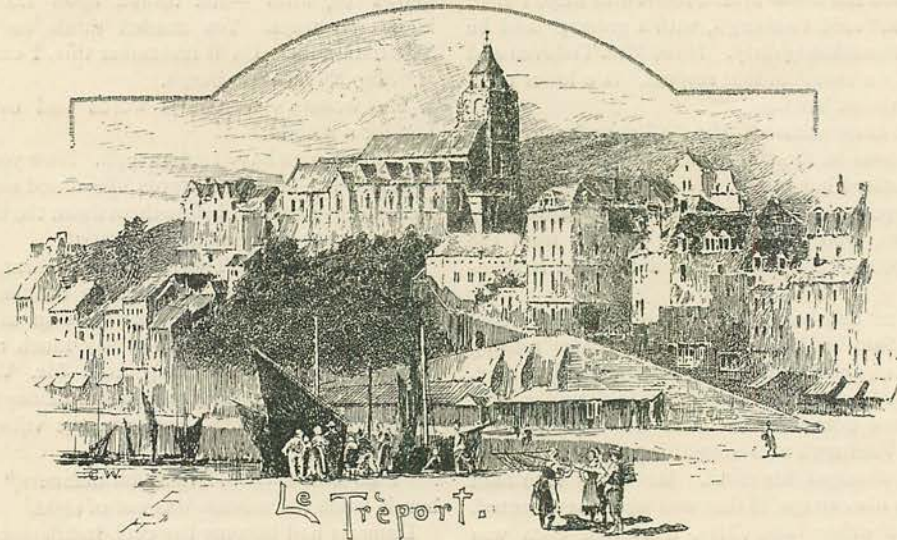


IN PICARDY AND ARTOIS.  
AN EASY CONTINENTAL TRIP.

BY JAMES BAKER, F.R.G.S., AUTHOR OF "JOHN WESTACOTT," "BY THE WESTERN SEA," ETC.



The easy trip of which this article speaks is through a country that is full of reminiscences of the English and Spanish occupation of the north of France, but in a district that is but little visited by the crowds of our fellow-countrymen who daily invade Paris. A great part of the journey will have to

be done either by driving or on foot; but the driving need not arouse a fear that such a journey can scarcely be "easy" for the pocket, for if two or three travel together, a trap or carriage can generally be obtained for about ten francs a day or journey, and this expense is more than saved by the cheapness of the living in these interesting but unvisited districts.

We make Tréport our starting point. To gain this, the steamer must be taken to Dieppe, unless, for love of adventure, passage be taken on some trading or fishing-boat to the picturesque and bright little port. The new part of the town, with casino and bathing establishment, lies under the white and yellow cliffs, and the old port stretches up the harbour, with sloping green hills on either hand, and with the old church high up on a rocky perch, dominating the grey houses of the fisher-folk beneath. The peasants are still picturesque, in their red petticoats and white caps, and the life in the harbour, with its crowd of fishing-boats gives an interesting study.

A climb up the steps to the Church of St. James allows a good look-out over the whole town, and a curious thing here is that the pathway passes under the west porch of the church, from one part of the town to the other; and this shelter forms a comfortable resort for beggars, blind and halt. The church is interesting, especially the roof, which is groined, with pendants hanging from the keystones or bosses.

To the economic may be recommended passing the night at Eu, instead of in Tréport. Here the seat—but they are not allowed to live here—of the Orleans family can be seen, from the outside: for a polite *concierge* in blue livery absolutely refuses, by strict orders, to open the gates of the château. But in Eu there is much else to be seen. The Church of St. Laurence, of exceptionally fine late Early English style, is full of interest architecturally and historically, and a visit to the well-kept crypt should not be omitted, for here are some well-preserved excellent monuments, though revolutionary ravages have scarred and hacked some of them; and as a satire upon human greatness, after reading a list of honours of one of the counts, a trap-door is raised, and beneath is seen a pile of human bones—all that is left of generations of princes whose remains were scattered broadcast by enraged plebeians, here to be gathered in a mingled, unnamed heap. The statue to Charles d'Artois—he who was taken on the battlefield of Agincourt—especially interests us in this journey. The Chapelle du Collège, on the other side of the square, contains some most carefully-executed monuments of Henry de Guise and others, and should be seen.





THE FIELD OF CRECY.

From Eu to Abbeville is but a short run by rail. We happened to enter this town late in the evening, just as the great manœuvres were going on not far from the Prussian frontier at Courtrai and Bar-le-Duc. The town was very quiet, but going into a café, that was somewhat brilliant with light, and chatting with the waiter, he began to tell us about these manœuvres. High up in the sky we saw a light in the dark; we could not make out whence it came; but we learnt it was the watchman in the cathedral tower, who had to watch for fire, and blow his horn to give the signal of the hour to prove he was awake. We had heard the sentry call in Greece to his comrades as he paced his rounds: "Sentry, be awake!" and in the old mediæval town of Prachatic, in Bohemia, had heard the watchman's curious whistle of the hours: a relic of the old days, when the town was ever in the midst of border strife; but we were curious to hear this survival of old times so near England; and in the silent night, hours after, the unusual sound of the horn awoke us, as the watchman told from his lonely height that "all was well."

The cathedral at Abbeville has suffered terribly from faulty foundations. The great tower is good work, and the west front exceedingly rich—a mass of delicate decorations. In the square of Abbeville is a brand new marble statue to Admiral Courbet; but probably nothing would give one a more striking illustration of how low art has fallen in France of to-day.

There is not much in Abbeville to detain one, and we were not sorry when we had procured a vehicle to carry us onward to Crecy. We had some little difficulty about this, for with that strange disregard of the suffering of animals which the French cannot understand as cruelty, the first horse that was brought us was bleeding from several sores. We refused to go with such an animal, and after a noisy argument we were taken to the Grande Place, and given another;

but the drivers were astonished when told in England they would be taxed or fined for such cruelty.

Soon we were beyond the outskirts of little Abbeville, and were passing a wood with marks stuck up on it, showing where soon a rail will run to historic Crecy. Our driver was a great *revengeist*—to coin a word—and said he was ready to go at once to war. What was the good? there was no trade, no money to be got; it wanted a good war to kill off a lot of people; the women would go this time. Prussia would be crushed! So the French talked in 1870.

After a couple of hours' drive, we passed across a wide open plain, and ahead of us, hidden in a hollow and surrounded by trees, lay Crecy. We put up at the suggestive sign of the "Golden Cannon" (Canon d'Or), and soon started out to get a sight of the battle-field where our Black Prince won his spurs. Guide-books said the field and the famous windmill where Edward stood was to the west of the hamlet, which said hamlet we found to be a town of 2,000 inhabitants, but as the information seemed vague, we went down to the church, an interesting, partly flamboyant building, and there we had a chat with the curé, who gave us the disheartening news that the windmill that all the guide-books said still stood had been lately pulled down, but he gave us directions how to find the field and the mound on which the mill had stood; and going east of the town instead of west of the village, we came up a slight hill, and an old grey-beard coming out of a cottage, we asked him to point us out the field. The old fellow knew the ground, and pointed us out the great mound, up which we clambered. There was the circular hole where the mill had stood, and part of its foundations lying scattered about, of lime, and brick, and stone. We knew now we could look rightly on the battle plain, and turning our faces south-eastward, we saw (for it was in the afternoon, as when the battle commenced) how the Genoese bowmen had the hot August sun in their eyes. They were



coming as it were towards us. Down on the undulating plain just below was the English force awaiting the French onslaught. Far away to the left centre, where some five lonely trees stood, was the cross that marked the spot where, from the dead body of King John of Bohemia the feathers and motto were picked up that are now borne by our Prince of Wales. We could imagine the great mass of French troops coming up from Abbeville across to the south, and the air thick with flights of grey goose-quills—the *mêlées* where the French men-at-arms attacked their own retreating Genoese—the clash of swords and battle-axes against knightly armour; all watched from this mound by Edward, whilst his son was in the thick of the fight. After thus studying the field, we went down and across some mile or so to seek the cross that commemorated the blind King John of Bohemia.

We found the cross at last by the roadside; formerly it stood some fifty yards more to the east, but in the field and in the way of culture, so it was moved to the present spot. It is a weather-worn stone cross, some four feet high, one of the arms broken, the other almost perfect, but rounded by five and a half centuries of time. The sun was setting in the most lovely hues as we halted here, and looked round the battle-field, but little altered probably since that memorable night when so many dead and wounded lay stretched on this fatal plain.

In returning to Crecy, we passed by the new railway station which is built, though the trees are not yet even cut down in the forest through which the rail is coming. We had asked the old peasant why they destroyed the windmill. "Because we have a republic," he answered, "that destroys everything." As a fact, the mill was destroyed by a man, the owner, out of spite, because they would not elect him a Mayor of Crecy. He built a garden wall with the stones.

We had some difficulty in getting away from Crecy;

all the horses were engaged in harvest work, but after a struggle and bargaining, we obtained a horse and gig to drive us on to Hesdin. Soon now we find, though so near England, we are getting into a country that has been held by the Spanish. At the first great village we near, called Estery le Crecy, a name that perchance has deceived the guide-book makers, we found a rich old church, and a white-headed priest tells us the tower was destroyed, as it was used as an outlook in the Spanish wars.

Our driver was a young man of twenty on the coming 1st of January, and on that day he would have to join the army for three years. For five hours a day he would have to exercise, and the remainder of his time he had for loafing and doing literally nothing. We asked him if he learnt nothing, if they were taught nothing; the exercise was the sole thing, and then the cabaret, the inn—surely a good, an excellent way to produce a nation of loafers and idlers!

On arriving in Hesdin, we found it *en fête*; it was the *Ducasse*, we were told, which was explained as the Kermesse—two words, neither of them French; but it was as our annual pleasure fair: games, such as climbing the pole, sack and barrel races.

In Hesdin itself we heard of a place called Viel Hesdin, formerly an old walled town, but now a village, with ruins of a fine old castle, the walls still left here and there to tell of its ancient greatness. The hotel we stayed at in Hesdin was an old château, and one part of it is a tower built by the Spaniards during their long occupation. The Hôtel de Ville is interesting, and shows we are nearing Flanders by its belfry rising above an arched Jacobean portico.

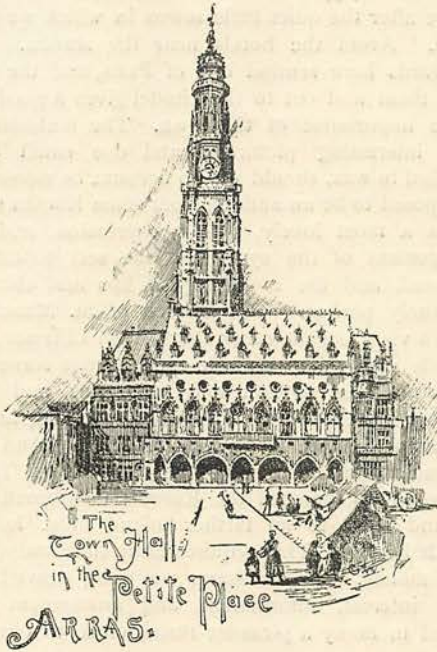
But Hesdin must not detain us long, with a day before us on the field of Agincourt. We had less trouble in getting a conveyance for Fruges, taking Agincourt *en route*. Our driver was again of a different type. We had had the man approaching middle-



ON THE FIELD OF AGINCOURT.



age, anxious for war ; and we had had the young man looking forward, not with joy, to three years of exercise and idleness ; and now we had an old man who knew what war meant. He had been wounded in the



leg at Reichshofen ; but his life had been spared him. As we drove on up a lonely road, and then through a pleasant forest, we soon became friendly, and he pointed out the villages to us, and told us their names. Some seven kilomètres from Fruges we gained a high plain, and away to the right, hidden amongst a wood, we saw rising above the trees the spire of Agincourt. It was an errand of discovery we were upon ; for our guide-books said naught of anything to be seen ; so we halted at the village inn opposite the church, and went to get some information. Here we learnt from a passing stranger that in 1832 the English had dug on the field, and had found a lot of arms, and they were in the museum in London—which museum he could not say, but he had seen them. We crossed over to the church, and found it very interesting.

Much might be said on this church, its quaint font, and carvings, but we must move on up the deep, tree-shadowed lane, and on to the plain, to the east of the village ; and then as we cross it towards the wood beyond, we halt and face southwards, having the village lying in a wooded hollow on our right, for we are now in about the centre of the battle-field of Agincourt. The wood that hides the village stretches up on to the plain. Then there is a wide open field running north and south ; and beyond, to the south, is another wood, with an opening on the right hand to the south-west towards Hesdin ; and on the extreme left eastwards is another wood, a small round one.

Now, although it is nearly five hundred years since Agincourt was fought, this tallies with the description of the battle-field as it then was ; but, were we on the field? We did not know. We had no proof, and had not learnt there was any trace left of it. But we crossed the plain on foot, and came to a cottage at a cross-road, and into this we went to make inquiries if there were not some tradition, some recollection, if only of the Englishmen digging in 1832. If so, where had they dug? An old man and his dame were in the cottage, and soon were interested in us. "It was earlier than '32," said the dame. "Not so," said the man. "But," said she, "my father was three years old when they dug, and his father was a soldier of Napoleon." She had Napoleon's medal to prove her statement, which we afterwards worked out to give the date 1816. She brought us that last medal Napoleon sent his soldiers from St. Helena. To Godefroi Jean Baptiste the medal had been given, and it had on it this legend : "Campagne de 1792 à 1815, À ses compagnons de Gloire sa dernière pensée. St. Helène, 5 Mai, 1821."

Interesting was this talk ; but we wanted to go farther back in history, and positively trace Agincourt. "Was there any trace?" "Have you seen the cross?" asked the old lady. "No, what cross?" "Where they were all buried." "No ; is there one?" "Yes, there, where it is enclosed," and she pointed onwards to the north, where was a square enclosure of a hedge, with many trees. We left the old dame with many thanks, and on gaining the enclosure, saw a high cross upon a great stone, with the date "25 Octobre, 1415," upon it : four hundred years before that same 1815 we had just heard of. A long inscription followed, commencing : "It is here that our valiant warriors have succumbed." Now we again looked out over the field, for we were sure we were upon the very centre of the battle-plain. All was calm and peaceful, and the soft wind gently swayed the leaves in this group of trees, that sheltered some of those who fell at Agincourt.

Our road now ran northwards, and the first village was called Ruisseauxville—the Town of Streams : because, says local tradition, the blood ran there in streams on that fatal day. But we were now *en route* for Fruges. "Ah !" said our old driver as we passed, "France always has war ! Every generation sees it. I have the memory of it ; and my sons will see it, for already they talk of it."

We found Fruges one of the old wide, open place, straggling market towns. In the great open square near the post some children were playing soldiers with drums and wooden swords. So the child is taught the glamour of war, and the fierce horror of the reality is left untaught. Lower down in the town we found an old-fashioned comfortable country inn, where we were excellently served for a very small sum. The train we were to get on to Arras with, only ran about twice a day ; and when it did come we found it was of the New Republic type, which means that everyone has had a picking out of all contracts. The carriages were of matchwood.



and thin iron plates, no cushions and little paint, and that terribly dirty. The rails waved along the line like a serpent; and when we got away, the swaying and jolting and jumping threatened destruction every minute. That same week, two if not three trains went off the lines in France. But at length we arrived at Arras, and happened to alight at a big but as dirty an hotel as it would be possible to find. In the morning, however, we were much interested in the town itself, for we found we were in a thoroughly Spanish town: great open squares, the houses suggesting Flemish architecture; but all round the square were the overhanging arcades and pillared arches that form a cool walk in the hot southern towns.

The Petite Place is exceptionally picturesque, and on its north side stood the rich Renaissance town-hall, surmounted by a graceful tower somewhat like that of Antwerp Cathedral, though smaller. The Spaniards held this town until the seventeenth century, and it was not really under French rule until 1640. The Grande Place is a more important square in size, with the same arcadings, but not so picturesque a whole. It was in this town that the peace was signed after the battle of Agincourt, so, though our history now dealt with the domination of the Flemish to the hated Spanish race, yet we had not left all trace of the earlier fifteenth century history connected with England. There is a most interesting museum and picture-gallery in Arras, and surrounding it a charming garden with fountains, a spot that was a

relief after the dirty dinginess of our hotel. The cathedral, a late classic building, has some one or two pictures of interest in it. But our space is exhausted, and we have but room for a passing note on Lille and Calais that end this historic trip. Busy, crowded, somewhat dirty, but well-built Lille, is indeed a change after the quiet little towns in which we have halted. Avoid the hotels near the station. The boulevards here remind one of Paris, and the walk along them and out to the citadel gives a good idea of the importance of the town. The museum has some interesting pictures; and one small head, modelled in wax, should on no account be missed: it is supposed to be an antique from some Roman tomb. It has a most lovely, tender expression, and the management of the eyes, and the soft contour of the head, and the modelling of lips and chin are exquisitely perfect. The Church of St. Maurice is worth a visit, but the other churches in Lille are poor. The life and gaiety of Lille may attract some who would not care to halt long in Calais, and these can leave the town as late as 10.45 p.m., and be in London before six in the morning. And here we conclude this series of "Easy Continental Trips," for we have exhausted the European seaboard near England; and to go farther inland must lead to extended tours. That requires more time and a little more money. But we have, we trust, proved that much interest, information, and amusement may be had in many a pleasant resort close to our own shores.

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## A TRIPLET OF INDIAN TALES.

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### I.—THE FARMER AND THE TIGER.



UT you will come back, won't you? I am really so hungry."

This was said by the tiger in quite plaintive tones, and to my wonder the man replied almost indignantly—

"I never told a lie in my life, and if I say I will, I will, and you can trust me."

I was watching the whole scene, though, for some reason or other, I was not able to do anything. It may have been that I was so interested in what was going on that I was unable to move.

I knew this farmer perfectly well. His name was Biloch Khan. He lived in a country where there was a river, and by the river there was a jungle, and then beyond the jungle were the farmer's field and his cottage. In the cottage, which must have been half-a-mile distant from the border of the jungle, were his wife, whose name was Fatima, and his two children—a boy and a girl.

This afternoon Biloch Khan had gone out early to look at his crops, and as he was walking through the

field nearest the jungle a voice called out familiarly from the thicket—

"Welcome, Bill! Give me the news."

Though it was the tiger that spoke, the farmer seemed in no way disconcerted, but replied in a matter-of-course sort of way—

"I am well; my wife and children are well; I came out to see my crops: they are looking well; I hope you are well; all else is well."

"Heaven bless you all!" replied the tiger.

"Now you tell me your news," said Biloch Khan.

"I am well; I came up from the river this afternoon; as I felt hungry, I determined to lie in wait here for you; now I have found you, and am going to eat you. All else is well."

"Heaven's blessing rest upon you!" said the farmer. "But," he continued, "do not eat me now. Let me go and spend the night at home, and say good-bye to my wife and children; then I will come back early to-morrow morning to be eaten."

This, then, was the point at which the story commenced.

Then the man went home, and so did the tiger,