

HOW TO SPEND SUNDAY.

BY THE REV. PREBENDARY EYTON.



WHATEVER differences may exist as to the precise reasons for the observance of Sunday, or as to the particular methods which those reasons suggest, there is happily no question about the fact that Sunday is an institution which exercises a most blessed influence on the community. Here at any rate we are all agreed. No proposal would be more universally condemned and even execrated than a proposal to abolish Sunday as an institution, to let every day be alike, with no interruption of business and no pause in the restless struggle of competition. The Secularist who limits his point of view to the life that now is would be as earnest in his opposition to such a proposal as the Christian who views this life as the preparation for a greater life beyond.

There is, then, a general consensus of opinion that Sunday, viewed simply as a day of rest from ordinary occupation, is a great blessing. Instituted, as it was primarily no doubt, for the good of man's soul, it has proved the greatest boon to his whole nature. Even those who do not realize that they have a soul would be among the first to exclaim, "We cannot do without it." That observance which the religious instinct wrested from the world by long and painful struggles—that rest from the dull grind of competition which nothing less strong than the religious motive would ever have succeeded in securing; is now universally recognized to be a great boon to mankind at large. But when we pass on to consider the question how Sunday is to be observed, we pass from the calm waters of universal assent, or, at any rate, of acquiescence, into a seething ocean of dispute and controversy.

It is to attempt to vindicate the real greatness and honour of Sunday, to vindicate it against mischievous attempts to identify it with the Jewish Sabbath on the one hand and against turning it into a day of nothing but amusement on the other, that we need a strong and enlightened public opinion.

It is of great importance in the formation of such an opinion not only to be quite clear that Sunday is not the Jewish Sabbath, but also to know why it is not. For a man will never get the full blessing out of his enlightened Sunday observance till he has got rid of a false conscience on the subject of the fourth commandment. The Christian is as free from the law of the Jewish Sabbath as he is from the law that prescribed Circumcision. A very little thought will enable us to see that Christian instinct from St. Paul's day has refused to identify Sunday with the Sabbath. For what was the rule of Sabbath observance? A Jew might not do any work, he might not sweep his room, or light his fire, or cook his food. He might not even go outside the camp to gather manna. A man was found collecting sticks for firewood on the Sabbath day and the whole congregation stoned him with stones till he died. Has anything like this ever been advocated as the law of Sunday? Did any one ever keep Sunday in this way? And yet those who maintain that Sunday is only a continuation of the Sabbath, ought, if they are consistent, to keep Sunday in this way. To what obvious absurdities it would lead a moment's reflection will tell us.

And we are strengthened in this conviction by observing Christ's attitude towards the Jewish Sabbath. That attitude is the more remarkable because He was generally

so careful to observe all Jewish practices. But He seems to make an exception in His protest against the rigidity of the Sabbath, "He healed those who were sick on the Sabbath day," when there was apparently no reason why He should not have put it off till the next day. He did not bid those who were healed to rest where they were till to-morrow, as the law would have bidden them, but He said, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." His obvious intention was to show that He was superior to the Jewish Sabbath, that it was made for man, and that its temporary and limited purpose was now fulfilled. And as regards Sunday it is needless to say that He said no word that could imply that there should be any continuation of the Jewish Sabbath under another name and on another day.

The Christian Sunday, then, is not a continuation of the Jewish Sabbath, it rests upon no Divine commandment. God gave His people laws in the olden time that they might be trained to give laws to themselves. He gave commandments which imposed prohibitions that His people might learn to restrain themselves. He claimed a portion of their time. He said, "That portion must be wholly Mine; it must be observed in a special fashion," such as was laid down. This was a necessary step in the training of mankind. One can easily see how without it a commercial nation like the Jews would have sunk into a state of money-making godlessness. They were pulled up sharply by finding every seventh day fenced round with observances which were meant to remind them of their relationship to God.

But the spiritual reality which underlay this observance of the Sabbath is the sanctification of the whole life by the consecration of stated portions of it to the direct worship of God. The Christian Church seized hold of this underlying reality from the first and connected it with that Resurrection Day which was to be a new spiritual departure for mankind. But she never dreamt of transferring to this the old rules and prohibitions which had served their time and done their work. That the first day of the week was a day on which the early Christians met for worship is abundantly clear from the Acts of the Apostles; but there is no hint there of any other kind of observance, nor was any such possible. The shops did their business, and the law courts were open on the first day as well as on any other day, and it was not till the time of Constantine that the religious forces were able to gain Sunday from the exigencies of worldly business. Even then there is no trace anywhere of any attempt to demand for Sunday observance the sanction of the fourth commandment.

Sunday was considered to be God's free gift to His people in this toiling world, a day of resurrection, a day of worship, a day of elevation above earthly things. Such is still the true idea of Sunday. The man who keeps it in the spirit of that idea will want no rules for its observance—he has entered into the spirit of the day. He has got hold of a great living principle, and so long as he is true to the one and the other he may very well be trusted as to their applications.

There is a saying of the great Saint Augustine which seems just to meet the case. "Ama et fac quod vis.—Love and then do what you like." Just so a man who has grasped the true idea of Sunday, who is alive to the great privilege of Sunday, may "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free." He will not want any rules for Sunday observance, he will remember that inasmuch as he is a follower of Christ, he has not rules to keep but a character to imitate. He will maintain his freedom and the only question that he will ask is how Christ would have him observe Sunday, and in the answer to that question, honestly faced, he will find the ideal of his life.

In the light of a great principle like this we may venture on a few details. The general interests of society obviously and clearly demand not only a weekly day of rest for physical reasons (though that is by no means an unimportant consideration), but a day of elevation for moral and spiritual reasons. Every busy man knows the tendency to become absorbed in his week-day occupations; every student knows the danger of being buried in his books; many feel the difficulty of the down-grade tendencies of their ordinary associations. They know that they might sink into being almost mere machines. But if Sunday is to be maintained as a day of elevation it will only be by according to worship its primary place. Worship is the first business of Sunday as work is the first business of week-days. Recreation holds the same place in both, and that is a subordinate one. It is necessary to insist on this however much we may sympathize with the quite reasonable desire for less restricted recreations on Sunday

than are now possible. If the true idea of Sunday as in the first place a day of worship is not preserved, and if schemes for recreation practically monopolize the whole day it is not too much to say that we shall soon lose Sunday altogether. Nothing but the religious motive would have gained it from the grasp of ceaseless competition and nothing but the religious motive will keep it.

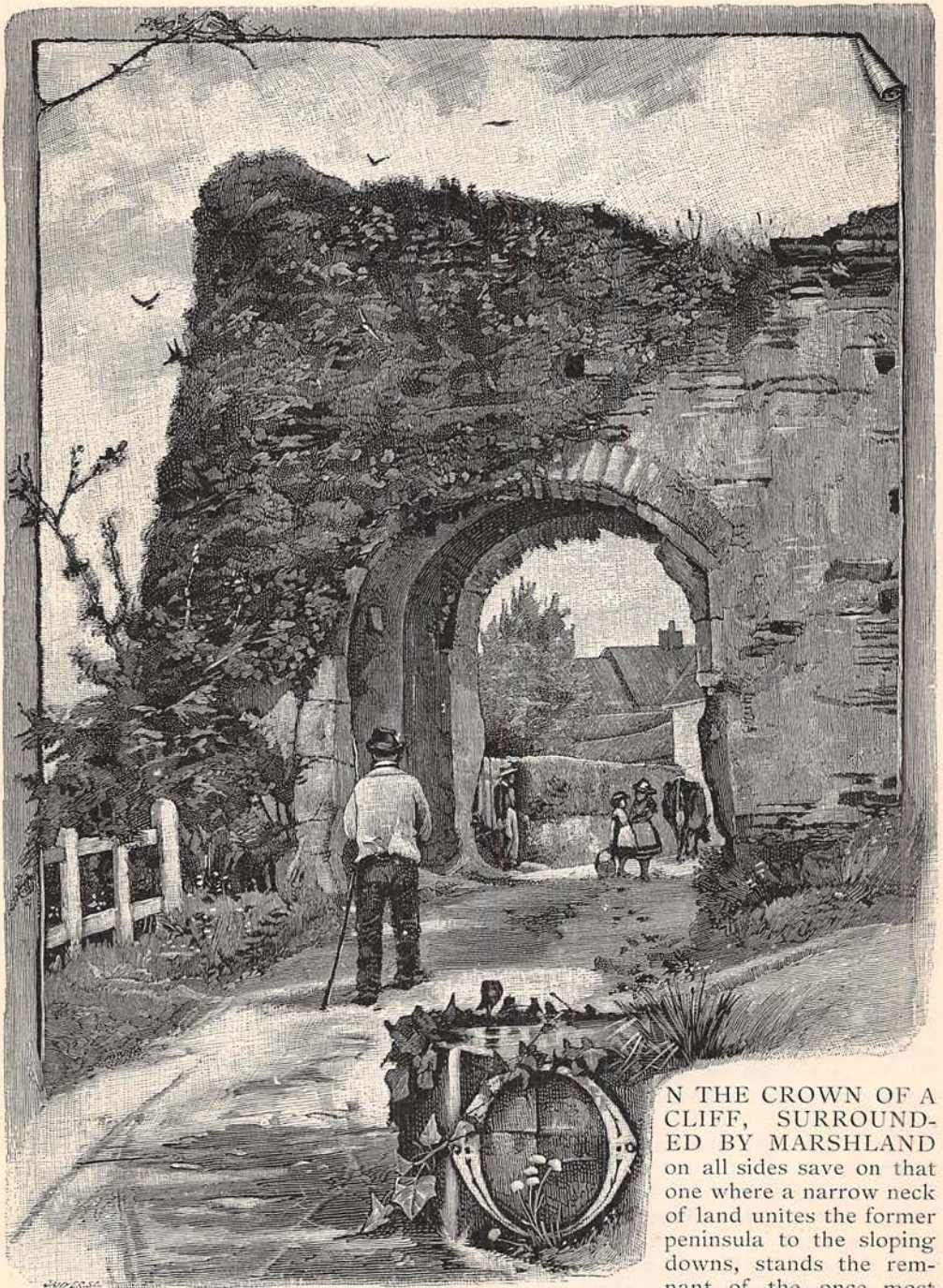
It may safely be prophesied that Sunday would never be preserved as an institution merely for physical rest and amusement, especially as the amusement of less than half the social body would necessarily provide the greater portion with necessary work in supplying it. We need a strong protest at the present time from all who value Sunday as a great boon against the increase not of harmless amusements which occasion no work but of recreations which practically deprive railway servants and household servants of any Sunday at all. Granting that a morning given to worship may quite fitly be followed by an afternoon of some healthy out-door amusement in the case of real workers, yet nothing can excuse the selfishness of large parties on Sundays, or of a demand for special trains for excursions on the river. And for the most part it is not the weary brainworker or hard working mechanic who demands these additional opportunities. The 10 a.m. train which runs on Sunday from Paddington to Maidenhead is filled (I am told) by the class of people who spend their week-days in perpetual recreation, who go from race to race, from one party to another, from hanging over Hyde Park railings to idle gossiping in houses. That train is a type of the real peril which is ahead, viz. that Sunday should be retained only as a holiday for those who can afford to take one. That the health, the happiness, the home life of so deserving a body as the railway servants, should be sacrificed to the self indulgence of upper class idlers is a thing which makes one burn with indignation. For charity's sake, for the sake of society as a whole, above all for the sake of those who have such scanty leisure we are bound to abstain from any recreation however lawful and tempting which makes Sunday a hard day for other people. On the other hand much might be done to make Sunday a brighter day for the young. The perpetual "Thou shalt not" which forms too large a part of the dim and hazy instruction on the subject too often given in schools and families is not only wearisome and oppressive, but tends to promote inevitable reactions. The distinction between Sunday games and week-day ones, or Sunday tunes and week-day ones is a relic of that hateful system which cut life into two, and left the thought of God's service out of work and play alike. I should be glad to see a cricket-match on every village green on Sunday afternoons, and the games of every Institute as freely used as on week-days. There can be no better relaxations than our ordinary English games, and it is a thousand pities to proscribe them as unfit for Sundays.

Then again in relation to another much controverted matter, the opening of museums and picture galleries on Sunday afternoons, might we not hope to get rid of the real difficulty of keeping the ordinary attendants at work by enlisting volunteers from the leisured classes to act as guardians, and so to enable thousands of the more intelligent Londoners to visit the National Gallery and the Natural History Museum on Sunday afternoons? Nothing could be more elevating than such opportunities, and to thousands who have little choice on a wet Sunday save the limited one of the public-house or the street-corner, the boon would be an inestimable one. We ought as a matter of charity to guard jealously the opportunities for Sunday rest of the great working classes; and we ought to protest against any selfish employment of Sunday labour. But we are most Christlike when we are most human in our sympathies, and we shall insure a far more intelligent and health-giving use of Sunday by promoting all reasonable recreations in the after part of the day than by looking askance at them or by invoking against them an abrogated commandment of the Jewish law.

Nothing is absolutely wrong in itself on Sunday that is not wrong on week-days, for Sunday does not alter or modify the great laws of right and wrong. But every man who has a real purpose in life, will see things which for himself are wrong on Sunday because they hinder that purpose instead of setting it forward. And every man who has learnt to feel for others will feel that it is noble work for him to sacrifice even some of his liberty in order to stem the tide of that Sunday selfishness which is the only real Sunday desecration. And if this attitude be maintained and extended we shall preserve all that is essential in our English Sunday.

WINCHELSEA. BY MRS. COMYNS CARR.

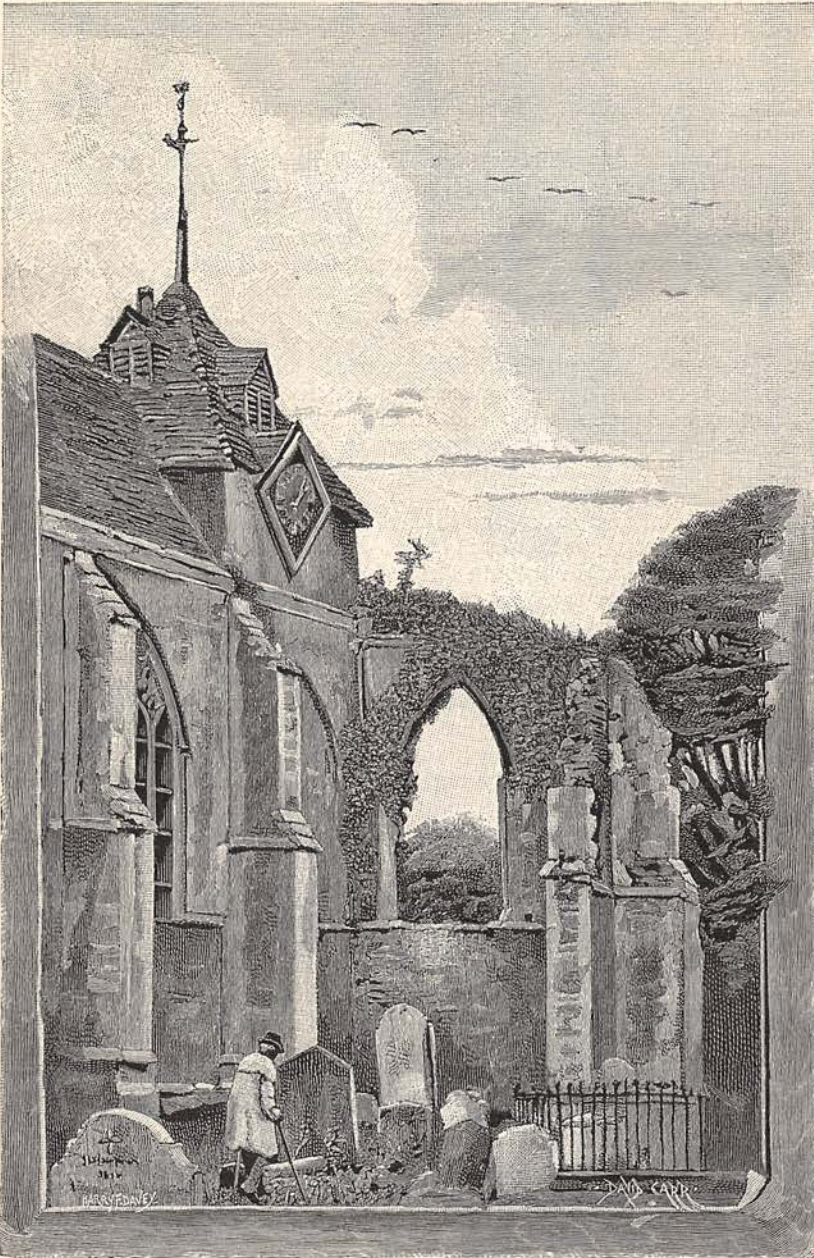
Illustrated by DAVID CARR.



THE NEW GATEWAY, WINCHELSEA.

IN THE CROWN OF A CLIFF, SURROUNDED BY MARSHLAND on all sides save on that one where a narrow neck of land unites the former peninsula to the sloping downs, stands the remnant of the once most opulent of the Cinque

Ports. Forsaken of the sea, it has since been almost forsaken of man also ; and the splendid choir of what once must have been a splendid, though possibly uncompleted, church, stands alone in the square graveyard, the centre of the little village, a solemn and stately token of the greatness of the ancient town. For that the city was at one



A CORNER OF ST. THOMAS'S CHURCHYARD, WINCHELSEA.

time the pride of its inhabitants and an ornament to the kingdom, while it was also so far the mark of foreign envy as to be subject to frequent invasions of French freebooters, we have the evidence of history, besides that of the stones and traditions of the place itself.

The name of Winchelsea is derived from the Celtic *Guent* (corrupted into *venta*, and thence into *wind*), meaning a broad plain, the Saxon *chesel*, signifying shingle, and the

Norse and Saxon syllable, *ea* or *ey*—an island: thus an island of shingle in the midst of a broad plain. And this was a very fair description of the old town in existence probably as long ago as Roman times, and which did not stand where the remains of the present one do, but lay to the east of Rye Harbour, at the mouth of the Rother, where pieces of moor bog have been found at low water, showing the former presence of buildings. Remains of a wood stretching from Old Winchelsea to Hastings have also been traced at intervals along that marsh, and are supposed to belong to the forest of Dymdale, a name now only preserved in the rivulet which flows from Broham through Pett level, and enters the Brede Channel half a mile below modern Winchelsea and the Military Canal.

Edward the Confessor made a grant of Winchelsea, with the town of Rye, to the abbot and monks of Féchamp in France, and on the 7th December, 1067, William the Conqueror landed there, marching up the high road through Udimore till he reached Battle. Old Winchelsea was by him added to the Cinque Ports, of which, in a short time, it became the most prosperous, for it counted at that time 700 householders, and being the most convenient port for France, it even reached a higher degree of prosperity than was ever achieved by the new town. It was built in thirty-nine squares or quarters, with a cathedral and monastery of the Grey Friars, and a fine arsenal and lighthouse. The place was probably in its greatest glory in the reigns of John and of Henry III., when it is often quoted as the head-quarters of the king in his engagements with the French; but towards the end of the latter reign the men of Winchelsea, emboldened perhaps by their successes, seem to have taken the law into their own hands, and to have soon made the passage of the sea so dangerous to commercial vessels that the king took Winchelsea and Rye under his own jurisdiction, and gave other lands to the monks of Féchamp in exchange. But these proud days began to draw to a close before the first half of the thirteenth century was over. In 1236 a storm shook the embankments, although the arsenal and lighthouse were not damaged, and in 1250 a far more serious encroachment of the sea did fatal damage to Old Winchelsea. Hollinshed speaks of "a great tempest of wind so huge and mighty that the like had not been lightly known," and declares that "the sea, forced contrary to his natural courses, flowed twice without ebbing," and that "moreover, the same sea appeared in the dark of the night to burn as it had been on fire, and the waves to fight and strive together after a marvellous sort, so that the mariners could not devise how to save their ships by no cunning or shift which they could devise." Herein "300 houses and some churches were drowned with the high rising of the water course." Nevertheless, Winchelsea seems still to have been strong enough to cast fear into the hearts of all travellers across the Channel, and the marauders even made common cause with young Simon de Montfort to assist him in the boldest of his piracies. When Prince Edward, in 1266, visited the sea-coasts to punish all such freebooters, the town of Winchelsea alone offered him resistance, and it was not till "much guilty blood was spilled" that he "won the town and commanded them to abstain from piracies."

Old Winchelsea however never flourished again; what had been begun by the sea was finished by bloodshed and lawlessness, and when Edward I. ascended the throne, he arranged for the transfer of the town to a new site, even before it was totally destroyed by the great inundation of 1287, when the mouth of the Rother was stopped at Romney, so that the waters spread over the whole land, and the Rother, uniting with the estuary of Rye at Appledore, altered the face of that entire tract of country. Therefore, in 1277, Edward I. ordered Kirkeby, Bishop of Ely, to choose a site and to plan a new town. This he did, and the site was an "uneven sandstone rock washed by the waters on the east and north sides," and connected with the mainland by a road on the west leading to Pett and Fairlight, and by a tract of meadow-land on the north-west, while a ferry communicated with Udimore on the north-east, whence the main highway led to Battle and London. By using the surface stone for building, a table-land of 150 acres was there levelled, whereupon the new town was built, according to the plan of the old one, in thirty-nine squares or quarters, varying from one-and-a-half to three-and-a-half acres each. A stone wall surrounded it on every side save on that of the precipice that overlooked the eastern port and the open sea; here, according to Thomas of Walsingham, it was inclosed by high earthen entrenchments, through the gaps in which one saw the ships lying at anchor below, but the cliff was so steep that the road leading to the harbour was perforce built in zig-zags. Upon the north-west corner, where the windmill now stands, the king built himself a stronghold overlooking

the church of St. Leonards beneath which the waters ultimately flowed round the hill into a natural inner harbour, which became one of the great features of the new settlement. Remains of the entrance-gate of this castle are still said to be in existence near the Pipewell Gate, and until 1828 the watch-tower or roundle was still standing on the ridge of this inland cliff. At intervals in the town wall stood the three gateways, still in part existing—the Pipewell Gate (destroyed in 1380, and re-built, but less elaborately, by Mayor Helde in 1404), leading to the Udimore ferry; the New Gate, without which stood the Holy Cross of Winchelsea—three-quarters of a mile further along to the south-west, leading to Pett and Fairlight; and the handsomer Strand Gate, with double portcullis, leading to the eastern port. Within these walls lay the

thirty-nine squares of the town, built with the windows looking outwards, and granted by charter of Edward I. to those burghers who chose to leave the decaying city for habitations in the new settlement. The exact sites of the streets and places, with their names and the names of the first owners, are all set out in a return made in the twentieth year of Edward I.'s reign.

The town contained three churches: St. Leonards, which remained without the walls to the north-west after the final embankment was made; St. Giles's, standing just beyond the present rectory; and St. Thomas's, the finest of the three, and of which the choir and part of the transepts still remain standing. This beautiful building was erected from 1288 to 1292, between the thirteenth and fourteenth squares, nearly in the centre of the town, and is supposed from the researches of antiquaries to have had a nave probably reaching as far as the wall which now bounds the graveyard, and flanked by rather exceptionally narrow side-aisles, as the fragments of the pillars go to prove. The transepts show the remains of entrance porches, apparently of later construction than the church,



A RIGHT OF WAY.

though not so late as the porch, which has been attached to the bricked-up arches of the choir. This fact leads experts to imagine that the nave must have been lost and the transepts abandoned in the earlier French attacks, as the church must have been finally altered about the time of Edward IV. or Henry VII. A roof is supposed to have spanned both nave and aisles after the manner of several of the Sussex churches, the transepts alone being separately covered, and the central tower may have had a shingled spire to serve as a beacon to mariners. The flying buttress at the north-east angle by the sacristy tells of some unforeseen sinking of the foundation at a date not very far distant from the original building. There was a bell-tower standing at the south-western corner of the churchyard as late as 1790, but it was unfortunately destroyed in the search for the foundations of the nave. The interior of the choir is separated from the aisles or side chapels by three arches of black and white Sussex marble and Caen stone, the arches and the windows being of a peculiar and elegant construction. Within the chapels are five canopied monuments, two of them attributed

to members of the Alard family, to whom were assigned the largest grants of land in the removal from the old town, the finest tomb being probably that of Gervase Alard, admiral of the Cinque Ports. In the chancel, four canopied recesses surmounted with gables and pinnacles, and richly diapered within, form the original sedilia and piscina, and in the Alard chapel these also remain, but are of later date than those in the chancel.

Besides the churches, Winchelsea had the orders of the Grey Friars and of St. Bartholomew's Hospital transferred from the old town, the one standing in the twenty-seventh quarter, in the grounds now belonging to Major Stileman, where the ruin of the beautiful chapel still exists; the other in the thirty-ninth and last quarter, near to the New Gate. It had also the hospitals of St. John and of the Holy Rood, newly built in the thirty-fourth and thirty-eighth quarters, on either side of the Pett road, at the corner of the present road to Hastings; and added in the reign of Edward II. the order of the Black Friars in the twenty-first quarter, now called Chestnut Field. It had besides a Court Hall, also called the Water Bailiff's Prison, still standing at the north-west corner of the churchyard. This has of course been lately restored, but antiquaries assert that even the walls must have been rebuilt in Tudor days from the old



HIGH STREET, WINCHELSEA.

materials, as the round-arched doorway and some niches are of older date than the masonry. Within, a small courtyard leads to the cells and to a large disused hall beyond them, and above to a fine room, where the mayor and jurats used to administer justice.

Two open greens—the King's Green, being part of the land now belonging to the Friars' estate on the high road; and Cook's Green, in the first quarter, on the corner of the cliff looking towards Rye—also adorned the town, and it boasted moreover two market-places—Monday's market, in the twenty-eighth quarter, close to the Friars' estate, and Little Monday's market, of which a portion of a gateway still remains opposite Mariteau House. Six open wells or springs supplied the town: the Pipe Well, still existing at the foot of the east hill, and St. Katherine's Well half way up it; the Strand Well and the Friars' Well, the first destroyed by the falling of the cliff, the second now inclosed; the New Well by the New Gate, and St. Leonard's Well at the north-west, under the former castle. The present so-called Town Well is a thing of recent construction. The whole extent of land belonging to the town was 1,120 acres.

Such was the New Winchelsea, which soon became nearly as wealthy as the old one had been. It was a famous shipbuilding place, and was still one of the most important ports of the kingdom, supplying twenty-one ships, or a greater number than any other port, to Edward III.'s fleet, and distinguishing itself greatly in a naval

engagement with the Spaniards in 1350, when Edward and the Black Prince each captured a vessel, landing at Winchelsea after the victory. The men of the new town



THE TOWN WELL, WINCHELSEA.

were however frequently in disgrace again for their marauding tendencies, excused in a measure by the piracies of the French upon the woollen cargoes that it largely exported, notwithstanding the high duty imposed thereon. Indeed, in the year 1341, Winchelsea, together with other towns, was required to contribute two ships to a Channel fleet to protect the coast, and at the time of Edward's expedition to France, it

stands specially charged that its mayor and water-bailiffs should keep a strict watch on its port, lest spies should carry the king's secrets abroad.

But although the victory of Crécy brought the English in awe for a while, the town of Winchelsea suffered greatly when the war again broke out. On the 15th March, 1359, while the king was in France, 3,000 French bore down upon Winchelsea from the coast of Normandy, plundered and partly burnt the town, killing many and ill-treating many more. The dead were buried in St. Giles's, and the steep lane skirting what was the churchyard is called Dead Man's Lane to this day. Notwithstanding that Edward, furious at the news, turned his army against Paris, a renewal of the attack on Winchelsea was made in the following year, on the same anniversary, and it was not till a fleet under Sir John Paveley forced the French to return to their ports that order was restored. But the Normans paid for their foolhardiness, for Edward, assembling the army of the Cinque Ports at Winchelsea, took the Isle of Sans and burnt the town of Luce, and in the following year won also the Isle of Caux, "in the revengeing of the Frenchmen displeasure doone to Wynchelse." This brought however but a lull in the quarrelling of the hostile coast towns, for in the following reign we find the French invading Rye, and forcing the abbot to take refuge in Winchelsea while they burnt the sister town and its beautiful Norman church to the ground. And although during the next year another attack upon Winchelsea was successfully repulsed by the "Abbot of Battele," again on the fatal 15th March, 1380, the unlucky town was captured through the treacherous opening of the New Gate to the enemy, the valorous abbot was put to flight, the walls of the city were seriously injured, the Pipewell Gate was totally destroyed, and the nave of the church of St. Thomas most probably on this occasion burnt to the ground.

In 1384 the Commons applied for some defence for the fortresses of Rye and Winchelsea, and the town walls were repaired, and some say, the windows in the north aisle of the church replaced, and, in 1404, under Henry IV. the Pipewell Gate was rebuilt by Mayor Helde. But although the town was still a trading centre it never recovered its former standing, and in the reign of Henry V. we find a murage grant for reducing the size of the place which was too large for the necessary habitations; while under Henry VI., although its merchants are still mentioned, and it is spoken of as a convenient port for embarking to the Continent, there can be no doubt that its real prosperity was at an end.

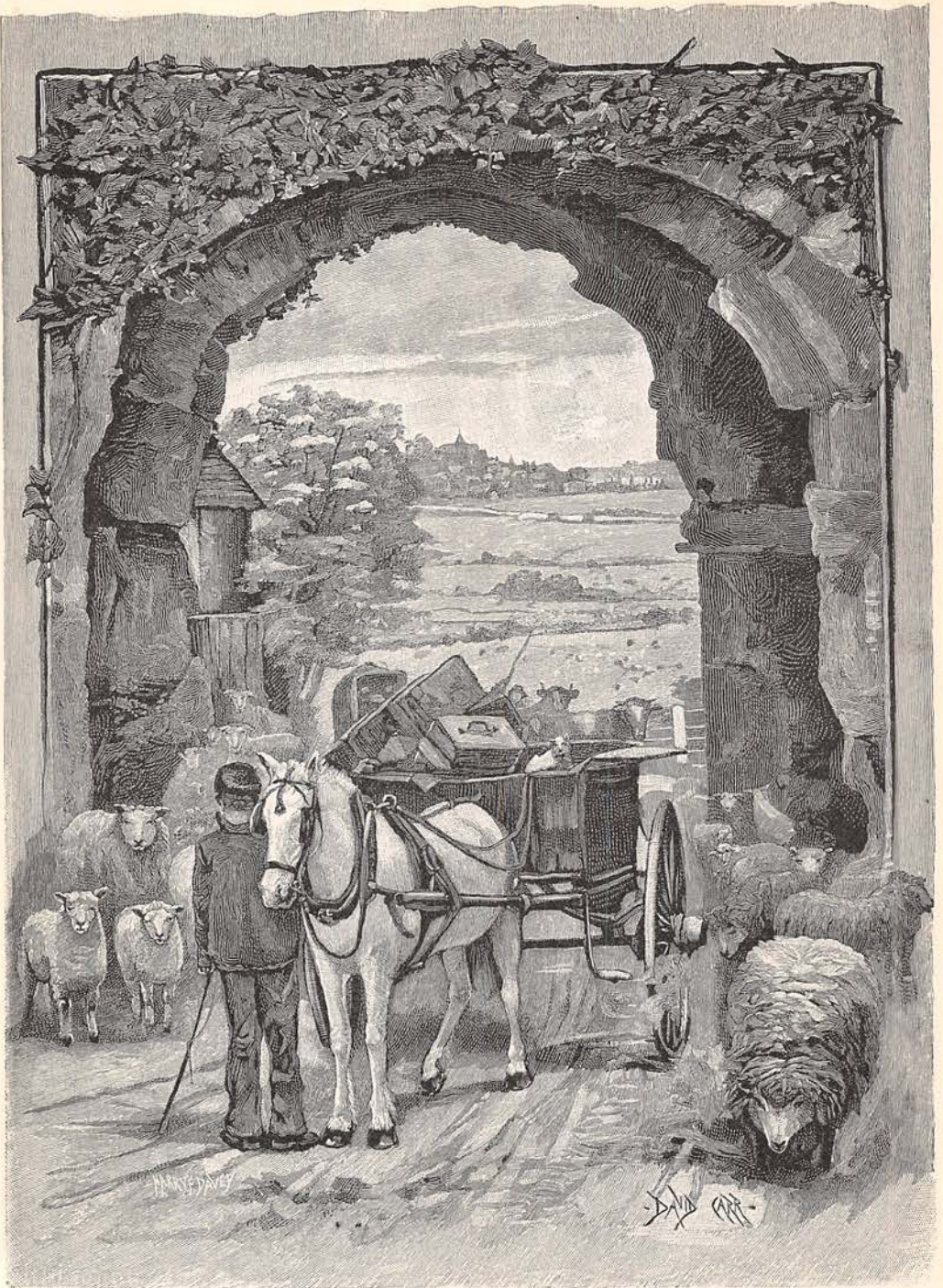
And for this sorrowful decadence its old foe, the sea, was in a great measure to blame. Whereas in 1370 we find "a certain bridge," built by "the burghers of Wynchelse, at Pypewel over a water called the Chanel of Wynchelse, between the towns of Wynchelse and Odymer and Rye," so broken down "by the violence of the tides and flouds of fresh water passing to the sea," that the king "granted commission to the Abbot of Battaile to take order for repairing it"; and again in the reign of Richard II. an order to the same personage for repairing the "common-way called Cop-greys," (probably from New Gate to Icklesham) and a "certain marsh called Dynsdale" . . . "through neglect," . . . "destroyed and overflowed by the sea", yet in the reign of Henry V. the waters had evidently already begun to retire, until in the year 1539—of Henry VIII.—the land was dry as far as the marsh of Camber, where he then built the massive stone castle and keep whose ruins still lie grey and lonely upon the greyness of the marshland.

In 1491 Winchelsea still had £80 allotted to her to furnish "ten sail of ships," while Rye only received £40 for half the number, but we find soon after that ships were all unladen at the Camber or at Rye, which had certainly become the seat of trade by the time Henry VIII. built Camber Castle for the defence of the harbour; and after the dissolution of the monasteries the ancient city may be said, so to speak, to have given up the ghost. The ambition of the few families of note who still clung to the old town would not however be quenched, and in 1570 they framed a pathetic appeal to the council of Queen Elizabeth showing "why the town of Winchelsea is worthy to be advanced and raised up out of the present poor and most lamentable state it is in." The statement affirms that "in the memory of man it has been a town of great prosperity, of excellent traffic and of most worthy service to the realm. Its situation most excellent, on a high rocky hill within half a mile of the main seas; it is divided into squares, and the streets large and broad, all straight as the same were laid with a line, and so cast that at the end of every street the town is to be seen through; and having yet remaining a great many costly vaults, arched and set forth with pillars of Caen



AT THE LOOKOUT, WINCHELSEA.

stone as meant to have houses over them fit for famous merchants. There is in the narrow seas no place so fit to have a good haven made as it is midway in a fair bay between Rye and Hastings, with rocks within half a mile to make piers and jetties, and three fathoms at low water without any sand, flat bar or other danger near ; with less



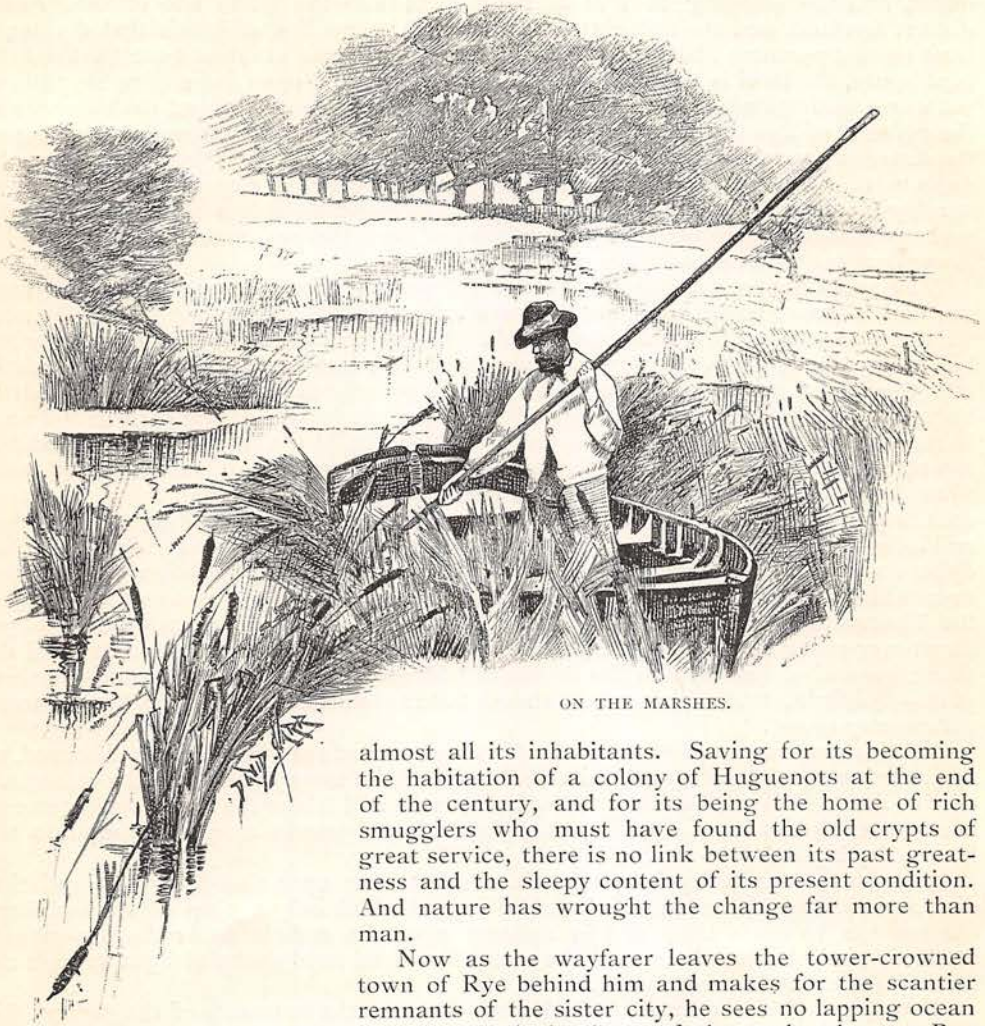
BACK FROM RYE MARKET.

than a hundred rods of cutting through good firm marsh ground, the sea might be brought into a great fleet two fathoms deep, and so into the old channel where the tide ebbed and flowed."

But all that this mournful cry brought forth was a visit from Queen Elizabeth in 1573, when she was so much impressed by the fine old buildings, and the mayor and

twelve jurats in their scarlet robes, assembled by the efforts of the old resident families—Ashburnham, Peake, Fane, Stapley, Weekes and others—that she gave the place the name of Little London, and in the year 1586 granted several estates in her manor of East Greenwich to the mayor and jurats of Winchelsea.

Gradually even the harbours of Camber and of Rye became more and more stopped up and spoiled, and the town of Winchelsea lost all its commerce, and very soon



ON THE MARSHES.

almost all its inhabitants. Saving for its becoming the habitation of a colony of Huguenots at the end of the century, and for its being the home of rich smugglers who must have found the old crypts of great service, there is no link between its past greatness and the sleepy content of its present condition. And nature has wrought the change far more than man.

Now as the wayfarer leaves the tower-crowned town of Rye behind him and makes for the scantier remnants of the sister city, he sees no lapping ocean waves around the base of the rock whereon Rye stands red against the sky, but it is a stretch of level marsh that he must cross, grim and weary of a winter's day, placidly flaxen beneath a scorching summer sun; it extends on his left to where a strip of yellow beach hems the grey sea-line; it extends on his right to where the ridge of the Udimore hills sinks into Rye town at one end, and carries the eye far away to the slopes of Brede, and to the gentle undulations of many soft downs in the distance; it extends in front of him to where the chalk cliffs of Hastings rise out of the flat land and present their white front to the sea, and it wraps the rock of Winchelsea around on all sides, save on that one where the New Gate opens on to the neck of primitive land that leads to the village of Pett, and, indirectly, to Hastings again.

Standing on the little public terrace close to the finest of the three old gates, the marsh is a level land beneath us, green or brown, grey or golden, monotonous or changing with the breath of the wind upon the long grass and rushes, and the hurrying of clouds overhead—according as the season be bursting spring-time with its emerald

green, against which the distant sea-line is blue as the veronica along the dyke-banks ; or rich harvest or mellowing autumn, when the white sheep are dotted upon the burnished turf and moss, and the brown tassel-grass makes planes of many shades whereon russet cattle crop lazily. When the village children run out of school at noon along the paved path leading to the little terrace, the marsh is faintly flaxen with the sun upon it, and the heavy fortress of Camber is sleepily grey in its midst, and the shipping of Rye harbour melts into the white line of Dungeness' distant foreland, and the sea glitters beyond the yellow line of beach that divides it from the flat pastures ; but when the villagers congregate at even beneath the little pent house, the level is grey with the shades of twilight upon its mellow monotony, yet warm perhaps with the reflections of some glorious sunset behind the village, and the pyramid of Rye town, as they see it through the old gateway, stands purple upon the distance ; yet two hours later again, labourers smoking their last pipe, after the day's work, see a soft and delicate pall resting upon this same monotonous yet ever-varying marshland ; it is the sea mist lying lightly along the dykes which the moonlight perhaps tenderly illumines as it strikes across from the sea, making the dark ivied tower darker than ever in the black shadow.

The mists almost tell the tale of the old sea-way, for wherever there was once sea and is now marshland, there they are apt to lie of autumn nights, chiefly near the dykes that nowadays drain the marsh. Round the northern side of Winchelsea hill, where the great Rye marsh narrows itself and curves round below the windmill into the inland marsh that must have formed so splendid a land-locked harbour in bygone days, the mists find a way and rise even more persistently than in the sun-baked level by the sea. From the breezy hill-top beside the mill, one may watch the sun set gloriously red behind the distant downs, washing the clouds on every side with triumphant crimson, bathing the hills in warmest purple, and leaving lakes of tender opal tints upon the horizon whereon waves and streaks of fire still float at will : then still later—the afterglow fading slowly, very slowly, gilding the wandering lines of the dykes so that they are as metal snakes upon the grass, mellowing the sober land studded over still with the familiar cattle—the mists begin gradually to rise as they do upon the Thames after a hot summer's day. They seem to float idly upon the marsh, yet they never pass the boundary where the neck of original land cuts it in two and the rising ground slopes up into the downs of Icklesham, Pett, Guestling, and—furthest of all—Fairlight, where the square church tower stands on the ridge, a beacon to all the country round.

All this one may see from the hill where once stood the church of St. Leonard, or from the grassy slope where the city wall hemmed the town just beyond the monastery of the Black Friars. Beside it twisted pine-trees still fringe the lane, sending storm-bent stems across it or standing straight, with red trunks as a foreground to the blue valley beyond.

In summer the valley is green with hop-gardens upon that bridge of land that divides western and eastern marshes, and beyond which only a peep of the sea hems the horizon to one's left ; and in autumn upon the stubble fields the hop-pickers set their conical straw huts, and the camp fires send lurid shafts of light to meet the tender rays of the harvest moon.

Save for the hunting season, which more concerns the remnants of the gentry, this is perhaps the liveliest time of the year in this smallest and quietest of quiet English towns. A few visitors stow themselves away in one or two picturesque little cottages, and of the permanent population the greater part take themselves to the hop-fields, faithful to a time-honoured belief that the picking is salubrious, and to a pardonable desire for easily-earned gains.

But the village is a sleepy village at the best of times, fit witness of the vast and quiet land that lies spread beneath it, and that no ingenuity of man can cover again with the stormy element that once brought the town its prosperity. The seasons pass over it, each leaving its silent mark, and the weather sweeps across it, bleak or stormy, serene with the dog-days or mellow with the harvesting ; but its days of event and excitement are past ; it is as a tale that lives in the memory, as the sad and peaceful evening of a boisterous life. And the mists cover it tenderly with a veil of infinite mystery that the harvest moon illumines but cannot dispel, for it makes the silvery pall more deceptive than ever, so that hills might even seem to rise from the plain, and the treacherous sea to lap once more around the base of the cliff that it once encircled.