



## ROUND HENLEY REGATTA REACH.<sup>1</sup>

By RODERICK MACKENZIE.



WE all know Henley regatta course ; most of us remember the terrible crush at Paddington, the sudden storms of rain, the happy, lazy hours when the sun *does* come out, and the general disinclination to take any interest even in the racing. But before we leave London, or when the regatta is over this year ; before the luncheon-basket is ordered at Gunter's, or when the last bit of newspaper has vanished from the reach, and the last coterie of corks disappeared from the quiet river, it may be of interest to recall some of the bygone history of this bit of country before

ever racing came to Henley.

The Henley regatta course is bounded on the north by the town of Henley, Phillis Court, and the meadows of Fawley and Greenlands, as the old geography books say, on the south by Remenham, and it is the story of this strip of meadow and upland that forms the subject of this article.

Though Dr. Plot and his followers have expended much ingenuity in tracing Henley back into the foggy days of antiquity, and by confusing Henley with Hambrough, near Woodstock, have invested the town with a respectable but spurious age, all we know for certain is that Henley had no wall at the time of the Conquest, and was of so little importance that although Walter Giffard, Earl of Buckingham, possessed the manor of Fawley hard by, Henley is not mentioned in that survey at all. After the Conquest, however, we soon begin to hear of the town. Important from its position on a ford where the high road northwards crossed the river, it soon made itself walls, which were certainly finished by the year 1307, and shortly afterwards the first bridge was built, apparently of stone. How long this lasted we know not ; it was succeeded by a second of wood on stone piers, which was standing in 1786.

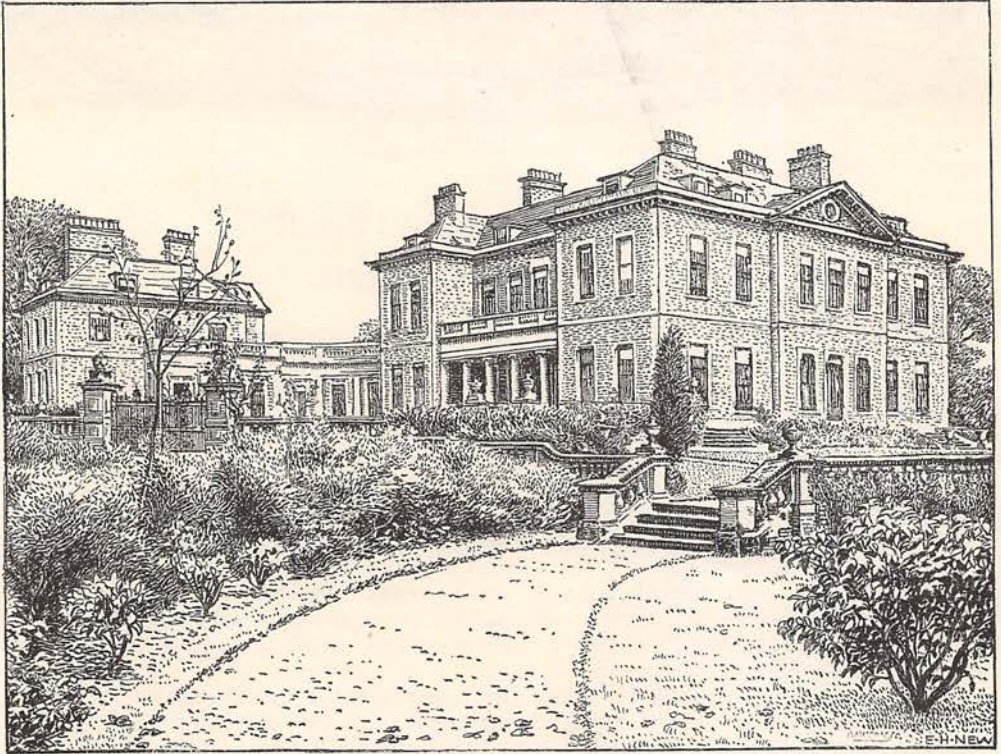
The Manor of Henley at the time of these early fortifications belonged to the family of De Moleyns. In 1199 it had been the "land of the king ;" in 1307 Piers Gaveston succeeded Margaret Countess of Cornwall as its possessor. From the De Moleyns it passed through many hands, till in 1609 it pertained to Master John Spencer, called "rich," the wealthiest merchant of Elizabeth's reign, who lived at Crosby Hall, in Bishopsgate Street. He died, in 1690, at Canonbury Tower, and over a thousand poor followed him to his grave, 320 of whom received a remembrance.

This prosperous trader left a daughter who eloped with William, second Lord Compton, on a dark, blustering December night, packed up in a baker's basket for

<sup>1</sup> The Drawings are from photographs by Marsh & Son, Henley-on-Thames.

security. Her grandson, James, third Earl of Northampton, sold the manor to Sir James Whitelocke, whom we shall hear of in connection with Fawley later on.

Of old Fawley, of the former house, and of its history, beyond bare facts we know little. The infamous Tostig, whose cruelties were so great that he was deprived of his estates, held it in the reign of the Confessor. Fawley was then of some value; there were two carucates of pasture, and pannage for 100 hogs, in all worth £6. The estates were then given to Walter Giffard, as we have seen, and from him passed to the Sackvilles, who held it, in a younger branch, for many years, till their last heiress married one Rokes. There seems to have been a question as to whether Miss Margerie Sackville was entitled to possession, or whether Fawley ought to go back to the head of the family; but upon application to the Duke of Dorset,



FAWLEY COURT, HENLEY-ON-THAMES, BUILT BY CHRISTOPHER WREN.

Drawn by Edmund H. New.

his Grace had "the politeness and condescension" to examine his papers relative to this point, and as the only one discovered respecting Buckinghamshire applied to Bernwood Forest, Miss Margerie was permitted to remain in possession.

It was about this time that a petition was sent from the Commons to King Edward III., praying him that no salmon should be caught between Gravesend and Henley Bridge in kipper time, as much salmon fry was caught illegally in the Thames and given to the pigs. We know how full of fish the river must have been then, from the fact that servants in these parts in the middle ages stipulated in their agreements that they should only be fed on salmon so many days a week; but, alas! for us now, the last salmon that ventured into the upper reaches was caught at Surley Hall about seventy years ago, and bought by George IV. for £1 a pound.

Rokes innumerable succeeded at Fawley. They were knights of the shire, they intermarried with Stoner and De la Pole of Hall Place, and then their place knew them no more; and a successful lawyer, Sir James Whitelocke, Chief Justice of Chester, afterwards a Judge of Common Pleas, and a favourite of Charles I., looking for a habitation, bought the estate for £9,000, a large sum in those days. "A good subject, a patriot, a just judge, a master of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, a Jewish

historian, a good herald and genealogist" is the character his more famous son gives of him.

Sir James was much at Fawley after he bought it; in 1617 we find that he had taken for him alive sixty partridges and also had "sum bred up." "I gave a covey of thirteen alive ones to the Lord Keeper, and another covey of ten to the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and this before Michaelmas term began." He kept curious lists of presents given to him on circuit and at other times. In 1625 he was given, with other provisions, 16 loads of hay, 10 ton of coals, 25 sugar loaves, 4 salmon,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  calves,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  capon, 24 stints (sandpipers), 8 grouse and heathcocks, 300 wardens—these were pears, "I would have him roasted like a warden," as Beaumont and Fletcher say—15 lemons, besides grocery wares, sweet waters, cates, and march-panes. "My presents ar well and easilye valued at £50."

The same year he was knighted. This cost him £44 17s. 8d. in fees; 13s. 4d. of this went to the drum-major, 10s. to the surveyor of the wayes—whoever he may have been—and 11s. to Arche the fool, who was no other than Archie Armstrong, our last salaried court jester.

In 1622 Sir James added to his land at Fawley by buying Fillels Court for £1,410; he also repaired the house, which he seems to have become very fond of. Ten years after he built a chapel in the house, which was consecrated with great pomp by the Bishop of Lincoln—for all this country was then, and long after, in his diocese—on the feast day of St. John the Évangelist. Thither came Robert Wright, Lord Bishop of Bristol; John Borlace of Bockmer, and Cope Doyley of Greenlands, knights. This was his last act of any importance, and on the 22d June he died, and was buried at Fawley Church, two miles off, in the south transept, beside his wife. The monument to them is a good example of its period, with a long Latin inscription and stiff recumbent effigies of the husband and wife, distinguished by the beautiful carving of their hands.

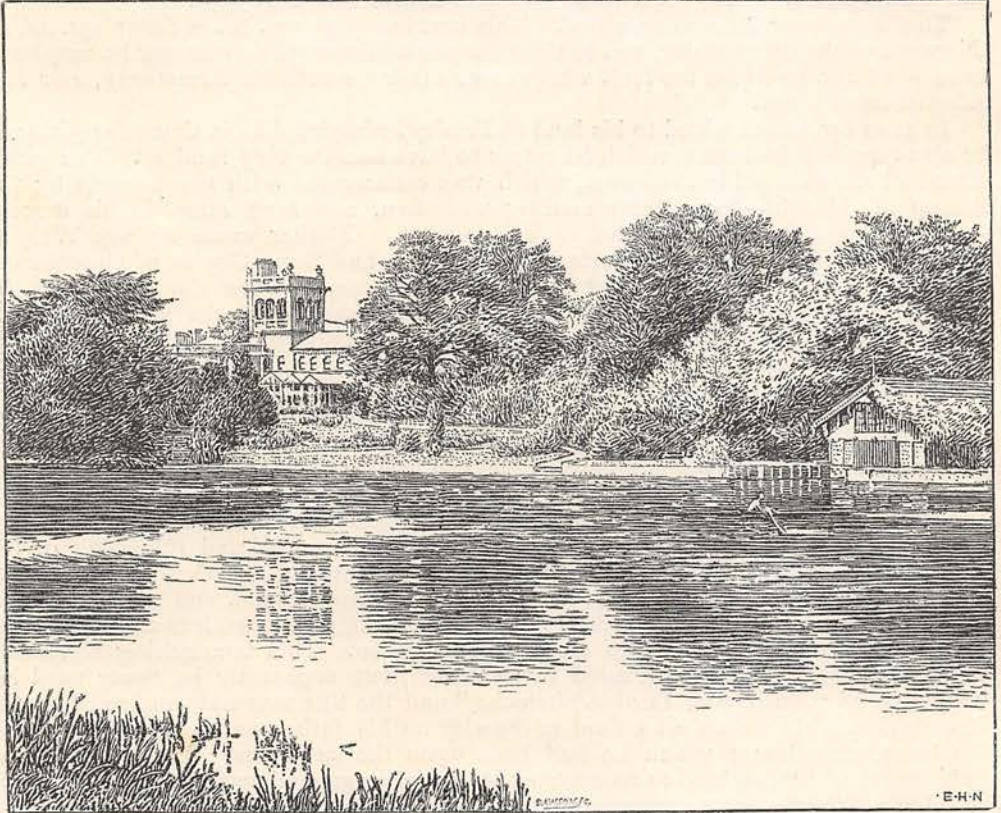
His son, Bulstrode, a lawyer who rapidly made his mark, succeeded him. Born in London and brought up at Merchant Taylors', a gentleman scholar at St. John's College, Oxford, he grounded himself in law so well, and then acted so prettily at a masque given by the Inns of Court to the King and Queen, that he speedily played himself into royal favour. However, the hard times came; he forsook the King, represented Marlow in the Long Parliament, and was appointed Chairman of the Committee for the trial of Lord Strafford. First a Royalist and then a Parliamentarian, he was always an advocate for concession and conciliation, and after acting as commissioner at the abortive attempts of peace at Oxford, retired into the country in disgust, and finally accepted an embassy to Sweden. This temporizing statesman was one of the three peers created by Cromwell, but apparently he never used his viscounty of "Bulstrode, Lord Whitelocke" and the title was not confirmed at the Restoration. He became as fond of Fawley as his father was. He pulled down the banqueting house which he had built upon the arch near the artificial lake in his park, and "resolved to reconstruct it on higher ground, near his orchard, which stood in a different county, that of Oxford." In this new sanctuary he officiated as a justice of the peace, and it is difficult to say of which he was more proud, his civil dignity of magistrate or the classic abode—twelve feet square—that he had built. The steps, bay boards of the windows, the hearth and pavements in it were constructed of Bletchington marble, the blue and white colours of which he thought most beautiful and had himself selected from the quarry of Sir Thomas Coghill, his noble friend and kinsman.

This peaceful existence was of very short duration, however, for all his temporizing did not help Whitelocke much. In 1622 Fawley itself was occupied by a troop of horse, who, contrary to orders, plundered the house, littered their horses with sheaves of unthreshed wheat, lit their pipes with valuable manuscripts, broke the park pales, killed the deer, carried off furniture, and made the place unfit for further residence.

The title-deeds of the estate were also lost at this time, some for ever and some to be found again a few years ago in the British Museum. The deer too which were then destroyed have only been restored to Fawley within the last ten years. Bulstrode had not much cause of complaint for the loss of his herd, as the hatred of the populace to privileged deer and deer parks, originating in the old New Forest clearances and fostered by the savage penalty of death for the crime of killing a noble's stag, came to such a head during these wars that few parks escaped destruction.

William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, who had been the happy possessor of eight deer parks before the civil wars, only saved the one at Welbeck. So few park deer indeed were left at the Restoration in England that fresh blood had to be imported from Germany, and one Peyton, of the Island of Ely, was created a baronet as a reward for giving Charles II. deer to re-stock Windsor Park.

Sir Bulstrode still resided at Fawley after this sortie for a time. Poor temporizer! The house was indeed in a perilous state—itsself a wreck and as insecure as his own position “among those who bowed not the knee to Baal.” Only a mile off was Greenlands, well fortified, well manned and well provisioned, a standing menace to the cropheads, for “Sir John Doyley, of his very great affection toward the royal cause, had the misfortune to have his house converted into a garrison of such strength



GREENLANDS, THE RESIDENCE OF THE LATE RIGHT HON. W. H. SMITH, M.P.

Drawn by Edmund H. New.

that it soon became an object of thought to Oliver.” On the other side of Fawley was Phillis Court, with Skippon energetically fortifying the house. Cannon and garrison of 300 foot had he there, and the Thames was brought into the ditches round about it, and between the two Fawley stood, miserably torn and plundered by each.

The situation was so menacing that in 1644 Cromwell himself came down to inspect his troops at Henley and made a reconnaissance towards Greenlands, but could not spare at that time sufficient troops for its reduction. Later it troubled Essex so much in his advance towards Oxford from Henley that, desiring to take his whole army with him without hindrance, he applied for a party to be sent out of the city to block up Greenland House, “a place very prejudicial to the country thereabouts.” He reported that he had sent a party to view the fortifications, but thought it unsafe to adventure the taking of it by onset; and that Major-General Skippon riding about the works had had his horse shot under him. Matters became so urgent that we find him only next day writing again about Greenlands. Clearly delay would not do. A serious attempt to reduce this little fortress was resolved upon, and in June more forces

were sent to batter Greenlands from the other side of the Thames. The siege was raised in the next two months more than once, as the King's forces gained ground or retreated; but finally Major-General Brown took over the command, sent to London for petards and two more pieces of battery, and finally, after a siege of six months, compelled Colonel Hawkins, the Governor of Greenland House, to send out in July for a treaty of surrender.

The defence had been most stubborn. Lady Doyley had been in residence the greater part of the time, and took an active part in the work. The articles of surrender were honourable; the officers retained their swords and horses, the common soldiers and cannoners their swords, muskets and pikes and their colours; and they were given a convoy of horse to Nettlebed and carts to carry their baggage as far as Wallingford.

After the capitulation of Greenlands the country grew quieter, and Sir Bulstrode, who had found Fawley too hot to hold him for long, was allowed to go down to the country to take the care of the "slighting," or dismantling, of the garrison of Henley and Phillis Court.

All the most prominent leaders on each side were at Henley from time to time. In 1643, Rupert was here and had hanged a spy on the big pollarded elm in Bell Street, opposite the Old Bell Inn, which is now the Grammar School. Perhaps it was to this same elm that in August, 1646, a woman, who had

taken notice of the unwonted exactions imposed on her and others by the Parliament, and had expressed in civil terms some dislike thereof, was, by order of the Parliamentary Committee in Henley, fastened by a nail through her tongue on market day by the road-side, with a paper fixed to her back setting forth in great letters the heinousness of her misdemeanour.

It was in 1644 that the King, escaping from Oxford on that luckless journey to the Scotch army, came by here. Ashburnham with two servants rode from Oxford by Nettlebed to Marlow. The King, "carrying a cloak, bag, or portmantle behind him on his horse as Harry, Master Ashburnham's man, looked a serving man indeed." They must have ridden down the old Oxford Road, then up Pack and Prime Lane to Henley Park, and down to the big oak by Fawley Lodge, to Marlow, thence to Harrow and Brentford, to the traitor army and to death.

But enough of the civil wars. The Restoration came. Charles was often about the quiet hills round. Did he not ride over from Windsor to Bockmer to see Sir Giles Borlace with sweet Nell Gwynn on a pillion behind him? Nell must have known the



THE LIBRARY, FAWLEY COURT.

Drawn by H. R. Millar.

country about well, if tradition is to be believed. She is said to have been at Lodge Farm, over Medmenham as a servant, and to have lived at Soundess, near Nettlebed, where her bower of yew still flourishes. At Pages Bottom, near Soundess, is a well down which the country folks say that she threw her jewels, why no one knows. Nell must have had great fascination for the people. England is seamed with the places where she is fabled to have been, and had she not as many birth-places as Homer? And then is any dying thought in history more pathetic than "Let not poor Nelly starve"? "Only a woman's hair" may match it.

At Phillis Court William III. received, on his way from Torbay, the declaration of the peers in his favour and an address from the corporation of London. The declaration of the peers was brought by the Earl of Pembroke, Lord Culpepper and the Bishop of Ely; the corporation was represented by Sir Robert Clayton, member for the city, a former Lord Mayor and the second Founder of Christ's Hospital, father of the Sir William Clayton who bought Harleyford. Whether Whitelocke's son William received William III. himself is doubtful as, to his great grief, he had recently lost his eldest son.

Fawley had eight years before this been sold to Col. Williams Freeman, whose son William, in 1684, built the present house. The architect was Sir Christopher Wren, and Fawley is one of the few houses that he designed. Marlborough House for the Duchess of that name was one, and there are a baker's dozen throughout England, of which three are in Chichester.

Fawley is a beautiful example of his work and of that marvellous proportion which is so much out of fashion nowadays and which never tires. Built originally of red brick with Portland stone coigns, at the beginning of this century, it was given the pink stucco coat which disfigured it so long. Verily, one man builds, and another pulls down. The house was originally girdled with terraces; these perished at the same time; but when the house was restored to its original state a few years ago, the old foundations were found and form the sub-structure of the new terraces. Inside the house the most interesting features are perhaps, first, the wonderful ceiling in the saloon of plaster and wood-carving, and secondly, the inlaid doors and bookcases which were made by Miss Dawson Damer, so well known as a sculptor of the heads of Thames and Isis on Henley Bridge.

The grounds have been beautified by some kind planter for posterity with many rare and beautiful trees. The planes are particularly well grown, unsurpassed by any in England; one at 5 feet from the ground measures 17 feet 5 inches round the girth, and the height is over 98 feet. The trees have suffered severely in the few last years, and only last year a magnificent lime, 120 feet high, close to the high road perished. In the gardens is a fine Norman door-case, the entrance to the dairy, brought from Hart Street in Henley, and once the gateway of some religious house.

After William left Henley the town settled down to unwonted quiet and prosperity. Much malt was made, and the corn waggons on market day cumbered the streets to the number of 300. The inhabitants were far too busy in the eighteenth century to make much noise in the world, and so we hear little of Henley till the trial of Mary Blandy in 1762, for parricide, made England ring with her story.

In the High Street, and nigh to the Angel Inn, lived, in 1751, an attorney-at-law, Mr. Francis Blandy, a widower with one child, "the darling of his soul, the comfort of his age."

In those days the line separating town and county society was very definite, and Mr. Blandy was foolish enough, so that his Mary might vault this barrier, to give out that his daughter would have from him £10,000 as dowry.

By ill chance Captain Cranston, a married man, of old border birth, and a debauchee of the first degree, came to Henley in command of a recruiting party. He heard, saw, and loved Mary and her famed £10,000, and, forgetful of his wife in Scotland, proposed to her. The father, disliking the man and distrusting his story, was averse to the marriage and forbade it. Thereupon the captain, as anxious for the money as Mary was for him, determined on slow poisoning. As early as the month of August, 1750, he endowed himself with convenient second sight, and with infinite cunning gave out that he saw Mr. Blandy's wraith, a certain sign of death, he said. However, it was not until November that Mary, under his instructions, began to poison her doting father, when Cranston left for Scotland and sent her Scotch pebbles as a love gift; so thoughtful was he, indeed, that wishing his jewels should ever look their brightest on

his lady-love, he even provided a special powder to clean them with. This powder was arsenic, and in the early spring of the next year our slow-poisoning damsel had the satisfaction of seeing her father's teeth dropping whole from their sockets out of his head. On her perceiving this, she "damned him for a toothless old rogue, and wished him at hell."

In March, by accident, she gave the charwoman, Ann Emmet, some of the poisoned tea; but was horrified when the daughter came running with the news of Emmet's illness. She sent off remedies at once, and cared tenderly for the sick woman till she recovered; a few days after another of the servants tasted the tea and fell ill. Mary became alarmed; she did not care to poison others; it was only her father she wished away, for, "who would grudge to send an old father to hell for £10,000?" She wrote again to Cranston for fresh instructions, who bids her "not to put the arsenic in tea, but into some liquid of a more thickish substance." Time was getting on, and Cranston, whose debtors were becoming more eager, writes again impatiently on July 18th: "I am sorry there are such occasions to clean your pebbles; you must make use of the powder for them by putting it in anything of substance, wherein it will not swim on top of the water, on which I wrote to you of in one of my last. I am afraid it will be too weak to take off the rust, or at least it will take too long a time." He also described the beauties of Scotland, and tells her that his mother, Lady Cranston, has employed workmen to fit up a room in Lenell House.

On receipt of this letter Mary began to double the dose, and soon after nearly killed the unfortunate charwoman again. Mary was in bed at the time, but on hearing how dangerously ill Emmet had been, "Poor woman, I am glad I was not up; I should have been shocked to have seen her," she said. The sight of her dying father never shocked her, as relentlessly she completed her task. The servants now suspected the cause of their master's illness, and one of them, Susan Gunnell, with every precaution told Mr. Blandy the strong grounds they had for thinking that his daughter was the cause of his illness. The father, with a fondness greater than that of a woman, only said, "Poor love-sick girl! What will not a woman do for the man she loves?" And afterwards, "I always thought there was mischief in those cursed Scotch pebbles." The end was not far off now. That day at breakfast Mr. Blandy complained that the tea had a bad taste, and looked at his daughter so hard that, bursting into tears, she abruptly left the room. The father soon followed her into the kitchen and said, "Molly, I had like to have been poisoned twenty years ago, and now I find I shall like to die by poison at last." On this she ran up stairs and brought down Cranston's letters and the remaining poison, and thinking herself unobserved, put them in the fire, and went about the house thanking God that she was much better, and that her mind was more at ease than it had been. One of the maids, despite her precaution, had seen her throwing the poison on the fire, and retrieved the packet before it was too late. On the wrappers which covered the powders was written "Powder to clean pebbles;" these on analysis were proved white arsenic. This happened on a Saturday, and on Sunday she was not allowed to see her father at all. Monday came, and, seized by remorse, she told the maid she should go distracted unless she saw her father. This she was allowed to do, and after a little conversation Mary said, "Dear sir, your kindness towards me is greater than swords to my heart. I must down on my knees and beg you not to curse me." His only answer was, "I curse thee, my dear! No, I bless thee and will pray to God to bless thee and amend your life. So do, my love, go out of the room lest you should say anything to accuse yourself." Could anything be more tender, more touching, more for-

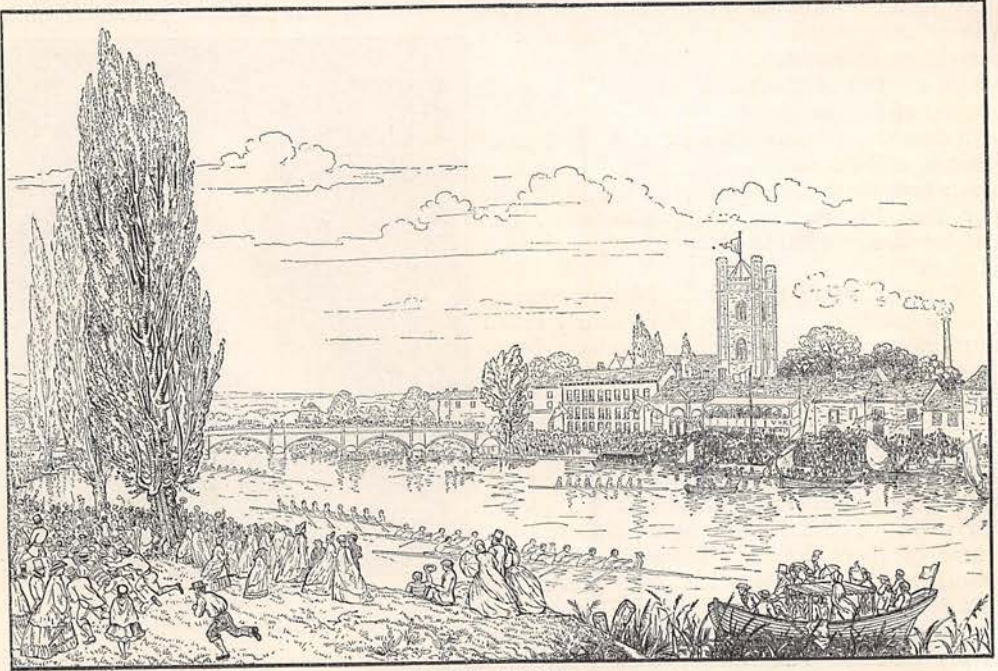


MARY BLANDY.

From a mezzotint by T. Ryley, after a picture by F. Wilson.

giving? The next day he died, and was buried in Henley Church by the side of his wife.

Mary, knowing her danger, far on in the night of her father's death offered the maid twenty-five guineas if she would help her to escape to London in a post-chaise. She had already, in the early morning, failed in a similar proposal to the man-servant, and, refusing to go to bed when the maid would not help her, stole out of the house over Henley Bridge alone; but was soon discovered by the mob, who would have torn her in pieces if she had not taken refuge in the Angel Inn. Here she was arrested, was taken to Oxford, where, after a long and careful trial in the Divinity School, on February 29th, 1752, before the Hon. Heneage Legge and Sir Sidney Stafford Smythe, she was condemned, and was executed on April 6th. She was dressed in a black petelair, with black gloves, and her hands and arms were tied with black padusoy. As she mounted the ladder she turned on the fifth step and said, "Gentlemen, I beg you will not hang me high for the sake of decency." Two steps



HENLEY REGATTA.

From a picture by Clint, painted about 1838, in the possession of Mr. Mackenzie, of Fawley Court.

higher she felt faint and said trembling, "I am afraid I shall fall." Before she was hanged she turned to the people and asseverated her innocence, saying that she did not know that the powders would have done him any harm, as Cranston had told her they would only restore her father's love to her. From Oxford her body was brought to Henley, attended by the fickle mob, who now worshipped her as a saint, and was buried in a coffin lined with white satin in Henley Church, between her mother whom she had never known and her father whom she had murdered.

Miss Mary's crime soon after was imitated in a commonplace way by a Miss Jeffreys, who murdered her uncle Joseph, a retired butcher, for the sake of his property, which included some houses in the market-place, aided and abetted by her paramour, a gardener named Swan.

Mary Blandy's trial made a prodigious noise throughout the country. It was one of the first cases, probably the first, where arsenic was traced by a post-mortem examination, and people had not forgotten the slow poisoning of Sir Thomas Overbury, in James I.'s time, who no doubt died of this drug; and besides this, the prisoner's sex and age and her father's pathetic and weak love for her united in making this trial one of the most interesting in the annals of crime. Of Cranston little more is known; he is supposed to have fled the country and to have been killed in a tavern brawl in Holland.



For the next half-century or so there is nothing of interest to note. Greenlands, fallen from its high estate, passed from one possessor to another, no one keeping it for long. Phillis Court, which now had become Freeman property, was pulled down; tradition says because one of its owners objected to having any house on his own estate bigger than Fawley, the one he lived in, where the Georges were often to be seen, for the Freeman family were always great favourites of theirs.

Modern times were coming to Henley and the palmy days of the coaching era. The oldest inhabitants still tell wondrous tales of the number of coaches that passed through the town every day. In 1838 fifteen changed horses here, including the Birmingham "Tantivey," the Cheltenham "Magnet," and "Berkeley Hunt," and the



HENLEY REGATTA.

From an instantaneous photograph.

Oxford "Defiance." Most of them pulled up at the Red Lion, and it was at this time that the inn obtained its great reputation for mutton chops. It is said that George IV., then Prince of Wales, ate fourteen at one sitting here.

From these days dates the glory of Henley regatta. On June 11th, 1829, the coaches brought large contingents from Oxford and London to witness the first race ever contested between the two Universities on the river. The start was from Hambleden Lock over a course of two and a half miles to Henley Bridge, and was won by Oxford, with six lengths to spare, in fourteen minutes ten seconds. The crews were eminently clerical, as in after years two bishops, including Selwyn of New Zealand, three deans, and four other parsons came from among them.

It was ten years before the reach saw racing boats on it again, and then Oxford sent three boats to row for the first grand challenge cup, and to be beaten by a solitary Cambridge crew, Trinity, which included Sir Stafford Northcote, first Lord Iddesleigh. The only other race at this first regatta was the town cup won by the *Wave*. Boats had names in those days, and the umpire rode alongside the two boats on the tow-path.

Next year the regatta was held in fear and trembling, for the Oxford dons suspected the innovation and were inclined to suppress it. To evade their wrath the mythical John Cross Club sent a crew composed of Wadham men, and the Brasenose Club dubbed itself the Childe of Hall. As in later days, at Aylesbury, when the Christ Church "grinds," now, alas! no more, were held, the riders adopted other names than their own for the occasion. In this year Leander, a new club, won the grand challenge cup, and in 1841 and 1842 the Cambridge Subscription Rooms gained this trophy with what was practically a University crew. However, in 1843, they were badly beaten by the Oxford University Boat Club, rowing seven men only, as Menzies, of University, fainted just before the race and the Subscription Rooms refused to allow a substitute. It was this Menzies who reformed rowing at Oxford, by substituting the modern long stroke with sharp catch for the old digging waterman's stroke. In 1845, Oxford and Cambridge both sent University crews, which met in their heats, and this happened again in 1847, '51, '53, and, '55; Cambridge winning twice and Oxford thrice. In 1844, the diamond sculls appeared for the first time, and in 1845 the silver goblets; but about this time, for some reason or other, the popularity of Henley suffered a check, so much so that in 1850 there were rows over for no less than three prizes, including the grand challenge cup. However this was but temporary, and the meeting has grown so rapidly that from time to time excisions have been made in the programme. The town goblets disappeared at a very early period, and the Public Schools' challenge cup, which was only instituted in 1877, was crowded out by 1885, and is now competed for at Marlow regatta. In 1855, the first keelless eight-oar appeared on the Thames, and carried the Chester crew to victory in the grand challenge and ladies' cups.

So the regatta grew for thirty years, in its original lines till, in 1885, the growling which had been intermittent for years as to the fairness of the course came to a head; and after many wild suggestions as to cutting off Poplar Point, it was decided, after much discussion, to change the course, and to limit the heats to two boats. This necessitated an extra day, and the race-course is now ended at the point opposite Phillis Court, where one last stump now remains of General Conway's Lombardy poplars—the first, they say, that were ever planted in England.

The meeting has now entirely lost its insular character and is become an international event. Americans, Germans, Frenchmen, have all shown themselves here, but at present, though we English have fared in professional rowing badly enough, not one of the foreigners who have yet appeared at Henley has succeeded in winning a prize with all his pluck.

The reach itself looks to-day more charming than ever. The terrible agricultural depression, which has hit the Chilterns so hard, has turned so much arable land into pasture that the valley looks one big park in which stand the three houses on the course, which are all at present trim and well-cared for. Fawley had a thorough restoration ten years ago. Phillis Court is almost new, so much has been done to it; and Greenlands, after its many years' neglect, is better known than any house on the river. After countless changes it came into the hands of Mr. Marjoribanks, who built the greater part of the existing house. It was he who filled up the marshy meadows below the island with earth brought on a tramway from the hills. It was bought from him by Mr. W. H. Smith, who, loved as much by his neighbours in the country as he was respected in the House, lies at rest two miles away, in a beautiful part of the Hambleden Valley.

So far the history of the course—for the future, who can say? The last of General Conway's elms is perishing and most of the elms on the island have disappeared; may-be in another hundred years Henley regatta will have become as much a matter of history as the poplars and the elms, Bulstrode Whitelocke, or Mary Blandy. But the chalk hills and the beech woods will still look down on Father Thames on its way for ever to the sea.