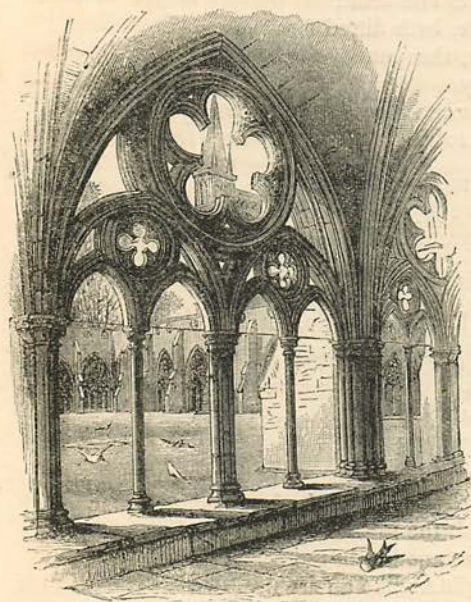


SALISBURY AND STONEHENGE:

A CONTRAST.

By CHARLES W. WOOD, AUTHOR OF "ROUND ABOUT NORWAY."



THE CLOISTERS.

DRIVING through the New Forest district, but forsaking its finest parts; crossing lovely stretches of moorland, and giving opportunity to an east wind, if prevalent, to find you out; now passing through a primitive village, where country carts are in process of building, and men are turning, joining and hammering for their lives; and now rapidly descending a steep bit of hill, you at length reach Downton, a place of some slight interest to the antiquarian.

We were late for the train that morning, but not too late. We had traced the steam running through the country, and

the train had stopped at the station long before we were near it. The mare, as if willing to show us what stuff she was made of, dashed down the incline at a killing pace, and was up the station hill in what seemed less than no time. The station-master called out that we were too late; but before the train was on the move we were safely packed in, rugs, traps, and all, and the tickets brought to us. The *alter ego* in this instance was my good host of the Compton Arms, who, having occasion to visit Salisbury, had taken the opportunity of driving me so far on the road to do the remainder of the journey on his own account.

Before many minutes had elapsed, the famous spire of Salisbury came into view, and the train passed on to the platform. I now felt I had left behind me the New Forest and all its pleasant influences; its great solitudes, its glades and avenues, its wealth of autumn foliage. Once more I was in the midst of a bustling town, with long streets

and commonplace houses. Salisbury, like many of our cathedral towns, is ordinary enough in aspect, and beyond a few records and buildings of antiquity, has little of the beautiful in its outward form. It is situated at the confluence of three streams, the Avon, the Bourn, and the Wiley. Rattling through the streets in a hired fly—they were quiet enough, these streets, but seemed noisy and vulgar after the solitude and refining influence of the forest—I soon found myself at the White Hart. The hotel has the advantage of being near to the cathedral, though not in sight of it.

But if Salisbury itself is not far out of the common way, how much may it not boast in the beauty of this same cathedral! Far as the spire is visible, so far will its influence follow the traveller.

I went out after "settling down" at the White Hart; and, once through St. Anne's Gateway, was immediately in the Close. Passing a few houses, old fashioned and dull looking, with the small-paned windows of a bygone generation, you at once come upon the cathedral from its finest point of view, the north-east. Everyone should seek for himself this first impression; said, by Rickman, to be the best general view of a cathedral to be had in England.

This opinion cannot be far wrong. The entire length of the building stands before you, one point opening and spreading above and beyond another, until you stand delighted at the whole beauty of the fabric. If there be a defect it is at the juncture of the tower with the spire. There is a heaviness here not quite in keeping with the slender and singular perfection of the rest of the structure.

As a whole, perhaps no cathedral in England is so perfect, because so uniform. It is built of freestone obtained from neighbouring quarries. One of its characteristics is its lightness and yet dignity. Salisbury Cathedral has all the beauty of the pure Gothic, and betrays no sign of mixture with the solid and more massive Norman.

It was an evidence of good judgment on the part of the architect, the beginning of a happier era, for Salisbury was built at a period when a mixture of styles was prevalent, the Norman and the Gothic. Commenced in the year 1220, it was finished in 1258, and thus took 38 years in building, at a cost of 40,000 marks, or £27,000, representing in those days a far greater sum than it does in these.

The form of the cathedral—that of a double cross—stands out conspicuously as you gaze from the north-east end. Every detail comes into view: the porch, the pinnacles, the flying buttresses, the delicate pointed windows rising tier above tier, the outlines of the transepts, finally the tower with its beautiful tracery work, and above it the famed spire. The latter is octagonal, rises between four pinnacles, and is 400 feet high. It is said to be two feet out of the perpendicular, but has remained in the same condition for two centuries. The tower and spire were built at a later period, and it is easy to conceive that the exact proportions designed by the original architect were not strictly followed out.

Approaching the building, and gradually making way, one is surprised at the beauty and finish of the minutest detail. Nothing is in excess, and nothing is wanting. There is no elaboration of ornament to offend by attracting special attention, and on the other hand there is an absence of the severe plainness that is a defect in more than one of our cathedrals.

Working round to the west entrance, you stand in front of what is considered the gem of the building, and is certainly the most gorgeous and richly ornamented portion. It is exceedingly beautiful, but seemed less perfect, less imposing than the length view from east to west. It appeared somewhat too broad for its height, an effect unrelieved by the pinnacles at either end. But the doorways were exquisite, and the rich ornamentation of the whole façade demanded long and careful scrutiny.

Many of the figures in the numberless niches were missing; others had worn down their beauty with the lapse of time—the onward rolling of the ages. But if they had lost the comeliness of youth, they had gained all the immeasurably greater, because more refined, melancholy, and romantic beauty of antiquity. The triple west windows towered above the triple doorway in perfect harmony, and the slender pillars between were the perfection of grace and finish. These pillars, supporting and dividing all the windows on the exterior, are a marked feature in the structure, and prepare one for the beauty and multitude of the fluted pillars within.

It is an old saying that there are as many windows in Salisbury Cathedral as there are days in the year, as many pillars as there are hours. Thus runs the rhyme:—

"As many days as in one year there be,
So many windows in this church you see.
As many marble pillars here appear
As there are hours through the fleeting year.
As many gates as moons one here doth view:
Strange tale to tell, yet not more strange than true."

Whether this be fact or not, it would be a hard and a long task to count the windows and the pillars. On entering, the first thing to arrest attention is an effect of perfect and complete harmony. But the "dim religious light" that certainly appeals to the senses (and is so pleasant when merely taken for what it is, and forms no portion of the ritual of the service) is here missing. The great want that is at once felt is the absence of stained glass. Strangely beautiful is the whole interior, with its fluted pillars, its delicate arches, arch above arch—the beautiful triforium crowning the nave—its pointed windows and its Gothic roof; but how much more beautiful would it all be if streams of colour chequered the lights and shadows around, in place of the more open, garish day that is now perhaps only too conspicuous.

Once upon a time it possessed this advantage; but much of the

painted glass was first of all removed by Bishop Jewel at the time of the Reformation : and the work of destruction was completed under Bishop Barrington in 1782, by James Wyatt, when, it is said, cartload after cartload of stained glass was thrown into the city ditch. One could almost weep at reading of this barbarous proceeding—this wholesale loss of what never could be replaced. For, rather than disfigure the windows with much of our modern glass, it were better to lose the repose and effect of subdued tones than be offended with colours in which all repose would be lost. Wyatt followed up his work by destroying screens, choir, porches, tombs, and paintings, in his so-called work of restoration; and when, at the end of nine years, there was nothing more to be done, his alterations were voted a vast improvement.

The choir, with the rest of the building, has again been recently restored. In some ways it has gained by the process, but not quite in all. This, perhaps, must ever be the case in all restorations of ancient and beautiful buildings, for Time seems only to give us favours in order to withdraw them again with unsparing hand. There was a certain gorgeousness about the choir that appealed to the senses, and was not unpleasant in its influence; but it is only redeemed by simplicity of ritual; the unobtrusive beauty, the having all things done “decently and in order,” happily still existing in most of our cathedrals, though fast giving way to the ceremonial in many of the churches of England.

Passing out at a small door on the south side, piloted by the polite verger, we were immediately in the cloisters, which are worthy of the cathedral. Few cloisters in the kingdom, perhaps, equal them. The pointed roof seemed to contract in the long vista of 181 feet, and the multiplied outlines of the Gothic windows, large and now unglazed, with their pointed arches, their quatrefoils and rosettes and intermediate buttresses, was especially imposing. In the enclosure, entirely covered with refreshingly green, well-kept grass, two sombre yew trees flourished. Beneath each was a grave, to-day covered with wreaths and crosses of hot-house flowers, a token that those who lay beneath had left hearts upon the earth to mourn their loss.

Turning to the left, we gained the chapter-house. Upon entering, this indeed strikes one as being almost the gem of the cathedral. Anything more beautiful than the exquisite proportions of the octagonal building could scarcely exist; and, in the restoration, complete harmony of detail has been carried out. The richly-groined Gothic roof is supported by a slender pillar, whose shafts spread outward in graceful perfection. The large windows are ornamented by slender columns from the base to the commencement of each pointed arch, and the stained glass throws its subdued streams upon a tessellated pavement. Each window is divided into four lights, surmounted by two quatrefoils and one rosette. If the cathedral were only filled in like manner with stained glass how great would be the effect.

Re-entering the main building, service was about to commence, and in one of the choir stalls I waited in patience the striking of the hour. The choristers trooped up the long aisle and began robing behind a curtain. Then, from the organ, the sweetest strains imaginable went swelling and vibrating down the aisles and into the roof, supplying all that seemed wanting to the perfection of time and place. One seldom hears a finer instrument. When service was over the organist went on playing long after everyone had left the building, and I listened spellbound to the rising and falling, the swelling louder and louder yet, and then the dying away of strains that transported one from earth to paradise.



ST. ANNE'S GATEWAY.

At last I was brought back to realities by a touch upon the shoulder, and the civil verger behind me. He had done his duties, was about to lock up and depart, and thought I had better depart too, or I might risk being fastened in for the night. Much as one could but feel the beauty and influence of the place, the prospect of a whole night's meditation "among the tombs" was not tempting, and would have proved far too much of a good thing. It was cold enough now: the wind crept in at all corners and searched one out: very soon the shades of night would be falling, and this beautiful vision of an earthly tabernacle would dissolve to the sight like the baseless fabric of a dream: leaving nothing for companionship but the cruel wind, and, perhaps, an array of ghosts—though if anything will keep ghosts back it is surely an east wind.

So I followed the attentive verger all down the long aisles to the

west doorway, while the swelling strains of the organ rose and fell upon the air and floated upwards into space towards heaven. Until the door closed upon us, and the verger, with very matter-of-fact and unsentimental energy and promptitude, turned the lock, and pocketed the key, and went his way. Probably that way ended in nothing more romantic than a cosy room with a blazing hearth, a quiet tea-table and a comely helpmate: and probably he was as happy as if he had been born in the purple. As there is a wonderful power of adapting oneself to circumstances in the human mind, so in like manner, and in what would be a very marvellous manner if we



SALISBURY CATHEDRAL.

had the arranging of our own lots, does man for the most part suit his particular niche in the world. It is only the headstrong and perverse *round* man who, by wilfully turning aside and choosing his own path, finds himself at last in the *square* hole. But once there, oh, pity him from the very bottom of your heart! Oh that fearful cry of the human soul: "What is—what might have been!"

And as the verger went his own way so I went mine, envying the organist who had it all to himself, and could go on playing long after the gloom had gathered, if he so willed; filling the darkness with magical sound, and living, if he was of that turn of mind, in a dream that was not of this world.

The next morning was dull and wet and cold; but towards noon the rain ceased, and about two o'clock I started for Stonehenge,

in a conveyance supplied by the hotel. The wind was blowing a bitter blast, but as on the morrow I should leave Salisbury, there was no choice but to brave the gale or give up the expedition. A newly married couple had just started for the ruins under similar conditions—in the matter of conveyance only, be it understood—and though the fervent influence of each other's society might assist in keeping them warm, still I felt that what they had undertaken could not even, without that influence, come under the head of the Impossibilities.

It was a dull, dreary afternoon. The sun might have departed to other spheres for anything that could be seen or felt of him—frightened away by the cutting wind. The clouds were gray and leaden, as if they were about to come down in showers of snow and once more whiten the world. We rattled through the streets and soon found ourselves in the bare open country, approaching Old Sarum: a spot so associated with much that is interesting in the annals of England. It is now nothing but a large conical-shaped hill encircled with entrenchments. But here, in days long gone by, existed a cathedral and a castle and all the busy life of a world.

As the wind caught us, sweeping with long-gathered force over Salisbury Plain, we could realise and believe in the ancient saying that "When the wind did blow, the people could not hear the priest say mass." Perhaps this did not greatly affect their souls, since if they had heard they would probably not have understood; but it discomforted their bodies and that was no light matter. It has been handed down by tradition that the site of the new Salisbury Cathedral was determined by an arrow shot from a bow from Old Sarum—rather a long shot, even for the stalwart arms of those days: and again, that not the arrow determined the site, but a vision of the Virgin herself appearing to the Bishop; and to the Virgin the new cathedral was dedicated. But whatever determined the site, chance, or revelation, or mere human judgment—which latter was most probable—it was well chosen.

On all sides the country was almost bare of trees, and the wind, that so disturbed the people of Old Sarum at their devotions, swept with cruel force across the long open stretches. But having started, it had to be endured, and the horse went boldly on, leaving behind the remains of the ancient fortifications, that took one back to the days long past, when Salisbury Plain was in turn in the hands of Ancient Britons, Danes, Saxons: a stronghold of Roman encampments.

Very different days, those, from this luxurious age. Pampering and self-indulgence were unknown: hard, stern realities alone existed, Spartan courage, savage powers of endurance. For a bed, often the bare earth; for a pillow, a stone. Nothing known or recognised or valued but the love of power, the lust of conquest.

An age of barbarism. The refinement and luxury of Rome herself, was not carried by her people into the countries they conquered

laid waste. Yet it was all productive of good in the end, no doubt ; fulfilling the world's plan, taking her on her course, carving out the destiny of nations : a fate which gives to each its time and place, its rise and fall, its day of power and wealth, its time of change and decay. Favoured England has had a long spell of this wealth and power, a universal sway. Will she have it for ever ? The lot is cast into the lap of each, but there comes a time when the lap, full to overflowing, begins to reject its blessings, and in time collapses.

It was a drive of eight or nine miles. The bare plain presented a strange contrast to the wealth of the New Forest, so lately visited, and certainly gained nothing by the comparison. But all things in their turn. It cannot be always May ; it should not be " *toujours perdrix* " ; we see the beauty of the lights by the depth of the shadows ; the dawn following the darkest night is the most welcomed.

Gradually making way in spite of the wind, which did its best to keep us back, and passing a curiously-shaped workhouse, we reached the ancient village of Amesbury, lying in a wooded depression. Here, branching to the left, we entered for the moment a more luxurious country. The Avon flowed between rich pastures and well-kept parks, and almost washed the base of the handsome cruciform church, with its background of whispering trees. The door stood invitingly open, and a woman upon her knees was beautifying the stone flags with the aid of sundry domestic appurtenances. But it seemed wiser first to visit Stonehenge, and take the minor events of the drive in returning.

Beyond the church we entered a long avenue of over-arching foliage, rich with autumn tints. In summer time it must be a very lovely spot. Passing out of the shadow of the trees, we once more came to the open plain, and soon the great monuments composing Stonehenge might be seen on a slight eminence. On a bank to our left a pheasant was sitting, and boldly kept his ground as we almost brushed by him. Sweeping round on to the turf, we were quickly under the very shadow of the stones. Our newly-married pair were preparing to depart. *He* was tenderly wrapping round her a thick shawl of many colours ; *she* was gazing into his eyes with fond adoration. Without being very close to them, all this was quite visible. There are some things that have a way of obtruding themselves, whether you will or not. Then they packed and settled into their little Victoria, and away they went, evidently in Eden ; evidently pitying all those unhappy mortals who were shut without the gates in the cold, but leaving me to enjoy in undisturbed silence this great solitude ; this wonderful and mysterious record of a long past age, in the midst of the wide-spreading, intensely solitary plain.

Many things belonging to the past are enveloped in doubt and uncertainty, but none more so, apparently, than Stonehenge. The first mention of it on record is by Ninnius, in the year 617, but he throws no light upon the matter. It has been the subject of much con-

troversy, has occupied the attention of many minds, has been the object of much research, but nothing is positively known as to the origin, end and aim of these remarkable ruins. This very uncertainty goes far to prove their most remote antiquity. Fancy inclines to refer



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them to Druidical remains, as throwing over them a greater glamour of mystery and romance : but whether they are so or not is as doubtful as everything else about them. Whether they were a temple erected to some heathen deity, or whether they were mere sepulchral monuments, are questions buried in the past. No Runic inscriptions have been handed down to be interpreted by the wise. Some great object

they must have served, and from the labour and stupendous exertions it evidently cost to erect them, it seems probable that the object was religious. The one certain thing about Stonehenge is that it once existed, and that it remains to this day a grand ruin.

Dr. Smith, writing in 1771, considered that it was most likely a Tropical Temple erected by the Druids for observing the motions of the heavenly bodies, and in an elaborate exposition he brings forward much cunning argument to prove his case. It is well known that the Druids were skilled astronomers, and, as Cæsar states, calculated eclipses with great accuracy. And there are signs about Stonehenge—such as the rising of the sun on Midsummer Day immediately over



SALISBURY, FROM THE RIVER.

a certain stone in a particular position—which, at least, do not contradict Dr. Smith's theory.

Three of the stones fell in January, 1797. Some men ploughing a field about half a mile away, suddenly felt the earth tremble, and on looking round saw that three of the stones—a trilith (two upright stones and one placed horizontally upon them)—had fallen to the earth.

Many great men have visited Stonehenge in the past, and left some record of their impressions. Pepys in his Diary mentions his stay at Salisbury, "where he slept in a silk bed at the King's Arms," and, I think, goes on to speak of Stonehenge. And we find Dr. Johnson—"the great lexicographer," to quote once more the austere Miss Pinkerton—thus writing to Mrs. Thrale in 1783 :

“Two nights ago Mr. Burke sat with me a long time; he seems much pleased with his journey. We had both seen Stonehenge this summer for the first time. I told him the view had enabled me to confute two opinions which had been advanced about it. One that the materials are not natural stones, but are artificial composition hardened by time; and has this strong argument to support it—that stone of that species is nowhere to be found. The other opinion, advanced by Dr. Charlton, is, that it was erected by the Danes. Mr. Bowles made me observe that the transverse stones were fixed on the perpendicular supporters by a knob formed on the top of the upright stone, which entered into a hollow cut in the crossing stone. This is a proof that the enormous edifice was raised by a people who had not yet the knowledge of mortar, which cannot be supposed of the Danes, who came hither in ships, and were not ignorant certainly of the arts of life. This proves, likewise, the stones not to be factitious; for they that could mould such durable masses could do infinitely more than make mortar. You have doubtless seen Stonehenge, and if you have not, I should think it a hard task to make an adequate description. It is, in my opinion, to be referred to the earliest habitation of the island, as a Druidical monument of at least two thousand years; probably the most ancient work of man upon the island.”

Amongst the different agencies said to have been brought to bear in the erection of Stonehenge, magic of course has its place. Geoffery of Monmouth, writing in 1130, says that the stones were brought in one night from the Plains of Kildare by the Evil One. The stones belonged to an old woman, and by their agency she was able to cure diseases, and perform other wonders. The enchanter Merlin coveted these stones, and entered into a compact with the devil to get them for him. The latter accordingly disguised himself as a gentleman, and knocked at the old woman's door. She opened it—perhaps expecting a patient—and seeing a well-dressed gentleman before her, invited him in. It is not said whether he brought with him a strong smell of sulphur, but it is recorded that he carried a large bag of money in his hand.

Next he offered to purchase the stones; the price to be as much money as ever the old woman could count during the time the stones were being transported to England.

This offer was too tempting to be refused, and the bargain was struck. Thereupon the devil opened his sack, and poured upon the table an immense heap of coin, all, however, in threepenny and fourpenny pieces. The old woman began to count, but had no sooner placed her finger on a fourpenny piece than the devil cried: “Hold! the stones are gone!”

The woman hastily rose and peered out, and sure enough they were no longer there; and upon looking round in alarm she found that the visitor was gone too, money and all. Whether she died from,

the shock, or went raving mad, or what became of her, or how she managed to gain a living now that Othello's occupation was gone, the chronicler is not good enough to say. It did not enter into his plans to satisfy a vulgar curiosity. Perhaps she had some savings hoarded up, and as there were no Three per Cents. in those days, it is possible that she ended her life in a dissipated kind of way by living upon her capital. We will hope, at least, that it was the only time she ever had dealings with the powers of darkness.

One of the stones outside the centre cluster of Stonehenge is called the Friar's Heel. The devil, having finished his work, stood in the midst of the great pile, and vowed that no man should ever know how Stonehenge had got there. He did not notice an old friar who, just behind him, exclaimed: "That is more than thee or anyone else can say." Upon which the devil, in great anger, seized one of the huge stones, and the friar, in great alarm, fled—so rapidly that the stone only just caught his heel, and he escaped to tell the tale.

It was a fitting day on which to see the remains of Stonehenge. The lowering sky was in harmony with these frowning, gigantic masses, hoary with the lapse of centuries. An undefined sense of the mysterious took possession of one in gazing at these huge, many-sized monuments, scattered about apparently regardless of design. It was almost as if some unseen and familiar spirit of the place hovered about it, and enveloped you with its influence. Little order could now be traced in the position of the stones. Some had fallen and become embedded in the earth; others are resting one upon another; others, again, are much out of the perpendicular, and seem ready to yield, but their time has not yet come.

Suddenly, as I looked, an old watchman, grim and gaunt, who might have been the genius of the place, now embodied in human form, appeared from behind one of the huge stones, where he was sheltering from the wind. This apparition, discerning a victim, advanced and began his popular explanation. He had been there regularly, I think he said, for nearly half a century; pointed out the plan of the stones, the position of those that remained in relation to those that were gone, and reduced them to something like a system. But a slight study of the original plan of Stonehenge before visiting it renders one independent of any further information.

The old man was as venerable as the stones, and as rough: a masculine counterpart, it might well be imagined, of the old Irishwoman who had been cheated out of them by the devil. It was impossible not to pity the old keeper, this bitter day, though he was here of his own accord, for his own profit. Take refuge behind what stone he would, the wind was sure to find him out. But use is second nature, happily, or the inevitable would sometimes be borne less easily than it is.

So the old man seemed not to mind the wind and the cold. He lighted up a short pipe—that surely had been his companion for the

half century—and began smoking philosophically. "Pain is forgotten where gain follows," and the small gratuities that probably tell to his lot from every visitor to the remains, more than atoned for the discomforts of an exposed and monotonous existence.

There was undoubtedly something very impressive about Stonehenge; but whether I was not "en rapport" with the surroundings, or whether the bitter east wind, cutting with the sharpness of a two-edged sword, put to flight all romantic emotions, certain it was that I felt somewhat disappointed. The cluster of stones was gigantic, strange, weird; "a sense of mystery the spirit daunted;" but in itself it failed to raise those grand flights that others seem to have gained from them. It was only in looking at them as records of antiquity, witnesses it may be of a past barbarism, but certainly of a power we appear to have lost, that they became invested with strange, unusual interest; and thus viewed, produced their influence upon the spirit.

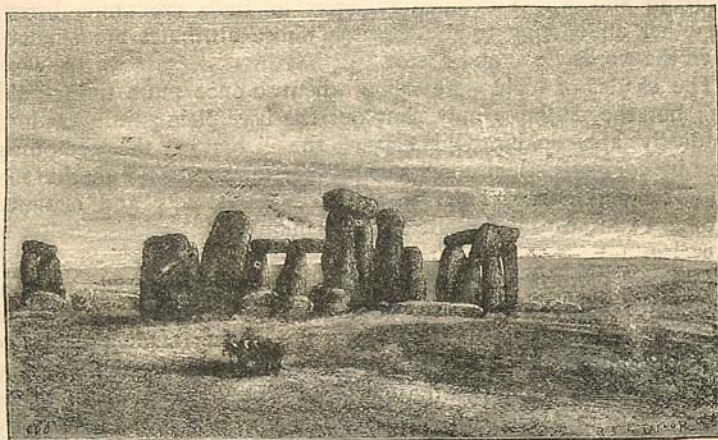
But the east wind ceased not, and every moment became a greater torture. Ere the shadows lengthened and disappeared it would be wise to depart. Accordingly we turned from Stonehenge not altogether with reluctance. Gradually receding from the strange cluster, more mysterious than ever they seemed in the waning light, their weird influence even more felt than when standing within the charmed circle. The silence of the dead ages enfolded them almost with portentous omen to the wayfarer, shrouded as they were in the gloomy sense of twilight now creeping over the vast plain. Perhaps the best and happiest time for seeing them would be on a bright night, with a full moon pouring down her flood of light, the huge stones, standing out in grim solemnity, casting long, ghostly shadows upon the dark earth.

As the little carriage went quickly down the hill, leaving the outlines of the strange group still clearly mapped against the sky, it was no hard task to bring vividly before one scenes that had taken place hundreds, nay, thousands of years ago. The despotic, crafty, and superstitious Druids, so wise in their generation even at that early period of the world's history, at their solemn and mysterious rites; though what those rites actually were, and what their manner of worship, no records of the past disclose to us. It was easy to invest this solitary plain with a crowd of rude barbarians at worship, bending to the will of their priests: only here and there an unseen protest going on in some nobler breast struggling for the true Light that an inward witness whispered to him was not here, or to be thus found. We swept down the hill and left it all behind us, a rude monument whose glory had departed; in comparison with the vast plain, growing small and diminutive the farther we went from it.

The pheasant was still sitting on the bank, and defied us as boldly as ever. Passing through the long avenue of trees, we swept round the road, crossed the stream, and stopped at the church. Here the carriage left me and went on to the George Inn, on the same side of

the road, but farther on, to give the horse a rest and a meal. The merciful man is merciful to his beast.

But the church door was now locked and safe: the woman with all her paraphernalia had departed. "He who will not when he may, when he will he shall have nay." On making the tour of the building, however, I came upon its weak point—the woman had left the key in the vestry door. Turning it, I entered. The first thing to stare me in the face was the Table of Kindred Affinity, hanging on the wall, the restriction **A MAN MAY NOT MARRY HIS GRANDMOTHER** always emphasized by ridiculously large type; as if there might be danger of transgression unless the warning was thus impressed upon him. There is one connection that I believe has not been added to the list: a



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man may NOT marry his MOTHER-IN-LAW. Perhaps they thought it really not necessary to go quite so far as this.

The church of Amesbury is a handsome edifice, cruciform in shape, with large windows, of the Early English period. The interior was plain and unadorned, but almost imposing from its simplicity. It appeared to have been recently fitted up with comfortable pews, and the many oil lamps fixed into their backs in an original manner, which did duty for gas, must, when lighted, have had a very picturesque effect upon the interior.

Out by the way I entered, and on to the inn; an old-fashioned building, where a civil waiting-maid showed me to a room already in possession of a solitary wayfarer: a pedestrian who had been driven to seek these comfortable quarters in the hope that the morrow would see a change for the better. Whilst I drank of the fragrant cup that cheers but not inebriates we compared mental notes, and agreed that,

like many another place, the reputation of Stonehenge had preceded it, and must often result, at a first glance, in a sense of disappointment.

But in the days of its glory it must have been an imposing and solemn edifice, full of barbarous rude grandeur. The refining and elevating influences of Christianity have brought out in man all that is beautiful, high, and noble. No two buildings, almost within sight of each other, could display a greater contrast than Stonehenge and Salisbury: the one of rude, primeval ages, when men were powerful but heathen; the other the most exquisite type of a pure and perfect architecture, fitting symbol of the religion in whose honour it stands. We can imagine the one raised to a supposed deity that demanded the sacrifice of all its votaries—a very Juggernaut of insatiable fury—that “Lord of the world” whose priests at Puri amount to four thousand and whose deluded followers in India are unnumbered: the other an offering to the Creator, whose attributes are summed up in the words Love and Mercy.

The shades of night were falling when we once more quitted the inn; but the darkness only shut out the bare plain; little was lost. Gradually approaching Old Sarum, the lights of the new town (new by comparison) gleamed out in cheerful contrast with the surrounding darkness. Then we entered the streets and clattered through them on to the White Hart, thankful to get within shelter of its walls.

The next morning, to wind was added a perfect downpour of rain. I wondered how the pedestrian would fare at Amesbury: whether he would brave the elements, and regret not having made the best of yesterday; or whether he would be content to spend a quiet Saturday and still quieter Sunday in the old place. For Sunday ought to be very pleasant in Amesbury, surrounded as it is by a halo of antiquity and past traditions. Here, in 980, a Benedictine convent was founded by Queen Elfrida; and here tradition says Guinevere found refuge from the world. In 1177 Henry II. expelled all the nuns for their wicked living. After this it rose to greater splendour than ever, receiving more royal ladies within the shelter of its walls. Finally, it came to an end in the days of Cromwell, and passed into the hands of the then Earl of Hertford.

But no place could be less inviting than Salisbury in such weather. The influence of its dull houses and long, regular streets was more depressing than the depths of a forest or the loneliness of a desert. Before midday I had said farewell to the old town, and, with weeping skies and half a gale, was on the way to Bournemouth.