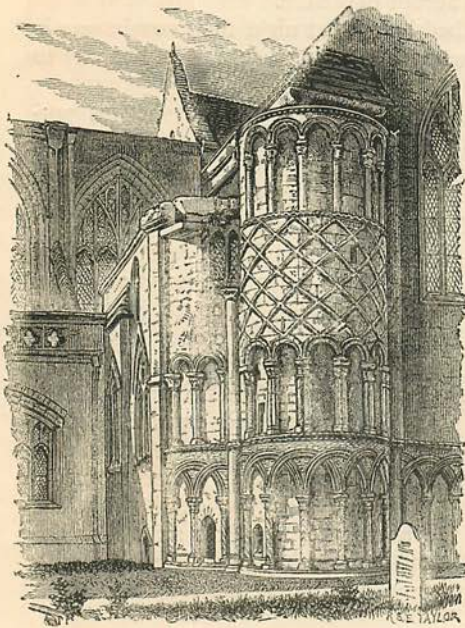


ON THE SOUTH COAST.

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



NORMAN TURRET, CHRIST CHURCH.

IT is impossible to approach Bournemouth without being struck by the beauty of its situation. Romantically placed, there is an absence of stiff outlines and premeditated plans about its first impression that is not the least of its charms. Such, at least, will be the opinion of any one coming immediately from the flat country and tame reaches of Salisbury Plain. It is not only as a "city set on an hill," but one also very much hid in a valley. Houses are picturesquely set on the slopes, and around all, and amidst all—alike fringing the heights and clustering in the vales—the pine trees

are scattering perfume upon the air, and adding to the reputation of Bournemouth by their healing virtues.

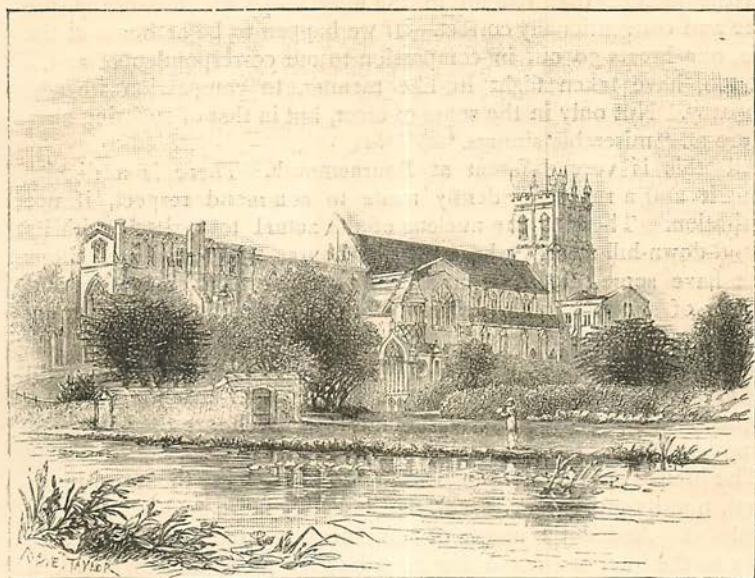
A short drive lands you at the Bath Hotel, where you are made so welcome, and where your quarters are so comfortable and well appointed, that, once within its portals, you will probably, even if wanderingly inclined, cease to wander.

Bournemouth is surely unlike any other watering-place in England. Individuality, that rare quality, marks it for its own. No matter how minutely it may have been described, you feel that the reality is somewhat different from the anticipation. Almost it resembles a foreign town, with its wooded slopes and detached houses. It is a town that has come to the wood.

Some years ago—I know not how many—Bournemouth was a small, unknown place—hamlet, village, or whatever the settlement might be called. Few people were seen there; trees flourished and had it all their own way, unvisited by man, happy in each other's company, wanting no intrusion, receiving none.

But where will man not penetrate for business, pleasure, or for speculation? So the repose and seclusion of Bournemouth were doomed. The axe laid low many a tree; cruel gaps were made in the pine woods; monsters in the shape of houses began to rear their heads. The pine trees, affrighted, more and more withdrew and shrank out of life. More trees were laid low, more houses appeared.

But land was not especially valuable in the first days, one would think; and so many a house was blessed with quite a large piece of pleasure ground to its own exclusive self, and trees surrounded it with becoming dignity. Very pretty, very proper, but oh! how melancholy.



CHRISTCHURCH.

So it comes to pass that in these days, a handsome and even pretentious looking building stands "within its own grounds," is approached by showy gates that swing to behind you with quite a park-like sound: you walk up an avenue, "well timbered," to an abode that might suit a retired Indian nabob of moderate views, or a dyspeptic alderman in search of ease, and you are surprised to find a small unobtrusive notice in a window announcing "Apartments to Let."

This, of course, has its advantages, not to be lightly esteemed. Who is not sick unto death of the interminable Terraces and Places, Crescents and Squares, of most of our seaside resorts? Do we not know the painful and reiterated experience of those long rows of bricks, whose very similitude to each other depresses one the very moment the agitation and excitement of leaving home and the subsequent journey are over; compelling one to rush back despairingly

to the familiar scenes we have left behind—the barred windows and ghost-haunted rooms and beloved sanctums?

And for what end, aim, or reward? “I suppose you have nothing in the world to do?” remarked a friend last October to a worthy Æsculapius. “Indeed!” he returned. “I am more busy than ever. My patients are all coming back from the sea, and of course they are all coming back ill. It is always so.”

One friend dates his letters from No. 1, Sophronia Terrace, Babington-Super-Mare, and another from No. 99, Alleluia Crescent, Babington-Super-Mud. There is a despondent tone in both these epistles, and the pictures that rise up in the mind’s eye are identically the same and conventionally correct. If we happen to be at home at the time, our hearts go out in compassion to our correspondents; and if we, too, have taken flight in like manner, to compassion we add sympathy. Not only in the sense of error, but in that of suffering also, we are all “miserable sinners.”

All this is very different at Bournemouth. There is a dignity about it and a repose, evidently made to command respect, if not admiration. There is the nucleus of the actual town itself, with its up-and-down-hill streets, whose rows of houses and terraces of shops must have some sort of resemblance to other rows of houses and terraces of shops in other towns. Nothing so much resembles a cat looking in at a window as a cat looking out at a window. But the town is on the lower slopes, hiding its diminished business-head from the aristocratic heights: and Bournemouth proper extends to these heights, and seems to have no bounds—so much are they building round and about, far and near.

The houses are all more or less pretentious (I use the word in its literal, not its unpleasant sense), and probably more or less agreeable to inhabit. And if the names of many displayed on the gates are an index to the interiors, not a few must be very grand and dignified, if not gorgeous and glittering. Some of the names were secular, others religious. In juxtaposition with “Grosvenor” and “Belgravia,” “Heart’s Delight” and “Mount Vernon,” one found “Beersheba” and “Jericho,” “Jerusalem” and “Madagascar”—not that the latter, as far as I am aware, has any religious signification, unless it be as a missionary station. Simply the names; such commonplace appendages as House or Villa were usually omitted; *Cottage* I am sure was unknown.

At length, during a contemplative drive, in which I was unable to disagree with my company for the reason that I had none, I came all at once upon the words “Beelzebub Lodge,” in large capitals upon a swing gate. This was quite too much. Surely here lived the parents of that blessed infant who was brought by them into church one Sunday afternoon to my friend X., and insisted upon his christening the child Beelzebub—and never forgave him for taking the law into his own hands and giving it the honest name of John. More shocked and

startled than I cared to confess, I hastily bade the coachman drive on, happy in the feeling that for once, at any rate, I was in opposition to the old saying—a saying that, for the sake of polite ears, shall not here find record. After this, I looked out for no more names.

I was on my way to Parkstone, viâ Branksome Chine. The road was long and lonely, but too beautiful to be dull. Houses in all directions were being erected, and the pine trees were giving way under the new régime. At length, descending to the left, we skirted a wild though not very deep ravine, where ferns and fronds and wild tangle and bramble bushes grew in enchanting profusion. Water ran below, and a rustic bridge romantically spanned the chasm. Firs clad the slopes and spread over the heights.

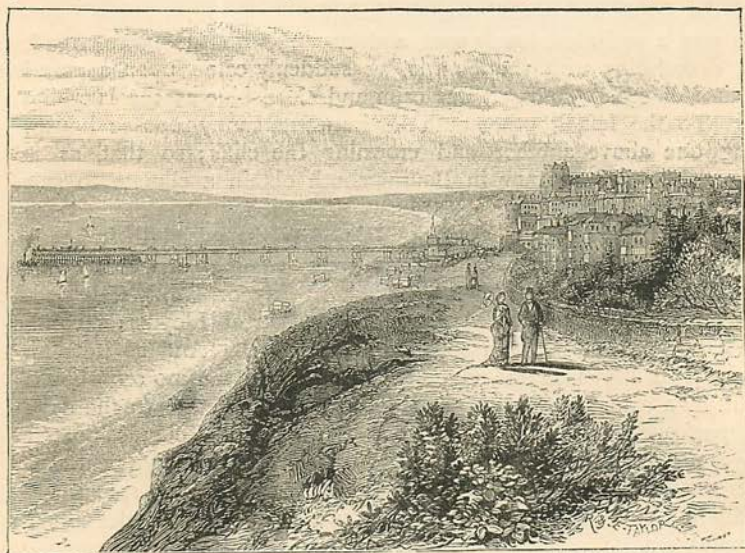
It was a secluded, lovely spot, and turning with the narrow road, and descending with the bourne, we suddenly came upon a grand expanse of sea. To-day it was calm and clear, blue as the laughing sky. To the left, Bournemouth lay in warm, sunny repose: houses rising one above another and crowning the cliffs; so that, as is commonly said, you may in Bournemouth obtain a climate to suit every temperament.

Out on the sea, the cliffs of the Isle of Wight raised their heads in bright, sparkling array. Vessels were passing up and down channel, homeward or outward bound, heavily or lightly freighted, in a sense that finds no record on the register at Lloyd's: moving slowly for want of wind, in spite of sails full set. And as it is an ill-wind that blows no one any good, so it is hard that no one should profit by a calm. In this instance it brought perfection to the day; the perfection of air, sea, and sky. A few white clouds floated above, not dimming the "blue vaulted dome," but varying its surface. The sun, already far on his course, was travelling in splendour, shedding a rich glow upon the moving waters, the ever restless, ever changing sea.

A deserted bathing shed stood in a sheltered nook, and one felt tempted to undress and plunge into those enticing waters. But, after all, it was a late October afternoon, and what looked so fair and warm on the surface, would no doubt in its depths prove cold and unfriendly enough. Moreover, up on the hill, Jehu was waiting in patience my pleasure in returning; in token of which there came wafted on the air murmurs of—not choirs of angels; not the gentle music of far off bells; not the melancholy strains of an Æolian harp; not the storm music of winds and waves ruled by Æolus—but the voice of one Jehu comparing notes with a fellow labourer (and, doubtless, as their notes agreed, fellow victim), who, in charge of another conveyance, was also waiting the pleasure of a trio of visitors, happily just now invisible.

Why do we resent these intrusions in solitary places from people who are doing the very same thing as ourselves, and have as much right to this fair earth? Why do we feel ourselves tortured, and they

a social scourge, the bane of our existence? Why does dislike immediately run riot within us, so that we hasten onwards with injured feelings that refuse to be comforted? Is it nothing but selfishness and inconsistency? Or is it that somehow or other, as a rule, the people one meets in travelling—the so-called tourists, of whom each unit seems a crowd, and a crowd a vast multitude—are of a genus gifted with small sensibilities and refinements, whose very presence immediately dissolves a spell and breaks a charm, and disturbs future pleasures of memory? We are strange beings, made of a thousand whims and fancies, full of uncertain motions, swayed by a breath of wind. Harps of a thousand strings, and every separate



BOURNEMOUTH.

string vibrating to a separate touch. Yet who shall say that it is not better so?

So I left the trio, and went on my way to Parkstone, to call upon Miss Rosa Mackenzie Kettle, the author of "The Ranger's Lodge," "My Home in the Shires," and all that series of pleasant and admirable books published by Mr. Weir, of Regent Street. And still, as we went, the plantations of firs were all around, and clearing after clearing had been made, and house after house was being raised to meet the demand. The pines threw out a delicious scent, and one longed to pitch one's tent in a place where the very air seemed possessed of an additional sense. Presently passing through a village, where building was going on just as much as anywhere else, we turned to the left, and entering a lane, appeared to be nearing the confines of civilisation.

To the right were long reaches of shallow water, an island beyond, and behind us might be seen a forest of masts sheltering in Poole harbour. Already the afternoon was waning, and the light of a lowering sun flushed the long flat reaches into something like romance, gilding the island opposite, and checkering our path at intervals with long shadows from the trees. The masts in Poole harbour looked black and still against the sky, glowing red and crimson. Amidst all there was neither sound nor symptom of life; a long melancholy road checkered by melancholy trees. Yet more melancholy when, my visit paid, darkness had quite fallen, and we made the best of our way back by a direct and much nearer route. This is perhaps the prettiest drive about Bournemouth.



"INVALIDS' WALK," BOURNEMOUTH.

The sunsets here are remarkable; more beautiful and gorgeous, as it seemed to me, than those usually seen in England: another point in which Bournemouth resembles in some degree a foreign town. They reminded me almost of mild Norwegian skies (the intense sunsets of Norway cannot be expected in lower latitudes) and of the evenings one sees falling over the shores of Southern Europe. I was told that these evenings were not exceptional, but that Bournemouth is noted for its singularly vivid sunsets.

One evening in especial I remember. The white fleecy clouds which are so beautiful, and which so often accompany a N.W. wind, were sailing along overhead, moving with that appalling silence which seems to belong to space, save when the thunder clap awakens the eternal solitudes. The sun sank to the horizon like a molten ball, the white vapours flushed with a crimson glow, and the whole scene

was steeped in warm colouring. Out in the west it seemed that the gates of Paradise had been thrown open, and sent forth a stream of celestial light. How often has not the sight been strained at such moments, as if surely beyond that glory one's vision must obtain a slight revelation of the unseen world—but gazed in vain?

At the bottom of the sloping cliffs the sea rolled in with a calm soothing splash over the smooth sands. In the midst of all this beauty reposed the Isle of Wight, its cliffs for ever enticing one to that wealth of nature they guard so well. The pier stretched out over the water, wide, new, and well built. Here you may pace up and down, and enjoy the beauties of sunrise or sunset, with the restless sea moving and surging around. And walking up and down the pier, you may see, a little way up the hill, a small house built in the Italian style, in which Keble died; so that Bournemouth becomes more or less associated with the author of the "Christian Year."

Often you have the whole pier to yourself. The townspeople are at "the daily task, the common round"; the visitors are most of them too delicate to venture thereon, except when the mid-day sun has dispersed all chilliness from the atmosphere. The "Invalids' Walk," which stretches almost from the Bath Hotel down the valley into the town, is more popular because more sheltered. Here, under the straight, stiff pines, you may pace the paths or occupy the seats, listening to the near ripple of the bourne, which gives its name to the town, or the more distant murmur of the sea, to which the bourne is hastening. If cold winds are blowing, the chances are they will not reach you; for these public gardens are in a depression, almost a ravine, and you feel yourself in a climate unpleasantly relaxing, unless you form one of the many sufferers who make the fortune of Bournemouth.

These invalids add to the melancholy of the place—melancholy in spite of its undoubted beauty. But, after all, people usually go there in search of health, not gaiety: scarcely even pastime. He who does so will be disappointed. With that object in view he must soon migrate to fresh fields and pastures new: and the chances are that in the mild liveliness of Cheltenham or Bath, he may find the small excitements Bournemouth disdains to cultivate.

"I cannot stay here; I shall get hipped if I do," remarked a friend whom I found at the Bath Hotel. We had parted ten years ago in Paris. He had gone his way to the coral strands of India, where I still thought him: until at seven o'clock one evening, we both took our seats at the same small table in the dining-room, and again proved the world less wide than it seems.

The cemetery at Bournemouth is certainly one of the prettiest in all England. It is more like a portion of some private grounds than a graveyard. Looking down the paths, you gaze through a wealth of verdure and sunshine glinting amidst the leaves and singing birds; whilst the marble tombs are so simple, so white and well cared for,

so pure and beautiful, they appear as ornaments, rather than sad records of vanished hands and stilled voices: the very spot one would choose to rest in after the labours of life. But the ground is now sacred to old inhabitants of the place only, for Bournemouth has expanded and space is limited.

The adjoining parish church, as everyone knows, was last year the scene of feuds between clergy and parishioners, bringing not peace but a sword within the town. It is a handsome modern building, richly decorated. On the Sunday evening it was crowded with a large congregation. The centre aisle of the church was in some sort of semi-obscurity, partly designed, partly because the lights, placed behind the pillars, threw their rays only into the side aisles. The chancel was large and brilliantly lighted. The singing was more adapted to a Roman Catholic than a Protestant place of worship. Of the prayers, scarcely a word could be heard or followed. And when the vicar ascended the pulpit, and in sensible tones delivered a sensible address, one could understand that it would be difficult for a substitution of the ceremonial for the spiritual to find favour in his sight.

A not very interesting drive of five miles over a long, straight road, brings you to grand old Christ Church, one of the most ancient buildings in the kingdom, of great beauty and of singular interest. The year in which it was founded is unknown, but the architecture consists of two periods, the Norman and Late Perpendicular. The dignity of the interior is, to a great extent, lost by a thick and general coating of whitewash. The rood screen, of the time of Edward III., also interferes very much with the length view, but is probably too handsome to be done away with.

The exterior is somewhat contradictory in its effect. The north porch is Early English, is unusually large, and has been particularly well restored. But the most quaint portion, and that which gives most character to the building, is the circular Norman turret, which is richly decorated, and in excellent preservation. All this portion seems "hoary with age," and takes you back in the spirit to the days when monks paced these territories and held sway in England.

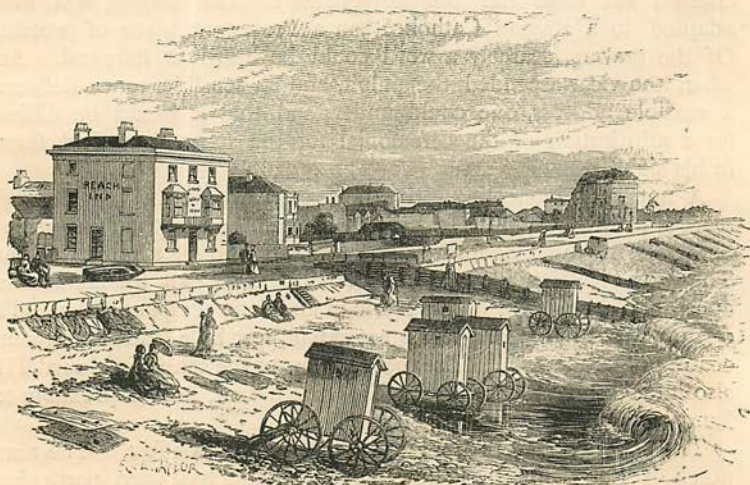
In the west doorway of the interior is the monument erected to the memory of Shelley. The drowned body of the poet is partly supported by his wife, who bends over it in drooping attitude, expressive of grief. The hull of a boat and fragments of rock and sea weed fill up the scene. Beneath are words taken from his poem of "Adonais":—the verse beginning:

"He hath outsoar'd the shadow of our night,
Envy and calumny, and hate and pain."

Strange life, indeed, was that of Shelley, passion-tossed and broken. That restless longing to make all things sure: to know what in this world is wisely withheld! Unhappy in his life, suddenly cut off by accident or by treachery, his work scarcely begun, he yet lived long

enough to make others unhappy as well as himself; to miss his aim; to leave behind him, as regards himself, a feeling of intense dissatisfaction and regret. But if we cannot judge of the life of an ordinary mortal, far less can we judge of such a man as Shelley. He probably made himself out worse than he really was, as men of a morbid temperament often do; and no doubt his own mental sufferings and experiences—phases “changeable as a poet’s moods”—were quite outside the reach and understanding, perhaps even beyond the knowledge of those by whom he was more intimately surrounded.

Much as the monument has been criticised, it is impossible not to look at it with extreme interest. Standing there and gazing, there is conjured up before the mind the vision of a small vessel on the shores



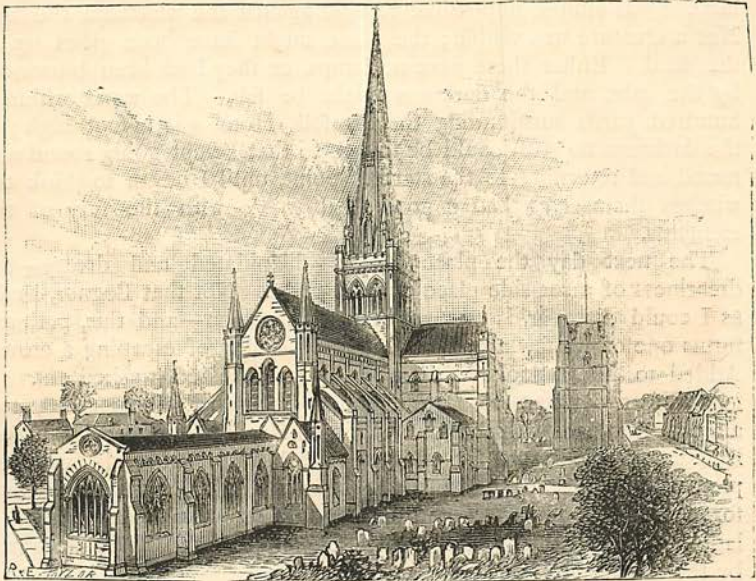
BOGNOR.

of an Italian bay. A glorious morning with calm waters and serene skies—the skies of Italy alone. The poet bids his beloved Mary—his second wife—good-bye, little thinking it is good-bye for ever: steps into his boat, and sails away to meet his friend Hunt. Suddenly, in returning, a storm arises, and Shelley is never more seen in life. The secrets of the unknown world, into which he had so longed to penetrate, were all too soon disclosed to him. What were his thoughts and emotions in that last supreme moment, when, as we are told, one’s whole past frequently rises up in an instant of time? What the reawaking of the next instant, when time and change were ended? Alas, poor Shelley! Unhappy in this world, let us hope for the best in regard to that to which his summons came so early.

Leaving the church, you look over into the meadows through which the river runs so calmly—a contrast to the life we have just touched upon. The scene is fair, and quiet with the quiet of

centuries. This grand building has grown old and gray upon its banks; dynasties and religions have passed away; generations have come and gone; but, youthful and vigorous as ever, the river still flows onward to the sea.

You turn from it all, and wend your way back to Bournemouth, leaving the little town of Christchurch behind, and once more approach the pine groves and fir-clad heights, and pretentious, secluded villas, where everything looks so proper and so respectable, so depressing and so melancholy.



CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL.

Nevertheless, there is a great deal to be said in favour of Bournemouth: its individuality, and small resemblance to any other place; the absence of Sophronia Terraces, and Alleluia Crescents; in that its sands do not become the bear garden of the ordinary sea-side resort, devoted to negro minstrels, and wandering photographers, and all that army of nursemaids and children—juveniles that surely were invented for the everlasting plague and punishment of man. It has many interesting spots in its neighbourhood. The cliffs of the beautiful Isle of Wight are ever a point of interest before you, stretching across the blue waters of the Channel. And the sunsets, I have said, often magnificently crown the day.

From Bournemouth to Bognor, as the crow flies, is a comparatively short distance, but as the train takes you it is miserably prolonged. I left Bournemouth one morning at eleven o'clock, and reached my

destination not until past five. Everyone surely needs some special object to take him to Bognor, and mine was to spend a few days with friends who were staying there. The place should be called Bognor-in-the-Marshes, and I failed to find in it many points of interest or recommendation.

To begin with, that first evening the elements were all warring together in fierce conflict: the wind and the rain, the sea and the darkness. Such a storm has not often visited our coast. In returning to the hotel at night from my friends' house (it was the first time they had visited the place, and they declared it should be the last), it was almost impossible to fight against the wind and the rain. Not a creature was visible; the place might have been given up to the dead. Either there were no lamps, or they had been blown out by the gale, and the darkness might be felt. The water within a hundred yards surrounding the Norfolk Hotel was a foot high; in the darkness no path could be found, so that I kept going round and round and returning to the starting point, until I began to think the witches themselves had a good deal to do with the fury of the elements.

The next day the place looked dilapidated and dreary—the dreariness of a sea-side place out of season. Not that Bognor, as far as I could discover, is ever very much in season—and this, perhaps, forms one of its few attractions: the possibility of escaping a crowd. Added to this, it looked driven and tempest-tossed, washed out. It is a direct contrast to Bournemouth, being flat, unprotected, and almost on a level with the sea. This, so far—its level beach—makes it a favourable resort for children. It has a narrow, old-fashioned pier, with wide gaps between the boards, which are so many traps for canes and umbrellas, and have doubtless wrenched off many a lady's high-heeled shoe (so fashionable and so ugly), to be devoured by the hungry sea beneath.

The sea itself was pleasant at Bognor, because it is pleasant everywhere: but it is especially so when it comes dashing in almost to your very feet, so that at high water you may almost jump from the esplanade into the advancing waves. It rolls up over the pebbly beach with a drowsy, soothing, monotonous lull. Strange that there should be so great a sense of rest, such a power of calming, in that most restless thing, the ocean! The air of Bognor seemed pleasant also, at this season, but in summer must be relaxing; though it appears paradoxical that any sea-side place should be otherwise than healthy and bracing.

“Horrid place!” said N. B., as we patrolled the esplanade like sentinels unattached, while the sea plashed beside us and seemed to set her words to music; and the smallest and daintiest of feet, clad in the daintiest of shoes, and scarlet silken hose that set off a perfect instep and ancles à merveille, beat time to the waves. “Horrid place!” she repeated with increasing emphasis. “You see we made

the mistake of taking the house before seeing the place. I cannot think how we can have been so stupid!"

And dear, gentle A.—who is able to see the world and all the beauties of nature only with others' eyes—walked between us and laughed at N. B.'s energetic paroxysms; and occasionally stopped to listen to the fairy patterings of her fairy dog Mimie; and every now and then fell a-musing, in contemplation of her paper on Madame de Staël: the result of which musing was placed before the reader in the January number of *The Argosy*.

And certainly, listening to N. B.'s well-directed criticisms, I felt myself fortunate in having had an object in coming to Bognor apart from the place itself. One can hardly wonder that it has stood still, and that a century ago it might have looked very much as it looks to-day; though in these days of progress it would be rash to prophesy its aspect a century hence.

But we had at least one pleasant drive, which must be recorded, because it is perhaps the most picturesque drive about Bognor.

Passing out by South Bersted Church, and crossing the South Coast rail at Woodgate, we presently came out by the Arundel and Chichester road, passed the great iron gates of Slindon House, with its splendid beeches, and swept over the bare, cold expanse of Slindon Common. Here at the top of the rising ground we obtained a fine view of the distant sea, but hardly pausing in our journey we gradually got up a long, rising hill to the Fair Mile, where on either side we found glorious trees rich with autumn tints, whose long glades and avenues, into which sight could just penetrate as we swept along, reminded one of splendours of the New Forest. If Bognor itself had no attractions, as little could not be said of some portions of its neighbourhood. But we were now far from Bognor, and in a distance, say of ten miles, the ugliest place has space wherein to turn to paradise. And, though Bognor is not beautiful, it is by no means the least favoured spot in the world. There are Essex marshes, for instance, and Norfolk downs, and many other places that certainly would win the prize for gloom and uninterestingness before Bognor.

Passing along the Fair Mile, and revelling in the trees, and then coming up with the Whiteways Lodge, imposing from its castellated appearance, we came to four cross roads, and, happily, a sign post. We came to more—a blast of the most cruel, cold, cutting east wind, which swept over us with a force that made our very teeth chatter, and the very horses tremble; whilst Mimie crept out of sight in A.'s arms, and N. B. drew tightly round her form a shawl of many colours.

We were now on the brow of a steep hill, and down below—far and wide—reposed a pastoral valley. A glorious view it must be in summer, but to-day drowned and steeped in deep flood, field after field obliterated in water. Taking the northern of the four roads, we gradually made way down Bury hill, thankful that each step took us

more and more within shelter of the high hedges, more and more out of the power of the cutting wind; until presently we found our destination at Bury Vicarage. A quiet, country spot, with a small, interesting church, where the even tenour of one's life might flow on from year to year, so that insensibly, unwittingly, one might pass through the seven stages of man, and never know where one stage ended, the next began; undisturbed, unfretted by the rush and roar of that world of business and pleasure that is not so very far off.

Some hours later we were on the road again, returning by the way we came, able to rejoice in much that is picturesque between Bury and Bognor. Making the most of the beauties of nature through which we were passing; knowing that our journey's end would land us in a country not flowing with milk and honey, where the grapes of Eschol do not grow.

The next day a short journey by rail took us to the quaint old town of Chichester. There appears to be very little about it that is interesting, beyond the cathedral. The city is built on the site of the old Roman Regnum, whose ruins lie beneath: mosaics and many Roman remains have been discovered, and many more doubtless lie buried. Regnum is interesting from its appearing to answer to the Claudia and Pudens of St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy.

The cathedral, though one of the minor ones of England, has many interesting points about it. It was completed about the year 1125, and some portions have preserved a look of great antiquity. The spire fell in 1861, and was rebuilt in 1865. The cathedral is a mixture of Norman and Early English. The nave and choir are Norman. Next to York, Chichester is the broadest cathedral in England, and is the only cathedral possessing five aisles, which make some of the transverse views of the interior imposing. The nave is enriched by several Flaxman monuments, besides a monument to the unhappy poet Collins. The choir, long and narrow, has been refitted, and possesses few points of interest.

The cloisters are Perpendicular, and fine, but all cloisters resemble each other more or less. The bell tower, or campanile, on the north side, is Perpendicular, and of the fifteenth century, and stands out in excellent and imposing contrast with the cathedral. No other cathedral in England possesses a detached belfry, though it is a feature frequently met with abroad.

We were unable to stay for service that afternoon, which had been made later than usual on account of a convocation of clergy, that was being held at the palace. On reaching the station we found the members of convocation on the platform en masse; and when the train came up they scrambled into the carriages and battled for places, and left any lady who might be there to look out for herself. But I found room for *my* ladies in a compartment reserved to a newly married couple (it was my fate to fall in with newly married couples), who fell in love with N. B. and A. (and

no wonder!), took compassion upon us, gave us a place, and made themselves as agreeable as their conscious position would allow. I caught sight of an earl's coronet upon a small bag as we got out of the carriage, and a few days afterwards discovered who our polite fellow travellers had been.

Returning from Chichester, even the dull, deadly-lively thoroughfares of Bognor had in them something almost pleasant; and at any rate there was the ever-moving, ever-changing sea for companionship. The dullest place in the world could never be dull if it bordered the sea.

My regret at leaving Bognor had nothing to do with the place itself. But it must be remembered that it was emphatically the "dead season;" and at such times there is a certain air of stagnation about the liveliest place, which never fails to depress. The lodging-house keepers have reaped their harvest and retired into their shells; large windows, dirty and disrobed, stare you in the face with stony, unchanging aspect. Grass begins to grow in the streets, and few footsteps interfere with its progress. The little pleasure boats are all drawn up on the beach, high and dry for the winter; and if, on seeing an old boatman lounging about, he asks if you would like a sail, he does it unconsciously, by the force of habit: just as a clock mechanically strikes the appointed hours through the night watches, though none are near to listen.

So I left Bognor. Winding about the South Coast, passing such lovely spots as Arundel, such quiet places as Worthing, such gay scenes as Brighton, I found myself in due time at St. Leonard's, that most agreeable, most picturesque of watering-places.

In the Alexandra Hotel, so pleasant an abiding place both in situation and management—where you receive rather the comforts of a home than the routine of an hotel—I found quietude and consolation for the dulness of Bognor. The elements, too, were at rest: fair skies and soft winds for the moment were the order of the day: and all the little world of St. Leonard's congregated every afternoon on the walk in front of the sea, for the pleasure of that eternal pacing to-and-fro of which people seem never to grow weary—doubtless because it is done of their own free will.

If the penance of Sisyphus became a fashionable amusement it would soon become as popular as lawn tennis: and, perhaps, would be as sensible a pastime as tobogganning down stairs on a tea-tray.

