

When our eyes and our senses were thoroughly satiated by gazing on the grand panorama which lay stretched out before us, we began to feel the effects of that "sharp burst" before mentioned.

"I'd give a pound I had my head in yon burn. I'm as dry as a smoked haddock," said the bushier.

"You shall dip your beak into better stuff for a penny," laughed Rington, beckoning to his man Joe.

A couple of bottles of champagne were speedily produced, their necks as speedily broken, and the contents gratefully quaffed by four as thirsty men as ever stood on the top of Blue Mountain Peak. My heart smote me as I drained the last drop from the bottle, and I looked at Joe; his mouth was glued to the calabash which hung at his side, and my pity was merged in admiration at his enduring bibacity.

In less than an hour we were seated at breakfast at Fernside; and, as far as my memory serves me, not a word was spoken for fully twenty minutes after we sat down.

BETWEEN SEVERN AND WYE.

THE shortest and pleasantest route from London to the banks of the Severn lies along the Great Western Railway as far as Swindon, and thence along the line to Gloucester, which runs through the vales of Stroud and Rodborough, at a sufficient elevation to command a view of the scenery. In this part of the route we have a series of woods, forests, pastures, and mountain sides, alternating with silvery streams and populous towns and villages; the whole showing like a glimpse of Switzerland on a very miniature scale, with the snow-clad peaks left out of the view.

Crossing the Severn not far from Gloucester, we are on the western and Welsh side of the river, the line running thence into South Wales. We stop at a small town on Severn's bank, which town is built on a sloping ridge, whose top overlooks a wide expanse of country, through which the broad stream, now amplified to an imposing width, curves and winds for miles and miles in either direction, losing itself in the haze and shadowy gloom of the far-off hills. The church of the little town stands near the highest point of the ridge, and is conspicuous in the landscape for many leagues along the broad flat alluvial lands below; and the churchyard, which commands the finest view, terminates abruptly in a precipice overhanging the water. Right fronting this point of view is the base of a peninsula formed by a mighty bend of the river, which, in the form of a loop, incloses a vast level area, latterly converted by the good people of Gloucester into an island by the cutting of that canal which has made of their inland city a port, and rendered their wharves and warehouses accessible by sea-going ships.

The Severn here is daily the scene of a curious phenomenon not at all common, indeed one which occurs but at few other places all the world over. We read of the "bore," in connection with the great Amazon river in South America, and with

some of the rivers running into the sea at British Granada, as well as at a few other places. On the French coast also, at Caudebec on the Seine, the "bore" comes in at the turn of the tide in a rather portentous manner, more than startling to the stranger. Anciently there stood a small island in the estuary of that river, on which island were a fishing village and a monastery, which had both flourished for many generations. One morning early, at the time of spring-tide, the "bore" came roaring up the estuary with unwonted vigour and unprecedented altitude, lashing and devouring the shores on either side, and covering the snug island with its foam and spray, as it had done before from time immemorial. But lo! this time, to the dismay and horror of the inhabitants of the coasts, when the "bore" had passed, and its yeasty surges had subsided, the island, with its huts, houses, monastery and all, had disappeared, and the billows flowed on uninterrupted over the spot where they once had been. There was a sorrowful season of weeping and lamentation among the friends of the lost, and there was something more than a nine days' wonder for all the dwellers on the neighbouring coast. But the marvel of marvels was yet to come. Two hundred years elapsed; the story of the sunken monastery and the martyrs of the tide, if not totally forgotten, had subsided into a legendary tradition—a tale of woe and wonder for winter evenings, when storms blew loud without, or a yarn for listless seamen when the winds were hushed and the sails flapped idly against the mast. The "bore" had made its regular visitations during all that long interval, rolling its thunder-march over the graves of its victims; but now again, on early morning, comes the "bore," and this time the rushing waters upheave again to view the long sunken island, with the wrecks of the old town, and the solid walls still standing of the ancient monastery! It was not a mere momentary phantom that could be doubted. During the whole flowing of the tide there stood the fearful vision palpable to sight; though no man appears to have had courage enough to land on the goblin soil and question it of its doom. When the tide fell, the island went down once more, never again to revisit "the glimpses of the moon." Strange as this tale reads, the whole of the facts are well attested and carefully recorded in the local archives, at the two several periods of the disappearance and reappearance of the fated island.

The "bore," as we saw it in the Severn, is no such a threatening phenomenon as the above; much less is it anything comparable to that at the Amazon, where it comes thundering on, a solid wall of water, forty feet in height; still, it is a curious and interesting spectacle well worthy of observation. The first indication we get of it is a hollow rushing sound heard at a distance, and which, serving as a warning note, fixes the attention; then a line of foam is seen crossing the river diagonally, which line, as it approaches nearer, resolves itself into an upright wall of water erect as a plumb-line, bearing a white curling crest on the summit, and advancing against the stream at the rate of a good rapid walk. As it passes, the

river rises to the height of the wall, so that it is not advisable to be standing too near the marge while watching its coming; and when it has passed, the ebb has changed to the flow, the current of the river moving from the sea landward. The phenomenon is not difficult of explanation; it is evidently due to the action of the turning tide upon a rapid stream running for a long distance over a shallow channel. In friths and rivers where the water is deep, though there is often a rough conflict of the meeting waters at the change from ebb to flow, there is never a "bore."

In the little town where we have taken up our quarters, we are on the verge of the Forest of Dean, into which we take the first opportunity of plunging on a tour of observation. The forest is a picturesque wild district, which for ages had the character of a sort of privileged land, the abode of a rather lawless or, to speak more correctly, extrallegal race. They are described by an old writer as "a sort of robusitic wild people, that must be civilized by good discipline and government;" and they would seem to have justified the description. To have been born within the forest limits appears in times past to have been considered a title to a species of right in the forest property, not clearly definable perhaps, but all the more lucrative on that very account. The forest abounding in coal and iron as well as timber, the foresters assumed the right of working the mines, and of burning the trees to blast and smelt the ore. Nominally, they took only the blighted and waste timber, reserving the rest for the government; but, really, they took whatever they stood in need of, spoiling the timber, first by wantonly boring or barking it, and then claiming it as waste because it was spoiled. In defence of such fancied privileges as these, they at times fought manfully, and not a few of them succumbed to the doom of the law. All such excesses have, however, long ceased; and, although the foresters of the present day are wild enough in appearance, they pursue their industry in a peaceful way and profess obedience to the law.

For several centuries the iron which was wrought in the forest, and which had the reputation of being of the best quality, was not, strictly speaking, the product of the mine, but was smelted from vast masses of half-worked ore left by the Romans in a hundred places where they had worked the mines during their rule in Britain. The Romans, owing to their imperfect means of smelting, got but a moiety of the metal from the ore; and the cinders, which they left in heaps upon the surface, remunerate the modern miner, through his knowledge of superior methods, better than the virgin ore which, lying deep in the bowels of the earth, has to be lifted above-ground at a heavy cost.

It is the presence of coal and iron mines, with the scattered mining settlements, that impart to the Forest of Dean so wild, and in many places so tinforest-like an aspect. You pass from dense groves of oak, of beech, and huge holly, out suddenly upon bleak moor-like wastes, dotted with the humble cottages of the miners, with heaps of rubble piled round the pit's mouth, with the snug dwellings of overseers, inspectors, managers, and

capitalists, with blast furnaces and tall steam chimneys, and here and there a straggling hamlet boasting a little gabled chapel or a modern church. Now you are on a hard macadamized road, running beneath the foliage of mighty oaks; and now you are toiling through a slough of mire up to your horse's knees or the axles of your gig. For a mile or more you are shut close in by the greenwood, the view on all sides bounded by the solid trunks that are to form the wooden walls of England, numbers of them lying prostrate and peeled white and ready for the shipbuilder's yard; and anon you are traversing an open height, commanding a view of distant hills and picturesque bluffs rising one above another, and towns and villages lying far down in the hollows, where the green tree-tops wave like grassy meadows, and the little silver streams are flashing back the sunlight. Then you meet the oddest figures plodding on foot or mounted on the veriest hacks of horses, who do not respond to your greeting, but stare at you as you pass; or, in some secluded glade you drop upon a pleasure party ruralizing in the solitude.

In the centre of the forest stands the Speech-house, a substantial and roomy stone building, erected in the time of the second Charles, for holding the Swainmote Courts, "for preserving the vert and venison." The house is now used as an inn, and the quaint old court-room in the rear of the bar, where in former times the judges sat on the railed-off bench to hear complaints and judge poaching delinquents, is now the frequent arena of picnic banquets, of archery feats and forest festivities; the fiddlers usurping the place of the judges, and the merry-making guests that of the delinquents. Here are preserved some curious and most grotesque whimsicalities of nature, in the shape of odd and ridiculous growths of timber found at various times on the forest trees; and here also are some huge branching antlers of the deer, though the deer themselves have long disappeared from the limits of the forest. The house stands in a wide open space, on a noble site opening upon a picturesque view, such as Wilson or Gainsborough would have loved to paint.

Following a devious route, which, being strangers to the place, we cannot attempt to describe, and which leads us over swelling hills and down many a shady woodland dell—past humble cottages skirting the roadside and stately mansions half-veiled in leafy umbrage, we escape from the forest not far from the village of Ruardean, and are bowling along the banks of the Wye towards the town of Ross. The ruins of old Goodrich Castle frown on an eminence which looks down upon the river to the left, and from thence a short and pleasant drive of something less than an hour brings us to Ross. The town of John Kyrle, whose name and noble deeds will survive as long as the tongue he spoke, is a neat little burgh built on the slope of a hill, whose summit overlooks the windings of the Wye and a fine panorama of undulating and picturesque country beyond. Its chief ornament at a distance is the "heaven-directed spire" raised by the "Man of Ross" himself; but the place is interesting from its evident antiquity, and is, moreover, cleanly and

well preserved. Reaching it on a market-day, we find it thronged with the population of the district, and busy as a hive of bees. The market-house, supported on columns of crumbling stone, has a time-worn aspect, appearing much older than it is, having been built about 200 years ago. The house of the "Man of Ross" stands opposite to it, but has been split up into two houses, both of which are now occupied by tradesmen. On one of them is a medallion portrait in stone of Kyrle himself, in a flowing wig and long neckcloth, though, unfortunately, it is but a sorry performance. In the church, which is a rather handsome edifice, two small elm trees have grown up spontaneously in the pew where the Man of Ross was accustomed to worship, and, having been suffered to grow, now wave their branches over the spot where he sat for so many years. They are elegant objects, and appear to flourish well; they form one of the most singular memorials to be met with in a parish church, and it is no marvel that they are lovingly tended and venerated. John Kyrle died in 1724, in his eighty-fifth year; but it was not until fifty-four years afterwards that the beautiful monument which now stands in the wall of the chancel, close to the communion rails, was erected to his memory. It is of white and dove-coloured marbles, and bears the simple inscription: "This monument was erected in memory of John Kyrle, commonly called the Man of Ross."

In the rear of the church is the "Prospect," an area which Kyrle laid out as a public walk, and planted with trees for the recreation of the inhabitants. The walk extends for nearly a mile through most agreeable scenery, the trees having long since reached a luxuriant maturity, and adding wondrous charms to the landscape; it terminates at rather an abrupt descent towards the river, and at this point Kyrle placed a neat summer-house. Unfortunately, the men of Ross who succeeded "the Man," proved insensible to the value of the benefits he had designed them, and failed to perpetuate the advantages he bequeathed them. The groves of beautiful trees which Kyrle planted, still, for the most part, remain, and lend magnificence to the scenery; but the "Prospect" ceased to be what it was designed to be, the common property of the people. The seats which were erected for the weary traveller have disappeared; some of the ground has been declared not public; and the summer-house, though it still stands at the termination of the route, is nothing but a tumble-down ruin of old bricks and timber. It strikes us as strange that the veneration which still subsists for the memory of "the Man," among the people of Ross, was not sufficiently active to preserve to their poor the benefactions he had established. It is but just to add that of late, evidences of an improved feeling in this respect have not been wanting in the town.

After a pleasant dinner at the Royal Hotel, whose ornamental gardens abut on the "Prospect," if they are not indeed a part and parcel of the same, we resume our drive, and taking the road to Mitchel-dean, and thence past Flaxley Abbey, return to the banks of the Severn in time to see the fishers of

our little town dragging the river for salmon—a species of industry which strikes us as an excellent school for patience, inasmuch as the ceremony has to be repeated again, and again, and again before a single captive is found in the toils.

The white church tower on the hill-top glimmers in the last level rays of the setting sun as we draw near the quiet town, and the gloom of twilight settles on the broad surface of the saffron-coloured waters as we finish our ramble between Severn and Wye.

THE BAMBOO AND ITS MULTITUDINOUS USES.

It has very justly been observed by a recent intelligent traveller, that "amidst the many gifts of Providence to a tropical region, the bamboo is perhaps the most benignant, appropriate, and accessible." Dense in its growth, and sometimes reaching to a considerable height, I know not of any tree or bush that can rival the bamboo, whether viewed in the golden sunlight, or under the influence of the soft night breeze and resplendent moon, whose beams throw a silvery mantle over its gently waving feathery branches. But this beauty is not its only excellence; there are many other things in the vegetable kingdom which are exceeding fair to look upon, but which, apart from the gratification afforded to the eye or other senses, cease, as far as human knowledge extends, to afford any further benefit to mankind. In its wild and uncultivated state, on arid plains where the sun strikes fiercely upon the head of the weary wayfarer, the bamboo affords not only a welcome shade, but the undulatory movements of its countless branches constitute a delightfully cool atmosphere—a priceless boon, to be appreciated only by those who have journeyed in the tropics and availed themselves of its shelter. Another step, and we find it, under the art of man, forming impenetrable hedges and fences, its pristine luxuriance cropped into formal and, in many cases, dwarf barriers, such as, though on a far more gigantic scale, our own box hedges in England; yet, even under this disadvantage, the bamboo presents still a striking and remarkable feature, even amidst the picturesque trees, plants, and flowers of that loveliest of lovely islands, Pulo Penang.

Seated under the shade of a most umbrageous bamboo copse, reposing from heat and fatigue, we see a miserable group, the half-starved inhabitants of some inland village, where the barren soil yields but an ungrateful recompense to the sweat and toil of the ploughman, and where, consequently, the impoverished natives are compelled to adopt other handicrafts to raise them the miserable pittance which is to satisfy their daily cravings. In a relaxing climate like India, where the natural indolence of the natives is still more augmented by the stifling lack of any breeze during the greater part of the day, basket-making is a very favourite and not unremunerative occupation. The better to carry on this trade, especially as their own miserable mud huts are heated to a point nearly sufficient to bake them, the poorer pariahs, armed with a few