

time when they told me she would never know me again, but, thank God, she did. She recovered at last. And since that night I never have tasted a drop of liquor, and, please heaven, I never will again. The baby, bless its dear little heart, wasn't harmed at all. It lay snug and

warm on its mother's breast all the while. But if I hadn't happened to be close by them at that instant, the night express would have ground them into powder.

And the white stripe came into my hair upon the night of that fearful snow-storm. That's how it happened, sir.

THE BRETONS.



BRITANNY, the country of the Bretons, is a large province of France, on its north-west coast. A great part of the country is wild, rugged, and nearly covered with forests, although it has several fine seaports and a few strange old-fashioned cities.

A considerable number of the Bretons are the descendants of Ancient Britons, who were driven by the Saxon invaders of England and Wales to cross the seas, and settle in this region. The country was formerly called Little Britain. Their language is very similar to the Welsh, and Welshmen can hold conversation with them, as a large number of the words in common use remain nearly the same in both tongues.

The Bretons are known for a love of their homes and country, and kindness to each other and to strangers. Their vices are avarice and drunkenness. Travelling in their country is not a pleasant affair. Their public conveyances are uncleaned, unpainted, creaking, and jolting cars, and full of insect annoyances.

Some of the Breton towns may give a good idea of the towns of England two or three centuries ago. The narrow streets, destitute of channel or causeway, abound with lofty-timbered houses, of curious build, rising tier above tier, like the stern of a three-decked ship, and approaching so close at top as almost to shut out the light, with uncouth figures

at the angles, and quaint devices on the walls. Some of the shops are open to the streets, like booths in a fair. . . . in Brittany now, as in the middle ages, the market and the fair are the great events. Rare is the buying and selling that takes place at other times; but when the market occurs, the country people, from a distance of twenty or thirty miles, throng the roads, bringing all imaginable articles to exchange for money; for money is as eagerly sought in Brittany as elsewhere. The Breton works hard, and with difficulty earns his poor pittance of fifteen sous (about sevenpence) per day, from which, by wonderful care, he contrives to reserve one sou, which he carefully saves.

The better classes of the people are dressed as represented in our engraving. This dress is neat and picturesque. The horses in use are strong and noble creatures. The common peasants in the rural districts are described as dirty and rude in their manners. The Bretons, says a traveller, dwell in huts generally built of mud, in which men, children, cows, and pigs live huddled together. Their habits are wild and savage, and they are mostly in a condition of great poverty. In some parts the men wear dresses of goat-skins, and look not unlike a number of Robinson Crusoes. The hairy part of this dress is worn outside; it is made with long sleeves, which fall nearly below the knees; their long shaggy hair hangs loosely over their shoulders. On Sun-



BRETONS ON THEIR WAY TO CHURCH.

days the men often wear three or four cloth waistcoats, all of different lengths, so as to let the various colours, red, white, and blue, with which they are

bound, appear one above the other in tiers; a muslin collar; full-plaited breeches, tied at the knees by garters of floating ribbon; white woollen stockings,

with white cloaks; and light yellow shoes. Many of the women of the poorer sort wear their dress till it becomes so dirty, patched, and ragged, that you can scarcely trace what it has originally been. Some Breton females, however, appear decently dressed in their singular costume, and are of a florid, healthy look.

In some districts the women wear high muslin caps. Knitting-pins in hand, they work away at stockings, whether walking, talking, or with a load of butter on the head. When not at work the knitting-pins are stuck in their hair. When the great Breton commander, Du Guesclin, was a prisoner to Edward the Black Prince, and was asked how he could raise the large sum required for

his ransom, he replied, that "the women of Brittany would rather spin for a year, and ransom him with the work of their distaffs, than that he should remain prisoner."

There are large forests of chestnut and oak trees in the land, whose fruit, boiled in milk, supplies the means of subsistence during the greater part of the year. The people grovel on from age to age, with little change in their habits. If you ask a Breton why he does not plant more fruit-trees, he will tell you his father never did so. If you say, "Why not grow more corn, instead of depending so much on chestnuts and acorns?" he will answer, "I have gathered chestnuts and acorns from the time when I was a boy; why should I not do so now?"

THE BEAVER FAMILY.



THE castoridæ, or beaver family, have two incisor or cutting teeth and eight molars in each jaw, twenty in all, and are particularly distinguished from all the rest of the order by their broad horizontally flattened tail, which is ten or eleven inches long, covered with hair, similar to the back, for about a third of its length; the rest of it is covered by hexagonal scales. The body of the animal is about forty inches long, having two sorts of hair upon its skin: one which is long, stiff, and elastic, is of a grey colour near the base, and terminated by shining reddish-brown points; the other is short, very fine, and of a silver-grey colour.

The beaver was once a very common animal in Europe, but the value of its fur has led almost to its extermination.

It is still found along the Euphrates in Asia; and by some of the larger rivers of Europe, as the Rhone, the Danube, the Weser; and in the Nuthe, near its

confluence with the Elbe, in 1828 there was a small colony which worked on the co-operative system. Naturalists have been unable to discover any difference in the habits or structure of the American and European species, and it may be assumed that they are identical. "The beaver being so plentiful (says Hearne, the traveller), the attention of my companions was chiefly engaged on them, as they not only furnished delicious food, but their skins proved a valuable acquisition, being a principal article of trade as well as a serviceable one for clothing. The situation of the beaver-houses is various. Where the beavers are numerous they are found to inhabit lakes, ponds, and rivers, as well as those narrow creeks which connect the numerous lakes with which this country abounds; but the two latter are generally chosen by them when the depth of water and other circumstances are suitable, as they have then the advantage of a current to convey wood and other necessaries to their habitations, and because,