

# THE *L. S. D.* OF LITERARY SHRINES.

BY HARRY GOLDING.\*

**A**N audited balance-sheet is commonly supposed to give a man as clear an insight into the state of his affairs as it is possible to have. Yet some of his most valuable assets are of necessity excluded, because they simply cannot be expressed in terms of *£ s. d.* No one with any experience of affairs doubts that luck counts for much in this world, though some of us prefer to call it by other names; yet how is luck to be valued? Education, experience, influence, health, are all of vital importance in a man's career, yet at what time of his life can he

to give us a nineteenth century set of Canterbury Tales, he would not tell of a motley crowd collecting in the courtyard of the Tabard Inn in Southwark; or of knight and lady, cleric and mechanic, setting merrily forth for the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, beguiling each other by the way with songs and jests and racy stories. Instead of "mine host" we should have a threatening cabby, or a perspiring porter with palm extended; the picturesque Tabard would give place to the majestic outlines of a modern terminus; the three or four days'

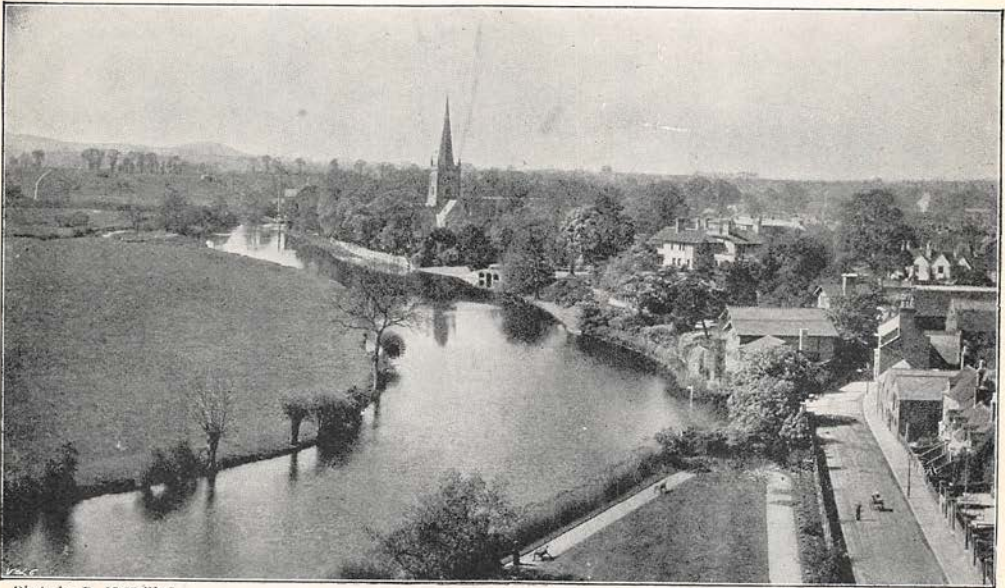


Photo by D. McNeille.]

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON.

[Stratford-upon-Avon.

say exactly how much his share of each is worth to him?

This mild moralising is evoked by an attempt recently made—not very successfully—to get at the actual value of literary associations to a place. That the sentimental value is considerable cannot be denied, and few people will dispute that there is also a monetary value, but the facts are not easily reduced to plain figures.

Were a new Chaucer to arise in our midst

journey would be a matter of about half that number of hours; and the pilgrims, instead of entertaining one another, would be buried behind newspapers, or glancing with ill-concealed distrust at the other occupants of the carriage. But, thanks to the German Emperor, amongst others, pilgrimages, however changed in character, are as prominent a feature of our own day as of the fourteenth century, and the modern Chaucer would not lack material. We have in this country no Jerusalem, or Lourdes, or Mecca, but we have a Stratford, an Abbotsford, a land of Hardy and a land of

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"Lorna Doone," and the pilgrims thither may be counted by their tens of thousands. If we no longer worship dead men's bones, we have an immense respect for them; and it is open to question whether a popular author cannot serve the place of his adoption far better by dying for it than by living in it or writing of it. We have too few front rank novelists just now, and their wholesale extinction, even if voluntary, would be a national misfortune, but there would undoubtedly be local compensations. Patriotic geniuses will perhaps think the matter over.

Shakespeare makes Mark Antony say—

The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good is oft interred with their bones;

but the poet himself supplies a contradiction.

where in the winter months the curfew still "tolls the knell of parting day." But, as Washington Irving has said, "the mind refuses to dwell on anything that is not connected with Shakespeare . . . the whole place seems but as his mausoleum." Pigs and corn and cattle are sold on market days just as if the spot were not hallowed ground; but Stratford does not live on its agricultural transactions. A "Mop Fair" is held annually in October, and excursionists come in their thousands, but Stratford would be badly off if it depended wholly upon that event. Brutally speaking, Stratford-upon-Avon lives in the main on William Shakespeare, *obit* in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and sixteen. That this is so is by no



Photo by D. McNeillie.]

[Stratford-upon-Avon.

ANN HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE.

The evil that he did—was it poaching, or the trouble with Ann Hathaway?—emphatically does *not* live after him, and much of the good does. "Shakespeare," said a too candid newspaper writer recently, "is a thoroughly good asset, and Stratford runs him for all he is worth." Now, it may seem a most undignified proceeding, and we tremble at the seeming impertinence, but curiosity prompts us to ask—what is the cash value of Shakespeare to the charming Warwickshire town which contains at once his birthplace and his tomb? Stratford is interesting in itself as a quaint old market town, where the crier may yet be heard, and

means to be deplored either by Stratfordians or their visitors, for the circumstance affords highly satisfactory evidence of the existence, both in this country and abroad, of large numbers of people who are warmly interested in the life and work of our great national poet. As is well known, the principal places in and around Stratford associated with Shakespeare are in the hands of a public-spirited body known as the Birthplace Trustees. But for their exertions, and the work of a long line of predecessors—notably David Garrick—Stratford might to-day have possessed no vestige at all of Shakespeare. It will be remembered that some years ago

a syndicate of too enthusiastic Americans almost succeeded in purchasing the Birthplace, with the intention of transporting it bodily to the States! It is doubtful whether even Shakespeare's bones would have been suffered to remain but for the famous inscription—

Good frend, for Iesvs sake forbear  
To digg the dvst enclosed heare:  
Blese be ye man yt spares thes stones,  
And evrst be he yt moves my bones."

From a recent report of the Trustees we gather some curious, interesting, and suggestive facts. It appears that in twelve months the total number of visitors to the Birthplace was 26,510. An admission fee of sixpence a head is charged, which yields the respectable sum of £662 15s. But this fee only entitles one to see the room in which Shakespeare was born, almost every inch of which is now scrawled over with the signatures of more or less famous men—mostly less; to inspect the room at the back, where a portrait of the poet is religiously screened; and to pass through the quaint old kitchen, with its open fireplace, where the poet may or may not have baked his chestnuts in the days of youth. To see the adjoining museum, with

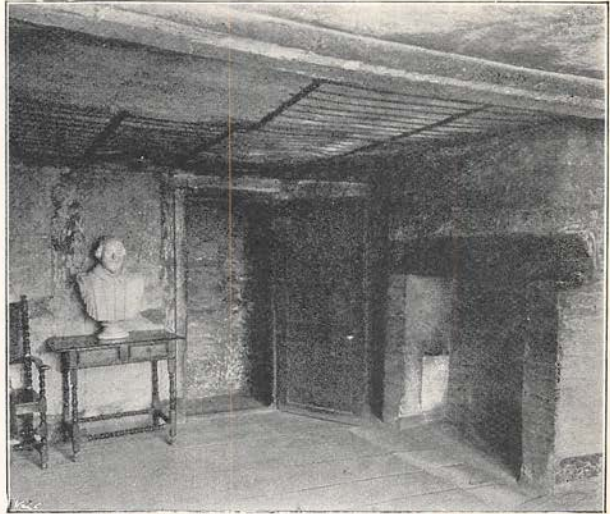


Photo by D. McNeillie.]

[Stratford-upon-Avon.

ROOM IN WHICH SHAKESPEARE WAS BORN.

its many interesting curios, another sixpence has to be paid, and we find that about two-thirds of those visiting the Birthplace, or, to be exact, 16,539, also visited the museum. This gives us an additional £413 9s. 6d. An analysis of the signatures in the visitors' book shows how world-wide is the interest in Shakespeare. Upwards of 7,000 persons naughtily dodged the ordeal of signing their names; but of the rest no less than 4,516



Photo by F. Frith & Co.,]

KENILWORTH CASTLE.

[Reigate.

hailed from America, England and Wales sent 12,979, Scotland 349, and Ireland only a paltry 194. Scottish pilgrims evidently reserve their energy for Ayr and Abbotsford, and one would be glad to think that Irishmen give to Thomas Moore the devotion that otherwise would have been expended on Shakespeare, but we have the best of reasons for knowing that they do not. Of pilgrims from other parts Africa sent 97, Australia 186, Austria 10, Armenia 8, Bavaria 3, Belgium 12, Canada 206, Ceylon 13, Channel Islands 41, China 1, Denmark 11, Egypt 2, France 77, Finland 3, Germany 113, Hanover 7, Hawaii 3, Holland 9, Hungary 2, India 49, Italy 12, Jamaica 5, Japan 3, Madagascar 2,

of the church; but reckoning only the admission fees at sixpence a head we get the sum of £575. Within sight of the church, and also on the banks of the Avon, stands the Shakespeare Memorial, a building which has been much criticised on account of its apparent incongruity, but for which all lovers of Shakespeare have cause to be devoutly thankful. It was in great part the gift of the late Mr. Charles E. Flower, who contributed no less than £25,000 to its cost. Here is a most valuable Shakespearian library, readily accessible to students, and a gallery of pictures collected from all quarters of the globe, and including works by such artists as Lawrence, Romney, and Millais.

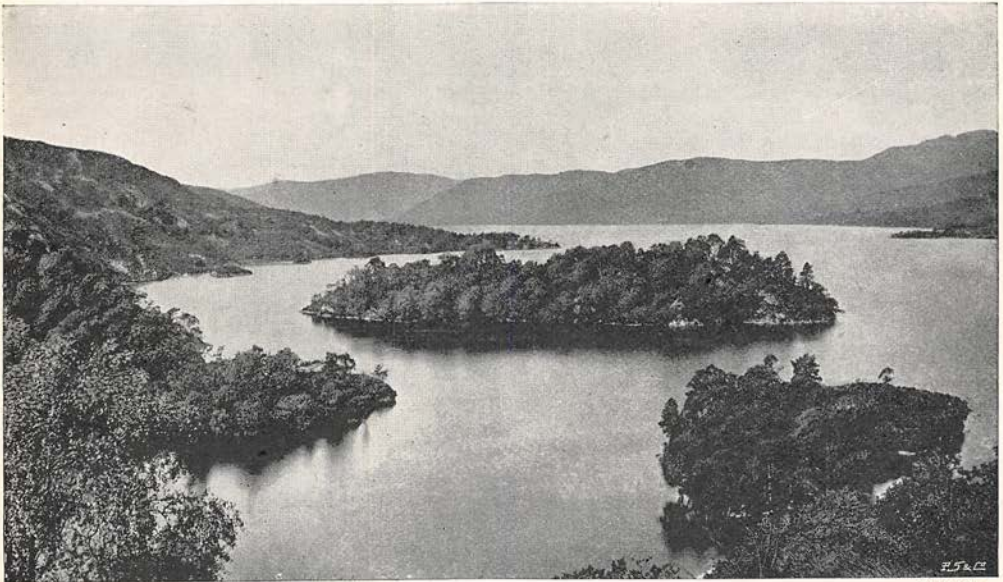


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"ELLEN'S ISLE," LOCH KATRINE.

[Dundee.]

New Zealand 64, Newfoundland 7, Norway 7, Poland 3, Portugal 3, Prussia 7, Russia 10, St. Helena 2, Saxony 1, Spain 11, Sweden 6, Switzerland 16, Tasmania 5, Turkey in Europe 4, West Indies 12.

Next in importance to the Birthplace is the beautifully situated church of the Holy Trinity, beneath the chancel of which Shakespeare is buried. The church is, of course, under the care of the Vicar, an enthusiastic Shakespearian, and the figures are not included in the Trustees' report. But a reliable estimate gives the number of annual visitors, apart from ordinary worshippers, as 23,000. A great number of these no doubt respond to the Vicar's appeal for help in the restoration and beautification

Another part of the building is used as a theatre, where important performances of Shakespeare's plays are given from time to time—notably at the annual fortnight's festival every April, which the artistic enthusiasm of Mr. F. R. Benson, the well-known Shakespearian actor, has made a landmark in the playgoers' year. Now, it is somewhat curious to notice that of the 26,000 odd persons visiting the Birthplace only 13,085, or less than half, took the trouble to visit the Memorial. The fact is to be regretted, though it hardly concerns us here. 13,085 at sixpence brings us in another £327 2s. 6d. The house, New Place, to which Shakespeare retired when fortune had smiled upon him, was razed to the ground in 1759 by the

Rev. Francis Gastrell, because he considered the assessment on it excessive, and to-day only the carefully preserved foundations can be seen. This probably accounts for the fact that not more than 474 persons paid for admission, though the fee of sixpence includes admission to the adjoining museum, Nash's House, where a number of curios illustrating the customs and manners of the seventeenth century are to be seen. New Place, therefore, contributes only the insignificant sum of £11 17s. Ann Hathaway's cottage at Shottery, where the poet went a-wooing, is about a mile from the town, and is reached by a pleasant footpath. The cottage was recently purchased by the Birthplace Trustees for £3,000, and their report gives the number of visitors as 10,489, which at sixpence each yields £262 4s. 6d.

Totalling the amounts, we arrive at the following result, the admission fee in each case being sixpence—

Birthplace, 26,510 ... ..	£662	15	0
"   Museum, 16,539 ... ..	413	9	6
Trinity Church, 23,000 ... ..	575	0	0
Memorial, 13,085 ... ..	327	2	6
Ann Hathaway's Cottage, 10,489	262	4	6
New Place, 474 ... ..	11	17	0
	£2,252	8	6

Stratford, therefore, derives an annual income from admission fees alone of considerably more than £2,000. It will at once

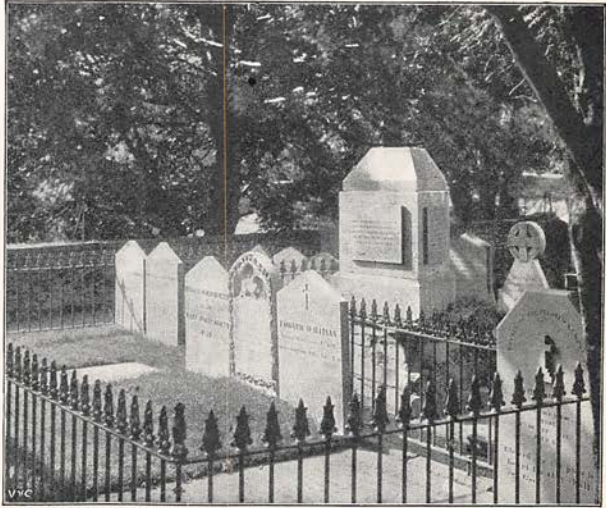


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[Dundee.

WORDSWORTH'S GRAVE, GRASMERE.

be pointed out that from this sum custodians have to be paid, fabrics maintained and repaired, and that the disposal of surplus funds is, in the case of the Birthplace Trustees, strictly regulated by the Act of Parliament of 1891. This is perfectly true, and I should be sorry to be numbered with those who complain of paying a paltry half-crown or three shillings for the privilege of seeing so many priceless relics. The point, however, is that this amount of money is left in Stratford every year by visitors. But in this case, as in others mentioned in this article, admission fees, being ascertainable, are taken merely as affording a clue to larger sums which are not ascertainable and can

only be roughly guessed at. Apart from the financial aspect of the question, such figures have also a distinct value as showing the relative interest taken by succeeding generations in the departed leaders of literature. At Stratford we are only at the commencement of the calculation. Fees paid for admission form a very small proportion of the pilgrim's expenses. There is the question of living. The majority of visitors, it is true, do not stay in Stratford more than a night or two—many are day trippers and do not stay at all. But from the circumstance that at least half a dozen first class hotels and a large number of boarding-houses manage to flourish in what, after all, is but a small country town, it may be



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DOVE COTTAGE, GRASMERE.

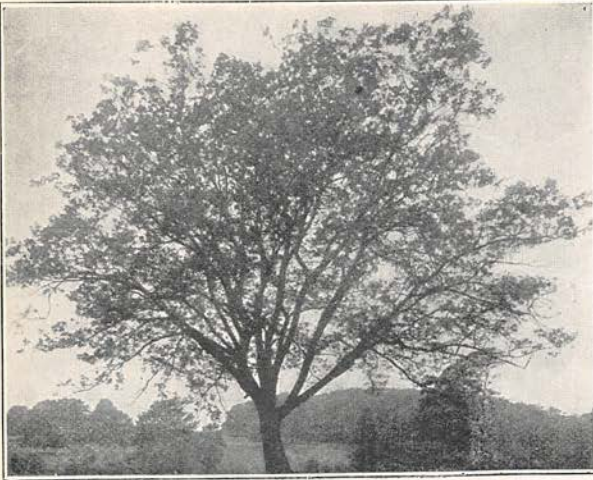


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BYRON'S OAK.

[Dundee.

concluded that a goodly sum can be allowed under this head. Then there is the important item of souvenirs. What of a "rubbing from the tomb of Shakespeare" for a shilling? Or a copy of the records of the poet's birth and baptism in return for a subscription to the church restoration fund? I am not aware how many of these precious productions are disposed of, but the majority of visitors from the States certainly invest. Then there are busts of Shakespeare *ad lib.*, at prices ranging from sixpence to half-a-guinea. Photographs also sell largely, and popular subjects such as Ann Hathaway's cottage are disposed of in hundreds. One firm alone sends out 2,000 prints of this view yearly, mounted and unmounted, though of course many are sold at places other than Stratford. Guide books, at prices from a penny to seven shillings and sixpence, find a ready sale, judging by the constant additions to their number. Altogether we are probably within the mark in estimating the sum spent by pilgrims to the shrine of Shakespeare, including the largely attended April celebrations, at something like £10,000 a year, exclusive of railway fares. It should be remembered, too, that Stratford is indebted to its connection with Shakespeare for many princely gifts, notably the Memorial, the Child's Fountain, and the American window in Trinity Church.

We have pursued the inquiry as to Stratford somewhat exhaustively so that one example may serve for many others. Stratford is by no means the only place, even in Warwickshire, which owes its prosperity to its literary associations. Less than a dozen

miles away stands the hoary ruin of Kenilworth Castle, which I have discovered to my surprise to be visited by even more people than the birthplace of Shakespeare. From information kindly supplied by the Earl of Clarendon's solicitors it appears that 30,000 persons annually pay the necessary sixpence for the privilege of inspecting this noble ruin, hallowed for ever by the genius of Sir Walter Scott, though it deserves to be remembered also for its connection with the heroic Simon de Montfort, to whom we are so largely indebted for representative government. It is a shame to spoil a good story, especially when told by the magic pen of the "Wizard of the North," but it has been proved indisputably

that Amy Robsart had been dead nearly fifteen years when the famous Kenilworth festivities in Elizabeth's honour took place. That fact, however, detracts but little from the interest of the Castle. To the £750 expended in admission fees must be added payments for refreshment, photographs and souvenirs, and in many cases carriage hire. The straggling town of Kenilworth is by no means pretentious, but its hotels would do credit to a stylish seaside resort, so that the crumbling Castle would seem to be an asset of no slight value.

What has happened at Kenilworth has happened in far greater degree in the Highlands of Scotland. That delightful region of mountain and moorland could not have failed, sooner or later, to become a great popular playground; but it was the author of "Waverley" and "The Lady of the Lake" who first breathed over it the spirit of romance and poetry and dowered it with charms to lure the moneyed traveller thither. But for Scott it is possible that we might, until a quite recent period, have viewed the mountains with awe and described them as "horrid and inhospitable," like those eighteenth-century travellers referred to by Macaulay. "In the south of our island," says the eloquent historian, "scarcely anything was known about the Celtic part of Scotland, and what was known excited no feeling but one of contempt and loathing. The Trossachs wound, as now, between gigantic walls of rock tapestried with broom and wild roses; Foyers came headlong down through the birchwood with the same leap and the same roar with which he still rushes to Loch Ness ;

and, in defiance of the sun of June, the snowy scalps of Ben Cruachan rose, as they still rise, over the willowy islets of Loch Awe; and yet none of these sights had power till a recent period to attract a single poet or painter from more opulent and more tranquil regions." It is manifestly impossible to set down in plain figures how much Scott is worth to the Highlands, but what would not the gallant Principality, or even the Emerald Isle, give to possess another like him?

But, apart from the Highlands, there is what is known as the "land of Scott"—Abbotsford, Dryburgh, and the many scenes associated rather with the novelist himself than with his works. Visitors to Dryburgh Abbey, where Scott is buried, vary greatly in number, and I have been unable to obtain definite information; but the numbers are, without doubt, considerable. The owner has recently given notice that the charge for admission is in future to be one shilling each person, instead of sixpence. Whether that fact indicates that the business has hitherto been conducted at a loss, or that the British tourist is considered capable of a little more squeezing, one would rather not say.

The "land of Burns" is in its way as remarkable an instance of the value of literary associations as Stratford-upon-Avon. As a tourist resort pure and simple it is to be feared that Ayrshire would fare somewhat badly. Yet in summer, Ayr, Mancline, Tarbolton, and other places connected with the poet, are crowded with visitors. It cannot be doubted that the hotel proprietors, railway companies, and others, derive no inconsiderable quantity of "siller" directly or indirectly from the Burns cult. The "Scots wha hae for Burns been bled" must be a far greater host than ever suffered with Wallace. In 1881 the Burns Cottage and about seven acres were purchased by the Monument Trustees for £4,000. A charge of 2*d.* is made for admission. In the year ending September, 1898, the number of visitors was 36,500, only some 1,700 short of the number in 1896, the centenary

of the poet's death. The numbers visiting the monument at Alloway were even greater, amounting to 49,589. For years past the annual total has always been well above 40,000. In July, 1898, there were no less than 2,558 in one day! The figures are themselves so eloquent that comment would be superfluous.

The English Lake District presents in many respects a case analogous to that of the Highlands. Gray, of "Elegy" fame, was probably the first to make widely known the tender beauties of Westmorland and Cumberland; and though to-day the attractions of the Lake District to the ordinary tourist are mainly scenic, it cannot be doubted that many people are lured thither by those "Literary Associations of the English Lakes" which Canon Rawnsley has so ably

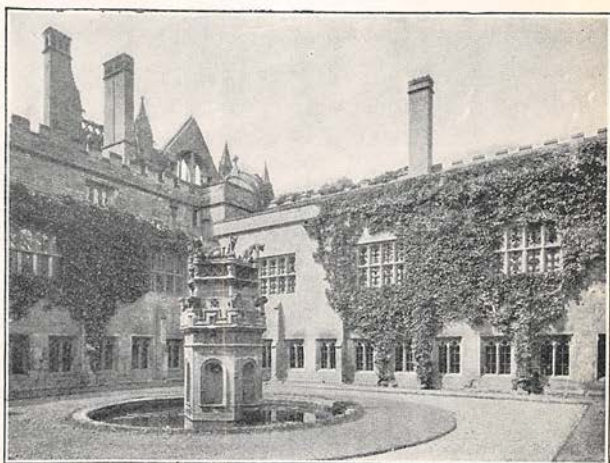


Photo by Valentine & Sons.]

[Dundee.

THE CLOISTERS, NEWSTEAD.



Photo by Valentine & Sons.]

[Dundee.

BYRON'S BEDROOM.

described in his well-known volumes. Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, "Christopher North," De Quincey, and later, Mrs. Hemans, Harriet Martineau, Dr. Arnold, and John Ruskin, each and all contributed to give the Lake District a twofold interest in the eyes of cultured sightseers. Few people find themselves near Grasmere without being magnetically drawn to the quiet churchyard where Wordsworth sleeps. It

large parties are admitted at times for an inclusive sum, and thus all the members are not counted. Perhaps, too, there is some justice in Mr. Clement Shorter's recent complaint that the Cottage has been robbed of much of its primitive simplicity.

The mention of Mr. Shorter's name recalls the fact that in the adjoining county of Yorkshire is a humble parish chiefly known to fame on account of its association with Charlotte Brontë and her talented sisters. A Brontë Museum was recently established at Haworth and is visited by about 5,000 persons annually. The charge for admission is threepence only, so that the sum raised can hardly suffice to pay for the services of the curator. Readers will remember the scene in Mrs. Humphry Ward's "David Grieve," when young David finds himself at Haworth—

"Does foak coom for t'summer?" asked David, lifting his eyebrows a little and looking round on the bleak and straggling village.

"Noa, they coom to see the church. Lor' bless ye! 'taint becoss the church is anything much to look at! 'Taint nowt out o' t'common that I knows on. Noa—but they coom along o' t'monument, an' Miss Brontë."

There was no light of understanding in David's face, but his eyes seemed to invite her to go on.

"You niver heerd on our Miss Brontë?" said the woman mildly. "Well, I s'pose not. She was just a bit quiet body. Nobboddy hereabouts saw mich in her. But she wrote bukes—tales, yo know—tales about t'foak roun' here; an' they do say, them as has read 'em, 'at the're terr'ble good. She's terr'ble famous is Miss Brontë, now—an' her sisters, too, pore young women. Yo should see t'visitors' book in the church. Aw t'grand foak as iver wor. They cooms

fro' Lunnon a-purpose, soom on 'em, an' they just takes a look roun' t'place, an' writes their names, an' goes away."

One of the most popular showplaces in the Midlands is Lord Byron's ancestral home near Nottingham. Here may be seen the poet's bed, his library, an oak tree he planted, and the curious monument beneath which his faithful dog "Boatswain" is buried. Newstead Abbey is shown to the public twice a week, but no account of numbers is kept. As regards Hucknall Torkard Church, which contains the tomb of Byron, the Vicar estimates the number of visitors at about forty a week in summer, and perhaps half that number in winter. This would give from 1,500 to 2,000 a year.

The question as to the actual situation of



Photo by]

OARE CHURCH.

Carver Doone fired through the middle window.

[E. Combes.

will be remembered that he has himself described the church—

Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,  
But large and massy; for duration built:  
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld  
By naked rafters intricately crossed.

No account is kept of the numbers who visit the church; but Dove Cottage, Wordsworth's home at Grasmere from 1799 to 1808—and subsequently De Quincey's—is under the care of a committee, a charge of sixpence being made for admission. By the courtesy of Professor Armstrong, I have learnt that for the year from May, 1896, to May, 1897, the visitors numbered about 2,000, and for the corresponding period in 1897-8, 2,500. One would have expected the numbers to be greater; but it must be borne in mind that



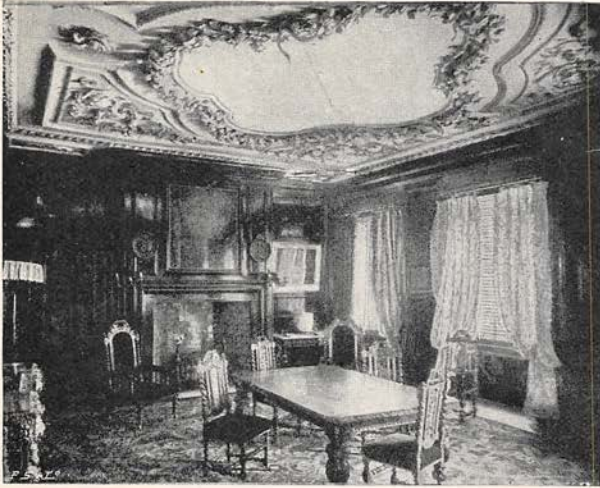


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[Dundee.

KINGSLEY'S ROOM AT ROYAL HOTEL, BIDEFORD.

Bleak House has been hotly debated by lovers of Dickens. The energetic and far-sighted Rector of Broadstairs has treated the matter as admitting of no doubt, and by the Dickens Fêtes held so successfully during the last year or two has drawn all eyes to the curiously shuttered, happily-placed mansion which dominates the sea-front of that delightful resort. In these days of competition amongst watering-places, advertisement is as breath to their nostrils, if the figure may be used in connection with such highly sanitary, clean-swabbed abodes of mankind. Now, there can be no doubt that the Dickens Fêtes have been a huge advertisement for Broadstairs—indeed, people are beginning to complain that it will soon be as overrun as its popular neighbours, Margate and Ramsgate. At the 1897 Fête there were no less than 5,000 visitors in the three days, and in addition to the admission fee most people patronised some of the “side shows,” and purchased refreshments and various articles of what Mr. Wemmick would call “portable property.” The “washing competition,” entrance fee sixpence, seems to have attracted a good number, though Englishmen are notoriously not good at this kind of thing; and the “Room of Mediæval Tortures” found many admirers at twopence, though few seem to have availed themselves of the invitation to “personally

try the tortures for the modest sum of five shillings,” in spite of the fact that specially reduced terms for mothers-in-law were offered to harassed husbands. The 1898 celebration was not nearly so successful, on account of unpropitious weather. It is clear, however, that Broadstairs has every reason to regard Bleak House as a valuable asset. How many visitors, too, are lured to Rochester from its connection with Dickens?

North Devon is another conspicuous instance of the value of literary associations. The “Combes of the West” would never have lacked admirers, but it can safely be said that the halo of romance thrown over the district by Kingsley's “Westward Ho!” Blackmore's “Lorna Doone,” Whyte-Melville's “Katerfelto,” and more recently by Marie Corelli's “Mighty Atom,” has immensely augmented its popularity amongst holiday-makers. Bideford is the centre of the “Westward Ho!” country, and the proprietor of the Royal Hotel points with justifiable pride to the fine oak room, with its handsome scroll-work ceiling, in which the novelist-divine wrote much of his book. “Kingsley's Room,” as it is called, is visited by several thousand persons in the course of a year. It is estimated that the number of visitors staying at Bideford and Westward Ho! is about 20,000 each season. Between nine and ten thousand persons go to Clovelly

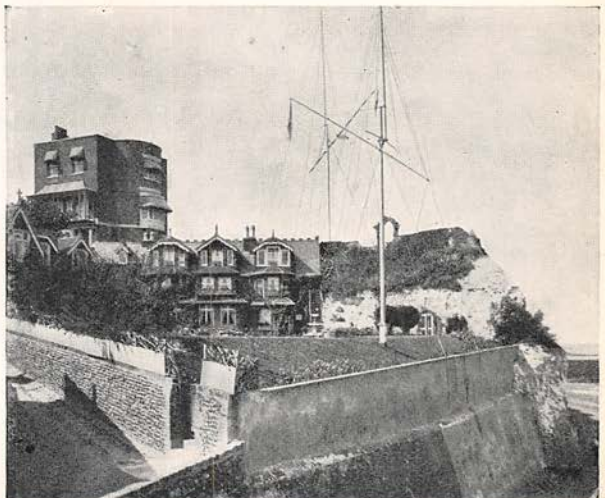


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[Dundee.

BLEAK HOUSE, BROADSTAIRS.

from Bideford by brakes and coaches, and there are two or three steamers daily to the same spot from Ilfracombe, each with a load of five or six hundred. The neighbouring land of "Lorna Doone" has not hitherto been visited to quite the same extent; but now that the railway has penetrated to Lynton, we may confidently expect a large increase in the number of visitors to the somewhat disappointing Doone Glen and the other spots made famous by one of the most delightful romances of the century. Of Whyte-Melville's "Katerfelto," with its breezy description of a stag-hunt on Exmoor, many thousands have been sold, and the publishers have recently brought out an entirely new edition, with illustrations by Lucy E. Kemp-Welch.

Two facts of interest relating to London were elicited in the course of our inquiries—one that the total number of visitors to Carlyle's House, Chelsea, with its "sublime garret," has been little more than 10,000 since its establishment as a museum in July,

1895; the other that the number visiting St. Giles', Cripplegate, where Milton was buried, is about 90 per day.

This inquiry could be extended indefinitely, and numberless instances given of places which have been to a great extent "made" by the pen. One might speak of the greatly increased popularity of the district of Galloway—a hitherto neglected touring ground—since the publication of Mr. Crockett's novels. Reference could be made to Elstow, in Bedfordshire, where the "divine tinker" wrote and laboured; to Olney, the quiet retreat of Cowper; to Arbury, Nuneaton, and the George Eliot country; to Thomas Hardy's "Wessex"; to Hall Caine's "little Manx Island," familiarised to readers of the WINDSOR by the opening chapters of "The Christian" and other works; to Somersby, in Lincolnshire, where Tennyson was born, and to Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, where he lived so long; but this article has already exceeded its proper limits.

