

JAMES EDMUND VINCENT

THROUGH EAST ANGLIA
IN A MOTOR CAR

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INTRODUCTION

This book, the first volume it is hoped of a series, was undertaken because the existing Guide-books were, through no fault in their writers, by no means adequate to the needs of the traveller by motor-car. A new method of travel, in fact, brings in its train the need for a new species of guide-book, and the truth of this observation becomes clear when we consider an authoritative definition of the term "Guide-book." It is "a book of directions for travellers and tourists as to the best routes, etc., and giving information about the places to be visited." All which needs to be added to this definition by way of explanation is that the information given may justly be of almost any kind so long as it is not tedious.

Substantially, all the existing guide-books, some of them of admirable quality, were written before the motor-car had entered into our social system. Except a small number of accounts of tours by horse-drawn carriages, they were compiled by men who travelled by train from place to place, obtaining no view of the

country often—for deep cuttings destroy all joy of the eye for the railway passenger—and at best only a partial view, for the use of men and women condemned to the like method of travel. In them it is vain to seek for any appreciation of the pleasure of the road, of the delight of travel itself. The motor-car has changed all that. The act of going from place to place is at least as essential a part of the enjoyment of a tour as the sojourn at the new place when it is reached, as the leisurely survey of its features of beauty or interest, or the inquiry into its history and its associations. Many matters, too, are of moment to the motorist which are of none to the traveller by rail. He desires to know something in advance of the nature of the roads to be traversed, of the gradients to be climbed, of the facilities for housing his car when his destination of the day is accomplished, and last, but certainly not least, where he can submit it to a skilled artificer for repair if occasion should unhappily arise.

Does the motorist need, or desire, more than has been set forth in the preceding sentence? The anti-motorist will think not, will remain convinced that the motorist is a dust-raising, property-destroying, dog-killing, fowl-slaying, dangerous and ruthless speed maniac. But, of course, the anti-motorist is quite wrong. The rational motorist, who is in the overwhelming majority—but black sheep are sadly conspicuous amidst a white flock—passes through certain regular stages of evolution. At first he revels without thought, or without conscious thought, in the sheer ecstasy of motion. The road which seems to flow to meet

him, white, tawny or grey as the case may be, and to open before him as if by magic, the pressure of the cool air on his face, even the tingling lash of the rain as he dashes against it, result in a feeling of undefinable, almost lyrical, exaltation. In the next stage he begins to take in broad impressions of great stretches of country, impressions similar in some respects to those obtained from a mountain top, but secured in rapid succession. Soon—for the faculties of man adapt themselves rapidly to his needs—the man in the car begins to observe more rapidly and more minutely than in the early days. The man at the steering-wheel finds that he can watch the road up to the farthest visible point in advance, manipulate his throttle, use accelerator or decelerator, and, most important of all, be in vigilant sympathy with his engine, subconsciously. At the same time he can take an intelligent interest in the scenes through which he is passing, can carry on a conversation with her or with him who sits by his side, can tell a good story or listen to one, can impart information or receive it, without in the slightest degree neglecting his primary duty of driving and humouring the car. In this is nothing of novelty. The same state of doing instructively and without reflection the right thing at the right time is reached by every proficient in many crafts, by the driver of horses for example, and by the steersman of a sailing vessel. The motorist, therefore, even if he be driving, can think of things outside the car, can remain a rational and intelligent man, can (and in my experience usually does) desire to know those associations of

the country-side which, when known, appeal to his imagination, or to his memory, and make the day's journey something better and more interesting than a progress through the air and over the ground. How much more then, after the first bewilderment of motoring has worn off, shall the mere passenger be able and desirous to travel with seeing eye and thinking brain?

There is no need to labour the point. Motorists are well aware, without argument, that they feel an intelligent interest in every part of "this amazing England," and that they would take that interest more fully if they were provided, so to speak, with the proper materials. Such materials ought to be found in guide-books, written in the motorist's mood, which is wider and often less microscopical than that of the traveller in railway carriages, and from the point of view of those to whom county boundaries, which determine the scope of most guide-books, have no meaning, except that the roads are better, and the police are more sensible, in some counties than in others. It is the guide-book writer's business to give first practical facts and directions, and then to provide the information which, after sifting a vast mass of history, legend, folk-lore, literature, and gossip, appears to be most interesting and attractive.

East Anglia has been chosen as the first theme, and in many respects it lends itself exceptionally well to isolated treatment. The motorist, it is true, has no regard for county boundaries, but let him once venture in his car to the east of an imaginary line drawn from the Tower Bridge to the mouth of the Welland,

and he will never come outside East Anglia on wheels, except to the westward. The Wash, the North Sea, and the Estuary of the Thames will block him effectually. Let him follow the history of this tract of land, to which the fens were an effectual bulwark on the north-west, and he will find that history to be one of isolation also. East Anglia has always gone on its own way, always worked out its own destinies, always indulged in self-satisfied but inspiring contempt for "the Sheres"; and so, perhaps, it has suffered less at troublous periods of the national history than other parts of the country. Its scenery is rarely, perhaps never, rugged, but it is marked in various parts by many kinds of peculiar characteristics not to be found elsewhere, some of them of quite exceptional charm. It has its ancient cities, its majestic cathedrals, time-worn edifices of many kinds. It is haunted by the ghosts of many great artists in colour and in words; and—a small matter this, but one adding greatly to the interest of a motoring tour—there is no other part of the country in which the lover of bird-life can see so much of bird-life from the passing car.

One drawback, and one only, is there to East Anglia as a topic for a motoring guide-book, and that affects only the maker of the book, not the motoring potentialities, so to speak, of the country. Taken as a whole it is not at all a flat district, and it has enough ups and downs and variety of scenery to suit any taste, but it is practically barren of hills presenting any real difficulty to a car of moderate power. So, in this volume, it is not necessary or possible to indicate any very serious gradients to be encountered

on this journey or on that. It remains only, after a word of thanks to the friends who have lent their company and their cars, to add that every chapter is a faithful narrative of tours undertaken or of journeys made, together with an account of the associations and memories appropriate to the places visited, and that, to save breaking the flow of the text, an analysis showing the route taken in each chapter, the distances from place to place, the points at which repairs may be effected, and the general character of the roads, appears at the very beginning of the volume. It must be understood, however, that these roads are judged by an East Anglian standard, for, even in Norfolk, where the road surface is far better as a rule than in any other East Anglian county, the roads cannot honestly be said to be of the highest order of merit. In the case of all hotels the presence of garage accommodation may be assumed, and all have been tried.

CHAPTER I

WINTER. [OXFORD]

TO CAMBRIDGE, NEWMARKET, AND IPSWICH

Elections delay start—Rail to Oxford—A treasure gained—Rail to Cambridge—Bull Hotel—English hotels criticized—Motorists squeezed—Morning at Cambridge—King's Chapel—Trinity Library—The Panhard arrives—Battered at elections—A start—Load and equipment—Undergraduates as pilots—A street blocked—Dull road to Newmarket—Bottisham Church excepted—Delusions about Swaffham Prior and Bulbeck—The Devil's Dyke—Prosperous Newmarket—The Icenhilde Way—A delusion in East Anglia—Kentford to Bury St. Edmunds—A switchback run—Fine trees—Arthur Young quoted—Bury St. Edmunds—Leland, Dickens, Arthur Young—Legends of St. Edmund—Past greatness of Bury—Parliaments held at—The Abbey ruins—Study with Shakespeare—Pickwick at the "Angel"—At the boarding school—Bury viâ Bayton, Woolpit, and Stowmarket to Ipswich—Night travelling—A legend of Woolpit—Dull Stowmarket—Ipswich at last—Narrow streets and fast tramcars—The "Great White Horse"—Why did Dickens speak so ill of it?—*Quære* why the White Horse is an East Anglian sign—The "Crown and

The year 1905 had almost run out when this volume was finally decided upon, and then a good many things happened, according to expectation and otherwise. Christmas came, surprising the railway companies as usual, but not the public, and the resignation of Mr. Balfour's Government. The resignation of Mr. Balfour, with its corollary of a General Election, involved some unavoidable delay in opening this campaign of pilgrimages in East Anglia. For during that General Election almost everybody who owned a motor-car and could drive it, or thought he could drive it, was stirred to lend his car and his energies to the service of his party by motives of double cogency. He desired, more or less keenly at the outset, but always vehemently, and even passionately after he had tasted the joy of battle, to lend his aid to the political party of his choice; and he knew further that the General Election of 1906 had provided motorists with a priceless opportunity of doing missionary work among the electorate at a critical moment in the history of Automobilmism. He felt that the Motor Act of 1903, of limited duration in any event, needed to be supplanted by a measure treating him as a reasoning and responsible being, rather than as a dangerous beast, and, having some hope that the Royal Commission then sitting would report in his favour (as, on the whole, it has reported), he recognized that enlightened self-interest made it desirable to educate public opinion into the frame of mind suitable for the reception of an enabling measure.

For these reasons, and some that are immaterial, it was not convenient to make the first raid into East Anglia until nearly the end of January, 1906, and that was a period calculated to try the reality of man's or woman's sincerity as a devotee of motoring by a somewhat severe test. How that test was applied it shall be my endeavour to tell in a narrative form, and to that form a preference will be given throughout the book, digressions being made, as occasion serves or fancy calls, to mention matters of practical utility or of intelligent interest.

Let me, therefore, "cut the cackle and come"—not to "the 'osses" by any means—but to the country and to the motor-cars. On Monday, January the 23rd, 1906, my daughter and I proceeded first to Oxford, and then to Cambridge by rail. Both journeys were an object lesson in the inferiority of the railway train, as it is arranged in England, to the motor-car, for purposes of cross-country travel. Our starting point being Abingdon, distant six miles only from Oxford, we were compelled to change trains at Radley *en route*. A long wait at Oxford would have been irritating if it had not been providential; as it was it furnished me with a private copy of Mr. F. J. Haverfield's *Romano-British Norfolk*, extracted from the "Victoria County History," and the dreadfully tedious journey to Cambridge allowed me to master that most accomplished and useful work. Cambridge we reached—not for the first time by any means—well after dusk, and there we lay, as they used to say in old times, at the Bull Hotel on King's Parade in reasonable comfort, an undergraduate kinsman

of Trinity College having cheered us by his company at dinner.

Here let me pause for a moment to speak of an all-important matter. It has been written that we were comfortably entertained at the "Bull"; it might be added that the hotel seemed much cleaner and brighter than when I had last entered it, and that the charges were, for an English hotel, not unreasonable. Unfortunately, it must be said also that the charges at the "Bull" and throughout the United Kingdom are far in excess of those for which at least equal accommodation and at least equally palatable fare can be obtained on most parts of the Continent frequented by tourists, and that this fact is at once the most serious obstacle to tours by motor-cars at home, and the principal cause why Englishmen go touring abroad to the neglect of their own country, the prejudice of British hotel-keepers, and the profit of the foreigner. They do not, I think, desire to ignore the beauties of their own country; they are even anxious to study it in detail; but the hotel-keepers of the provinces, without quite killing the goose that lays the golden eggs, have a suicidal habit of making nesting accommodation so expensive that the bird, being a wise bird really, becomes perforce migratory as the swallow. More unwise in relation to the motorist even than in relation to the ordinary traveller—it will be observed that there is no special reference to the "Bull," and that we did not go there as motorists openly—hotel-keepers frequently behave as if they thought the owner of a motor-car must needs possess an endless supply of ready money, whereas the legitimate inference from his

ownership of an expensive vehicle is that he has none to spare. Motor-cars of real value—and no sensible man will have them of any other kind—cannot be obtained on credit, and hotel-keepers might have learned from experience that a banking account is reduced, unless it be an overdraft, not increased, by drawing a heavy cheque upon it.

Some day, perhaps, there will be an improvement in this respect. In the meanwhile the path is not altogether clear before him who would fain play the part of guide to his fellow-men. So long ago as 1799 a correspondent of the *Norfolk Chronicle* wrote: "There is room for a most useful work in the form of an itinerary, which shall give an impartial account of the several inns of the kingdom under the heads of quality, cleanliness, beds," etc. There is still just as much room, but until the law of libel shall be changed the "most useful work" is not likely to be written. Certainly I am not going to write it—not that I lack the inclination nor the desire to be of service; not that I have not a nice taste for comfort, nor an experience of British and Irish hotels possessed by few men other than commercial travellers—simply because I cannot afford the time or the money to fight a series of actions, in which a verdict for the defendant would leave me still liable for the difference between my solicitor's bill of costs "as between solicitor and client," and the same bill taxed "as between party and party." The utmost that is possible, and at the same time prudent, is to point to examples of merit. Demerit, dearness, and dirt must go unchastised.

My arrangement with a friend, who had done as much electioneering as he and his car could endure, was that he should run down from London and pick us up at the "Bull" on Tuesday after luncheon.

Tuesday morning, therefore—a frosty, windless, somewhat misty morning—was spent in what in our domestic circle is called "abroad" in Cambridge, that is to say, in visiting places of paramount interest. But let the reader take heart. Some little knowledge of Cambridge, the fruit of many sojourns and of considerable reading, is not going to be made an excuse for a topographical, archæological, and architectural chapter upon a subject worthy of a long book, already treated in many volumes, grave and gay. Even if such a chapter could be legitimate here it would be wrong for a mere Oxford man to write it, and I shall never forget how, when I was staying at Cambridge a year or two ago, a Cambridge friend who took me out sight-seeing closed my mouth before it was opened, so to speak, by saying, "You are absolutely forbidden to ask where our 'High' is." As matters stand, remembering always that this Cambridge friend is not at my elbow, and firmly believing, with Mr. Ruskin, that "the High" at Oxford is not to be matched in the world as a whole, I am inclined to think King's College, as seen from King's Parade, leaves nothing to be desired, and that King's College Chapel has a claim almost equal to that of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, to be recognized as the most exquisite example of Perpendicular architecture to be found in England. Of course, the best way to

see all there is at Cambridge, and to understand it, is to live at Cambridge; and the next best is to go there often and to study it piecemeal. To try to absorb impressions of Cambridge in one visit, even one of many days, is to submit the human brain to too severe an ordeal. On former occasions I had seen the Backs in summer, had spent an hour or two in the Senate House on a State occasion, had looked into the University Library and had admired the delightfully free-and-easy way in which graduates are permitted to borrow its books, had seen cricket played and had played football on Parker's Piece, had stayed in college rooms at Caius: and yet impressions remained a little confused in memory. This time we went to King's College, and to the chapel especially, again. If it falls behind St. George's at all, it is in point of lightness, in which St. George's is perfect. So to Trinity College, where we admired unfeignedly the Great Court, Nevile's Court and the Library, and spoke politely of the chapel, where the Grinling Gibbons' carvings are really good. But it was in the library that one would gladly have spent hours.

A lecture was in progress in the hall, so that was closed to us; but the library is perfect. Somewhere in the world there may be the equal of it, but, in a life of fairly extended wandering, I have not entered its match. One hundred and sixty feet long, forty feet wide, with its carved bookcases, its abundant busts of famous men, its portraits, its magnificent collection of coins, its rare books and manuscripts, its unbroken stillness, and, above all, its ample and all-pervading light, Trinity College Library is

not merely a book-lover's paradise, but even a place to compel an air-loving man to be bookish. Hence to St. John's, many-courted, with walls of ancient brick and stone dressings, the most architecturally individual of Cambridge's colleges, and so, by the Bridge of Sighs, across the chilly, green, and exiguous Cam to the Backs. These, since there had been no white frost of the dainty kind that drapes a landscape in a fairy veil of silvered lace, were not at their best, but in summer they are of rare beauty. Still this was winter. So the small remaining part of the morning was devoted to a pilgrimage to Magdalene, the only college entirely situated on the left bank of the Cam, famous mainly for the Pepysian Library (everybody knows how the six volumes of shrewd gossip in shorthand were discovered and interpreted) and itself a quiet and sequestered retreat in appearance, although the undergraduates are not always in the mood appropriate to their environment.

By two o'clock the charioteer had come, his face bearing traces of the black fog through which he had forced his way out of London; the 15 h.p. Panhard, with a short wheelbase, was in the yard. We must be tolerant, he said, of his Panhard's shortcomings, after a fortnight of hard electioneering on the part of master, mechanic, and car; and he had come down from London on three cylinders. In due course the Panhard came round to the door, dented a little by the missiles of partisans, having lost some of the white paint of her rear number under the impact of voters' iron-shod toes, a little war-worn and dingy, in

fact, to the eye. Her carrying capacity was, however, soon tested severely, and she bore the trial unflinchingly. First luggage: a suit-case for the daughter, the same for my friend the charioteer, a small kit-bag for me, nothing visible for the mechanic—a stalwart ex-soldier of six feet and 14 stone, if he was an ounce. Charioteer, in motor-coat, was about 13 stone. He and an undergraduate of some 9 stone sat in the front seats, the mechanic on the step. In the back seats were my daughter, say 10 stone, wraps included; myself, say 13 stone in the like condition; and on the back step a second undergraduate, say 11 stone 7 lb.—for the two young men were going to pilot us out of Cambridge. But the little Panhard made no account of these things, and started off as a greyhound from the slips.

Practical considerations make it desirable to say what my daughter and I wore. My friend and his mechanic wore a lot, precisely in what detail I cannot say. My daughter wore a thick tweed dress, a short fur coat, a mackintosh with sleeves gathered in at the wrists over that, a red Connemara cloak sometimes—its colour proved to be of incidental advantage later in quite an unexpected way—a motor-cap and veil, fur-lined gloves, and a muff. I wore a vest, flannel shirt, lined corduroy waistcoat, ordinary tweed trousers, a rowing "sweater" over the waistcoat, thick Norfolk jacket, thick Ulster coat—without inner sleeves gathered, worse luck—and loose woollen gloves. I was never too warm, often much too cold, and the woollen gloves turned out a fraud. They were of no use as a protection against wind and cold

combined, and a motor-car makes its own wind. In fact, there is nothing like leather, with or without fur or wool within.

The undergraduates were useful as pilots to Jesus Lane, where we turned to the right, which brought us in fact, although not in name, into the direct road for Newmarket; not that it is so difficult in Cambridge, as in many other towns of East Anglia, to solve correctly the all-important problem how to find the absolutely right exit having regard to the point sought in the distance. But the streets of the heart of Cambridge are of an exceptional narrowness, and we were not through them without becoming witnesses of an incident, almost worthy of the title accident, which delayed us a little and might have delayed us more but for the camaraderie of motorists. We were proceeding slowly up a narrow street behind a motor omnibus, the roadway being wide enough to allow two vehicles to pass, but no more. On the off-side of the omnibus, facing it, were a motor-car, attended as the law directs, at rest by the kerb, and a tradesman's cart and horse behind the car, cart and horse being unattended, as is not unusual, law or no law. The horse, perceiving the motor omnibus, and being probably unaccustomed to the sight, proceeded at once to give one of those convincing exhibitions in equine intelligence which must be the constant joy of the thick-and-thin champions of that traditionally "noble animal." Planting its forefeet on to the pavement, it backed the cart violently into the bonnet of the passing omnibus, of course blocking the route completely. Somebody, possibly the man who ought to have been in charge,

came up and pulled the stupid brute into line, but not before it had also contrived to injure a wing of the resting and innocent motor-car. The omnibus was disabled for a time at any rate; traffic accumulated rapidly behind us; it seemed likely that we might have to spend the rest of the afternoon in this street that might justly be called Strait. But the injured motor-car was most courteously backed out of the way to make a passage for us, and we proceeded on our journey rejoicing and grateful.

It would be a stretch of imagination—in fact, it would be what the late Sir William Harcourt once called "a good thumping lie"—to say that the exit from Cambridge to the eastward has any features of interest, or that the dead level of the Newmarket road for the first few miles is attractive on a cold and dull day, when Ely, dominating the low-lying plain in decent weather, is not visible to the naked eye. This Fen Country has its charm of appearance no less than of history. Its history, indeed, is an engineering epic, to which it will be possible to allude, hardly to do justice, at a later point. January 24, 1906, was not a day calculated to make the motorist feel in a romantic mood concerning the Fens. The road, straight, level, muddy where it was not metalled, metalled where it was not muddy, was lost in grey vapour to the front of us. The prospect on either side was of flat ploughed land, and of land on which the steaming plough-horses were even then at work; there was no distant view at all.

Some five or six miles out of Cambridge the undergraduates alighted to walk home through the mud, and we left them behind

with many shoutings of farewell, reflecting to ourselves the while that one of them, who, with the true carelessness of a twentieth-century undergraduate of Cambridge (or for that matter of Oxford), was wearing tennis shoes, would find walking in the mud to be one of those carnal pleasures whereof satiety cometh soon rather than late. Soon we passed a church close to the road on the left, a striking structure of brick and stone, and said to be the finest example of Decorated architecture in East Anglia. How that can be, having regard to the existence of Ely and the rhapsodies that are penned concerning its Decorated portion, it is not for me to say. At any rate Bottisham church, commanding the landscape as it can only be commanded in a plain, is a stately and beautiful structure, leaving an abiding impression on the memory. It is, in fact, essentially a motorist's church—that is to say, one of which a passing view gives sincere pleasure.

The afternoon had advanced more than was desirable. I did not like to ask my kindly charioteer to make a detour for Swaffham, which I then believed to lie on our left. Instead of that I regaled him with memories of Swaffham, which have their proper place in another chapter. The conversation helped to pass the time; at any rate it did no harm, and it was only a month or two later, in the "Maid's Head" at Norwich, that I learned where the real Swaffham was, and that this detour, if it had been made, would have shown us nothing but the relics of two churches at Swaffham Prior and another church at Swaffham Bulbeck.

Now there is an end of the dead level whereof the most eager

of motorists is apt to grow weary, if only because it gives his good car nothing to do. At Bottisham, among the Fens, in fact, but not in their heart, the road is but forty-six feet above the sea-level at King's Lynn, but in the course of two miles to Street Way (surely Roman by its name) the road rises rapidly and the Panhard climbs cheerfully to a height of 170 feet, an upland having regard to its surroundings on the western side. The very air, eagerly as it bites the cheeks of those who are forced through it, seems more bracing, more exhilarating, more instinct with life than the stagnant atmosphere of the plain. Here are wide spaces, pines and Scotch firs; but the spaces are not wild, for innumerable white boards on posts, the marks of galloping grounds, tell us that we are on the confines of Newmarket Heath and near the metropolis of the turf. Such it has been since the days of Charles I, and such, having regard to the fact that it has been for upwards of a century and a half the head-quarters of the Jockey Club, it is likely to remain, even though the "going" be better at Newbury in Berks, which is a little nearer to London.

But we are not at Newmarket yet. There is the Devil's Dyke—irreverently called the Ditch where it bisects the familiar course—to be crossed. Why his Satanic Majesty should be credited with so many dykes it is not easy to see. Devil's Punchbowls, of which there are scores, if not hundreds, in the kingdom, are more natural and rational, for a being of Satan's traditional environment might reasonably be credited with thirst upon a large scale and with a liking for cold punch equal to that which

was all but the temporary ruin of Mr. Pickwick, and quite fatal for the time to his young friend upon another memorable drive to Ipswich, for that was our destination too. The devil did not make this dyke, running from Reach, north of the Great Eastern Railway, to Ditton Green, near Wood Ditton, that is certain; yet nobody knows exactly who the builders were. What is known is that it has a rampart on the west side, and that the Iceni, of whom all that is necessary will be told soon, held the land to the eastward, so far as land was held in those days. Probably, like their successors in the same territory in mediæval times, during the Stuart period, and now, they had a good conceit of themselves and a robust contempt for their western neighbours, and therefore, perhaps, they built them this rampart and digged this ditch, or made their captives dig it for them, as a bulwark against the outer world. It must be confessed, however, that thoughts and conversation ran not on the Iceni, not on the violent deaths which came to most of them eighteen centuries and a half ago, but on the death of one man of our time whom Newmarket Heath had known as a familiar visitor. Only a few days before Sir James Miller had died full of racing honours, but by no means of years. A tribute to the memory of this prince of racing men was surely due most appropriately at Newmarket.

Of Newmarket the story needs no telling. It is not, perhaps, so long as that of Cambridge, but probably it is better known to a greater number of persons. Equally well known are the seats of the mighty in the immediate vicinity. But perhaps the traveller

through Newmarket, and to it, by road, will not only notice the thoroughbreds, if there be any on view—we naturally saw none late on a winter's afternoon—but will not resent the fact that his attention is directed to an interesting feature of Newmarket, as of other racing and training centres. Newmarket may be, as Lord Chesterfield said in his will that it was, "an infamous seminary of iniquity and ill manners." Men may back horses at Newmarket, may gamble, may try every cunning device known to those who have to do with horses—not that some of those who are concerned with motors are much better—but Newmarket, in appearance at least, is free from that worst of all evils, poverty, which is rarely absent from agricultural Arcadia, and, as Dr. Jessopp has shown, very prevalent in East Anglia. Its houses are trim and weatherproof, the paint of doors and gates is clearly renewed often. The whole place has an air of prosperity which disarms curious investigation into the sources of its wealth. The children are rosy and plump, and that, at any rate, is a blessing; and, save perhaps for backing a horse with judgment now and again, which is a great deal less vicious than backing one without knowledge or judgment, I dare be sworn that their morality and their standard of life are much higher than those of the Arcadian peasant.

The weak light was growing quite dim as we passed through Newmarket and out of Cambridgeshire into Suffolk—out of "the Sheers" into East Anglia, in the narrowest sense of the term. Our course for Bury St. Edmunds lay along a road of astonishing

straightness, having many fine oaks and other trees on either side; for the matter of levels it was, and of course is, a series of long ups and downs, of no very severe gradients, and the going on the newly-frozen road left nothing to be desired. At Kentford, according to the Ordnance map and the tradition of the antiquaries of yesterday, we crossed the Icknield or Icenhilde Way. Unfortunately, from the point of view of one who would like to conjure up visions of ancient Britons, neatly painted with woad in summer, fur-clad in winter, sweeping down this road with scythe-chariots to meet an invader from the west, or to make a raid into the Midlands themselves, the Icenhilde Way has to be numbered among the pretty traditions which cannot be cherished any longer. It has been called the warpath of the Icenī, or a principal Roman road. Ickleton, in Cambridgeshire, Icklingham, in Suffolk, Ickleford, in Herts, have been imagined to represent points upon its route from Norwich to Berkshire and the west. But probabilities, philology, and charters are separately fatal to the theory, and they are irresistible in combination. Over philology I shall not delay longer than to say, on the best authority, that, according to well-known laws, if the places now known as Icklingham and so on had been called after the Icenī, they would have been written otherwise than they are. Again, if the way had been the warpath of the Icenī, it would certainly be more clearly traceable in the east, which was theirs, than in the west, which was not; whereas the contrary is the case. Charters are even far more deadly to this romance than philology and

probability. Referring to the date of the Norman Conquest and to the Icenhilde Way, Mr. Haverfield says: "Not till three centuries later do we find its name applied to roads in Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, while east of Newmarket we never find it at all." This is conclusive, for it is the considered judgment of a man exceptionally learned and acute upon the subject to which he has devoted most of the leisure of an academical life, and so this avenue of romance and to romance is definitely and permanently closed.

From Kentford to Bury St. Edmunds was a fine, but cold, switchback run along a very straight road, just before lighting-up time, though it was not dark enough yet to prevent an impression of the landscape from being left on the mind. No very great houses were close to the road on either side, but the trees on the right were of remarkable stature, and on the left were many belts of Scotch firs, evenly planted, almost like shaws in Kent, which seemed, as did many similar belts seen on other tours, to indicate the existence of landowners, past or present, who had prepared the way for the continental method of driving partridges. For the first time, as our car coursed along with the subdued and yet lively melody of the true "Panhard hum," one began to realize how vast an influence has been exercised over the face of nature in Norfolk and Suffolk, how many new features have been grafted on to that face, by men who have made good shooting the principal object of estate management in the part of England better suited to that purpose than to any other. Arthur Young

thought, it is true, of the land between Thetford and Bury, and probably of this land also, that it would repay cultivation. It "lies for some miles over a wild heath, overrun with bushes, whins, and fern, the wild luxuriance of whose growth displays evidently enough how greatly it would answer to break it up and convert it into arable farms; for a soil that has strength enough to throw up such vigorously growing weeds would, if cultivated, produce corn in plenty." But Arthur Young, as we shall see in a minute or two, had no eye for the picturesque; he certainly could not have foreseen the present low prices of various grains; and still more certainly he could have had no idea of the length to which game preservation would go, or of the amount of employment to which it would give rise. His advice was followed in a number of cases, but it may be suspected that some of the famous warrens of Norfolk and Suffolk pay better in rabbits for the London market in these days than they would pay under crops.

Soon we glided "through the well-paved streets of a handsome little town," to quote the words of Charles Dickens, who was impressed, as Leland had been three centuries before him, by the cheerful brightness of Bury St. Edmunds. Arthur Young's editor of 1772, "the author of the *Farmer's Letters*"—I see I have done Young himself an injustice—tells us that "Bury is a tolerably well-built town, in a dry and healthy situation; many of the streets cut each other at right angles; but a parcel of dirty thatched houses are found in some of them not far from the centre of the town, which has a very bad effect." We should

probably hold a different view of the thatched houses now, and the motorist who passes through Bury will certainly desire to know more of it than the author of the *Farmer's Letters* deigned to tell. I had been to Bury before January, 1906, and I have visited it since, though never in such discomfort as the Confessor, who made the last mile of his pilgrimage to St. Edmund's shrine unshod. Yet, interesting as Bury St. Edmunds is, it is not as a pilgrimage to St. Edmund's shrine that a visit to Bury and a fairly long halt there are recommended. St. Edmund is really rather a difficult saint concerning whom to wax rapturous, because our certain knowledge of him amounts to very little and yet gives him a date sufficiently modern to make the monkish legends about him even more completely absurd than such legends are wont to be. There is no doubt that he was a king of East Anglia who was defeated by the Danes in 870 a.d. Hume, one of the most matter-of-fact of our historians, and surely the most unimaginative man who ever took it upon himself to tell an historical tale, says this and no more: "They broke into East Anglia, defeated and took prisoner Edmund, the king of that country, whom they afterwards murdered in cool blood." (This is quoted from the edition of 1823, containing Adam Smith's "appreciation" of his friend, written in 1776, and the "author's last corrections and improvements.") The *Student's Hume* of my youth, mindful perhaps of the wisdom of appealing to the memory of the young through the imagination, gives the date of Edmund's defeat as 871, for the sake of variety perhaps, and adds

that, Edmund having rejected with scorn and horror a proposal that he should abjure Christianity and rule under the Danish supremacy, "the Danes bound him naked to a tree, scourged and shot at him with arrows, and finally beheaded him." That is not unlikely. A live target was, as the Scandinavian mythology shows, quite to the taste of the northern barbarians. King Edmund's body may very likely have been, as Abbo says, "*velut asper hericius, aut spinis hirtus carduus, in passione similis Sebastiano egregio martyri*"; "like a rough hedgehog or a thistle bristling with thorns, etc." (There need be no apology for giving the translation which caused a classical schoolmaster some trouble, because *hericius* is not a word used in classical Latin.) That was a martyrdom sufficient to justify canonization, an abbey in honour of the martyred king, and pilgrimages to his shrine, which were undertaken by quite a number of distinguished persons to the great profit of the institution preserving of it. But the monkish chroniclers had an unhappy habit of spoiling their stories by excessive and impossible embroidery. The romantic inventions that, when Edmund's followers stole back to the scene of his torture, they heard a voice crying, "Here, here, here," in a wood, and there found a wolf guarding the saint's head between its paws, and that the head, being replaced upon the trunk by human hands, was miraculously reunited to it, only spoil the story for us of the modern world; for 870 a.d. is fairly late in the history of England really. They suggest the vision of crafty ecclesiastics plotting how most effectively to advertise the shrine, for the glory

of God of course, but also for the profit of the abbey; and that, to our minds, is repellent. That the ecclesiastics knew their public is clear, however, from the results here, as at Walsingham. The wolf legend, palpably false as it was, passed into ecclesiastical heraldry throughout East Anglia as generally as the story, probably true, of the manner of the martyrdom, and East Anglian churches have many traces of it in stone and in painted glass. Hence came the illustrious pilgrims and their offerings, and hence, in some measure at any rate, the fact that this little inland city of East Anglia played in its time a very important part in the history of England.

How great that part was it is exceedingly difficult to realize as one stands in the centre of that essentially peaceful town. Yet it really has a genuine claim to its motto: *Sacrarium regis, cunabula legis*. Of the two great meetings of barons and clergy held before King John was forced to sign Magna Charta, one was held in London, at St. Paul's, the other in the Abbey Church of Bury St. Edmunds, of all places in England, as we should be inclined to add now. In truth, nothing could be more natural, for the venue illustrates not only the paramount influence of ecclesiasticism in those days, but also the characteristic tendencies of the East Anglian people. Other ecclesiastical centres, of course, there were equal in importance and wealth, and other mitred abbeys. Only in London, always jealous for its liberties, and in East Anglia, could such meetings have been held with confident assurance of the support of the mass of the inhabitants. Read

the scattered history of Eastern England, reflect upon the many democratic risings that it witnessed; remember the Eastern Counties Association and the almost complete unanimity of East Anglia for the Parliament against Charles—then the selection of Bury St. Edmunds for this memorable assembly becomes easily intelligible. Parliaments were held there sometimes; royal visits were frequent. In fact, this quiet country town was one of the most influential places in the kingdom until the Dissolution. Then it suffered "a knok of a kynge," to quote Piers Plowman's prophecy concerning the abbey of Abingdon, and its glory departed for evermore. It remains a bright town, possessed of a famous old inn, "The Angel," and of the ruins of the abbey, still of uncommon interest, which were laid out as a botanical garden before Thomas Carlyle wrote *Past and Present*. They are a garden and a playground still.

A good deal of imagination is called for before the architectural glories of the abbey can be reconstructed in a mental picture, and the best help to be obtained in such an exercise of the imagination comes from reading once again words spoken of the abbey, words purporting to have been uttered within what Carlyle called its "wide internal spaces," words conjuring up realities none the less for that they are themselves the product of an inspired imagination. Need it be said that the reference here is to the second part of Shakespeare's *King Henry VI*? Here Suffolk and the Queen dropped poison into the King's ears concerning absent Gloucester; here Gloucester pleaded his

cause in vain in imperishable lines of despairing resignation and passionate patriotism:—

I know their complot is to have my life;
And if my death might make this island happy,
And prove the period of their tyranny,
I would expend it with all willingness.

Here, in some dark recess of a dungeon, Suffolk's hireling villains "dispatched the Duke." Here was enacted the grim scene, very short, but infinitely pathetic, wherein Suffolk goes to summon his victim to trial, knowing him dead already, and the Queen, the very embodiment of cold-blooded hypocrisy, cries aloud to the King, the Cardinal, and Somerset:—

God forbid any malice should prevail,
That faultless may condemn a nobleman!
Pray God he may acquit him of suspicion!

Back came Suffolk, trembling and pale, for fear of consequences, to announce the news that was known to him, for he had made it all too certain before he left the "room of state" upon his futile errand. We can almost hear the dull sound of the swooning King's fall, and his agonized lament:—

For in the shade of death I shall find joy;
In life but double death now Gloucester's dead.

And what comes next? Surely it is essentially characteristic of the people of East Anglia:—

The Commons, like an angry hive of bees,
That want their leader, scatter up and down.

Here, again, the substratum of authentic fact is, as in the case of St. Edmund, made the foundation of an imaginative structure; but see how vast is the difference between the effects produced by the paltry monkish embroiderer and the Poet, the maker, the creator. The first tale almost raises a smile of incredulity; the second, written in characters of blood and tears, stirs the heart to its depths.

Bury has its lighter memories and associations too. Many good Englishmen who would not step far out of their way to make a pilgrimage to what was once St. Edmund's shrine, who might even feel that the second part of *King Henry VI* was a little above their heads, may be relied upon to take a great deal of trouble for the sake of treading in the footsteps of the immortal Mr. Pickwick. It was at the "Angel" in Bury St. Edmunds, still "a large inn standing in a wide open street, and nearly facing the Old Abbey," that Mr. Pickwick enjoyed "a very satisfactory dinner." This was, as we shall have occasion to see at Ipswich, high praise indeed when uttered by the author of Mr. Pickwick's being, who, if displeased by the accommodation and fare offered to him, did not hesitate to express his opinion with remarkable force

of language. In the tap-room of the said "Angel," Mr. Weller, having been voted into the chair, cracked such jests and evoked such uproarious laughter that his master's rest was broken. The pump in the "Angel" yard cooled Sam's throbbing head next morning so effectually that, shortly afterwards, he was able to describe the stranger in the mulberry suit, stranger as he deemed him, as looking "as conwivial as a live trout in a lime basket." In the adjoining tap, again, Sam, "the names of Veller and gammon" having "come into contract" for the one and only time in that veracious history, cemented his alliance with the deceitful Job Trotter over gin and cloves. He took the doubtless fragrant and pungent beverage as a pick-me-up in the morning; it might have served us, perhaps well, as a warmth-restorer in the afternoon; but candour compels the confession that, for the moment, we forgot the *Pickwick Papers*, drew up in front of the "Suffolk," not the "Angel," and did our best to restore heat to our chilled bodies by gargantuan consumption of crumpets, tea, and jam. Even this was mildly Pickwickian (who can forget the story of the gentleman who demonstrated by devoted self-slaughter the proposition that crumpets *is* wholesome?). But as we did not drink gin and cloves in honour of Sam Weller, so we did not blow out our brains to prove the wholesome character of crumpets.

Yet one more Pickwickian association of Bury St. Edmunds must be set down. In a private room of the "Angel" the artful Mr. Trotter, having "gammoned" Sam, proceeded to "gammon" his innocent master also with the story of "the large, old, red-brick

house just outside the town, sir," and the pretended revelation of his own master's nefarious intentions. Hence came kindly Mr. Pickwick's ludicrously pathetic vigil in the garden, alarm of maids, hysterics of Miss Smithers, drenching of Mr. Pickwick, doubts whether he was burglar or lunatic, imprisonment in the Clothes Closet, rescue and explanation by Mr. Wardle, rheumatics of Mr. Pickwick, and, last of all, the Parish Clerk's tale. These things are not history of course, "which there never war no sich a person" as Mr. Pickwick, but they are imperishable and essential truths none the less, and the *Pickwick Papers* are a possession of Bury St. Edmunds at least equal in commercial value to all the legends of St. Edmund, King and Martyr. So much for Bury on this occasion. We shall see it again, and foregather this time at the "Angel."

We left the hotel, to find cold and windless darkness in full possession. It was my first experience of driving in a motor-car on a dark night for any considerable distance through an unknown country. The first few miles, through Bayton and Woolpit, were very difficult, the road sinuous as a corkscrew, the necessity for dismounting to study the sign-posts constantly occurring. In marked contrast, however, to experience in some of our southern counties, was the alert intelligence of the country-folk. From Stowmarket the road to Ipswich, our destination, was straight, but seemed endless. At first we tried to proceed with oil lamps only; then we were driven to acetylene; but, with air none too clear at any time and wreaths of denser mist now and

again, even the acetylene rays did not penetrate very far. On the whole, cold apart, this kind of driving at night is not to be recommended. I remember nothing of that journey to Ipswich, except the cold and the mild excitement of trying to guess the species of the splendid trees passed by their shadowy forms and general character. Oaks I saw, and elms and beeches for certain—for the form of these may not easily be mistaken. In the matter of ashes I would not like to pledge my faith, for one might easily mix up an ash tree in winter, half seen by a light not thrown distinctly upon it, with some other tree. But the best thing I remember of that night, out of doors, was the sight of the lights of Ipswich and of the tall tramcars, which told us that we were there at last.

Neither fate nor inclination has taken me down this same road by daylight since then, but something may be said of the places passed in the darkness, with due acknowledgment of the aid afforded by Mr. W. A. Butt's *Suffolk*, in the "Little Guides Series" (Methuen). The acknowledgment is made the more gladly, and the aid is borrowed with the more confidence that it will not prove a broken reed, because "in another place" and at another time I have had the privilege of knowing Mr. Butt in MS. as a careful and fascinating writer, equally learned in antiquities and in ornithology, and very much at home in East Anglia. Had it been light we might have seen at Tostock a fine church, Perpendicular in the main, but with an early Decorated chancel. As motorists, however, we should hardly have been

induced to descend and explore the interior even by the hope of seeing carved oak benches, one of them showing "the fabulous cockatrice" and another the unicorn scratching himself with his horn. At Woolpit we might have seen a new tower to an old church, the tower built no later than 1854. But the tower is no outrage, for it had to be built to replace an older one destroyed by lightning. To Woolpit, too, belongs one of William of Newburgh's strange legends, thus summarized by Mr. Dutt: "One day, while some men were at work in a harvest field here, they saw a boy and a girl, whose bodies were green and their dresses of a strange material, appear out of the pits known as the 'Wolfpittes.' They said they had come from a Christian land, which had churches, but where there was no sun, 'only a faint twilight, but beyond a broad river there lay a land of light.' Their country was called the land of St. Martin; and, one day, while they were tending their father's sheep, they heard a noise like the ringing of the bells of Bury Abbey, 'and all at once they found themselves among the reapers in the harvest field at Woolpit.' The boy, we are told, soon died, but the girl lived to marry a man of Lynn." The name of the place in *Domesday* is "Wlfpeta," which is simply "Wolf-pit," but why this particular wolf-pit, out of the hundreds that there must have been, retained the name, there is nothing to show. At Haughley, moved to alight by some of the guide-books in the hope of finding ruins, we should have discovered a mound only, its origin quite uncertain; and at Stowmarket there would have been no temptation to halt.

Chemicals and cordite combine to give the ancient market town some prosperity, some calamities, and no beauty. Here we began to follow the course of the railway and the River Gipping, the eponymous river of Ipswich until it is named anew. At Great Blakenham we passed a manor given by Henry VI to Eton College, and at Claydon an Elizabethan hall.

But, sad truth to tell, we were in the mood of Gallio that evening, so far as these things were concerned, and the vision of the lights of Ipswich was unmingled pleasure. It was generally admitted that the last eight miles into the ancient city, from the point at which a native stated that they began, must have been measured with a very elastic chain. Nor was entry into Ipswich easy. He who held the steering wheel was one who, for combined nicety, courage, and consideration in slipping through traffic, has few equals in this country; but his task was of more than common difficulty. The streets of Ipswich, or most of them, are of an exceeding narrowness; the electric tramcars glide through them, swift, monumental, irresistible, in their usual Juggernaut mood. Hardly anywhere is there room for a vehicle to be drawn up to the kerb on the inside of the tramway lines. We, indeed, were not suffered by the police to draw up in front of the "Great White Horse" at all, even for the purpose of dismounting, but were motioned to a side street. Moreover, although the immediately local election was over, the streets were grievously crowded for some reason or other—and surely there was never seen a population more serenely indifferent to the blast of a motor-horn!

They were, perhaps, inured to peril by the tramcars, swifter in towns than any motor-car would dare to be, heavier by a long way, and exceptionally dangerous by reason of the length and height of the moving veil they draw across the view. At any rate they would not move out of the way.

Arriving, we were in a far more appreciative mood than that of Mr. Charles Dickens when he became a guest at the "Great White Horse," and wrote the account of Mr. Pickwick's arrival on the coach of the elder Weller. We found no labyrinths of uncarpeted passages, no mouldy ill-lighted rooms, no small dens for sleeping in, but rather a kindly welcome and attention, distinctly good rooms, a dining-room having plenty of space, fire and abundant cheer, and a reasonably moderate bill to discharge at the end of our stay. Yet I doubt not that the edifice, built round a cobbled courtyard that is roofed over, the bar parlour on the far side of the yard from the door, where a good many of the citizens congregate of an evening, the office window at which mine hostess receives her guests, are precisely the same as when Boz visited Ipswich. In this view I differ from Mr. Dutt; but the probability is that the alterations to which he refers were made before, not after, Dickens saw the house. Dickens did not like the place at all, that is clear. If there be doubts whether Ipswich was the original of Eatanswill, as Mr. Percy Fitzgerald suggests, there are none about the "Great White Horse," which is, of course, mentioned, and abused from floor to garret, nay, from cellar to garret: for is not "the worst possible port" mentioned—by name? We found

things otherwise, but then it was not the misfortune of any of us to look out of bed and see "a middle-aged lady, in yellow curl-papers, busily engaged in brushing what ladies call their back-hair." It would be easy enough to miss the way in the recesses of the "Great White Horse"; in fact, to be frank, I did so myself, although I neither entered the wrong room nor got into the wrong bed. But the censure of Dickens generally has no reference to the present state of affairs at this classic hostelry; nay, more, such is the irony of fate, the bad name given by Dickens to this house is now its chiefest recommendation: prints of Leech's pictures adorn every wall, and the telegraphic address of the hotel is "Pickwick," Ipswich. Thus has railing been converted into blessing; thus is it proved more profitable to be abused by a great writer than to remain uncensured and ignored. Perhaps Mr. Percy Fitzgerald could oblige, as the saying goes, by explaining what the real meaning of his hero's attitude was. It must have had some deeper source than a stuffy bedroom and a bad dinner, or else the essential kindness of the Dickensian attitude towards everything except cruelty and injustice must be cast aside as an exploded belief. Certainly no public writer would dare to write in 1906 of any hotel as Dickens wrote of the "Great White Horse" in the thirties of the last century; and perhaps that is not entirely to be regretted, for hotel-keepers really are our fellow-creatures, unwilling as some advocates of the Temperance Cause may be to admit the truth.

By the way, why is the "Great White Horse" an hotel sign in

East Anglia?—not that I can endorse the description of it as "a stone statue of some rampacious animal, with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart-horse." It seems to me quite reasonably like to a Suffolk Punch, except in colour, and one finds Phidias never, although Apelles sometimes, over indoors. But why a white horse? One expects such signs in the parts about Berks, where the classic Vale is named after the gigantic symbol on the northward side of the Downs, of which a simple explanation has become impossible, owing to the tiresome growth of knowledge. But why, despising all commonplace explanations, have we encountered a "White Horse" in Suffolk? Well, one of the many explanations of the White Horse *par excellence* is that it was taken from the horse delineated on Philip's stater, which was copied a good deal in Britain, and an explanation of the "White Horse"—I beg its pardon, the "Great White Horse"—of Ipswich may be that it had its origin in the horse figured on some of the Icenian coins that have been discovered in East Anglia. Or, again, it may be simply a survival of the ancient Saxon totem. Some such desultory speculation as this may serve to soothe the mind of an evening at Ipswich—not that after motoring all day the mind needs much soothing. But I would counsel all male motorists to burn their last incense of tobacco, as my friend and I did, in the warm bar-parlour on the side of the courtyard over against the main door, for thus shall they see the native of Ipswich in his natural state. The discovery of "this amazing England," as Mr. Kipling has said well, is the

main joy of motoring; still in the evening one may do much worse things than pursue the proper study of mankind in easy-going mood, and a provincial bar-parlour is not a bad place in which to do it.

To Ipswich I have been more than once since that night of freezing cold in January, and to Bury St. Edmunds also, and more features of both will find a place in later narratives; but of each there are a few practical things to be said which must not be delayed. On a second visit to Bury, made in the course of the most troubled and delightful tour of my existence so far, I lay at the ancient "Angel" with mighty satisfaction and to the remarkably small minishing of my store of sovereigns. On a second visit to Ipswich I was hospitably entertained by a local gentleman at the "Crown and Anchor," because he thought it was the best hotel in Ipswich, and behold the fare was very good! By the same gentleman I was introduced to oysters, in a little shop near the Butter Market, the best I ever ate, and to hand-made gloves in a little shop hard by which have motored many a merry mile since then. There need be no hesitation in advertising them. They are made by a widow and her daughter out of soft and strong Cape leather, and with them, it is to be feared, the industry will die, since apprentices will not come to them in these degenerate days. Since then I have exhibited these gloves, during the Scottish "Reliability" trials, to a casual acquaintance, and her criticism, although strictly irrelevant, was too witty to be omitted. "Mphm! they look as if you had made them yourself." Ipswich

gloves, then, are not for the dandy, but for the motorist they are hard to beat.

CHAPTER II

WINTER. IPSWICH TO NORWICH VIA WOODBRIDGE, BECCLES, LOWESTOFT, AND YARMOUTH

A walk in Ipswich—Sparrowe's House—With Pickwick and the Wellers—Start at noon—The glittering car—Another passenger—Infantine pilotage—A loose clutch—Mechanic's chagrin—A stitch in time—Nuts screwed home—Need to watch mechanics—Woodbridge—Edward Fitzgerald—Wickham Market and Saxmundham—Abyssinian luncheon—Détour to Aldeburgh—Aldeburgh described—The dilatory Alde—Birthplace of George Crabbe—His views of Aldeburgh—Saxmundham to Yoxford—Peasenhall adjacent—Yoxford to Blythburgh—A motorist's church—Détour to Southwold—Southwold described—Battle of Sole Bay—Did Isaac Newton hear guns at Cambridge?—Lord Ossory's ride from Euston—Blythburgh to Beccles—First view disappointing—Better next time—Unforeseen value of Connemara cloak—Beccles to Lowestoft—*Norfolk and Norwich Notes and Queries*—Their value—Origin of Lowestoft harbour—"Norwich a port"—Cubitt and Telford—Sir Samuel Peto—Meaning of "Lowestoft"—Lowestoft to Yarmouth—Direct route to Norwich—Darkness and frozen haze—

Straining eyes—Norwich at last—The "Royal" formerly "Angel"—An ancient hostelry—Colossal window tax—Norfolk election memories—Corn Law riot—"Coke of Norfolk" sheltered—Always a Whig house—Stroll in Norwich—Multitude of churches—The walls and "murage" tax—A learned society's day—Fraction of Norwich only seen—Wat Tyler's Rebellion—Geoffrey Lister and Sir Robert Salle—St. Peter's Permountergate—Memories of Nelson—Fascination of Norwich—Its great men and women—George Borrow—"Old Crome"—The Norwich school.

Truth to tell, Ipswich on the Gipping, which becomes the Orwell and an estuary lower down, seemed to me then an ancient city showing, except in a few picturesque houses and the gateway of Wolsey's College, few signs of antiquity. If it cannot be called happy in having had no history, for it was plundered by the Danes in 991, it has had little cause for unhappiness of that kind since the Conquest; it has produced no really famous man except Wolsey, though Gainsborough lived in it for some years; and its churches, although not quite devoid of interest, are not striking enough to delay a motorist. Note, in passing, not the least advantage of an exploring tour by motor. You need neither spend time in examining that which is barely worth the process on the ground that there is nothing else to be done, nor hurry away from that which is interesting, in order to catch a train; but, staying so long as seems pleasant and no longer, you may be transported when you please, rapidly and pleasantly, to scenes

you have reason to believe to be worthy of your regard.

In these circumstances, after an admiring glance at the famous Sparrowe's House in the Butter Market, close to the hotel, I frankly betook myself to an effort to follow the Wellers, father and son, Mr. Pickwick and his followers, through an eventful day. This stable-yard round the corner to the left, where the Panhard was now being furbished up, was the same on which Mr. Weller, senior, looked when, "in a small room in the vicinity," he discussed a pot of ale and the "gammoning" of Sam, and drank to the toast, "May you soon vipe off the disgrace as you've inflicted on the family name." The office in the courtyard was doubtless that at which he got his "vaybill." Walking about these very streets Sam wormed himself into the confidence of the lachrymose Job Trotter. In this inn parlour Mr. Peter Magnus, *alias* Jingle, splendidly attired, made a hollow pretence of breakfasting with Mr. Pickwick; here the latter gave his simple hints on courtship and proposal, and here were seen "the joyous face of Mr. Tupman, the serene countenance of Mr. Winkle, and the intellectual lineaments of Mr. Snodgrass." In this room was enacted that memorable scene when Mr. Magnus presented Miss Witherfield to Mr. Pickwick and Miss Witherfield screamed, but neither she nor Mr. Pickwick was indelicate enough to mention the cause—his unwitting invasion of her chamber overnight. Rushing out of this room the lady, after bolting herself into her bedroom, went forth in search of Mr. Nupkins and apprised him of the forthcoming duel, which there was not really much

reason to anticipate. Where exactly Miss Witherfield saw Mr. Nupkins I am unhappily not able to say, nor yet, and for the same reason, whither Grummer, with his myrmidon Dubbley and his "division," each with a short truncheon and a brass crown, conducted Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman in the old sedan-chair, but for all that it is easy to picture the whole of the never-to-be-forgotten scene, all the more memorable in that it never was enacted. In fact, it is no mean regret to me that, on that cold January morning, I was not able to find "the house with the green gate," with the "house-door guarded on either side by an American aloe in a tub." It has eluded me since also. Perhaps it is gone, like a good deal of old Ipswich; possibly some miscreant has had his gate painted white instead of green; perhaps I looked in the wrong place, in the vicinity of St. Clement's Church. It is even within the bounds of possibility that the house with the green gate never had any more real and substantial existence than Mr. Pickwick himself. All I know is that I could not find it.

At noon or thereabouts—time does not worry one in a motor-car, unless one is seeking records—we boarded the Panhard, now "bright as a Birmingham button," and started off up a long and trying hill, in cold, dry, and windless weather, for a circuitous drive, its sinuosities determined by the desires of my friend. A new member was added to the party in the person of a resident at Norwich, desirous of reaching that ancient city in due course, who was supposed to know, and probably did know, every considerable turning of every high road in the two

counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. He had not, however, enjoyed much experience as the pilot of an automobile, and he found, as I had in years gone by when I was new to the pastime, that eye and memory were not equal to moving together at a speed proportioned to that of the car. "Which road?" the charioteer would cry—the new passenger was riding astern—when we were from fifty to seventy yards from a fork or a turn, and hesitation would often be visible in the reply, so that it was necessary to slow down and sometimes, having invaded the wrong road, to back out again. This is not criticism, it is rather matter of observation and experience. Only recently have the minds of driving and driven men been called upon to exercise their judgment, to choose a line, as a fox-hunter might say, while they are being carried through space much more rapidly than of yore, and the pace puzzles them at first. You are past a familiar turning in a car in less time than is consumed over approaching it in a dog-cart or on horseback, and the aspect of the turning itself has something strange about it; but you grow accustomed to the new conditions with experience. In fact, motor-cars sharpen the perceptions and spur the intelligence. To venture an audacious travesty, and some even more hardy doggerel:—

*... Urgendi didicisse fideliter artem
Exacuit mentem, nee sinit esse pigram.*

He who has learned a car to drive
Sharpens his wits and looks alive.

Personally, I sat alongside the driver, a place of honour, if cold, and the mechanic sat at my feet. Pity is wasted on a mechanic so placed at any time, for he likes the position, and it is not so comfortless as it looks by a long way, *experto crede*. In any case our ex-soldier was a proud man that morning, for his car was a joy to the eye. The day before owner and mechanic were hustings-worn, the car looked battered and dissipated as well as fog-dimmed. Now the brass shone with a glow that would have satisfied the proud commander of a man-of-war, who is the most exacting person living. If that mechanic had read the Greek tragedians he would have known that Nemesis must needs come soon. Brass glittered, varnish shone, all four cylinders worked nobly, but the engine would race from time to time. It became all too clear to him who had the control of the machine, or desired to have it, that he had it not in entirety, since the clutch kept slipping. Hence came power wasted, miles per hour lost, and a definite feeling of discontent in the owner. So, after a hill or two had been climbed without satisfaction, a halt was called on the level. The mechanic did not like it a bit, and he had our sympathy. He had worked hard; he had turned out the car with a creditable appearance; it was crushing to be found out in a single fault. I knew his feelings from experience. To be blamed when you thoroughly deserve it is tolerable; to be blamed for no fault at all is to find consolation in private reflection upon the folly of him, or her, who administers reproof; to discover

that one essential point has been forgotten when you have tried hard to remember everything is to be compelled to recognize that, after every willing effort, you only look a fool after all. The mechanic had our sympathy on another ground too. He vowed, of course, that the clutch could not be made tighter; he declared that, if it were, the consequences would be disastrous; for you shall note that your mechanic dearly loves "a bit o' play" in fittings, and abhors a nut screwed quite home. All these things were clear to us, but we were none the less inexorable. As, in starting on a heavy job in carpenter's work, minutes spent in putting a keen edge on to plane and chisel are hours saved in the end, so it is sheer idiocy to muddle on with a motor-car if, at the beginning of the journey, you are aware of something wrong that is capable of being set right on the road. It is, indeed, in detecting the first premonitory evidence of trouble, and in meeting difficulties more than half-way, that the genius of an inspired driver is shown. This little weakness of mechanics for a "bit o' play" is also worth remembering.

So we were sorry for the mechanic, but the thing had got to be done whether he liked or no, and for half an hour he lay on his back under the car, straining, grunting, otherwise eloquently silent, while black and viscous oil made a little pool on the road alongside of his honest head, and while we, pacing up and down the frozen road, forbore even to remind him that, if the road had been muddy, his fate would have been worse. In cases where an angel would lose his temper under the gentlest persiflage it is

only decent to leave a willing but disappointed man to himself. The half-hour ended; the job was done; overdone a little, as the mechanic well knew, yet not so much overdone but that a driver of rare skill could disappoint him by ignoring the inconvenience; and we took our seats again. The car sprang forward like a living creature, moving fast and smoothly. There was all the difference in the world between the motion as it was and the motion as it had been, and the chagrin of the mechanic yielded to time and to the proud feeling that all was right with "his car" through his handiwork.

Sooth to say, the scenery was not interesting on a frosty and somewhat misty day. The route was, to start with, viâ Woodbridge, Wickham Market, and Stratford St. Andrew to Saxmundham; that is to say, the road runs along the brow, the very much wrinkled brow, of the upland, which is high by comparison with the lowland, extending a long way in from the coast, running from Felixstowe to Aldeburgh and beyond. Of that lowland we could see nothing. Woodbridge, appearing to consist of one street, long, straggling, and narrow, was the first village of any consideration through which we passed. Its chief claim to fame is that Edward Fitzgerald wrote letters at it, remarking in one, dated 1855, that Woodbridge had not reached 1842 yet. But we shall see Woodbridge again. Next came Wickham Market, narrow, straggling, and long. It is quite commonplace. From Wickham Market we went on to Saxmundham, and there committed a grave error. "Hot dinner," it was stated, was due

in three-quarters of an hour, but it could be hurried forward if we wished. We wished accordingly, and wished afterwards that we had not, for the meat, some forgotten joint half-boiled, was in a state in which, according to the traveller Bruce, the Abyssinians eat their meat from choice; and the accompanying parsnips, quite hard, may have been fit to place before sheep. As we were neither Abyssinians nor sheep, but English travellers, the error was felt the more acutely because we had ourselves only to blame. Given the same conditions another time, I should urge a detour to Aldeburgh, a detour of some six miles to be begun about two miles short of Saxmundham, for Aldeburgh is worth seeing and man can feed there.

Of Aldeburgh an observation or two may be made on the basis of a sojourn a few years since. It is certainly one of the most bracing places in this world. It has a tolerable hotel, good golf-links, and a fine view of the sea; and the ancient moot-house is picturesque. The abiding impression left by Aldeburgh is simply that it is the oddest place ever seen. The little River Alde, starting somewhere near Saxmundham, follows a more or less southerly course for a couple of miles; then an even smaller river joins it, and, flowing eastward for a mile or so, the combined streams seem to be heading for the sea, distant about six miles; but it takes them fifteen miles, even with the help of another so-called river, purposeless as themselves, to reach the sea; for first they are lost in a meandering mere of sluggish water, which actually approaches within a hundred yards of the sea at Aldeburgh,

where it is stopped by a stony bank. The mere continues, and the rivers are merged in it, parallel to high-water mark, divided from it sometimes by a hundred yards or so, sometimes by half a mile, for nine miles from the point of turning, and soon the water is dubbed River Ore in the map. By this time it is meandering, mainly under the influence of the tide most likely, behind and to the west of Orford Ness, and it is not until somewhere about the middle of Hollesley Bay that this utter absurdity of a river, this monstrous estuary for three trifling streams, finds its way into the sea.

A year or two ago the good folks of Aldeburgh celebrated their native poet, George Crabbe, though why they chose the date, seeing that Crabbe was born in 1754 and died in 1832, it is not quite easy to see. The celebration, indeed, was, like the use made of Pickwick by the hotel at Ipswich, an example of the truth that a community or an individual having a mind for advertisement will not be stopped by petty considerations of pride. George Crabbe was born at Aldeburgh, through no fault of his own. He left it in 1768, to be apprenticed to a surgeon at Bury St. Edmunds. He came back to it to practise as a surgeon, and failed miserably as a medical man, because his mind was on the making of verses all the time. Then he tried his fortune in London and beat despairingly on the doors of fame until Burke introduced him to Dodsley, who brought out *The Library* with some success in 1781. At about the same time Dr. Johnson expressed a high opinion of his verse. Next he was ordained and took up his

residence as curate at Aldeburgh, but he left it soon to become domestic chaplain to the Duke of Rutland; and he does not seem to have had much, if anything, to do with his native place during his subsequent career as prosperous poet and comfortable clergyman. He was a distinctly sound poet, with a queer vein of humour, although his admirer, Edward Fitzgerald, whom we meet to-day, valued him perhaps too highly, and Byron, probably for his own purposes, overpraised him in the words:—

Nature's sternest painter, but her best.

Crabbe hated Aldeburgh, or Aldeburgh scenery at any rate; or, if he did not hate them, he took the stern view of them.

Lo! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its withered ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land and rob the blighted rye.

Thus does he describe the vicinity and thus the so-called river and its marge:—

Here samphire banks and saltworth bind the flood,
And stakes and seaweed withering in the mud;
And higher up a ridge of all things base,
Which some strong tide has rolled upon the place.

No, assuredly Crabbe had no liking for Aldeburgh, and to be perfectly candid, I agree with him that, save for golfers, it is a dreary and eye-afflicting place. In this view I confess to have believed myself to be singular and, for expressing it, have incurred scorn more than once. So Crabbe is quoted in confirmation, yet with the hope that those who visit Aldeburgh may agree with the general view and not with that of a minority of two, one of them something better than a minor poet. Be it added, in justice to Aldeburgh, that you can look for amber among the pebbles on the beach. So you can anywhere and find as much as I did.

From Saxmundham we laid a course due north for Yoxford—Peasenhall of murderous fame lies some three miles to the west—and passed by way of Darsham to Blythburgh. Here, in a village named in *Domesday*, is a really striking fifteenth-century church, in good Perpendicular and with splendid clerestory, plainly visible from the road; and we are not far from Southwold, now known of many as a summer resort, whereas in days not long past it was visited by few persons save those who knew of the existence of St. Edmund's Church with its really majestic tower and rare rood-loft. Here, by the way, is buried Agnes Strickland, the historian. The very slight inward curve of the coastline here is dignified with the name of a bay, and as Sole Bay, which is simply Southwold Bay spoken short, it has a considerable place in history. On 28 May, 1672, "the combined fleets lay at Sole Bay in

a very negligent posture." They were the fleets of England, under the command of the Duke of York, with Lord Sandwich under him, and of France; and here De Ruyter, the greatest sea-captain of his age, took his royal adversary quite by surprise. This was due not so much to the dashing merit of De Ruyter as to the crass carelessness of the Duke, for "Sandwich, being an experienced officer, had given the Duke warning of the danger; but received, they said, such an answer as intimated that there was more of caution than of courage in his apprehensions." What hasty words, I wonder, of the rude and haughty admiral were represented by this sonorous periphrasis? De Ruyter came, with ninety-one ships of war and forty-four fireships, sailing "in quest of the English," and Sandwich, after giving the warning in vain, saved the day by a display of gallantry to be ranked as extraordinary even in the annals of the English navy. Sailing out to meet the Dutchman, he engaged him at once and gave time to the Duke and the French admiral. "He killed Van Ghent, a Dutch admiral, and beat off his ship; he sunk another ship, which ventured to lay him aboard; he sunk three fireships, which endeavoured to grapple with him; and, though his vessel was torn to pieces with shot, and of a thousand men she contained near six hundred were laid dead upon the deck, he continued still to thunder with all his artillery in the midst of the enemy. But another fireship, more fortunate than the preceding, having laid hold of his vessel, her destruction was now inevitable. Warned by Sir Edward Haddock, his captain, he refused to make his escape, and bravely embraced

death as a shelter from that ignominy which a rash expression of the Duke's, he thought, had thrown upon him." Admiral and flag-captain, in fact, perished when the fire reached the magazine, and this time at any rate the "price of Admiralty" was paid in full.

The English claimed a victory and embalmed it in a ballad, although the truth was that the Duke's fleet was too much shattered for pursuit and the French fleet, under secret orders, perhaps, from Louis XIV, did next to nothing; the Dutch, probably, claimed one also, although the battle ended the hopes with which De Ruyter's expedition started. All that matters nothing now. The moment that heartens a man is that at which he stands on this low-lying shore, as spectators stood all the long day in May, 1672, and remembers the gallant fight and the glorious death of Sandwich. "Sir Isaac Newton is also said to have heard it [the firing] at Cambridge." So writes the accomplished author of Murray's Guide in 1875, and there is nothing incredible in the suggestion. The distance is but seventy miles, roughly; the cannon of old time with their black powder made a terrible sound; acoustics are full of mystery, and the noise of the big guns at Portsmouth is often heard in the heart of the Berkshire Downs. From Euston to the centre of Sole Bay is about half the distance over which sound is said to have reached Newton, and it is on record that Lord Ossory, then a guest of the Duke of Grafton, heard the guns and rode half-way across East Anglia to witness the battle. Surely it was a majestic and awe-inspiring spectacle for those on the shore, and surely it is worth while to reconstruct

it now in imagination.

From Blythburgh we went along a road of poor surface, and of no scenic attraction in winter save that the trees were fine, to Beccles, one of the three principal towns of Suffolk, possessed, I was content to believe, of a grand church, and boasting a view over the marshes of the Waveney, once navigable. But we saw little of Beccles, the name of which reminded Edward Fitzgerald of "hooks and eyes"; we were indeed quite glad to leave it after penetrating a quarter suggestive of a new and prosperous Midland town, for election fever was running high, and car and its occupants were cheered or hooted by eager crowds; cheered most, perhaps, for the crowds were mostly "Red," and the Connemara cloak seemed to express a sympathy which, in truth, was not felt. We had all had enough electioneering and to spare and were glad to turn our faces for Lowestoft. As will be seen later, Beccles made a far more pleasant impression on a subsequent visit. At Lowestoft too—it is a short and easy run—election fever was running high, and the political excitement of a seething mob does not make for an individual appreciation of the picturesque. But old Lowestoft is picturesque, hanging, as it were, over the sea, and South Lowestoft has a peculiar origin worth knowing.

Among the pleasant enterprises incident to the writing of this book has been the making of notes from *Norfolk and Norwich Notes and Queries*, reprinted from the *Norfolk Chronicle*, to which I have added in my note-book *O si sic omnes!* Would

indeed that all county papers laid themselves out, as this one does, to collect notes from those interested in the antiquities of their county. Here as to Lowestoft are found two notes, one entertaining and suggestive, the other distinctly taking. It appears that in 1558 one Thomas North published a fantastic explanation of the origin of herring curing, in which Lowestoft has always rivalled Yarmouth. Without giving it in detail, it may be stated that in essential spirit, if on a different topic, it exactly anticipates Charles Lamb's divine theory of roast pig; but Thomas North has none of that grace of expression which compels quotation when one encounters Lamb, and one only regrets that Lamb did not think of describing the origin of herring curing as well as of roast pork.

The second Lowestoft note deserves a paragraph to itself, for it is full of moral lessons, and a curious illustration of the way in which the overweening ambition of one community and the churlishness of a second has ended in loss to the first and in the profit of a third community to the prejudice of the second. In the records of St. Peter's Church, at Norwich (St. Peter's, Permouthergate, if memory serves accurately, which is St. Peter's, Parmentersgate, or Tailors' Street), is an entry of 27 March, 1814: "Ringing the Bells for Norwich a Port. 10/6." Early in the last century, it appears, Norwich was a very important centre of the wool trade. Now Norwich thrives on mustard and boots, but let that pass; at the time in question wool was the staple trade, and it was exported by way of Yarmouth. In 1812

or thereabouts, like Manchester later, Norwich determined, if possible, to have direct communication with the sea. Enterprising men consulted William Cubitt, afterwards Sir William Cubitt, and a very distinguished engineer in matters relating to canals and docks. They probably consulted him mainly because he was a Norfolk man, for he was not yet thirty years old, and his fame, which was to be considerable, was yet to come. They sought the advice also of that consummate Scottish engineer, Thomas Telford, then well advanced in middle age and almost at the pinnacle of his fame. Alternative routes for the proposed canal were suggested, one by way of Yarmouth, the other by way of Lowestoft. Yarmouth, its safe trade threatened, opposed from the beginning, and eventually the Lowestoft route was adopted; the mouth of Lowestoft Harbour was cleared from the sands that blocked it, a cut was made connecting it with the Waveney through Oulton Broad, another cut from Haddiscoe to Reedham, and in 1814 the bells rang gaily to celebrate "Norwich a port." For Norwich it was a short-lived triumph, since the scheme did not pay its way, and in 1844 it was practically, possibly indeed formally, bankrupt. At any rate, the Lowestoft part of the works was bought outright by Sir Samuel Peto, who in that year—but whether before he acquired the harbour or not I cannot say—bought Somerleyton hard by, some time the seat of the Fitz-Osberts and the Jernigans, from Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne. *Sic vos, non vobis*. The Norwich folk lost their money, or some of it; Sir Samuel Peto took Lowestoft in

hand, "developed" it, as the saying goes, so that South Lowestoft became a flourishing seaside place; and finally Lowestoft as a port became a serious rival to Yarmouth. As a seaside place Lowestoft is pleasing to some tastes now, even as it was in the days when Edward Fitzgerald would betake himself thither from Woodbridge to spend his days in sailing and in writing letters which are a treasure to posterity; and his evenings in reading Shakespeare or *Don Quixote* with his close friends, Cowell and Aldis Wright, who often lodged at Lowestoft for a short time in summer. It would have been good to have their opinion upon the derivation of Lowestoft, appearing in *Domesday* as Lothu-wis-toft, which is said to be "the enclosure by the water of Loth," who in his turn is said to have been a Norse invader; but nothing is to be discovered of Loth, or Loo, save that Lake Lothing, now the inner harbour, is named after him, as was the hundred of Lothingland or Ludingaland; and Edward Fitzgerald is really much more interesting than a nebulous Norse pirate.

Election fever and its ravings, a short glance at picturesque features, and the inestimable blessings of tea and warmth are the principal memories left by this particular visit to Lowestoft. Thence we ran along the easy coast road in the darkness to Great Yarmouth, which, on this occasion, left no vivid impression on the memory. No such language, however, can be employed with regard to the remainder of that evening's drive. Doubts had arisen whether it would be wiser to make for Norwich by the more circuitous route which fetches a compass round Caister Castle,

or by the "new road" running in a direct line for Acle first, across a salt marsh, and from Acle fairly straight for Norwich. The new road was much the shorter and, being across a salt marsh, a dead-level, but our local pilot was doubtful as to the state of its surface. However, it was decided to make inquiry at the toll-gate, a mile or so out of Yarmouth, and to abide by the answer, which was satisfactory. So was the road, so far as its surface went. It ran first for five miles straight as an arrow; the straightness was apparent at the time, but the five miles seemed like twenty. A fine mist was frozen over the watery land, nothing was visible on one side except, at stated intervals, a towering telegraph pole, and on both sides, at shorter intervals, were puny and poor trees which may have been poplars or willows. It became my duty, seated beside the man at the wheel, to peer into the darkness, trying to distinguish any possible obstacle or turn, to make out the character of any light that might be seen, and to watch for the bend, which, after another straight run of some three miles, would take us to Acle. As a rule I could just see the outline of one telegraph post as we passed its predecessor; there was, in all probability, a deep dyke on either side, and it was an ideal night for running into a country vehicle travelling without a tail light; but happily we encountered none. Indeed, although motorists complain much, late years have seen a great improvement in this respect. Of lights on approaching vehicles we saw one or two, appearing at first to be distant and stationary as a planet on a clear night, and then to be close to us in an instant. It

was, in short, a trying experience to the nerves and to the eyes, and we resolved to avoid night journeys as much as might be in the future. The resolution was renewed when we looked at our strained and bloodshot eyes the next morning, and broken perforce the next evening; but night travelling by motor-car in winter is not to be recommended unless the moon is strong. It is a process to be resolved upon when circumstances suit, not to be planned in advance.

From Acle to Norwich was ten miles more or less of up-and-down travelling, the hills not serious enough to try a good motor high, and it was an unfeigned relief to reach the shelter and food of the Royal Hotel. Here, practically, ends the account of the second day of this excursion, for the Royal Hotel is comfortable, not expensive as English hotels go, and new; but mere comfort is fortunately commonplace, its novelty is rather more of an outrage than usual in this case, and the novelty of the hotel's name is an offence not to be pardoned. Here, where the modern "Royal" stands, in the very centre of the city, stood the famous "Angel" from the fifteenth century at least to the middle of the nineteenth. Local antiquaries, many and eager, rejoice in tracing the history of this celebrated hostelry, finding frequent allusions to it in the records of the Master of the Revels, for here mountebanks performed, and theatrical performances were given, and strange monsters were shown. It had the glory of paying £115 tax for thirty windows in the eighteenth century—this makes one understand the blocked windows in old houses

more sympathetically than a bare mention of window tax does—and it was the great Whig House in the days when Norfolk elections were, as Mr. Walter Rye tells us, half of the history of Norfolk, the other half being concerned with trade. It is true that Mr. Walter Rye, speaking of the election of 1675, says that Sir Nevill Cattyn's party "used the 'Royal,' (then the 'King's Head,') and the other side, using a stratagem—singularly enough repeated at the same house last election, two or three years ago—ordered a great dinner there on the pretence that they might 'friendly meet and dine' with the other party, and ultimately secured the whole house as their election quarters; Cattyn, who was brought into town by four thousand horsemen, having to put up with the 'White Swan' 'at the back side of the butchers' shambles'" (*A History of Norfolk*, by Walter Rye. Elliot Stock, 1885). I prefer to pin my faith to *Norfolk and Norwich Notes and Queries*, not only because its elaborate article on the topic is evidently based on careful research, but also because its statements are not contradicted in subsequent issues, and these bear eloquent testimony to the fact that the local antiquaries of East Anglia have at least one trait in common with the antiquaries of the wider world—they contradict with freedom and dispute with endless pertinacity. Here there is no contradiction (and Mr. Rye's accuracy is by no means equal to his industry or to his love of antiquity), so it may be taken as reasonably certain that the "Royal" is on the site of the "Angel," and that the "Angel" first appeared by that name in 1578, when it

was leased to one Peterson; but the property has been traced back to Mistress Katharine Dysse in the rolls of the Mayoralty Court of Norwich, and she lived early in the fifteenth century. Here, in October, 1677, Joseph Argent had "fourteen days allowed to him to make show of such tricks as are mentioned in his patent at the 'Angel.'" In 1683 "Robert Austine at ye Angel hath leave given him for a week from ys Daie to make show of the storie of Edward the 4th and Iane Shore, and noe longer." In several later years Peter Dolman clearly made a great success with Punchinello or Puntionella—both forms are used. There are a score of similar entries, also of displays at the "Angel," of freaks and monstrosities, waxworks and the like. Hither fled Mr. Thomas Coke, of Holkham, father of the agriculture of Norfolk, during a Corn Law riot of 1815, escaping through the back of the house with the then Earl of Albemarle; in the "Angel" in 1794 the Duke of York stayed when on his way to Yarmouth to meet the exiled family of the Prince of Orange, and here the Duke of Wellington changed horses on his way to Gunton in 1820, receiving a hearty welcome from the citizens. From the "Angel" the Whigs sallied forth during the election of 1832, and enjoyed a glorious fight in quite the old style with the Tories in the market-place. An inn-name of such antiquity and so many associations should not have been changed. Apparently, however, the house has not changed its political colour, for it is a curious coincidence that, on the evening of 24 January, Lord Kimberley was a guest at the "Royal," and next day his son, Lord Wodehouse, won the

Mid-Norfolk election. Now the Wodehouses have been Whigs ever since Whigs were, and it need not be doubted that Sir Philip Wodehouse, M.P. for Castle Rising, who died in 1623, was of much the same political temper as those of the name who came after him.

Next morning I walked about Norwich, and I have done the like many times, but, short of writing a book on the subject, which is certainly not necessary, it is by no means easy to decide how to treat it. Norfolk has more parishes and churches in proportion to its area than any other county (730 to 2024 square miles, whereas Yorkshire to 5836 square miles has but 613, according to Mr. Rye), and of these, besides a remarkably striking cathedral, there are no less than thirty-five in Norwich alone. Norwich has a castle, its history and nature far from free of doubt; some relics of walls built by the citizens for their own safety in the time of Edward I, when they were empowered to levy a "murage" tax; an ancient Guildhall of smooth, black flint (which interested me, although it is said to have "no regularity or beauty of architecture to recommend it"); St. Andrew's Hall; the nave of an ancient Dominican church; a school partially domiciled in what is left of a Dominican convent; a fine museum containing some rare treasures of antiquity; the curious part known as Tombland; and great store of ancient houses, each one of them possessed of a history. Also, in the "Maid's Head," to be described later, it has the most alluring old inn known to me anywhere. True it is that a mayor of Norwich, conducting a royal

personage on a tour of inspection, is reported to have said "this was an ancient city, Your Royal Highness, before several of the old houses were pulled down," but, while there can never be too many old houses left to be an endless delight to the antiquary, there are far too many to be noticed in a work of this kind. One learns without surprise, but not without satisfaction, that a society of persons interested in antiquities meets periodically for "Walks in Norwich," and it is pleasant to follow their wanderings. Now they are studying the stately cathedral, with its three magnificent gateways, and its beautiful fourteenth-century spire, and listening to its story from the lips, it may be, of Dr. Jessopp. (All I need say at this moment is that I have never known the grand simplicity of the prevailing Norman style to strike the imagination so quickly and so completely as when I first entered it at a time, as it happened, when the exceptionally perfect organ was being played in the empty church.) At another time they are investigating the Butter Hills, and learning that they take their name from John le Boteler, who gave them to Carrow Abbey; at another finding traces in a malt-house of the house of that stout Sir Robert de Salle who opposed Wat Tyler's rebellion in these parts, and was celebrated by Froissart. Here the temptation to quote a little is overpowering. The insurgents, it should be said, were led by Sir Roger Bacon and Geoffrey Lister, a dyer.

"The reason that they stopped near Norwich was that the Governor of the town was a knight called Sir Robert Salle: he was not a gentleman by birth, but having acquired great renown for

his ability and courage King Edward had created him a knight: he was the handsomest and strongest man in England. Lister and his companions took it into their heads they would make this knight their commander and carry him with them in order to be the more feared. They sent orders to him to come out into the fields to speak with them, or they would attack and burn the city. The knight, considering that it was much better for him to go to them than that they should commit such outrages, mounted his horse and went out of the town alone to hear what they had to say. When they perceived him coming they showed him every mark of respect, and courteously entreated him to dismount and talk with them. He did dismount, and committed a great folly, for when he had so done, having surrounded him, they conversed at first in a friendly way, saying, 'Robert, you are a knight, and a man of great weight in this country, renowned for your valour; yet notwithstanding all this we know who you are; you are not a gentleman, but the son of a poor mason, just such as ourselves. Do you come with us as our commander, and we will make so great a lord of you that one-quarter of England shall be under your command.' The knight, on hearing them thus speak, was exceedingly angry; he would never have consented to such a proposal; and, eyeing them with inflamed looks, answered, 'Begone, wicked scoundrels and false traitors as you are; would you have me desert my natural lord for such blackguards as you are? I had rather you were all hanged, for that must be your end.' On saying this he attempted to mount his

horse, but, his foot slipping from the stirrup, his horse took fright. They then shouted out and cried, 'Put him to death.' When he heard this he let his horse go, and drawing a handsome Bordeaux sword, he began to skirmish, and soon cleared the crowd from about him, that it was a pleasure to see. Some attempted to close with him; but with each stroke he gave he cut off heads, arms, feet or legs. There were none so bold but they were afraid, and Sir Robert performed that day marvellous feats of arms. These wretches were upwards of forty thousand; they shot and flung at him such things that, had he been clothed in steel instead of being unarmed, he must have been overpowered; however, he killed twelve of them, besides many whom he wounded. At last he was overthrown, when they cut off his legs and arms, and rent his body in piecemeal. Thus ended Sir Robert Salle, which was a great pity, and when the knights and squires in England heard of it they were much enraged."

On the very same day the party of explorers—I find they were not the Norwich Society, but the Yarmouth branch of the Norfolk Archæological Society on a pilgrimage—had visited the old Foundry Bridge, heard the story of the loss of a Yarmouth packet hard by in 1817, learned that a neighbouring yard, once known as Spring Gardens, was a resort of fashion in the eighteenth century, seen the remains of the Austin Friars' Watergate, visited the Devil's Tower, heard the history of the city walls and St. Peter's, Southgate. Dr. Bensly had read a paper at Robert de Salle's house aforesaid. Then St. Etheldreda's

Church was visited, the plate was examined, and Dr. Bensly read another paper in the crypt of the House of Isaac the Jew, a Norman domestic cellar, clearly to be traced from the days of William Rufus, to a house subsequently occupied by Sir John Paston and Lord Chief Justice Coke. Next at St. Peter's, Permouthergate, attention was called to all manner of details—personal, historical, and architectural; St. Andrew's and Blackfriar's halls were visited and explained; a paper was read on sundry discoveries made in excavating under the Guildhall; King Edward VI's Middle School (the one in the ancient convent) was seen; a paper was read on St. Andrew's Church; and, after dinner at the "Maid's Head," the vicar of St. Peter's, Permouthergate, read a paper on the parish records. Just a few of the entries it is impossible to resist, for they are of imperishable interest.

"1798. October 19th. Form of Prayer on the victory obtained by Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson over the French fleet off the Nile, 1st August /6."

"Nov. 12th. Form of prayer for general thanksgiving on 29 November 1/".

"1805. December 5th. Paid for a form of Prayer and Proclamation on account of the late glorious victory over the combined fleets of France and Spain by Lord Viscount Nelson off Cape Trafalgar on 21st October, 1/".

No bells were rung in Norfolk that day, for the calamity of Nelson's heroic death saddened the heart of every man in his native county. But they were rung at St. Peter's, Permouthergate,

merrily enough, no doubt, in 1814, when there was the entry: "April 12. Putting flag upon the steeple on Buonaparte's overthrow; beer ditto 7/6."

Does this multiplicity of topics take away the breath, as is intended? Not without set purpose has this very full day in the life of an archæological association been set forth with some little of particularity. It is an illustration, deliberately chosen, of the truth that a learned party, or a party desirous of becoming learned, can spend a day comfortably in a single quarter of Norwich under expert guidance and without wasting any time, and yet leave a vast number of the most interesting places and remains altogether unvisited. We have no mention here of the city walls, of Tombland, the meaning of which is still in doubt, of the castle, of the Guildhall and its treasures, of the Strangers' Hall and a score of matters besides. This is not criticism, but a preliminary to an excuse in the nature of confession and avoidance. The Yarmouth archæologists were wise in their generation in contenting themselves with a single section of the city on a single day. They had come, perhaps, before; they could come, no doubt, again. What they saw and heard in a single day is an explanation, combined with cursory mention of some of the things not seen, at once of the extraordinary fascination Norwich must exercise over a man or woman of intelligence, of the immense variety of its attractions, and of the sheer absurdity of attempting to deal with them in a part of a book with any completeness. It is better, surely, to give something of detail, if

not a tenth of what is due, to a part, than to attempt the vain task of stretching the complex whole in outline. To him or her who has time I would say, "Spend a great deal of it in Norwich, and you will find no hour hang heavily."

Also it is as well to know a little of Norwich as an historical city and of its associations, of which indeed the latter are so much the more interesting that the history may almost be cast on one side. First of all the idea that Norwich was Venta Icenorum may be dismissed, with Mr. Haverfield's authority, as untenable for lack of evidence. No considerable Roman remains of clear authenticity have been found to warrant the theory. The castle is a complete puzzle. The city was ravaged by the Danes, of course, under Sweyn in 1003, and it became a diocesan centre in 1094, and has remained such ever since. It was walled, as has been stated, by the citizens; it flourished in the wool trade early. "Worsted" owes its name to an adjacent village, and Sir John Paston wrote: "I would have my doublet all worsted for worship of Norfolk." It suffered grievously in the time of the Black Death. It had its share, as we have seen, of trouble from Wat Tyler's rebellion and from Kett's rebellion in the sixteenth century, Mousehold Heath being the place of encampment on both occasions. Elizabeth, also visited it in state in 1578, and it contributed its quota towards the repulse of the Armada. From the troubles of the Civil War it escaped almost scot free, mainly because East Anglia, the home of the Eastern Counties Association, was exclusively Parliamentary, except in the case

of Lynn, whereof more later. After that it is true to write of Norwich, as Mr. Walter Rye has written of Norfolk, that the history of the last three centuries is really one of elections and of trade, neither of them very alluring from our present point of view.

All these things, however, are but history in the primitive sense. There is far more pleasure, and perhaps as much profit, in remembering that the editor of the *Paston Letters*, a mine of information and of interest, was Sir John Fenn, a man of Norwich; that Dean Hook, Mrs. Opie, Hooker the botanist, and Harriet Martineau were born in Norwich. These names, except perhaps that of Fenn, do not stir the imagination much in these days. We are spared from study of Miss Martineau's *Political Economy*, or of her history; and Sir John Fenn was really, as his comments in the *Paston Letters* and his omissions from them prove, a dull dog; but what man or woman of literary taste can see, as I did the first day I was in Norwich, the name Rackham on a solicitor's brass plate without remembering that the wayward genius, George Borrow, was clerk to Messrs. Simpson and Rackham, solicitors, or perhaps they were attorneys then, of Norwich, or will omit a pilgrimage to the house, still unchanged, in which he lived in Willow Lane? Then, chiefest jewel of all in the crown of Norwich is the Norwich school of painting that rose in her midst, whereof "old Crome"—his portrait is in the Guildhall—was the father and the founder. His pictures you may study in the National Gallery, but only in Norwich, where he

was born and apprenticed to a coach and sign-painter, can you realize his gradual progress, see him in imagination producing signs for the "Lamb" and the "Maid's Head," teaching the Gurney children at Earlham, having George Vincent and James Stark as apprentices, founding, with Ladbroke, R. Dixon, C. Hodgson, and John Thirtle, the first provincial art society, holding in 1805, and subsequent years, considerable exhibitions, joined in 1807 by John Tell Cotman. Only here can one realize the depth and justice of the pride taken by Norwich and Norwich men in their most honourable school of painting, and the eagerness with which the merchant princes of Norwich collect the examples of the school. But there are some in the Guildhall, too, as is but right.

CHAPTER III

WINTER. NORWICH TO LONDON BY ROMAN ROAD

Crooked streets of Norwich—An appropriate epitaph—To the county surveyor of Norfolk many thanks—The London Road (Roman)—Roman roads in East Anglia—Mr. Haverfield, the greatest authority on—Some history necessary to understand paucity of Roman remains in East Anglia—The country of the Iceni—Rebellion, brief triumph, and defeat of Iceni under Boadicea—The Iceni wiped out—Their territory minor part of an unimportant province—No military stations—Frontier far to the north—Caistor-by-Norwich not a Roman fortress—Roman roads of East Anglia enumerated—*En route*—Tempting declivities and annoying cross-roads—Long Stratton—The first round flint tower—Explanation—Scole and county boundary—The "White Hart"—Worse roads in Suffolk—A church with good parvise—Difficulty of identifying villages—Ipswich to Colchester and London—Towns and scenery of route postponed—Reasons—Puzzling darkness—Familiar villages not recognized—Futile demand for tea—Romford discovered—Lights to left front—Had we lost our way?—"Stratford Empire" a sign of hope—Ichthyophagous Whitechapel—Skill in traffic—Journey ended—Observations on winter motoring—On general

character of East Anglian scenery.

Norwich was left behind in mingled sorrow and regret the next morning, for, on the one hand, it seemed a sin to leave so fascinating a city practically unexplored, and, on the other, frost had given place to rain, and the rain having abated, the air was mild and warm, so that motoring promised to be entirely pleasant. However, other visits to Norwich were a certainty in the future, so off we went gaily. But, Lord!—to copy Mr. Pepys—were ever streets so strait or so prodigal of angles as these where some folk were hastening to their business at the assizes, while others, on cars garlanded with significant ribbons, were clearly bound for election work in Mid-Norfolk, where it was the polling day. Of a surety a pilot was needed, and we had one; undoubtedly, although Tilney All Saints is far away in Marshland, the epitaph appearing there, and here quoted, must have been written by a Norwich man, and by no other.

This world's a city, full of crooked streets,
Death is the market-place where all men meet;
If life was merchandise, then men could buy,
Rich men would always live, and poor men die.

So hey for Ipswich and London, for at last we are on a straight road, which hardly curves before Ipswich is reached. The air seems soft and balmy after the frost of the day before, and, crowning blessing of all, the surface is good and even. This

fact completed and rounded off by plainly legible milestones, seeming to follow one another at intervals satisfactorily short, induce us to pass an informal vote of thanks to the county surveyor of Norfolk, and the heaps of repairing material at regular intervals along the roadside call for observation on more than one ground. They are alternate heaps of blue stone, granite probably, broken into commendably small pieces, and of some whitish matter, probably chalk, doubtless used for binding. This may not be ideal road-making—in fact, it is not, for the smaller the stones are broken, and the less the use of any kind of binding material, the better the road will be in all weathers—but it must be admitted that this road was remarkably good on a morning when fairly heavy rain—it turned out that there had been much more of it further south—had followed shrewdly sharp frost.

For the good surface we had to thank modern times; for a straightness of direction, having the double advantage of saving labour and sometimes rendering a really exhilarating speed prudent, we had to thank the Roman invasion of Britain. It was the first time on this tour when passage through the air gave one that almost undefinable feeling of thrusting through liquid and cool purity—for cold is horrid but coolness is bliss—which is one of the chief pleasures of automobilism. It was also, after we had passed Caistor-by-Norwich, the first time we had been on a road that was once undoubtedly Roman.

Here, since in the course of our wanderings we shall be upon Roman roads fairly often, and upon reputed Roman roads much

more often, I am going to take the bull frankly by the horns and to dispose at once of a problem which, taken in detail, might be tedious. Nor shall any apology be offered for saying here once and for all, on the authority of Mr. Haverfield, almost all that needs to be said concerning the Roman occupation of East Anglia and of its Roman roads in the course of this volume. The digression shall be made as brief as may be. It can, of course, be omitted by those who know the subject and by those who do not desire to learn. Both will have the consolation of knowing that there is next to nothing of the same kind afterwards. Those who do desire to learn may be informed of that which is a commonplace to everybody who has given any attention to the story of the Romans in Britain, that Mr. Haverfield knows all that is ascertainable on the subject, and at least as much as any other living man. As for the dead, none of them, since the fifth century at any rate, have had the chances we have of ascertaining the truth, although posterity may learn more, for our sources of knowledge will be available for it, and there is, or may be, a vast amount of information to be obtained still by the intelligent use of the homely spade. The antiquary, no less than the politician, appeals for spade work, especially in East Anglia.

One or two principal facts must be borne in mind. County divisions are, of course, long Post-Roman; they have no meaning in relation to Roman Britain, which was simply a remote and not very important province of the Empire. By the end of the year a.d. 46 the Romans had overrun the south and the Midlands of

England, annexing part entirely, leaving the rest to "protected" native princes. Such were the princes of the Iceni, who occupied Norfolk, most of Suffolk, and part of Cambridgeshire, and, for inter-tribal reasons, took the side of the conquerors at the outset. The Iceni rebelled twice. The first effort was puny; they were defeated, and they returned to their native princes. Then, in a.d. 61, came the affair of Boudicca, better known as Boadicea, "the British warrior queen," and so forth. It is quite an interesting little story, of which our poetic dramatists might easily have made use, and it is told shortly because, judging from personal experience, the details may not be generally familiar. Besides they are essential to an understanding of East Anglia as a field for the "prospector," so to speak, on the look-out for Roman "finds," and to know of how little account East Anglia was under the Romans is to understand the more easily why many so-called Roman remains are really not Roman at all.

The Icenian "Prince Prasutagus, dying, had bequeathed his private wealth to his two daughters and the Emperor Nero. Such was the fashion of the time—to satiate a greedy Emperor with a heavy legacy lest he should confiscate the whole fortune. Prasutagus hoped thus to save his kingdom for his family as well as a part of his private wealth. He did not succeed: the Roman Government stepped in and annexed his kingdom, while its officials emphasized the loss of freedom by acts of avarice, bad faith, and brutality against Boudicca (Boadicea), the widow of Prasutagus, her daughters, and the Icenian nobles." All this

happened when the Roman Governor was away fighting in North Wales, and his absence enabled the rebellion, which Boadicea immediately headed, to gain temporary and very substantial success. Her Icenian warriors destroyed a whole Roman army, three Roman towns, and seventy thousand lives. Then Suetonius came with his trained legionaries; a single great battle destroyed the Icenian power for ever, and their whole country was laid waste. We hear no more of the Iceni in history. Their sometime territory, of little agricultural value in those days, simply became a part of the province, thinly populated, having a few country towns and villas, centres of large estates. In it we have no reason to look for traces of large military stations of early Roman date for, as we have seen, the Iceni were wiped out of existence in a.d. 61; and, after Hadrian built his wall from Carlisle to Newcastle in a.d. 124, the frontier, on which Rome always kept her soldiery, was never to the south of that wall. Some military stations there are of later date, fourth century, which were erected for the specific purpose of beating off the Saxon pirates (hence, and hence only, the phrase "the Saxon Shore") who began to raid the southern and eastern coasts of England, running up the rivers in their vessels of shallow draft. Such were Brancaster, guarding the mouth of the Wash, and Burgh Castle defending the outlets of the Waveney and the Yare, and with them we shall deal later, in their place.

As for the roads they all radiated from London, as indeed they do still in large measure. One passed direct from London to

Colchester and thence, viâ Stratford St. Mary and Long Stratton and Scole, to Caistor-by-Norwich. Such names as Stratford and Stratton, unless shown to be of modern origin, are strong evidence of Roman occupation, and at Scole, where the road crosses the Waveney and enters Norfolk, have been found some Roman remains and, perhaps, traces of a paved ford. That is the road on which we are now travelling. Caistor-by-Norwich, where we should not have seen much if we had halted—that is the worst of these Roman remains—is in all human probability *Venta Icenorum*, concerning the situation of which debate used to be carried on vehemently. What we might have seen is a rectangular enclosure of earthen mounds covering massive walls, having bonding tiles and flint facing to a concrete core, the walls themselves being visible on the north and west, and a great fosse surrounding the whole. Its area is about thirty-four acres, and there were towers at each corner. A careful analysis of the evidence leads to the sure conclusion that this was a small country town and not a great military fortress.

This particular road crossed the Ipswich river a few miles to the north-west of Ipswich, and a branch from it ran by way of Goodenham to Peasenhall. Thence it can be traced due east to Yoxford, where it ends, so far as our certain knowledge goes. From Peasenhall another direct road can be traced as far as the Waveney, near Weybread, and no further. Other roads there are of uncertain Roman origin, but the most important of them was the Peddar's (or Pedlar's) Way, which can be traced

with certainty from Barningham, in Suffolk, to Fring, about seven miles from Brancaster, and perhaps even to Holme, which is nearer, and is, indeed, one of the supports for the theory concerning the nature and origin of Brancaster, but the modern roads seldom follow its course. A Roman road was supposed to run from Caistor viâ Downham Market, and across the Cambridgeshire Fens to Peterborough, but its existence is hardly proved in Norfolk, and its origin is hardly clear to demonstration in Cambridgeshire. These are all the Roman roads which need concern us, and the references to Roman roads in guide-books and on Ordnance and other maps may be disregarded. This is written not at all by way of disparaging the ordinary guide-books, some of which are monuments of learning and industry, and by no means in any mood of conscious superiority. There is no credit at all in knowing that which Mr. Haverfield has made easy, and, until he co-ordinated the facts and sifted the evidence, it was practically impossible for anybody but a specialist to know the truth. He is a specialist of the true scientific temperament, eager to acquire knowledge, cautious in inference, and it is to be feared that he and his like knock a good deal of romance out of travel in England. What they leave, however, is real; and it is worth stating once and for all.

At any rate, we were on a Roman road with a sound British surface on this genial January day, for genial it was by contrast with those which had gone before; and we sped along gaily, regretting not so much that a great deal of Norfolk is hilly, as

that when there came a tempting downhill stretch there was generally a village or a cross-road at the bottom to counteract the temptation. Such were the circumstances as we passed down into Long Stratton, where our eyes were delighted by the first specimen on the roadside of the round church towers of flint for which East Anglia is famous. Many theories there have been as to the origin of this peculiar form of tower, but the best of them, because the most obvious and simple, is that of Mr. J. H. Parker: "They are built round to suit the material, and to save the expense of stone quoins for the corners, which are necessary for square towers, and which often may not have been easy to procure in districts where building stone has all to be imported." Now we bade leave to hills for a while, and at Dickleburgh the floods were out in some force. Scole came next, a pleasing many-gabled village with a fair share of Scotch firs, and once a great coaching centre. It also contains the White Hart Inn, of which Mr. Rye writes: "Of course the best known inn in the county was that at Scole, built by James Peck, a Norwich merchant, in 1655, the sign costing £1057, and being ornamented with twenty-five strange figures and devices, one of which was a movable one of an astronomer pointing to the quarter whence the rain was expected. There was also an enormous reproduction of the great 'bed of Ware,' which held thirty or forty people. The inn itself is a fine red-brick building, with walls twenty-seven inches thick, and with a good oak staircase." Scole, by the way, is only just in the county of Norfolk, and there is room for doubt whether

the "White Hart" was ever so famous as the "Maid's Head" at Norwich. Mr. Rye, however, is entitled to be modest in this matter, even if modesty lead him into inaccuracy, for he saved the "Maid's Head" from being modernized by buying it out and out and restoring it in perfect taste. May the motor-car bring back prosperity to the "White Hart," and may the "White Hart" merit it. It is well situated at the crossing of two trunk roads, that on which we were travelling and the Bury and Yarmouth road. In our case it was not convenient to halt.

Here we entered Suffolk, crossing the Waveney, and a country of road surfaces far worse than those traversed up to that point. The rain had apparently fallen more heavily than it had near Norwich; but it had not rained gravel, an infamous material for roadmaking, nor could it account for the weary attitude of the tumble-down and illegible milestones. As it was, when hills were encountered the Panhard was hard tried, and the driving wheels, although they wore antiskid gaiters, revolved many times more than the distance covered by them warranted. There was simply no hold for the wheels in the dirty, porridge-like mud, concealing a crumbling sub-surface, and, now and again, although no great height above the sea had to be climbed, the gradients were almost trying, owing to the bad surface.

Shocking bad roads, luncheon sadly deferred in consequence, and the certainty of much travelling after dark if London were to be reached that evening, may be accountable for the fact that, between Scole and Ipswich, the only point that seemed worthy

of a passing note was a church on the left-hand side, I think at Yaxley, clearly visible from the road and having a good parvise over the porch. It has been written, "I think at Yaxley," in all honesty, for it is not always possible to identify on a map the village through which the car is passing, nor always easy to consult the map even when travelling at moderate speed. Blessed be the villages that proclaim their titles, even by modest boards on the post-offices, as many do in East Anglia; for by such boards is the traveller saved from the scorn poured upon him who asks of the rustic the name of his native village. This is an almost universal phenomenon, so frequent in occurrence that one is tempted to speculate as to its origin; and that may be that the normal rustic, painfully conscious of the narrow limits of his own knowledge, feels that he has encountered a fool indeed when he meets anybody who is more ignorant than himself, although it be but as to a single and quite trivial point.

The one important thing about luncheon at the "Great White Horse," thrice welcome as it was to us, was the sad fact that it did not begin until three o'clock. Of the places passed through between Ipswich and London, or of their appearance and their story at any rate, little shall be said here for two reasons, or even three. The first is that having once stayed at Colchester for ten days and more, going out motoring every day, and studying Colchester itself, full of interest, at many odd times, I deal with Colchester and excursions from it in another chapter. The second is that, after it grew dark, that is to say not long after we left

Colchester behind, our journey seemed to become exciting and mysterious in a degree hardly conceivable, of which it is hoped to reproduce an impression; and the third, last, and most cogent is that this chapter grows full long already for the small portion of road of which it really treats. We passed then to Colchester viâ Copdock, Capel St. Mary, and Stratford St. Mary—here we entered Essex, and the name of the village reminded us again of the antiquity of the road—and so passing, especially after Capel St. Mary, we encountered some hills which would not have seemed despicable to a weak car. Through Colchester, its outlines rendered picturesque by the fading light, we hastened, setting our course for Chelmsford; but we were hardly a mile outside Colchester before the lamps had to be lit, and the darkness came down upon us like a curtain.

Now it was my turn to fail as a pilot and a guide. It has been said that I had motored round Colchester every day for ten days at least, and that not long before. I had, in fact, followed the Essex manœuvres of 1904 in a Lanchester on business, and had stayed on for pleasure afterwards; but on that occasion, except in a futile effort to see a night attack on Colchester during pitch darkness, there had never been occasion to use the lamps, and it was astonishing to find how vast a difference the darkness made. We halted at Kelvedon to procure water; we would have taken tea there, at a roomy inn of old time, if the mere mention of tea had not seemed to paralyse those who were in charge of the house. I had been through Kelvedon at least a score of

times before, yet I had to ask its title. In Witham, the long and straggling congregation of houses three miles beyond, I had been interrupted at luncheon in an inn by a sharp fight between the armies of Sir John French and General Wynne; yet I could not recognize the place at all in the gloom. Chelmsford revealed itself by process of inference; there was no other considerable community to be expected at this point, and Chelmsford it must be, and was. After this all was fresh and mysterious. Ingatestone I had visited before, and passing lovely some of its environment, which we shall see by daylight some day, had been found to be. To Brentwood there had never been occasion to go, so there was no shame in failing to recognize it. On we sped a dozen miles which, what with feeling our way in the darkness and the impossibility of calculating distance accomplished,—here was one of the cases in which a recording instrument would have been useful,—seemed to be at least a score. Surely we must be approaching the environs of London, for there was a glow of light ahead, and there were railway lights to the left, and beyond them more lights still. Not a bit of it; the lights ahead turned out to be merely Romford; those on the left beforehand must have been Hornchurch. Even Romford was at last detected only by virtue of a fortunate glance at some public office. Again we were out in the open country, as it seemed in the dark, although, no doubt, the rural illusion would have vanished by daylight. After that in a short time lamps began to appear regularly, but the mystery and ignorance of us who were travellers was not less than before. The

pride-destroying fact must be admitted that a glimpse of Seven Kings Station only set me thinking of the two kings of Brentford, with whom the "seven" can have no reasonable connection, that Ilford was new to me save by name, and that I began half to think it possible that (like the Turkish Admiral who, having been sent on a voyage to Malta, came back to say that the island had disappeared) we might have missed our course by many miles, and might be skirting London to the north. Multitudinous lights stretching far away over the left front, aided the illusion. Then came a reassuring advertisement, that of the "Stratford Empire," a distinct presage of the East End of London, and before very long on our left was a row of houses quite respectably old among many that were horribly modern. The old houses were, at a guess, not earlier than Queen Anne, but the mind went back further to reflect that Stratford had been Stratford-attè-Bowe in Chaucer's time, and that there his prioress had learned to speak French "ful faire and fetisly" at the Benedictine Nunnery.

To my friend, at any rate, the environment of the Mile End Road was familiar, for he and his car had been busy electioneering there; as for me, the pangs of hunger notwithstanding, I was fascinated by the deft way in which he slipped through the traffic. Truly the motor-car is capable of marvellous dirigibility in skilful hands. Eftsoons were we in Whitechapel, breathing a murky atmosphere of naphtha and fried fish, so all-pervading that, at the moment, the very thought of food seemed nauseous. It is surely one of the standing mysteries

of creation where all this multitude of fishes can have their origin. So, at precisely nine o'clock in the evening we passed up Holborn out of the City of London, and, for the purposes of this book, our subsequent proceedings were of no interest.

Let us, before closing the chapter, see what had been gained by this tour in mid-winter. Well, first it was a conviction that, although motoring in winter is a cold occupation, productive of some absolute pain, for it hurts to be really cold, and of a compensating increase of appreciation for familiar comforts, it is distinctly better than not motoring at all. This conviction I should probably retain, in spite of a constitutional dislike to cold, in all circumstances except those of heavy snow when falling, which, I am content to believe, without trying it, is all but an absolute bar to motoring. If you have a screen the snow destroys its transparency; if you have not a screen it blocks your vision and covers up your eyes or your goggles. Moreover, on high and fenceless roads, where the motorist is most liable to be overtaken by snow, the white mantle obliterates the track and renders movement full of perils. But something more substantial than this conviction was gained during these three days. They were days, be it remembered, when the face of Nature, in what may be called a tamed country, is at its worst; they had been spent in traversing districts up to that time, for the most part, unknown to me; but there remained much of East Anglia, familiar to me in summer and in winter dress, which have been purposely omitted in this effort to gain a general impression of the country.

I pictured to myself the breezy uplands of the Sandringham district, the pines, the heather, and the bracken, as I had seen them many a time in summer sunshine and in stormy winter; fancy filled the brown ploughland we had passed a sea of yellow corn; I remembered the beautifully umbrageous lanes and roads of Eastern Essex, where they rarely "shroud" the elms in the barbarous fashion prevailing in Berkshire and other counties; the strange crops, whole fields of dahlias for example, which I had seen in the seed-growing districts; the heavy-laden orchards upon which, it must be admitted, Mr. Thomas Atkins levied heavy toll in 1904. So remembering I concluded, there and then, that I should find ample satisfaction in my task. But at that time I had not seen a tithe of the characteristic scenery of East Anglia. Ely, rising majestic from the plain; the very singular and impressive run along the sandy coast from Cromer to Wells-next-Sea; the road on thence to Hunstanton and Lynn; the glorious expanses of heath in many parts of Norfolk and Suffolk; the extraordinary hedges of fir along the roadside near Elvedon and in many another place—all these things, and a score besides—were as a sealed book to me. The book has been opened now, and its prodigal variety of infinite charm appals me, even though a substantial part of my pleasant duty has been accomplished.

CHAPTER IV

SPRING. THROUGH THE HEART OF EAST ANGLIA

Some books consulted—"Murray" useless to motorists: proceeds by rail and observes county boundaries—Arthur Young's *Six Weeks' Tour* dull—Leland's *Itinerary* a mass of undigested notes—*The Paston Letters* full of excellence—Start from Abingdon—The six-cylinder Rolls-Royce—Freedom from trouble—Hopes and Nemesis—Abingdon to Thame, a bad cross-country route—Thame to Royston direct—The gate of East Anglia—The "Cave"—Royston's broad hint to James I—To Newmarket—Straight road and abundant game—The mystery of the Hoodie Crow—Wild creatures and motor-cars—Weather Heath—Appropriate name—Value of tree "belts"—Scotch fir hedges—Elvedon Hall and its game—Best use for such land—Enter Norfolk—Warrens and heaths—Thetford—Its story—Its Mound—Mr. Rye's theory dissipated by the learned—Windmills in East Anglia—Thomas Paine a Thetford man—Euston unvisited—Attleborough—Wymondham's twin towers—Their origin—Religious houses and popular risings—Kett's Rebellion—Curious legend on a house—Stanfield Hall—Its grim tragedy—A monograph quoted—Wholesale murders and a famous trial—Extraordinary cunning of the

criminal—To Norwich and the "Maid's Head."

During the interval between the first and second tours in East Anglia many books, more or less promising of material, were read. Of these books it will be prudent to say a little before recording an expedition in which East Anglia was attacked, so to speak, amidships. Many of them it is needless to mention, though some will come in for passing reference. The first was Murray's Handbook to Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Cambridgeshire, which is well-planned, having regard to the needs of its age, and well, no less than learnedly, written; but it was published more than thirty years ago, and is therefore rather out of date as to some of its facts, and for motorists absolutely obsolete in its method. It proceeds, for the most part, county by county; its routes are railway routes; it almost ignores roadside scenery, and it enlarges, very usefully sometimes, upon the internal details of churches and of other edifices, with which the motorist can rarely be concerned; for, as it is not intelligent to hurry through the country always, so it is not motoring to "potter" at every place. The good "Murray" is really rather embarrassing to the motorist. Let me illustrate. Scole, mentioned in the last chapter, is a little more than two miles from Yaxley, on the Roman road. A brief account of Scole is found on p. 183. If Yaxley were mentioned at all (and it is worth mentioning, for the sake of its church, in a guide-book pure and simple) it would find a place in some Suffolk route, for only very occasionally does the guide-book writer allow even a railway to transport him across

a county boundary. Amongst other books studied were Leland's *Itinerary*, the *Paston Letters*, in five stately quarto volumes, and Arthur Young's *Six Weeks' Tour*. These studies were not quite in vain, for they will at least show a reader what to avoid. Young's *Six Weeks' Tour* is most consumedly dull, reeking of turnips, sticky with marl, and the accounts of "the seats of the nobility and gentry, and other objects worthy of notice, by the author of the *Farmers' Letters*," are very rarely interesting. Some of them which are to our purpose—for of course the tour was not confined to East Anglia—shall be quoted in due season. To reading Leland, stimulated by many quaint quotations in later works, I had looked forward for years, but the second edition in nine volumes of "The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary, Oxford; Printed at the Theatre, for James Fletcher, Bookseller in the Turl, and Joseph Pott, Bookseller at Eton. 1745," was a grievous disappointment. The plums seem all to have been picked out by guide-book writers; few of them, if any, relate to East Anglia. The only things worthy of note were an account, perfectly straightforward, and to be quoted in its place, of the Dunmow Flitch, and some doggerel concerning the "properties of the counties of England." The material ones for us are:—

Essex, ful of good hoswyves,

........*....*

Northfolk, ful of wyles,

Southfolk, ful of styles,

Huntingdoneshyre corne ful goode,

Cambridgeshire full of pykes.

Leland, in fact, cannot be commended, but that is only because he planned his *magnum opus*, like many a good man before him and after, without regard to the allotted span of human life, not to speak of its uncertainty. In his "Newe Yeare's Gyft to King Henry the viii in the xxxvii Yeare of his Raygne," Leland talks of his studies, of his six years of travel, and then sketches his plan. It is "to write an History, to the which I entende to adscribe this Title, *De Antiquitate Britannica* or els *Civilis Historia*. And this Worke I entende to divide yn to so many Bookes as there be Shires yn England and Sheres and greate Dominions in Wales. So that I esteme that this Volume will include a fiftie Bookes, wherof each one severally shaul conteyne the Beginninges Encreaces, and memorable Actes of the chief Tounes and Castelles of the Province allottid to hit." Leland died when he was forty-six, but if he had lived another century he could hardly have achieved his self-imposed task, even if he had been miraculously endowed with a Mercédès; and he cherished divers other projects. As it is, his so-called *Itinerary* is, at best, but a collection of rough notes, having frequently no sort of coherence, often corrected or added to later in a distant geographical connection. In spite of a taste for antiquity it may be put down as stiff and heavy to read, and not sufficiently abounding in quaintness to repay the trouble of the reader.

The *Paston Letters* on the other hand, are the best of reading, giving a wonderfully vivid idea of life in East Anglia at a singularly troublous period, and there will be occasion to quote them more than once. The edition by the worthy Sir John Fenn, stately as it is, and a joy to handle, is far from being the best. Posterity owes to him a deep debt for rescuing the letters from oblivion, but he omitted as uninteresting precisely the little fragments upon private and domestic affairs which we value most now in later editions. His notes, too, prove him to have been a rather dull dog and lacking in a sense of humour. Sometimes he scents impropriety where there is clearly none, at others he misconstrues the most obvious badinage. Thus, where John Paston is addressed in the phrase, "Wishing you joy of all your ladies," Fenn suggests a reference to the Virgin Mary, Heaven knows why. Still, Fenn rescued the letters, and the latest edition—far more complete than his—is at once one of the most entertaining and valuable of historical documents and essential to the right understanding of life in old Norfolk. In fact, the *Paston Letters* is one of the few really old books which a man not too studiously inclined may not prudently be contented to take as read. It is vastly entertaining, but, it must be said, it is not for the young person. A spade was not called a horticultural implement in those days, and there are many spades, and some knaves of spades too, in the *Paston Letters*.

Fortified with this literary foundation, and a good deal more of minor importance, I left my Berkshire home near Abingdon

on 9 March in a 30-h.p. Rolls-Royce car, six-cylindrical and equipped with every luxury in the shape of glass-screens and a cape hood, and driven by Mr. Claude Johnson. For companions we had my two daughters, and for assistance, if it were needed, a mechanic. As it happened there was not a particle of trouble with tires, engine, or apparatus of any kind during the 300 miles and more of this expedition, and we might have dispensed quite well with the mechanic, and with his weight. Indeed, at the end of the little tour, and for that matter after the next on another car, arose a feeling that the days of the uncertainty of motor-cars were over. Need it be said that Nemesis was in waiting for this sanguine feeling, and that, before my "travelling days were o'er" in East Anglia, one of those extraordinary runs of misfortune came, which, in motoring more than in any other pastime, justify the sayings that troubles never come singly, that it never rains but it pours? It is perhaps wise to make this statement now, for a record of motoring wherein all was plain sailing—the metaphor is hardly mixed, for there is kinship between the motion of a sailing craft running free and that of a car in good tune—might run the risk of being dull. How our troubles were turned into a positive pleasure, at the time as well as in retrospect, by the skill, patience, and good humour of this same Mr. Claude Johnson, shall be told in its proper place in another chapter.

One thing, however, may be said by way of preliminary to the account of this particular tour. There was much controversy at the beginning of 1905 upon the question whether the movement

of a six-cylinder petrol car is, or is not, more luxurious than that of a four-cylinder car of first-rate design and construction. A prolonged match, not entirely free from flukes, the bane of motoring trials, has been held by way of attempt to decide the issue; and it has ended in favour of six cylinders, as illustrated by the identical car in which this tour was taken. The controversy will probably go on for ever, none the less, for it is the old case of *de gustibus* which can never be settled, and it is all but impossible to compare memories of kindred sensations felt at different times. Who can say, for example, which cigar, glass of old wine, sail on a strong breeze, gallop over the Downs, run in a first-rate motor-car, dive into cool water, which—almost what you will, so long as it be one of the pleasures classified by old Aristotle as coming into being through the touch—was absolutely the best of his life? Without scientific certainty, however, there may be strong conviction, and mine is that a good six-cylinder, whether Rolls-Royce or Napier, runs more smoothly than any four-cylinder car, and I have tried nearly all the best of them. In fact, there is very little to choose in point of smooth running, if indeed there be anything to choose at all, between it and a White steam car, used on another East Anglian tour. Tried by the, to me, infallible touchstone of my own spine, a six-cylinder is a very little, but still distinctly, more luxurious than the best four-cylinder car; but this is not to say that there are not a round dozen of four-cylinder cars on the market which make their passengers as comfortable as any man, or even delicate woman,

can reasonably wish to be in this world.

We started just after ten, on a windy and rainless morning, in an atmosphere giving beautifully clear views of distant objects, and thereby raising some reasonable apprehensions for the morrow among the weather-wise. Our route lay outside my present manor until Royston was reached, for it was through Dorchester, Thame, Aylesbury, Ivinghoe, Dunstable, Luton, Hitchin, and Baldock; and the temptation to describe some of it, especially the run along the Chilterns, is strong, but it must be resisted. One observation, however, must be made. From Thame onwards, in spite of the tendency of our road system to radiate from London obstinately as in Roman times, much as our railways do, and as if cross-country travelling were not a thing to be encouraged, there was little reason to complain of want of directness in the road. But to journey from Abingdon to Thame it is necessary to go round two sides of a rough but large triangle, whether the route chosen be through Oxford, distant six miles, or through Dorchester and Shillingford, which is rather longer. In either case the traveller has been compelled to go a long way out of his true course, and from the turning point to Thame is about the same distance in both cases. To Royston the distance is, as nearly as may be, seventy miles, and the last part of the run, where we followed the north-west edge of the Chilterns, cutting in and out of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, and Cambridgeshire in bewildering succession, was very exhilarating. A pretty sight too were the Chilterns, with their swelling undulations of down

turf, marked out near Royston for galloping grounds and showing here and there, in the form of a flag and a carefully tended green, that the golfer has found his way to Royston. Indeed, this close down turf, this "skin" of grass catching the full force of northerly and westerly gales, is suitable to the golfer's needs as any save that of seaside links.

At Royston we found an ancient and interesting inn, actually bisected by the ancient boundary line of Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, a kindly welcome, most benign bulldogs, and last, but by no means least, a glorious pie. The inn is there still no doubt; so probably are the bulldogs; so no doubt is the kindly welcome; but the pie vanished in a manner almost miraculous. It came in an ample dish, steaming, succulent, the crust browned to a nicety. In a surprisingly short time the dish went out, empty, almost clean as Jack Sprat's and his spouse's platter, and its exit was accomplished by a gurgle of suppressed laughter from without. Was there something of a rueful tone in that laughter? Perhaps there was. He who would feed after March motorists have eaten their fill had best send in to them a gigantic pasty, else will he go hungry.

At Royston, the gate of East Anglia, we strolled about a little, finding it to be just a quiet town of the country—there is no sufficient reason to believe it to be really ancient according to the standard of antiquity in these islands—and the intersecting point of two great roads, that followed by us, which went on to the eastward, and the road between Hertford and Cambridge.

Here, according to the antiquaries of yesterday, Icenhilde Way and Erming Street crossed one another. The antiquaries of to-day question the Icenhilde Way so far east as this, laugh at the philology which would make Ickleton evidence of its existence, and make nothing of the authority of the learned Dr. Guest. Perhaps they would treat with more respect Erming Street, said to have led from Royston to Huntingdon, and to cross the Ouse at Arrington, for there appears to be sound evidence that Edgar granted to the monks of Ely the Earningaford, or ford of the Earnings, or fenmen. Walking eastward along the spacious street we found first the turning for Newmarket, which was of present interest, and, quite by accident, a notice "To the cave," leading us into a back yard and to a locked gate, and provoking a little later research. We couldn't get in, of course. The custodian, if there be one, was at his sacred dinner, as everybody in Royston seemed to be; but Royston struck us as the kind of place in which an obsolete notice might hang unmoved so long as the fibre of wood would support its covering of paint. Investigation in books showed the "cave" to have been discovered by a fluke in 1472, but the "cave," like a good many others here and elsewhere, seems to have been merely an ancient boneshaft or rubbish pit, afterwards excavated sufficiently to be used as a subterranean chapel. Hence the sketches of saints carved on the chalk walls which, candidly, I should like to have seen close at hand.

Royston is quiet enough in all conscience now, and it is doubtful whether the motor-car, rapidly as it increases in the

land, will bring much prosperity to it, although it is placed at important cross-roads. Cambridge is but 12-1/2 miles distant, and Cambridge is a good deal more interesting than Royston, as well as a more certain find for refreshment, for pies may not always be to the fore. Being at the cross-roads, however, Royston is likely to see as much life passing through its midst and to like it as little as it did in the days of James I. Nay, it may even like the bustle less, for more dust will go with it. James, who really was an ardent, if not a mighty, hunter, planted a hunting-box near Royston, his particular object being probably to course the Chiltern hares—for this is a first-rate coursing country, possessed, as is most down-land, of remarkably stout hares; and, when hares are stout, the open prospect of the downs makes coursing a very pretty sport. Deer, of course, there may have been; but the country does not look like them; and as for the fox, of whom the moderns have written and sung, "Although we would kill him we love him," he was vermin in the days of King James. To hunt the hare either with greyhound or harier, on the other hand, was a sport much loved of our kings even in Saxon times, and in Downland of Berkshire, not dissimilar to the Chilterns, there are examples of manors held on the condition that the tenant should keep a pack of hariers for the king's hunting. Whether the Royston folk had to keep hounds for the king is not clear, but "Murray" has unearthed a lovely story of their catching his favourite hound and attaching to his collar a scroll bearing the words "Good Mr. Jowler, we pray you speak

to the king, for he hears you every day and so doth he not us, that it will please his Majesty to go back to London, for else the country will be undone; all our provision is spent already, and we are not able to entertain him longer." Here was a new way of conveying a broad hint. "Baby Charles" visited Royston twice, immediately before his standard was raised at Nottingham, and later as a prisoner.

The distinguishing feature of the road from Royston to Newmarket, which crosses over the south-eastern end of the Gog Magog Hills, is its undeviating straightness. It is plain from the map that it curves gently here and there, having indeed almost a sharp turn to the left before it ascends the Gog Magog Hills—which would be of little account as hills elsewhere than near a fenny country—but the general impression left was of wide prospects, Scotch firs, belts planted for partridge driving, and abundant game birds. The feeling that this is an ideal shooting country, and not half a bad one for motoring, was at its strongest when Six-Mile Bottom, famous in the history of sport with the gun, was reached. It was a day, as luck would have it, on which a bird-lover could take rapid observations of bird-life as he swept along, for there were no vehicles to distract him on the empty road, and there was no chance of his coming upon them unawares. Partridges we saw galore, cock-pheasants strutting on the ploughland, confident that they were safe from the gun by law till the next October, and probably knowing quite well—for there are few things a wily old cock-pheasant does not know—that

there would be no serious danger, away from boundary hedges, until the leaf was clear in November. Less handsome than the cock-pheasants, but more interesting, because less familiar to my eyes, were the hooded crows, in their sober suits of drab-grey and glossy black, walking about in perfect amity with the pheasants. This bird is a grey mystery. In shape and dimensions he is identical with the carrion crow; carrion crows and hoodies (or Royston crows) will interbreed on occasion; their nests and eggs are of identical situation, structure, colour, and shape. Their common habits include a partiality for young birds and young rabbits as well as for carrion—I have heard a rabbit scream, looked in the direction of the noise, shot a carrion crow which rose, and found it lying within a couple of yards of a half-grown rabbit, quite warm, and with its skull split—and yet nobody knows for certain whether the two species are distinct or not. The black crows may be migrants; the grey crows certainly are. They come over to the East Coast in hordes in the autumn, mostly from Russia, where they also interbreed with the carrion crow. They come inland a little, and I have seen one or two in Berkshire, but west of Berkshire they are certainly very exceptional in England and Wales, though they are quite common and even breed in Scotland and Ireland. In fact, they are birds, of whom one would like to know more, attired in a Quakerish habit according ill with their disposition. Still, when you have no game coverts of your own in the vicinity, it is good to see them circling about over these wide spaces near Royston, and to remember that they used to

be called Royston crows. The marshmen call them Danish crows also, and it is a great pity when ornithologists omit to specify these local names of birds. Hoodie, Danish crow, Royston crow are identical, and each of them at least as interesting as *Corone cornix*. They are all, as Mr. Rowdler Sharpe says, ravens in miniature, but it is open to doubt whether, as pets, they would be equally amusing in their tricks. We saw them in great numbers as we swept along, and, like many wild things, they took no notice of the car. It is strictly irrelevant, of course, but it may be interesting to say that, since these words were written, I have found that even a Highland stag is not afraid of a motor-car, which shows a Highland stag to have far more sense than some reasoning men.

Newmarket we have seen before, and since this time also it was passed without a halt, whereas on a later visit we stopped for a while, it need not detain us now. Our road, which kept to the high ground to the south-east of Mildenhall Fen, took us first through characteristic environs of Newmarket not seen on the former tour, past endless training grounds, trim houses and carefully-built stables, and later through the wild heaths known as Icklingham and Weather Heath, the latter actually 182 feet above the sea-level. Right well, no doubt, that last-named heath has earned its name, for it is easy to imagine, and much more comfortable to imagine than to feel, how a gale from the north or west would have swept across the fens over that heath. For that matter there is not a single eminence of more than 200 feet between Weather Heath and the gales from the North Sea, so

the east wind swept it too. Here the hand of man has wrought a great and beneficial alteration in the features of nature. Mention has been made before of the belts, clearly planted for partridge driving, to be seen in some parts of East Anglia, and they must be noticed more particularly a few miles farther on, when we pass Elvedon. The landowners who planted them, and the pheasant coverts, have improved the scenery and their own shooting at the same time. They cannot, perhaps, be credited with absolute and unalloyed altruism. And soon, on this naturally bleak upland, the road was sheltered on either side by close hedges of fir, trimmed to a height of ten feet or so, such as I never saw before, nor have seen since, out of Norfolk. They cannot be meant for screens to conceal the guns from the driven birds, for the British public has to stand a good deal of shooting in illegal proximity to high roads, but it would hardly tolerate permanent arrangements to that end, even in Norfolk or Suffolk, where game is sacrosanct. There can be nothing of this kind here, nor, if there were, would it have been necessary to plant both sides of the road. No—these hedges, charming because of their quaintness, can have been planted in no other spirit than that of humanity, in the widest sense of the word. They break the monotony of the landscape, and that is something; close and impervious, they must break also the force of the wind and must form an effectual barrier to the slashing rain that the wind sends with terrible force before its breath. They are an unmixed blessing, a wonderful improvement to the conditions of wayfaring, and it only remains to be hoped

that there may arise no county surveyor who, using the arbitrary discretion given to him by law, shall decree that these merciful shelters be laid low in the season of the year when his word is law.

On we glided with supreme ease—the whole distance from Newmarket to Thetford being eighteen miles, but the "going so good," as foxhunters would say, that distance counts for little—and the evidence of the cult of St. Pheasant was more and more conspicuous. Were we not drawing near to Elvedon Hall—an Italian house built in 1876 for the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, now the property of Lord Iveagh—and have not fabulous "bags" been long a tradition of Elvedon Hall estate? Let it not be supposed for a moment that this fact is mentioned by way of pandering to the prejudice of protesting Radicals, or of joining in the chorus of ignorant invective against game-preservation, now happily seldom heard in the land. Looking at this bleak upland, having regard to the recent and the probable future history of British agriculture, and, if a personal allusion be permissible, to the well-known character of the present owner of Elvedon Hall, it is plain that this ground could not be better employed than as a game preserve, that as such it probably produces more food and gives more employment than if it were in the hands of farmers, and that, if this were not so, Lord Iveagh would not be the man to preserve game. There is no East Anglian grievance here, and East Anglia certainly feels none. If there be any grievance at all it is that some of the money primarily made on the banks of the Liffey is spent in East Anglia; but, no doubt, much of it comes

indirectly from East Anglia also, and there is no sort of doubt that Lord Iveagh does his duty, and much more than his duty, by Ireland as well as by England, more completely than most men.

Leaving Elvedon behind we sped to Thetford, passing, a mile or so beyond the gates of Elvedon, across the county boundary and out of Suffolk into Norfolk. The character of the scenery remained unchanged. We were in a land of heaths, barren and pleasing, and of rabbit warrens, some of them very ancient and famed for the quality of the skins and fur of the rabbits reared among them. Arthur Young found this country from Northwold to Thetford, and again from Thetford to Ingham, "an uncultivated sheep-walk," and as he made no suggestion for its improvement generally (in spite of the success achieved in the neighbourhood by "one of the best farmers in England [Mr. Wright]," through the use of marl, which was not even "the fat soapy kind"), it may be taken that the case is a fairly hopeless one. The rabbits probably pay as well as anything else would, and we have to thank them, and the sterility of the soil, for the preservation of a fine tract of wild and open land, and for the sense of freedom in passing through it.

As for Thetford, its motto certainly ought to be "Ichabod." There are few places in England, possessed in their time of a substantial reputation, whose glory has departed more completely. It was the scene of a fierce battle between Dane and Saxon; it was the second city in Norfolk in point of importance; it had a mint so late as the days of Henry II; its priory was founded

by Roger Bigod, but is now an uninteresting ruin; it had twenty churches, five market-places, and twenty-four main streets in the time of Edward III; it was the diocesan centre of East Anglia for nineteen glorious years, from 1075 to 1094. Also it has always had its vast earthwork, commonly known as the "mound," commonly believed also to be of enormous antiquity, Roman at the latest, and by virtue of it Thetford has been identified with the Roman Sitomagus. It is a little hard that, when all the rest of the glory of Thetford is gone, even the Mound, which without excavation is totally devoid of interest, should have the glamour taken away from it and that investigators on scientific principles have exploded the Sitomagus bubble. Mr. Rye says:—

"It has been guessed to be Sitomagus, and certainly many signs of Roman occupation have been found here. But the great 'Castle Mound,' steep and high, with its grass-grown sides, so difficult even in times of peace to climb up, is the chief object of interest in the town. There are no traces of buildings on it, and the platform at the top is so small that the generally received theory that it was thrown up as a refuge against the Danes is obviously untenable. The labour and energy necessary to create such a mound would have been enormous, and surely would have been expended in comparatively recent times, such as those in which the Pirate Danes harried our country, to more practical use. That the mound is mainly artificial I have little doubt; but whether it was a burial mound or not cannot now be discovered without deeper excavations than are likely to be allowed."

Considering that the earthwork is a hundred feet high and a thousand feet in compass it would certainly be rather a large-sized burial mound. Let us look at what Mr. Haverfield says. He relegates Thetford to an index of the "principal places where Roman remains have been found, or supposed, in Norfolk," but does not dignify it by a position in the text, which is confined to "places where vestiges of permanent occupation have been found." The "finds" at Thetford have been first Roman coins, according to Sir Thomas Browne and Blomefield. But coins alone do not carry us far.

"Hoard of coins have their own value for the students of Political Economy, since they often reveal secrets in the history of the Roman currency. But they do not so often illustrate the occupation or character of the districts in which they are found. Sometimes they occur in the vicinity of dwellings, buried—for instance—in a back garden, which the owner had constantly under his eye. But they occur no less often in places remote from any known Romano-British habitation; they have been lost or purposely hidden in a secluded and unfrequented spot."

This is a general remark on the test applicable to "sporadic finds," such as those at Thetford, which are banished to the index. There another sporadic "find," which if it had been real would have conveyed more meaning, receives very short shrift. "A lamp is said by Dawson Turner to have been found at Thetford in 1827 under the Red Mound, and the lamp he figures is now in Norwich Museum." That sounds promising, does it not? Men

might bury hoards of money in odd places and forget them, or meet their deaths before they unearthed them. They would hardly be likely so to conceal their household lamps. Alas for this pretty piece of foundation for an imaginative structure, "the curator tells me it was brought from Carthage, and presented by Edward Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, and it certainly has the look of a foreign object." Finally, "Thetford has been called Sitomagus by Camden and others, and also Ician; but it does not seem to be a Roman site at all; its earthworks are post-Roman. Camden's 'river Sit or Thet' is a piece of characteristically bad etymologising."

The learned scholar deigns to write no more than this of Thetford, and, being concerned only with Romano-British Norfolk, sets up no positive theory. But why was the Mound built? Exit Mr. Rye's *à priori* view, that it could not have been built in such comparatively recent times as those of the Danish invasions, because the energy and labour would have been expended to better purpose in those times, for the Mound is post-Roman. It may have been raised between the date of the Roman "departure," in 410, and that at which the kingdom of East Anglia was established. This is one of the most delightful chapters of history, to a persistently boyish mind, because next to nothing is known about it. There is no reason to suppose that the Romanized Britons remaining in East Anglia, as it was to be, welcomed the Saxons with open arms, and every reason to believe that the Saxons were a thoroughly barbarous

crew. The Britons may have raised it against them. Or again, it may have been raised by the Saxons against the Danes, as, in the opinion of Dr. Jessopp, were Castle Rising, Castle Acre, Mileham, Elmham, and the Norwich Mound. The works at some of these places are certainly post-Roman, and at none of them is there clear evidence of Roman occupation; in fact, the chances are that they were all of later date; and the chances are also that there was a great deal more fighting in these parts between 410 and 800 a.d. than the muse of history has chosen to reveal. But this problem is glanced at later. As for Mr. Rye's *à priori* view that the exertion would have been better employed in those days, why, bless the man, Offa's Dyke was made, from the mouth of the Dee to that of the Wye, late in the eighth century, and it is a Cyclopean work.

The Mound is "wrop in mystery," that is all about it, and a heap of earth whereof the meaning is not known to the learned is a precious dull spectacle. So, to tell the plain truth, is Thetford. To us the most interesting facts it provided were a substantial tea at the "Bell," itself quite old enough to please. While tea was in preparation we saw quite as much of Thetford as any reasonable man could wish to see; when tea came it was marked by the appearance of weird things in the nature of tea-cakes, combining something of the toughness of the muffin and the texture of dry toast, not very new dry toast, with the shape of the crumpet. The other memory of Thetford is of a strange old man, having toy windmills for sale and attached to every part of his

person, after the fashion of those street musicians who, by dint of ingenious contrivances in string, can play, or at any rate make a noise with, some half-dozen rude instruments at the same time. This wandering toy seller was a blessing in disguise. He was, and is, a providential reminder that windmills, here, there, and everywhere, are striking objects in the East Anglian landscape. Travelling eastward from the Midlands one sees them as far west as Buckinghamshire, and there not in the Chilterns only, and in East Anglia proper their name is legion. In or out of working order—and in a country of much wind travelling fast, of water moving, as a rule, very slowly, they are mostly in working order—they add picturesque character to the landscape. Moreover, in beauty they have a distinct advantage over the watermill. The latter may be, often is, exquisite at close quarters; its foaming stream, its dripping and moss covered wheel, its gleaming pond with willow-shadowed or elder-girt bank, are among the loveliest objects in England when seen at close quarters. Your windmill, on the other hand, must in the nature of things be placed either on an eminence or in a wide and open space. Not so beautiful, perhaps, only perhaps, at close quarters, as the watermill, it is still more than pleasing, and it can be seen for miles. It is as a beacon on the coast which the mariner can see for many leagues before he passes it, as the motor-car passes the windmill, at a safe distance. Constable, it is worth while to remember, learned some of his skill in an East Anglian watermill.

It was only afterwards that, consulting the faithful "Murray," I

learned that Thetford had been the birthplace of Thomas Paine, "the infamous author of *The Age of Reason*," and that the house in which he was born was standing thirty years ago. It would not, perhaps, have been very interesting to discover whether it was still standing; but it was decidedly quaint to learn that Tom Paine was the son of a Quaker staymaker. Could there be anything more incongruous? That a Quaker should be the father of Thomas Paine was bad enough; that a Quaker should make stays—let us hope he never measured his fair customers for them, but made them in stock sizes—was monstrous. Yet on investigation in other books it turned out to be a true story, and from the investigation came an awakened memory, which others may need also, that Thomas Paine was a really influential personage among the founders of American Independence.

During tea and the consumption of the strange tea-cakes (which may, after all, have been slices of the traditional Norfolk dumpling, more or less toasted) rose a suggestion that we might turn southward for three or four miles, cross the Waveney, enter Suffolk again, and take a motorist's view of Euston Park. It would be the same Euston Park, planted with many of the same trees, grown bigger, which surrounded the house, when Lord Ossory heard the thunder of guns from the east and rode off, as has been recounted before this, to be a spectator of the great sea-fight in Sole Bay. It would be the same house, too, for it was acquired by the first Duke of Grafton, with the property, by marrying Lord Arlington's daughter in the days of Charles II, and

the Dukes of Grafton from time to time hold it still. The decision not to make a detour was reached partly because, as we meant to make Norwich by way of Attleborough and Wymondham, it would have involved a return by the same road as that taken on the outward journey, and partly because the descriptions were unpromising. The reference here is distinctly not to the description in "Murray." "It is a large, good, red-brick house, with stone quoins, built by Lord Arlington in the reign of Charles II, and without any pretensions to beauty, except from its position in a well-timbered and well-watered park." That description, such is the perversity of human nature, raised a suspicion that the house might, if it were visible from the road, turn out to be a very satisfying structure, conveying that idea of spacious comfort and substance which is completely lacking in many a more imposing "mansion." Nor was I moved by the fact that Walpole wrote "the house is large and bad," for it might have been possible to disagree with Walpole, of Strawberry Hill, on a question of taste. But Walpole went beyond matters of mere opinion. "It was built by Lord Arlington, and stands, as all old houses do, for convenience of water and shelter in a hole; so it neither sees nor is seen." That settled the question. Euston might, or might not, be one of the stately homes of England, whose owners permit them to be inspected by strangers on stated days; this March day might have been such a day; but not even the prospect of seeing "Euston's watered vale and sloping plains," or some fairly interesting portraits, or Verrio's frescoes, would

have induced me to avail myself of the privilege, if indeed it had existed. I know what the legitimate inmates of a great house feel on those occasions. Besides, motorists are unpopular in ducal parks, and with good reason. It is absolutely true that a duke, riding a bicycle in his own park, has been abused, coarsely, violently, and recently, by a motorist who was enjoying that park by the duke's grace. That park is now closed to motorists, and no wonder; and the case is not exceptional in character.

So we glided onward—gliding is the true word for the onward movement of a good car—over the open ground of Croxton Heath first, then past sundry villages, not lying close up to the high road, between the houses of Attleborough, and noticed, without halting, Attleborough's fine church. After this, for quite a long while, there were no more villages, and then, in front of us and dominating the view, rose a huge church, having two towers, one at the west end. It stirred memory of pleasant browsings in *Norfolk and Norwich Notes and Queries*. This could be, and in fact was, none other than Wymondham, pronounced Windham, where the Benedictine monks and the parishioners quarrelled over the parish church, which had been appropriated to the abbey. So bitterly did they quarrel that the east end, transepts, and part of the nave were walled off for the monks—they certainly took the lion's share—in 1410, the parishioners being relegated to a portion of the nave; and there, at the west end, they built them a tower and hung bells in 1476.

A mighty religious house was this of Wymondham, entitled

to all wrecks between Eccles, Happisburgh, and Tunstead, and to a tribute of two thousand eels every year from Elingley. This tribute, we may be sure, was paid in Lent, for it is pretty clear from the *Paston Letters* that, while herrings were the stock food of the days of fasting, eels were the luxury that made them tolerable. Mistress Agnes Paston writes to her husband in London that she has secured the herrings—from Yarmouth, no doubt, as she lived hard by at Caister-by-Yarmouth—but that the eels are delayed, which appears to be accounted very sad. Just because this was a mighty religious house at Wymondham it is not surprising to find that Kett, of the famous rebellion, was a Wymondham man. Here, unfortunately, it is necessary to be at partial variance with Mr. Walter Rye. He writes: "Lingard, as of late Professor Rogers, has said that Kett's Rebellion had a religious origin; the former so writing from religious bias, the latter from ignorance." That is rather a brusque way of putting things, for, although Lingard, as a Roman Catholic, was a little apt to think too ill of the effects of Henry VIII's policy towards the religious houses, Professor Rogers deserved to be spoken of with more respect. Enclosures were, of course, the main cause for Kett's Rebellion in 1549, and Kett had a private grudge to avenge against one Sergeant Flowerdew at the outset. But, as a Wiltshire labourer once said to me, "where there's stoans there's carn," so, where there have been great religious houses in England, the rebellious spirit manifests itself in the pages of history before and after those houses came to an end. At Abingdon and at

Bury St. Edmunds—I quote the two places of which the story happens to be fresh in my memory—conflicts were incessant, and there is no reason to doubt that the state of things was the same at Wymondham. The religious houses had become, with exceptions of course, corrupt within and extortionate without the gates. They were oppressors of the poor, whose best friends they had once been; there was no limit to the variety of the tolls they demanded. They were by far the largest landowners in the country. All this had ceased but a very few years before Kett's Rebellion, but the spirit which it had created, the very men in whom that spirit had been raised by extortion and injustice, were very much alive. If Kett's Rebellion had not such a directly religious origin as Lingard supposed, it is more than likely that it was indirectly due to the spirit of unrest and discontent which always arose in the vicinities of religious houses. Indeed, the very success of Henry VIII's stern treatment of the monasteries is proof positive that he was supported by popular opinion. As for the enclosures, some may have been made by the new lords of manors; others, and probably the vast majority, had been made by the grasping "religious." Moreover, the petition sent up to the king when the rebellion was at its height contained express allusions to religious grievances. It asked "that parsons shall be resident, and all having a benefice worth more than £10 a year shall, by himself or deputy, teach the poor parish children the catechism and the primer." Not a very outrageous demand surely; and if we scan the material grievances complained against

—establishment of numerous dovecots, and claims to exclusive rights of fishing, for example—we see that they are essentially the grievances which the religious houses had originated. How Kett and his men marched in due course to Mousehold Heath, on the outskirts of Norwich, the grievous fighting which followed in and about Norwich, how they killed Lord Sheffield by the Palace Gates at a spot marked to this day by a stone with an S on it, how Warwick, after many reverses, finally defeated Kett, who was hanged, drawn, and quartered, shall not be told at length in this volume. These things are an essential part of the history of England; they are far and away the most exciting events in the history of Norwich, and, since they cannot be dealt with fully here, they are best passed over with this slight mention.

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