

well enough as far as it goes, though devoid even of the average force of Jamie. But, as we have intimated, it is a queer river. Pouring into the Thames by several mouths that deviate over quite a delta, its channel, two or three miles above, is destitute in dry season of water. Its current disappears under an elevation called White Hill, and does not come again to light for almost two miles, resembling therein several streams in the United States, notably Lost River in North-eastern Virginia, which has a subterranean course of the same character and about the same length, but has not yet found its Milton or Pope, far superior as it is to its English cousin in natural beauty.

For this defect art and association amply atone. On the southern side of the Mole, not far from the underground portion of its course—"the Swallow" as it is called—stand the charming and storied seats of Esher and Claremont.

Esher was an ancient residence of the bishops of Winchester. Wolsey made it for a time his natural retreat after being ousted from Hampton Court. A retreat it was to him in every sense. He dismissed his servants and all state, and cultivated the deepest despondency. His inexorable master, however, looked down on him, from his ravished towers hard by, unmoved, and, as the sequel in a few years proved, unsatisfied in his greed. Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, was called upon for a contribution. He loyally surrendered to the king the whole estate of Esher, a splendid mansion with all appurtenances and a park a mile in diameter. Henry annexed Esher to Hampton Court, and continued his research for new subjects of spoliation. His daughter Mary gave Esher back to the see of Winchester. Elizabeth bought it and bestowed it on Lord Howard of Effingham, who well earned it by his services against the Armada. Of the families who subsequently owned the place, the Pelhams are the most noted. Now it has passed from their hands. That which has alone been preserved of the palace of Wolsey is an embattled gate-house that looks into the sluggish Mole, and joins it mayhap in musing over "the days that we have seen."

Claremont its next neighbour, unites, with equal or greater charms of landscape, in preaching the old story of the decadence of the great. Lord Clive, the Indian conqueror and speculator, built the house from the design of Capability Browne at a cost of over a hundred thousand pounds. His dwelling and his monument remain to represent Clive. After him, two or three occupants removed, came Leopold of Belgium, with his bride, the Princess Charlotte, pet and hope of the British nation. Their stay was more transient still—a year only, when death dissipated their dreams and cleared the way to the throne for Victoria. Leopold continued to hold the property, and it became a generation later the Asylum of Louis Philippe. To an ordinary mind the miseries