

Calais on the French coast (the magnificent sight reminding one of Douglas Jerrold's *not* that the best thing between England and France was "the channel"), and then to turn and look over miles of "the garden of England," as the county of Kent has been called, with its picturesque patches of gardens and fields, laid out like the squares on a chess-board.

The impression produced would thus take shape in words:—

I have beheld the stately sun arise
Ere the pale earth had yet forgot the night,
Blushing all rosy with a glad surprise,
Like to a girl who sees her heart's delight.
Folding the crags that gird the mountain-top,
Night's messenger, the creeping cold gray cloud,
Holds close its arms; before the sun they drop,
And leave the cliff uncovered by their shroud;
And the fair valley is again revealed;
The scorching sun has freed what was concealed.

I have seen this, and have seen men gathering samphire too, exactly as Shakespeare tells us—and I have eaten the samphire pickled; in the bottle it looks like the tails of mice or rats.

On seaside mud-flats there grows very commonly another plant, suitable for pickling, the salt-wort (*salicornia herbacea*), a singular production, made up of little round, green, erect and juicy pencils. This, sometimes called samphire by mistake, is by no means to be thought of as Shakespeare's samphire, that grows only on the cliffs and rocks, as I have said.

Shakespeare's single botanical mistake is to be found in *Cymbeline*, where he says:—

"A mole, cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
In the bottom of a cowslip."

A certain amount of latitude is always permissible in descriptions designed to be vivid and picturesque, but it is quite beyond the reality to say that the spots in the cup of the cowslip are "crimson." The flower must have been very dear to Shakespeare, as familiar as the violet, and no flower would be plucked more frequently, which makes one wonder so much the more, that over this flower he should have made the one solitary mistake in exactitude of description, which shows in contrast so striking to his otherwise strict accuracy.

One other matter is worthy of note—his mention of the cedar tree—by this name is always understood in literature, the immemorial cedar of Lebanon, so often employed in Scripture as an emblem of kingly stateliness and magnificence. It was, doubtless, the scriptural use which furnished Shakespeare with his ideas of the tree, no mention being made of it by the classical authors, to whom, indeed, the Libani would seem to have been unknown. Shakespeare introduces it upon twelve different occasions. No cedar existed in England during Shakespeare's life-time. The first appear to have been raised from seed by John Evelyn, some time about 1680.

I fear that I am growing tedious, but I have not yet spoken of his weeds, and his medicinal plants, and much more; we have all heard of the play of Hamlet, with the part of Hamlet omitted, and I think I hear it said that I have scarcely reached the "folk-lore" yet. I can only say with Captain Cuttle that "the force of the observation lies in the application of it," and therefore if it meets with your approval, we might reserve "folk-lore" for another paper. My object was simply to indicate a few of the suggestions called up by the mention of flowers in connection with the poet's name, but my pet wild-flowers ran away with me.

"Shakespeare's flowers." The words are talismanic, and as we utter them we see him as a boy on the Avon's side; as a lover, hastening past the hedgerows to blossom-hidden Shottery; as a grave citizen, strolling between the trim beds in his garden at New Place; and at the last, stricken down with mortal fever, "fumble with the sheets," and "play with flowers," and be sure that he "babbled o' green fields."

H.M.

REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM.

The lord is outshone by his valet;
The subject dictates to the king;
The urchin that crawls in the alley
Squalls louder than choristers sing.

The African maid is more garish,
Array'd in her girle of rope,
Than a princess; the priest of a parish
Is prouder by far than the pope.

The cowl must not stoop to the mitre;
The pulpit o'er tops not the pew;
The printer improves on the writer
And whispers the critic his cue.

And the first and most fam'd virtuoso
Must have known diletanti like us,
And been told that the thing should be so-so,
And this way and that way and thus.

The knight of the cross in his armor
Was lay'd by the Apennine hoar;
The trailer looks down on the farmer;
The beggar despises the poor.

The student informs the professor,
The freshman the Master of Arts;
Thus the greater is less than the lesser,
Or the whole is a part of the parts.

CAP'N GOUN.

A HOLIDAY ADVENTURE.

I happened a few years ago to be spending my fortnight's holiday in a small, inland, country village, very beautiful doubtless from an artist's point of view, but to mine, fresh from the life and gaiety of a large city, ghastly in its isolation and loneliness.