



WOLSEY'S TOWER, ESHER.

The angler's capital is Thames Ditton, and his capitol the Swan Inn. Ditton is, like many other pretty English villages, little and old. It is mentioned in *Domesday Boke* as belonging to the bishop of Bayeux in Normandy, famous for the

historic piece of tapestry. Wadard, a gentleman with a Saxon name, held it of him, probably for the quit-rent of an annual eel-pie, although the consideration is not stated. The clergy were, by reason of their frequent meagre days and seasons, great consumers of fish. The phosphorescent character of that diet may have contributed, if we accept certain modern theories of animal chemistry as connected in some unexplained way with psychology, to the intellectual predominance of that class of the population of the Middle Ages. That occasional fasting, whether voluntary and systematic as in the cloisters, or involuntary and altogether the reverse of systematic in Grub street, helps to clear the wits, with or without the aid of phosphorus, is a fixed fact. The stomach is apt to be a stumbling-block to the brain. We are not prone to associate prolonged and productive mental effort with a fair round belly with fat capon lined. It was not the jolly clerics we read of in song, but the lean ascetic brethren who were numerous enough to balance them, that garnered for us the treasures of ancient literature and kept the mind of Christendom alive, if only in a state of suspended animation. It was something that they prevented the mace of chivalry from utterly braining humankind.

The Thames is herabouts joined from the south by a somewhat exceptional style of river, characterized by Milton as "the sullen Mole, that runneth underneath," and by Pope, in dutiful imitation, as "the sullen Mole that hides his diving flood." Both poets play on the word. In our judgment, Milton's line is the better, since Moles do not dive and have no flood—two false figures in one line from the precise and finical Pope! Thomson contributes the epithet of "silent," which will do