

# The Saturday Evening Visitor ;

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## LITERATURE.

From Howitt's Visits to Remarkable Places—Second Series.

### DURHAM.

There is this characteristic of most of our cathedral towns, that they have changed less in their outward aspect than others; and you would imagine that Durham had not changed at all. As we remarked of Winchester, it has grown, not in bulk, but in a gray and venerable dignity. The ancient cathedral, the ancient castle, the ancient houses, all are there. The narrow and winding streets, nobody has presumed to alter them; the up-hill and the down-hill, no one has presumed to level them. The very bridges, built by Flambard and Palsley upwards of six and seven hundred years ago, are still there. A stillness, full of the past, reigns around you; and while I write this in my inn, the solemn tones of the organ from the ancient minster-choir, on its distant hill, remind me that the daily worship of many ages is still going on there, and that the waves of stately music roll in the city no bustle and thunder of a mighty multitude obstruct them, but flow audibly, and as with a deep murmur of many long-enduring thoughts, over the whole.

Whichever way you approach Durham, you are first struck with the great central tower of the cathedral peeping over the hills that envelop the city. It looks colossal, massive, and silent. Anon you lose sight of it; but again you mark it, solemnly breasting the green heights, like some Titan watcher; and it well prepares the mind for the view of the whole great pile, which presently opens upon you. Every traveller must be sensibly impressed with the bold beauty of Durham in the first view. As he emerges from some defile in those hills which, further off, hid from him all but that one great tower, he sees before him a wide, open valley, in the centre of which a fine mount stands crowned with the ancient clustered houses of Durham; the turrets and battlements of its old and now-restored castle rising above them; and again, above all, soaring high into the air, the noble towers and pinnacles of its Norman minster. Around recede in manifold forms the higher hills, as if invited by nature to give at once beauty and retirement to the splendid seat of ancient religion. From various points of these hills, the city looks quite magnificent. The old town, with its red roofs, runs along the ridges of the lower hills, and these higher ones are thrown into knolls and dells, with their green crofts and wooded clumps and lines of trees. The whole surrounding scenery, in fact, is beautiful. My visit there was in the middle of May. The grass had a delicious freshness to the eye; the foliage of the trees was of spring's most delicate green; and the blue bells and primroses, which the hot weather in April had entirely, a month before, withered up in the South, were there in abundance all their dewy and fragrant beauty. Through all the seasons of the year, however, the environs of Durham are delightful. I have passed through it when the hay-

makers were busy in those hilly crofts; when fragrant cocks of new hay, the green turf, which became every moment visible beneath the rakes and forks of merry people, and the sun shining brightly over the old buildings of the city, and the tall trees that quivered their green leaves in many a fair slope, made me think that I had rarely witnessed a more charming scene. What adds vastly to the pleasantness of these environs, is that they are so accessible. Unlike the condition of many a beautiful neighbourhood in many a part of England, where you may peep into Paradise but may not enter, here, almost wherever the allurements of the scene draw you, you may follow. Footpaths in all imaginable directions strike across these lovely crofts. You may climb hills, descend into woody dells, follow the course of a little stream, as its bright waters and flowery banks attract you, and never find yourselves out of the way. In all directions, as lines radiating from a centre, deep old lanes stretch off from the city, along which you may wander, hidden from view of every thing but the high bosky banks and overhanging trees and interweaving sky. Other lanes, as deep and as sweetly rustic and secluded, wind away right and left, leading you to some peep of antiquated cottage, or old mill, or glance over hollow glades to far-off hills, and ever and anon bringing you out on the heights to a fresh and striking view of that clustered city, its castled turrets, and majestic cathedral.

### NEWCASTLE.

DESCRIPTION OF MACHINERY.

(The approach to Newcastle and thunder of its engines are well described. The very words seem to hiss, and rattle along, and shoot fire.)

When you get into the bishopric of Durham, going northward, as I have observed in the visit to Houghton-le-Spring, you begin to see tall engine-houses, and vastly tall chimneys, breathing into the sky long black clouds of smoke. You hear groans and whistlings, and numerous unearthly sounds, around you. These engine-houses contain those great steam-engines that work the coal-mines; and those noises proceed from pulleys and gins, and railways, and other inventions and instruments for raising and conveying away the coals. As you get into the country nearer Newcastle, all these operations—these groanings, and wailings, those smokes and fires—increase upon you. Here you pass one of those tall engine-houses that you saw in the distance, with its still taller chimney hoisting into the sky its slanting column of turbid smoke. You now see from the upper part of the engine-house a huge beam, protruding itself like a giant's arm, alternately lifting itself up, and then falling again. To this beam is attached the rod and bucket of a pump which, probably at some hundred yards deep, is lifting out the water from the mine, and enabling the miners to work, where otherwise it would be all drowned in subterranean floods. O, you see a great beam suspended by