

struction. Timbers are heavy and solid, and not mean and "skrimpy," as is unfortunately so often the case with our modern attempts at what is technically known as half-timbered work. How true this is, may be seen by comparing the modern imitations of the Lisieux houses on the sea-front at Trouville. There, it is but too painfully evident, they have spared the baulk and spoiled the building.

From Trouville to Caen is a very interesting railway journey. By the side of the river Touques the train runs for some distance, allowing one an opportunity to nose the many patient disciples of Izaak Walton that line its banks. Now, the engine pants up a steep "bank," and anon, the train rushes down a sharp incline,



IN COUTANCE.

and winds about like a snake. Past a station or two, and then, in a very charming manner, we run right along the edge of the sea, before, even, the houses on its front—a pretty peep on a bright evening, when the sun is low down on the horizon: the sea, a cool gray, and serpentine pools of tide-left water reflecting the golden rays, whilst the wet sands assume the deepest purple tones, and

masses of olive-brown rock, dark on the glowing water, relieve the monotony of the picture. Soon, we catch a glimpse of the distant city of Caen, with its maze of towers and spires, prominent among which are those of the abbey-churches of William and Matilda.

To the English historian, Caen is one of the most interesting towns in Normandy. It is impossible to stand within the walls of the magnificent Abbaye aux Hommes, without becoming doubly interested in the life of the great Conqueror and in the period of his greatest achievement. "The whole story of the Conquest," says Mr. Green, in his *Short History of the English People*, "stands written in the stately vault of the minster at Caen." Certainly, the town is well placed, for as we approach it from the sea the sight of the towering churches of William and