



In the Saxon Village, Wareham, Dorset

of them. There is coming and going of the men in khaki, and every village, after a year and a half of the war, has its soldier heroes. There are campaigns for recruiting, and frequent drills for home defence. Along the coast, too, there is national policing, for here, as on her other coasts, Britain is on the watch. Yet the fact remains that the people of the south counties are largely free of that military obsession that prevails in some other districts, and in the heart of their farming country the war is as little a nightmare as it is possible to be.

If now the unexpected should happen, and the foe should come down or up the Channel upon, say, the coast of Dorset, it would be but history repeating itself. For so came the Romans, the Saxons, the Danes, the Normans and in later times the Spaniards and the French. The south coast is historic ground. Marks of the several early occupations may be clearly traced at many points. Thus Wareham, in Dorset, which was originally a Celtic town away back in the Bronze Age, has the unmistakable layout of a Roman camp of the first century. So with Dorchester, twenty miles west. Then the Saxons came, and to this day Wareham has a quarter known as the Saxon Village.

Not a town in England has had a stormier career than this same Wareham, which knows, from its own baptismal experience, what raids and wrack of war means. For a century and a half the Saxons and Danes fought over it, till old Canute laid it in ruins about 1015, and from that time it knew no lasting peace for another six centuries. It is to-day a pleasant town of some two thousand people, whose life has been so very quiet and almost sleepily peaceful that it may not have occurred to them even yet to connect the possibility of a German raid with their long list of raidings and plunderings in the ancient past.

It is, of course, a far cry to the time of the Danes and King Canute. Some of the village folk in England, who remember things, are now likening the

Kaiser to Napoleon, but it is doubtful if any of them have gone back to the Danish war-lord for a comparison. Yet Canute was a terror along this south coast. He came down upon it with a navy outfitted after the best eleventh-century fashion, and landed in Dorset, at the old port of Poole. In his wake came destruction and ruin.

In after days the south coast saw goings-on that had nothing to do with war, but were almost as stirring and quite as romantic. Bold, adventurous smuggling, in which the whole populace connived, became one of the standing industries of both Dorset and Sussex; and when the palmy days of smuggling finally passed, piracy and privateering came in. One naturally wonders what sort of recruits the old-time filibusters would make to-day for the British army and navy, as compared with the Sussex farmers who have gone in their place.

Reminders of war-time are never far away, whether Kitchener's men in khaki are around or not. There is, for instance, a series of Martello towers at Eastbourne, built at the time of the Napoleonic war. The south coast was then in mortal fear of invasion, and the government of the day sought to allay that fear by the erection of what at least looked like a means of defense. The towers were placed along the coast from Eastbourne to Kent, and several of them are still standing. But the Sussex people know right well that, whatever their value may have been a hundred years or so ago, they are of no protection against to-day's Napoleon.

The fascination of this untroubled, rural England is due not to its green fields and miles of hedges alone, but very largely also to the number and variety of its old-fashioned hamlets and simple cottage homes, from many of which have come good settlers to the Canadian West. It will be a pity if modern improvements shall ever take away the charm of these quaint places. To be sure, country life cannot afford to be out-of-date and uncomfortable for the sake merely of being



Typical Cottage in a Sussex Village—the South Downs in background.

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