



ON THE SUFFOLK SHORE.

PART I.—SOUTHWOLD

THAT indefinable charm of quaint simplicity, which rings round the bay of the Suffolk coast town, certainly does much to the attraction of Southwold, especially in the eyes of those weary brain workers who, when they take their summer holiday, crave beyond all things for rest and quietude. Rest from the slight mental pace from the fiercer sea land, all these are to be found at Southwold, where the wide disposition of a pleasure-seeker is only paralleled on such a grand occasion as that of the annual marine regatta, when Southwold so far forgets itself as to indulge in a brass band from morning till night, and a gorgeous display of fireworks at the end of the day's festivities.

But Southwold, as it is, as the local poet would say, is not the Southwold we have learned to love, and we can but rejoice that these special occasions are few and far between. As a rule, a soothing sense of peace pervades here, a tranquillity which is unapproachably delightful to eye and ear, tired of the dust and glare of London passages, and all the thousand and one noises and distractions of a great city. The perpetual music of the sea, rising and falling as the tide ebb and flow, with the distant murmur of the sea, and the gentle lapping of the waves at your open window, and the steady drift in the fresh sea breeze, blowing straight across the bay from the east, and the distant shadows as they chase each other over the surface of the water, and the sweeping flight of the sea-mallows, as their white wings gleam for a moment in the sunlight, it is only natural to think for the time being at all events that everything is for the best, in the best of all possible worlds.

Southwold, although not absolutely beautiful, has yet a picture

successful figure, as it stands to the ships, far out at sea. Here may be seen, in a character in groups of fish-folk, carrying the heavy nets to the beach, as they haul in when the work of the day is done.

It is a curious appearance, by the way, to walk suddenly in the night and hear the sound of steadily beating, muffled voices in the distance, and perhaps a gruesome crawling, as of iron chains. In the confusion of your waking moments it is only natural to imagine that you are at home again, and that the long-expected burglars have come of last night, however, you can command sufficient courage to get up and look out of the window, you will quickly realize that it is only the fishermen making ready for their day's work. You will see the dusky figures in their jerseys and sea-waters, moving to and fro on the beach, while the fishing-boats are being got by one unanchored out on the water, dark just over the grim dark sea which comes before the dawn.

The beautiful church of St. Edmund is beyond a doubt the crowning glory of Southwold, and an admirable example of the sure, not only to the learned antiquary or professional historian, but also to anyone who has the slightest appreciation of fine architecture, and perfect design. Its walls also seem pathetically out of proportion, though, to the small population of Southwold, although when it was built—in the fifteenth century—it was surrounded by thickly populated towns, villages, and hamlets which, and to have long since been swallowed up by the sea. The inhabitants of these places, no doubt, in the days before Reformation, helped to fill such spacious churches as those of Southwold, Walberswick, Blythburgh, and Dunwich. Every nook and corner of Southwold Church is well worth careful study, from the exquisite carvings and graceful windows which light the chancel on either side, to the wonderful roof screen of carved oak, ornamented with gesso-work and covered with painting and

varnishes, and to take down thirteen chandeliers, and to take down twenty angels, and to take down the cover of the font." The same amiable gentleman no doubt smiled in the wholehearted washing of the stained glass windows, which were unfortunately very easy of access from the churchyard, and which must originally have helped to make the interior of the church one blaze of color.

It is supposed also that many memorial brasses were torn up and carried away at the same time, for in spite of the great age of the building, there are really old monuments at all in the interior. The exterior of the church is shown in one of our illustrations, and in another the north portion of the road were looking towards the star.

The curious little figure known as "Jack-an-the-clock" stands on a bracket upon the porch wall. He has a crook in one hand, and with the little axe which he holds in the other, he strikes upon a bell hanging in front of him at the moment when the service is about to commence. It is said that Jack stood originally at the west end of the building, and that his work was so cleverly connected with those of the clock in the tower above, that he then struck each hour upon his bell. At the present moment he seems undisturbed delight to the little folks among the congregation when he lifts his small arm and strikes with all his might.

The miniature railway station is also in its way, one of the curiosities of Southwold. It is the terminus of a most quaint little railway, which runs from Halesworth to the sea, passing through Waltham, Blythburgh, and Walberswick. The miniature railway cars, constructed on the same principle as the American railway cars, with doors at either end, and side-way seats for the passengers. In size they are little bigger than large or railway or small steam cars, while the locomotive which draws this baby train looks at a distance quite like a toy-engine. The station, as might be expected,



JACK-AN-THE-CLOCK.



SOUTHWOLD CHURCH (PART OF THE INTERIOR)



WALBERSWICK FROM THE RIVER BANK.



NORTH CLIFF, SOUTHWOLD.

rougher charms of its own, whether you see the town from the Gun Hill, and note how the red-roofed houses of every size and shape cluster round the white light house, with the beautiful tower of St. Edmund's Church in the distance, or whether you look down from the cliff, upon the fishermen's boats which are grouped on the shore in the distant bay, and the fishing-boats, with their red roofs and masts, and their brilliant sails. Certain other of these boats are turned most quaintly of old boats, long past service, and now turned bottom upwards, and used by way of seats. The fisherman's boat, with their wooden masts, are drawn up along the beach. The wonderful picture before you will give you another touch of colour to the scene, not perhaps needed so much as usual, this year, when instead of the ordinary grey sky days out of town, we have had one long spell of glorious summer weather.

Many of these lovely August days have been haunted by scenes or scenes beyond description, even when seen with sleepy eyes, at last a clock in the morning, when the light grey of the dawn changes almost imperceptibly to a leaden tone of rose colour, brightened with clouds of gold, quickly giving place to the clear and sunny light of the sun, as it comes up slowly over the sea. Such marvellous scenes we have seen, too, over the low marsh land, where the broad stream of the river, in its stretch out over its every nook and cranny, is dotted here and there by nothing, and hence to no direction. Here, night after night, we have watched the sun go down, sometimes in a smoky sky of grey, veiled with gold, sometimes in floods of deep red light, and sometimes in the calm, clear blue heaven, making down, suddenly, a large ball of intense fire, and leaving a beautiful after glow reflected in the creek, and the little river, as they wander in and out among the dykes.

Of these days we had the lovely marshland, stretching out towards Walberswick to the distance, now time. For the present, there is still something to be said concerning Southwold Head. A bit of the North Cliff is seen in one of the accompanying illustrations, with a glimpse of the sea and the sea beyond the sea, where the point of the cliff and the white tower of the lighthouse, and the low degree of light, and the sea beyond the sea, is a substantial sign-post, and a sign to the sea, and a sign to the sea.

gilding, of which the colors, though faded by age, is still most beautiful. These over the time, was—

"In the courtyard of St. Edmund's church, the old man and his wife, for the fish on a tray."



SOUTHWOLD CHURCH.

In the second of the book, which is a wonderful one, and which occupied the head of the destroyer, who, in 1843, William Downing, the rural poet, made the following joyful entry in his diary— "Southwold, April 13th.—We broke down our ancient and stony antiquated passage, and the tunnel, so the low surface of the

are correspondingly tiny. The country through which the line runs through is really beautiful, for it goes by way of lovely heath and common, brilliant now with golden grass and purple heather, and dense pine woods, seen at their best perhaps at present, when the tall trees tremble, commencing with the rays of the departing sun, contrast brightly with the dark gleams of the opposite heath.

Here we see the frightened rabbits scurrying away through the bushes, burnt yellow in many places by the extraordinary heat of the summer sun, and then we pass through wide stretches of marsh land, across which the horses and cowmen fly, with their cart-wheels pathless and half-bare a cry, and we note the winding creek and rivers reflecting every change of colour in the sky, and here and there the Red Grey church, almost like small cathedrals, surrounded by tiny hamlets, with their red-roofed cottages and thatched barns, all this new reminder of a once densely populated and prosperous district.

In my second article I hope to tell you something of the interesting monuments in Southwold churchyard, and also to show you some picturesque aspects of Walberswick, that peaceful little village across the Blythe, the happy beating-ground of art, nature and observation, and just now filled to overflowing with the brethren and sisters of the law.

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TO BE CONTINUED
HERALDS.

F. S. M. in Harper's Weekly.
Within the eastern skies a purple ray
Proclaims the coming of the perfect day;
So purple lads which dot the rolling lawn,
Make us aware of royal spring-time's dawn.