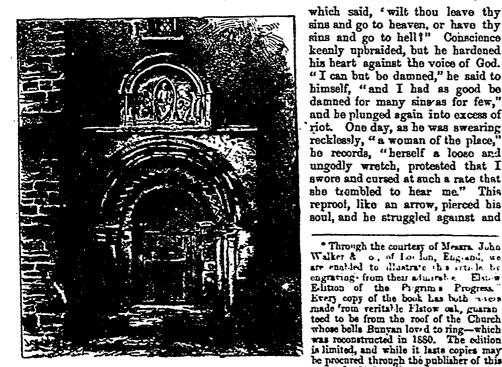


## FOOTPRINTS OF BUNYAN.\* BY THE EDITOR.

0 the present writer the foremost memory in traversing the beautiful county of Bedford, was that of John Bunyan. Many places were passed hallowed by the footprints of the immortal dreamer-Finchley Common, where he spoke bold words on behalf of religious freedom; Dallow Farm, in a loft of which he took refuge when pursued because of the truths he had spoken ; the Village of Elstow, in which he was born, and where, in his reckless youth, he led a dissolute life; Elstow Church, a venerable pile, the notes of whose bells had often been wafted on the air as he palled the ropes; and then Bedford, where he was imprisoned, and within the walls of the old gaol wrote "The Pilgrim's Progress to the Celestial City."

Strange spell of genius, which makes the name of the Bedford tinker a household word in every land. No writer of the English tongue has won so world-wide a fame, and no book has been printed in so many editions and translated into so many foreign languages. Bunyan was born at Elstow,

near Bedford, in 1628, and was



OLD NORMAN DOOR, ELSTOW ORUGON



ELSTOW CHURCH

brought up, like his father before him, "a mender of pots and kettles, vulgarly called a tinker." He lived in the most stormy period of English, history—the turbulent reign of the first Charles—with the long intestine war and its memorable battles of Edgehill, Naseby, and Marston Moor. "Like many of the Lord's heroes," says Dr. Punshon, "he was of obscure parentsge, and, not improbably, of gipsy blood. His youth was spent in excess of riot. He was an adept and teacher in evil. In his seven teenth year we find him in the army—'an suddenly dart from heaven into my soul, which wild to be the seven the



BEDFORD PRISON.

overcame this wicked habit. In the quaint old church of Elstow is still shown the carved seat in which Bunyan sat. The old Norman door, with its dog tooth moulding, dates back probably six centuries or more. Above the door is a carved representation of Christ, having St. Peter with his keys on the right and St. John the Evangelist on the left. In the door is a wicket, which may have suggested the wicket-gate of the allegory. One day Bunyan overheard

"three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, talking of the things of God." Their pious talk sank into his soul, "shaking it as if his breast-bone weie split asunder." A godly "Master Gifford,"

who, in his youth, had been a reckless Royalist trooper, was the pastor of a little Baptist flock in Bedford. He was the "Evangelist" of Bunyan's dream, who first pointed the immortal dreamer to the wicket-gate of mercy. Bunyan joined his Church, and was formally baptized in the River Ouse, near Bedford Bridge. Soon he began to preach in burning words the great salva-tion he had experienced. The word was attended with power and with converting grace. In 166, he was indicted under