

commands the sand-hills and the strand at low tide, the top corner, as it were, of a triangle at whose other points stand two not less curious relicts—le Croisic and le Bourg de Batz. Besides Guérande there are but two places—Vitré, in the very centre of Brittany, and Avignon in the south—which preserve their mediæval aspect and features intact in the midst of our century.

Guérande is to this day enclosed by mighty walls, its wide moats are full of water, its battlements are unbroken, its loopholes are not filled up with shrubs, the ivy has thrown no mantle over its round and square towers. It has three gates, where the rings may still be seen for suspending the portcullis; it is entered over drawbridges of timber shod with iron, which could be raised, though they are raised no longer. The municipality was blamed in 1820 for planting poplars by the side of the moat to shade the walk; it replied that on the land side, by the sand-hills, for above a hundred years, the fine, long esplanade by the walls, which look as if they had been built yesterday, had been made into a mall overshadowed by elms, where the inhabitants took their pleasure.

The houses have known no changes; they are neither more nor less in number. Not one of them has felt on its face the hammer of the builder, or the brush of the whitewasher, or trembled under the weight of an added story. They all retain their primitive character. Some are raised on wooden columns forming "rows," under which there is a footway, floored with planks that yield but do not break. The shop-dwellings are small and low, and faced with slate shingles. Woodwork, now decayed, has been largely used for carved window-frames; and the beams, prolonged beyond the pillars, project in grotesque heads, or at the angles, in the form of fantastic creatures, vivified by the great idea of Art, which at that time lent life to dead matter. These ancient things, defying the touch of time, offer to painters the brown tones and obliterated lines that they delight in.

The streets are what they were a hundred years ago. Only, as the population is thinner now, as the social stir is less