

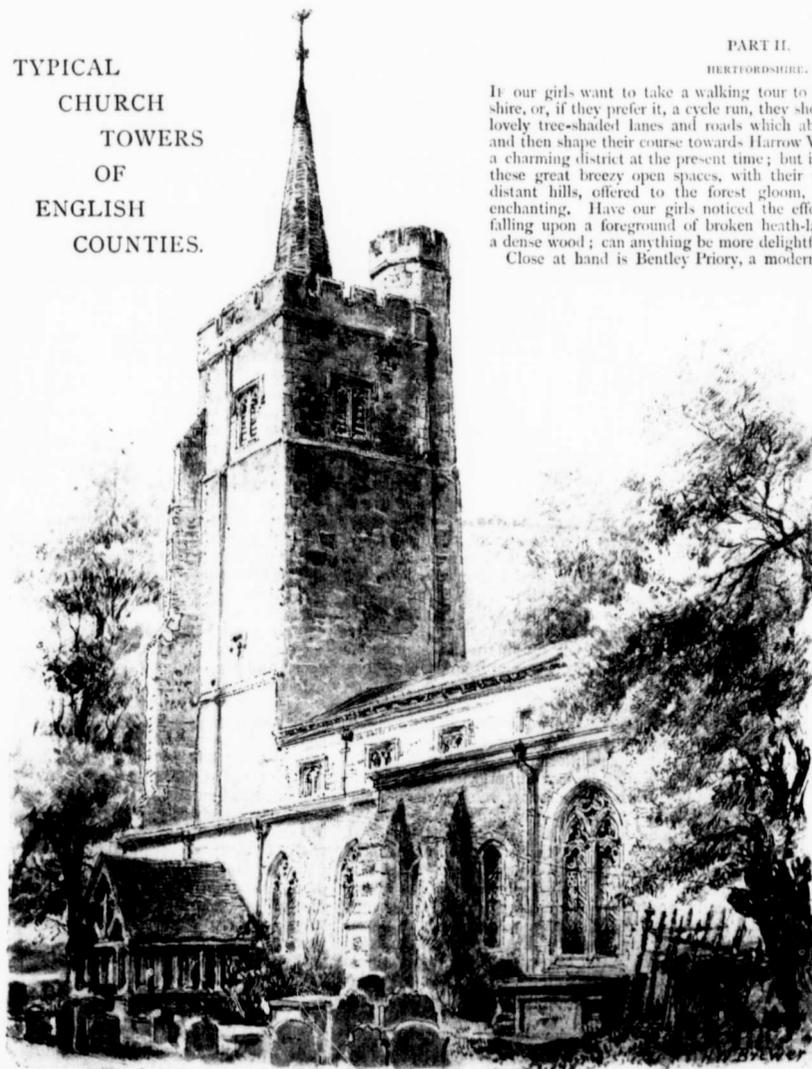


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TYPICAL
CHURCH
TOWERS
OF
ENGLISH
COUNTIES.



ALDENHAM CHURCH, HERTS.

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PART II.
HERTFORDSHIRE.

If our girls want to take a walking tour to the pretty county of Hertfordshire, or, if they prefer it, a cycle run, they should go by Pinner through the lovely tree-shaded lanes and roads which abound in that neighbourhood, and then shape their course towards Harrow Weald and Stanmore Common, a charming district at the present time; but in early days the contrast which these great breezy open spaces, with their views of range after range of distant hills, offered to the forest gloom, all around, must have been enchanting. Have our girls noticed the effect of a warm ray of sunlight falling upon a foreground of broken heath-land after a long walk through a dense wood; can anything be more delightful?

Close at hand is Bentley Priory, a modern house of no special interest from an architectural or archaeological point of view. And few people even in the neighbourhood seem to be aware that the name is old. The grand forest trees surrounding the estate hint that it has a past history, and such is really the case, for an ancient record proclaims the fact that in the year 1258 a prior of Bentley was killed by a corn-mow falling down upon him; the lands of the suppressed monastery were made over to the king in 1543, and not a single vestige of the building now exists. When we have followed the road to the end of the noble grove which borders the demesne of this ancient estate, we have crossed the border of the counties of Middlesex and Hertfordshire and are in the latter county. When we come to explore we find evidences that we are in what was formerly a richer and more well-to-do county than that which we have just quitted, and the very first church we come across, Aldenham, proclaims the fact unmistakably. Instead of the low, rudely-built Middlesex tower we have a tall, handsome one, embattled at the top but with a little wooden spirelet or "spike" rising out of the lead-flat at the top; this "spike" or spirelet is a common feature in Hertfordshire, and is found in other counties, but we think it is a