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COUNTRY TOWN SKETCHES.

The aspect of some of our little quiet provincial boroughs, basking, as it were, in the sunshine of a summer day, is very prepossessing. To the dwellers in large cities, or the inhabitants of the woods and fields, a small country town forms equally an object of curiosity; the latter wonder how anybody can be found to live in a town at all, and the city folk, how they can live in a small town; and certainly small towns are to active-minded persons more suited for casual visits than for a permanent abode. There are, however, many shades of difference between them; some give an idea of laziness, some of dullness, and some of quietude only; while some are dirty, and some are bustling—characteristics which strongly impress themselves upon the mind of a traveller, even should his sojourn be limited to the change of horses at an inn. In the metropolis, the spectator, as he surveys the crowd which throngs in every thoroughfare, wonders how inhabitants can be found for the masses of the people which seem to choke up the avenues; while, in country towns, he suspects, in spite of some slight indications to the contrary—smoke from the chimnies, and flower-pots in the windows—that the houses are destitute of inhabitants. It seems to be a rule of etiquette among the genteeler sort never to be seen; tiers upon tiers of windows, five in a row, will stretch themselves along some substantial brick mansion, adorned with the whitest of little muslin curtains, and bright with continual cleaning; but not a head, not even the housemaid, appears at one of them. The shops are gaily set out with ribbons and gauds of the most tempting description, but they seem to possess no attraction for the belles of the place;

and if there should be a group of young ladies, either lounging at the door, or looking into the windows, ten to one but they belong to the carriage at the end of the street, which has just brought them in from the country.

A knot of two or three gentlemen may sometimes be seen congregating together under the portico of the chief inn, but the ladies are infinitely more secluded. Most of them, nevertheless, contrive not only to hear, but to see, all that is going on. The smallest movement in the place becomes known by a sort of magic. An event, no matter what, occurs at the eastern extremity of the town, and all about it is known in no time at the western boundary; the rapidity with which the intelligence travels resembling in some respect the velocity of an electrical shock, which is felt at both ends of a wire at the same instant of time. The incoming of any stranger is, in particular, a matter of extraordinary interest; it is as good as meat and drink—bed, board, and washing for a week—to half a hundred gossips, who are not long in ascertaining his pedigree up to the days of Noah, and his resources even to the odd pounds, shillings, and pence, lying in the hands of his banker. The arrival of a post-chaise is a great affair in these old-fashioned dreamy towns; and even the circumstance of the family carriage of the neighbouring squire having been seen on shopping excursions three times during the week, is a bit of news not to be despised. It is known beyond the possibility of doubt, that there will soon be a marriage in the family of the Barringers at the Lodge; that the postman has called at the cottage of Captain Riley five times within the last fortnight with letters, some of them with large red wax seals stamped