

ON THE SUFFOLK SHORE.

PART II.—W. L. CRAWFORD.

BEFORE we make our way across the marshes to Wallerwick, we will spend a little while wandering through Southold, a beautiful place where several improvements have lately been made.



WALLERWICK FROM THE SUFFOLK SHORE.

and many half-obliterated inscriptions have been restored. As you walk here among the graves the echo of the sea seems to change to a minor key, and you can almost imagine that it is rolling out a funeral dirge for the brave men and true, whose last resting-place is not upon this earth.

The monuments are for the most part those of a race of sea-faring men—Trinity pilots, master mariners, officers of the coast-guard, and many many fishermen. In more than one rural instance the bones of the dead men do not lie under those grey headstones, but have been left to rot in the sea. There is a stone, for instance, erected to the memory of two young men, the one, a miller of twenty-eight, and the other, a lad of eighteen, who are "supposed to have perished" when a certain ship went down. I imagine the heart ache and the anguish covered by those words, "supposed to have perished!"—the sickening suspense, the years of hoping against hope, the dead dread certainty as time went on that the two lost ones would never return, and then the touchstone in the wind-swept graveyard, all that was left for their souls to weep over.

Another epitaph, which is well worth quoting, by its metre recalls the sea writing of the early days of the century, and reminds us of a time when the Fife was a grim reality on the high seas, and had not sunk to the level of a mere of poetic fiction. After stating that the stone is erected to the memory of a certain seaman, who perished in the Gulf of Florida on the 12th of June, 1819, on board the "Ann," West Indian, it goes on to say—

"Not yet have we seen a widow's wail,
Our hearts remembered with the hope of gain,
On foreign seas he fell, but not by storm,
When halcyons while the morning were calm,
Saw by the rock towards the tide receding,
But by the crowd, which shouting to him said,
But by the sea, recovered in Brandon's gully,
By heads of beach-wood parted, to be dead."

After this somewhat dismal wandering among the tombs, we will make our way through the quaint little Southold streets and out into the open country. We leave behind us the dusty old marketplace—gay to-day with its green wooden stalls laden with fruit,

vegetables, and flowers, and shaded by striped awnings—and we pass across one of the many pretty green, which are so characteristic of the place, and presently find ourselves on the outskirts of the town, with the salt marshes stretching away at our feet.

The land is everywhere intersected by dykes, and on either side of the high, wind-swept paths, there are narrow rivers and creeks, picturesque always, but farthest at high tide, when the salt water flows equally in, and wells up, close under the grassy bank. Further inland the rustling reeds and rushes seem never tired of lending their graceful heads, and whispering together, as the breeze comes blowing across from the sea. They shiver a little though, as if they thought of the dreary days to come, when that same wind, now so light and tender, will diabolically howl over the desolate marshes and rattle the dry stems together, and when the warm St. Peter's sunbeams will have faded away like a pleasant dream.

To-day, however, under a brilliant autumn sun, which is very far from our thoughts as we take our way across the low lying land between Southold and Wallerwick, and note the groups of busy cattle, contentedly grazing in the water-meadows. Looking back towards the town we see the turpentine golf players and their attendant caddies, as they pursue their melancholy pleasure on the bumpy courses near the picturesque black windmill, which is now, alas! to be demolished. The cricket-coated figures of some of the select among the gaffers stand out in strong relief against a dark background of grass and furze.

Presently our dyke path stops short, somewhat suddenly, as we find ourselves, on the banks of the river Mythe, looking across towards Wallerwick. Beyond a wide stretch of shingle and grey water can be seen the red roofs and green trees of the little village, well beloved of artists for many years past. Here poor Charles Keene spent summer after summer, and here at the present time there is a complete colony of artists and art students, some of them having taken up their quarters at the Old Toll Inn, while others are staying at the various cottages, where the latticed windows look out on small old-fashioned gardens, brilliant with hollyhocks, nasturtiums, marigolds, and giant dahlias.

The old inn itself is not to be despised as a subject, with its white-washed front, and its thatched roof with overhanging eaves. Long wooden benches, painted a wonderful shade of pale blue, are

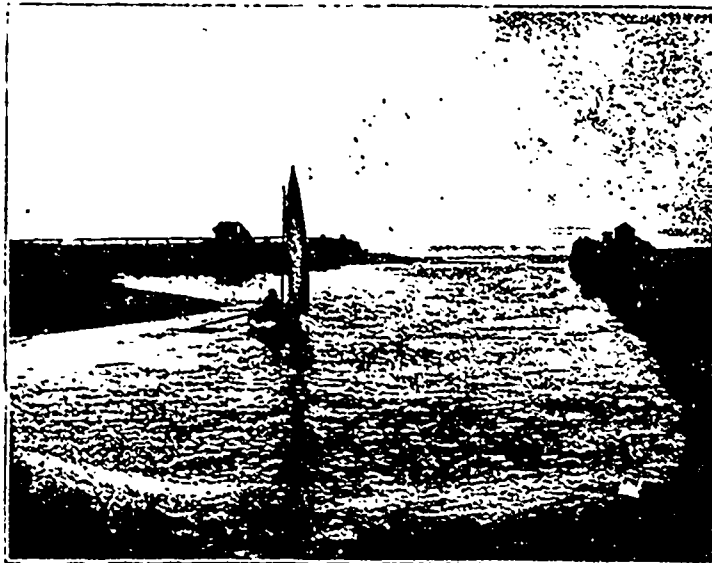
set out in front of the inn, and here, instead of the cinders and gutters, whom one would naturally expect to find in such a place, we see groups of artists—the girls, with their pretty frocks hidden under business-like aprons, comparing canvases, and solemnly discussing the all important questions of light and shade. In a great many instances, the value is the voice of New York or Boston, while the art is the art of Paris.

Quite incongruous figures are these art-students, as they sit in and out of the cottage doors, and across the village green, passing to and fro the grey country with eager, and laden with camp-stools, easels, sketching umbrellas, and paint-boxes. So thoroughly accustomed are the neighbouring natives to see artists at work, that as a rule, they go on their way unheeding, and regard the unhappy painter the awful feeling, that two or three strange people are breathing down his back, and are just about to utter unkind criticisms on his work.

The artists do not always escape notice, however, for a certain young man the other day, who was proudly displaying to one of the cottagers the labour of weeks, in the shape of a picture of the common and the surrounding houses, was met with the pleasing remark, delivered in a very loud tone of voice, and with noticeable scorn, "That's a bit like the place. I believe I could paint it as well as that young man!"

But all this time we have been walking on the river bank until the ferry-man can come over to fetch us. There are two ways of crossing the Mythe. You can go over in the big passenger, with much grunting of wheels and grating of chains, and in this case you may possibly have horses and carriages, pony carts, and bicycles, and even cows, sheep, and pigs for your travelling companions. Or you may go over in the old blue boat, rowed by the older ferry-man, a bluff, grey-bearded sailor, who has seen foreign service in his time, and who rows you quickly to the opposite shore over the fast running tidal river with the skill and ease acquired by long and incessant practice.

Among the backwaters of the Mythe there are many delightfully picturesque glimpses of river-bank looking seawards. Here and there the stream is crossed by curious old bridges, whose wooden planks and rickety painted "beams" are reflected in the clear water of the creek. The old hulls of decayed fishing smacks are drawn up along the shore, and together with the red roofed huts, which everywhere abound, seem to form part



THE HARBOR AT WALLERWICK.

beautiful subjects for the pencil and brush of the trustworthy artists who, during the summer months, come here for inspiration.

There is much to tempt them, certainly, in the way of color, for many of these old boats show these wonderful reds and greens, which can only be arrived at after long exposure to wind and weather, brilliant sun, drizzling rain, and strong winds. Much lovely color, too, may be seen in the golden rust of the chains and anchors lying about the shore, and in the more distant houses and cottages of the village. Here the bright coloring is softened and subdued by the close proximity of the old town which are grouped round the village, and which may be seen in one of our illustrations, the Victoria, and which may be seen in one of our illustrations, taken from a boat in the creek, and looking towards Wallerwick across the village green. Another picture represents the old mill and the church in the distance, with the sea-strut of Wallerwick, as seen from the shingle-grass. Our illustrations are from photographs by Mr. J. Murray, of High Street, Southold.

Seeing how still and quiet the place is now, it is difficult to believe that once upon a time this small river was quite a highway of commerce. The old mariners who lounge about the ferryman's hut still talk of the days when ships from distant parts would come up the Mythe, and take on board their cargoes of wheat and country produce in Wallerwick Harbor. Along the quay, by the river side, long rows of farmers' waggons would stand, waiting their turn to be unloaded; but now, alas! no business of any kind ever touches the deserted little town, although the raised granaries along the bank bear witness to its former prosperity.

The beautiful old harbor (of which we give an illustration) is entirely forsaken, except for a visit now and then from an occasional fishing smack from Lowestoft or Yarmouth. The Southold Pier on the one side, and the Wallerwick Pier on the other, both alike silent and solitary, seem to look at each other sadly across the waste of waters, as if lamenting together the remoteness of human glory and all the other "chances and changes of this transitory life." Once they looked down upon ships to fill with happy riders to the firm foreign ports, laden with merchandise, and representing prosperity and wealth, but now the breakers roll in unheeded, moaning dimly as they sweep themselves against the harbor bar, while the sea-larks every blither and blither wail about their wretchedly cry the only sound which comes to break the silence beyond the never-ceasing murmur of the sea.

