

GREEN LANES AND BYWAYS.

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I.

OLD COUNTRY LANES.

"Through the green lanes of England, a long summer day,
When we wandered at will in our youth's merry May;
When we gathered the blooms o'er the hedge-rows that hung,
Or mocked the sweet song that the nightingale sung.

In the autumn we knew where the blackberries grew,
And the shy hazel-nuts hidden deep in the shade;
And with shouting and cheer, when the Christmas drew near,
In search of the ripe ruddy holly we stray'd."

These lines appeared in the "Illustrated London News" for January the 24th, 1852. They are dear to my remembrance, for they were sung to me by a much-loved companion—long gone to his rest—as we strolled along an English lane, one day in the summer, after their appearance. From this friend* I received my first lessons in Entomology.

The enclosures in the rural parts of England, by which the road-ways pass, have been from times immemorial, and for the most part they are known each by its proper name, as "Nether lea," "Ea-side," "Haly-well Croft," "Twenty acres," "Basket lot," etc. The boundaries of the fields are quickset hedges, with ditches on the outer sides. Six feet from the roots of a hedge was allowed for the ditch.

The original growth of the hedges was Hawthorn (*Crataegus oxyantha* L), but, as time passed on, birds and other agents dropped seeds of many plants among the thorns. The most noteworthy of the intruding growths are: Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Dog-rose (*Rosa canina*), Honeysuckle (*Caprifolium perfoliatum*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Traveller's Joy (*Clematis vitalba*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Bindweed (*Convolvulus sepium*).

The mud from the ditches—washings from the roads and fields—is thrown up periodically to the hedge-bottoms, and the fresh soil maintains the varied growth in constant vigour.

*Mr Edwin Tearle, in after years Rector of Stocton, in the Diocese of Norwich.