

## WAKEMAN'S WANDERINGS.

LONDON, June 19, 1893.—There is no place in England where such a fine example of the very ancient stone-built village may be found as at Broadway, the "Bradweia" of 500 years ago, which nestles against the lower slope of the northwestern face of the Cotswold Hills, overlooking the lovely vale of Evesham. The many-gabled Lygon Arms, a delicious resort for Americans and English artists and other genuine epicures for food, scenery and charming antiquities, is the most ancient of all the structures of the slumberous old mountain town.

The precise structure standing here today is known to have been occupied as an inn for upwards of 500 years. It is charmingly picturesque without, and its interior is most quaintly arranged, with odd nooks and corners, while the first floor of the east wing has a fine old room with a curiously carved chimney piece in stone, other interesting ornamentation, and a wondrous lot of charming traditions about the great folk, some on desperate business, like Charles I., in 1645, and Cromwell, in 1651, who have lodged within it. Broadway itself is the sweetest old English pastoral village idyl to be found in England, and, to me, this ancient hostelry, with its Tudor chimneys, its many gables and dormers, its stone and iron finials, mullioned windows and bays, its fine old ingles and fireplaces, with its stone walls, thick as a fort's, massed with creepers and vines, is its warmest and mellowest page.

The old cathedral city of Gloucester possesses several very ancient inns which are still in use, two of which are regarded as among the most interesting sights of the place by all foreign travelers. One of these, the New Inn, is an extraordinary relic of very ancient times and deeply interesting from its great age, its historical associations and its extremely picturesque character, its architecture having many features in common with the larger and distinctly Moresque inns of Spain and Portugal.

Readers of history will recall that the splendid south aisle of Gloucester's magnificent cathedral was built in 1318 by Abbott Thokey, during the period of whose abbacy the body of murdered King Edward II., which had been refused interment in the abbey of Malmesbury, Kingswood and Bristol, was given burial within it. Great pilgrimages to Edward's tomb, and wonderfully increased revenues to the then abbey church resulted. The throngs were sometimes so enormous that the city could not shelter them, and they were obliged to encamp at night outside the gates. A shrewd old monk, named John Turnius, taking proper advantage of the situation, in 1450, under the abbacy and with the sanction and assistance of the famous abbot, Thomas Seabroke, built the New Inn, which at the time doubtless had no superior as a public hostelry in Europe. Think of taking your ease in your inn, as you can do in the New Inn of Gloucester today, in a tavern which has survived the changes of 443 years and never been closed a day!

The quaint old place is so cunningly hidden behind the grim walls of Northgate street that the casual straggler, not having it in actual quest, would be for-

tunate enough indeed if his glance penetrated the deep, dark archway separating it from the street and fell upon the charming old-world scene within. I can never forget my own experience, when, wholly ignorant of the spot, and of all of dear old Gloucester, for that matter, I had come after a wearisome tramp down the Malvern Hills, and without object or purpose was leaning against the corner of this same dark archway for a bit of rest. Turning in a vagrant way to depart, a coaching party dashed gaily past me through the archway. My eyes followed the cavalcade, and then my legs followed my gladdening eyes. What an exquisite pleasure was in that sense of original discovery of a place so picturesque and old! How hesitantly I tiptoed about that fine and ancient courtyard, feasting on this and that like a covetous intruder; and when I found these were anybody's pictures for the reckoning of even three pennyworth of entertainment, with what delight did I luxuriate at the bow-window of the fine old coffee-room, ordering this and that which I did not want, and tipping the waiter so immoderately that he sent another, and that one another, but taxing them all with questions so that they gasped between answers; and finally wound up by settling an advance score which removed all doubts of responsibility, if not of sanity, while ordering my luggage to the quaint old room with the loquacity of a bridegroom and the bravery of a lord!

Around the entire three stories of the inner court, which is very spacious, run galleries upon which all the dormitories open, precisely as with the Spanish patio or court; while the half story of the peaked roof is broken into dormers, hooded with pretty tiling, and their faces set, like the border of an old woman's cap, with simple but wondrous ornamentation. The most picturesque of old stairs and landings lead from one story to the other. Huge iron ornamentations, many cast with sacred emblems in view of its original pilgrim character are found promiscuously attached to the doors, windows, and ceilings, angles and bows. Diamond shaped panes in leaden frames are common. Casement and little swinging windows are everywhere throughout the structure. Niches for effigies and carved crosses have not yet been hidden by time and change.

Opposite the street archway is another lesser but picturesque archway, with the entire facade of the rear side of the quadrangle above showing as quaint and dreamful a scene of restfulness and antiquity as can be found in Europe. Through this is reached the stable-yard, now restricted to accommodation for sixty horses. In olden times it could care for hundreds of animals, as folk of quality in the time of the King Edward pilgrimages invariably came on horseback. Everything about the New Inn is queer and quaint and old. Never elsewhere was seen such a radiant jumble of odd corners, little arches, protruding upper stories, peepholes of windows, gables, offices, "ostries," taprooms, and wealth of vines and foliage and grave unctuous waiters and chubby-cheeked kitchen maids, housemaids, and bar-maids to heighten the mysteries, cheer and charm of the typical old English inn.

Dead old Bowes, in northern Yorkshire, alongside what was called the Great North Road, possesses one of the finest specimens of the ample roadside inns of the olden coaching days to be found in all England. The village and this inn have always had for me the weirdest fascination of any provincial spot in Britain, though both hamlet and inn are now dreary and desolate beyond description. The old inn here, now called the Unicorn, was first known as the George. Eight coaches, bound either to London or Glasgow, daily changed horses in its great yard in the good old coaching days. It is to this inn that Charles Dickens, with a great and merciful motive in fiction, repaired with his friend and companion, Hablot Browne, a few weeks before Christmas of 1857, where the two remained while Dickens secured material for "Nicholas Nickleby."

He had letters to a yeoman of the place, soon to shine as one of the "Immortals" of fiction as honest "John Browdie." He represented himself as agent of a poor widow desirous of placing her only boy in a quiet country school. In this way he secured admission to a number in the vicinity, though shut out of some by the wary masters. The "school" seeming most suitable as a prototype of them all, from the personnel of its savage owner and his family, with wild and desolate physical surroundings in keeping with hopelessness of the school life of the place itself, was the Dotheboys Hall, still standing in Bowes—hardly a stone's throw from the ancient Unicorn Inn, the house being now occupied by "old man Bonsfield," husband of the veritable Squeer's daughter, Fanny Squeers, known in life as Mary Ann Shaw—where "Nicholas Nickleby," his protégé in misery, the wretched "Smile," and scores of other helpless young lives, are depicted as having undergone an almost inconceivable life of servitude, starvation and cruelty.

Investigations showed that the horrible picture drawn was not an exaggeration, and bore out Dickens' own statement in the original preface that "Mr. Squeers and his school are faint and feeble pictures of an existing reality, purposely subdued and kept down lest they should be deemed impossible." This, Dickens' second, and in some respects his greatest, novel was begun in April, 1838, and finished in October, 1839. At the appearance of the first part he ran away from London, as he always did, to remain in hiding until a distinct measure of public favor or disfavor was shown. In the case of "Nicholas Nickleby" his forgivable skulking was of short duration. The first day's sale of the first part exceeded 50,000 copies. Not six months had passed before the torture and cruelty of helpless scholars in these remote prison-pens were abated, and before the last chapter of "Nicholas Nickleby" had been read, public feeling, which in many portions of the country barely escaped expression in riot, had annihilated every child-hell of the Dotheboys Hall variety in England.

If you came from London to Bowes over the same coach-road as did Nicholas Nickleby, when, nearing the end of his dreary journey, "at about 6 o'clock that night, he and