

the lowly are Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest. It is but a pleasant walk from the heart of London to Hampstead Heath, for its farthest reaches can be no farther than six miles from the Strand; while an Epping Forest to-and-return fare is but one shilling; and the myriad London costermongers and other possessors of tidy carts and traps find it an easy jog to their donkeys or screws to either of these recreation grounds. The result is that in both of these resorts you invariably find hordes of the "common people" filled to the brim with horse-play, "four ale" and good cheer. They are vigorous in their merry-making as children loosed from school. They are grudgingly but good-naturedly fierce in the utilization of every moment of the holiday in some sort of rugged diversion, and altogether they furnish scenes of the heartiest, easiest-provoked, most unctious and vociferous holiday enjoyment to be found in all the world.

But who can properly describe this Hampstead Heath and its quaint and picturesque surroundings, or fitly tell its weird and pleasant memories?

The Heath is a trifle west of north of the heart of London. It is not more than 300 or 400 acres in extent; but as it comprises the highest and wildest hills rising out of the valley of the Thames, the railways have had to stop at its edge and leave the region for the people, almost as nature fashioned it. The High Street of old Hampstead town, winding up the last steep of the first hill which has stood as a rampart against London encroachment, gives charming views of ancient houses, old streets which have held their old names, old courts, and avenues of limes and elms so old that the midday light beneath them is like the saffron gloaming of eventide. There is a pensive hush in these streets and lanes suggestive of splendid antiquity and gentle, loving decay. It would be a glorious outing in itself to saunter and dream in these lovely avenues and courts, with here and there their shadowy vistas blending into blossoming lanes, every one of which, sun-flecked and odor-laden, invites to the free, wide expanse or the pleasant country beyond.

You enter the Heath at once from old Hampstead town, and instantly comprehend that the region and its attractions to Londoners must be considered in three distinct and delicious aspects—its advantages for free and untrameled recreation; its positive inspiration to painter and poet and excellent uses for the naturalist; and from those blendings and environment of mellow age, tenderest aspect of all, which furnish the idler and dreamer a host of winsome memories. First of all it is a wild and rugged heath and not a park. Dark, wind-bound fir trees hang against sandy ridges where they have for centuries clutched the virgin soil. There are high banks of red sand pierced by rabbit burrows. Ancient ditches and hedges cut each other at sharp angles. Narrow bournes or ravines, their hallowed floors of clear and shining sand, plough the hills in fanciful furrows, providing tiny crags of furze, mounds of verdure and pleasant ways and shade, as if one walked in well-worn ancient water-courses.

Altogether it is a mass of hills scooped into innumerable pits and cavities, threaded with tiny ponds, banked every-

where with hardy gorse and mazes of heather, wild flowers and grass, splashed with knots of noble trees, intersected by countless foot-ways, wild and ragged as when the Romans were here, and all seemingly held together by interlacing roadways and rugged sides of rock and sand and pines and furze. Around it is a shining thread of lovely hamlets, stately halls and winsome cottages, all gabled, ivied, old. Within it on gardened hills and blossoming hollows, or at its slumbering edges, where old structures like old folk seem to love to doze in sun and shade, are scores of those quaint and ancient inns, still the most charming heritage of the "merrie England" of long ago; and the whole region is exhilarating from its free, fine uncouthness and the ceaseless breezes sweeping from odoriferous northern vales, ever inviting to their life-giving dalliance the city millions below, and beating back from these fields of pleasure the pestilential breath of grimy London town. Is it any wonder that the hundreds of thousands of London folk who come here give themselves to untrained enjoyment, or that this translation from city woes and wails produces such a joyous delirium to young and old that you will hear on Hampstead Heath more ringing, almost ecstatic, laughter than in any other place in all the world?

Seated beneath the flagstaff which marks the highest elevation of the Heath one can readily understand how the region roundabout has been the best beloved of all the near haunts of London naturalists, and why, from the days of Gainesborough and Constable it has furnished the landscape artist's canvas with many of its noblest themes and scenes. It is the one place in England where its greatest city and a vast expanse of typical English landscape can be contemplated almost at the same glance. Wide open to the wind and sun stretches vale after vale to the southeast, the north and the west. Your circling view extends into seven English shires. Far in the north can be traced the spire of Hainslop Steeple, in Northamptonshire. The Knockholt Beeches in Kent the hills and downs of Surrey, the Laindon hills of Essex, the turrets of royal Windsor in Berks, and a church on the far borders of Oxfordshire, are in full view.

Down below old Hampstead, enfolded by the exhalations of hundreds of thousands of chimneys, in the distance its myriad roofs like a plain of broken and seething lava, lies the metropolis of the world, the dome of gray old St. Pauls like a peak of fuseless steel in a measureless, incinerating mass. What mind can grasp the magnitude of human history, of human accomplishment and of human despair within this single circle of vision!

One is said to always find good company at Hampstead Heath. Yes, even if alone. You can still sit here by the flagstaff with no one to converse with and conjure up a gressome or goodly company. It was at Hampstead Heath as at Hounslow Heath that the Jacksons, the Duvals and the Turpins of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries cut purses, and throats if need be to get them, and made merry as lords at its inns, some of which are here to minister alike to saint and sinner now. Over against the gardens of Wildwood, at the side of Heath hill road, still

stands the ancient Gibbet Elm. Upon its huge old arms, many centuries old, were hung in chains, when caught, these merry knights of the road.

The same locality, as you stroll towards Spaniard's Road, will remind you as you look at the little oriel window of Wildwood house, of the saddest year of Lord Chatham's life; the year when the English nation's destinies were trembling in the balance and Chatham shut up here like a monk at penance struggled and prayed to be physically new and whole. It was here that Addison and his friends passed their summer evenings in the gardens of the old "Bell and Bush" tavern. George Steevens, Shakespeare's noted commentator, lived and died at the ancient "Upper Flask" inn. Dr. Johnson wrote his "Vanity of Human Wishes" down there at Frognall, in the edge of Hampstead, doubtless spurred to deepest conception of the subject by his giddy wife who, housed at the Well's the ancient Hampstead Heath spa, constantly quarrelled with her physician about having her blonde tresses dyed black.

In the Groves at Highgate still stands the house in which Samuel Taylor Coleridge lived and died. Richardson lastingly connected his memory with the Heath by lodging his heroine, "Clarissa Harlowe" at the Upper Flask inn. Lord Mansfield, who once resided at Caen Wood, used to give dinners to the poor, to from four to five hundred at a time, presenting each guest "with a half crown and a quarter loaf when dinner was over." Lord Erskine once lived near the Spaniard's inn; and the most famous historic inn of the Heath, which is still standing, owes much of its noteworthiness to its old-time proprietor inventing the "No-Popery" or Gordon rioters, who, after burning Lord Mansfield's house in Bloomsbury, came to destroy his rural seat at Caen Wood, into his own cellars, where they became so drunk that the rescuing troops drove them like sheep down the Hampstead hills into frenzied London. Dickens utilized the incident in "Barnaby Rudge," and he also brought the immortal Pickwick to Hampstead Ponds to pursue his earnest scientific investigations.

Indeed a goodly volume could be written upon the worthies whose love of breezy Hampstead Heath has left upon it one of its rarest and sweetest charms. Shelley, Hazlitt and Haydn often met here in the cottage of Leigh Hunt in the Vale of Health. Pope and Murray were often seen upon the high road from old Hampstead to Highgate, Hornsey and Barnet. Goldsmith found the Heath favorable to his muse and sauntered much in its thickets, hollows and rustic lanes. Here John Keats lived and here he wrote "Eve of St. Agnes," "Ode to the Nightingale," and "Endymion," as he sobbed out the closing years of his life before they took him to Rome to place his ashes near the pyramid of Cestius. The mother of Tennyson died in the fine old avenue of limes, Well Walk; and when the old Wells were noted as a Spa, the quality, the London "quality" both of purse and intellect, flocked here to drink the waters, to gamble and to flirt. At a later time Thackeray loved to study the folk and their manners at the Heath. Dickens and Forster used to "muffle themselves up" for a brisk walk over its wind-swept heights and take a "red-hot chop for dinner with a glass of good wine" at