

Mr. Squeers and the little boys and their united luggage were put down at the George and New Inn," you would have come by the old coach road from London to Edinburgh and Glasgow. On leaving the ancient city of York you would have struck into a highway 2,000 years old. Masses of Roman legions have swept, tide on tide, back and forth over the same stone road. Stern Agricola, the courtly Tacitus and Emperor Servius himself have ridden towards the unconquerable North upon it. The latter left 50,000 of his army dead among the Scotch mists and mountains, and with his face set towards Rome and home only reached York to die of his wounds and chagrin.

It is the great Roman road of England. Watling, or Waithling, Street it is called. Away in the north of Yorkshire, a few miles above Caisterick Bridge, one stem of this highway goes on through Durham and Northumberland, and thence to Edinburgh. The other swings around to the westward, traversing Westmoreland and Cumberland through Carlisle to the great Roman wall, which once protected Britain from the Caledonian hordes, and thence, on a more modern coach road, winds through the olden lovers' haven, Gretna Green to Glasgow. On this western stem, between the rivers Tees and Greta, at the eastern edge of Stanemoor, nearly surrounded by desolate moors, and in the northwest corner of Yorkshire, lies what is left of Bowes.

It is difficult not to wander away from a description of the old Unicorn Inn, at Bowes, among the literary and antiquarian things of interest in its neighborhood. The inn itself must not be confounded, even under its old name of the George, with the George Inn of Greta Bridge, six miles nearer York, now used as a corn mill. To disguise the exact location of Dotheboys Hall, Dickens made Squeers (Shaw) travel with young Nickleby three miles from the George Inn at Greta Bridge to the supposititious "Hall," followed by the "cart-load of infant misery." What they really did do was to dismount all together from the York and Carlisle coach within the innyard of this very Unicorn, and then shiver along the crooked, cobbled single street of Bowes, until they arrived at the "long, cold-looking house," a little way beyond to the west, and "a tall, lean boy (poor Smiket) with a lantern in his hand issued forth."

The Unicorn, which seems to have completely escaped the attention of English antiquarians and travelers, is not only remarkable from its associations, in having been the most important inn near the border, between York and Glasgow and Edinburgh in olden times, but in also being the largest of those ancient English roadside hostelries still extant which were called into existence by the necessities of travel in the old coaching days.

At its very door the Royal Mail began the ascent over the Great North Road of weird, dreary and vast Stanemoor, peopled only by witch and warlock; silent ever save from howling tempests; and with no semblance of humans upon it, save at its desolate top, where William the Conqueror and Malcolm of Scotland fought dreadfully and long to decide the boundaries of their respective kingdoms; and then wisely stopped and feasted, sensibly deciding that on the

very spot should be raised the great Roi (now Rere) cross, or "Cross of Kings," on one side of which was graven the image of William, and on the other that of Malcolm; but 800 years have eaten these old faces away; and none others will be seen until Kirkby Stephen, nestling in the valley, on the other side towards ancient Penrith and Carlisle, is reached, all of which gave travelers' cheer at the Unicorn a special zest not unmixed with a tinge of dread.

Its form is of a double quadrangle, each fully 100 feet square. The one next the street has its entire front open to the great inn-yard thus formed. The two sides abutting the street comprised respectively the inn proper—a long, two-storied and garreted stone structure, with a perfect maze of curious old rooms approached by outlandish stairs, entries and landings, and rendered additionally bewildering by countless niches, cupboards, alcoves and blind panels; and the other a huge brew-house, with dozens of granaries and store-rooms behind. The side opposite the street provided offices and sleeping accommodations for guards, post-boys, whips and all those inn-helpers concerned in working the coaches, or dealing with the tired cattle of the many travelers on horseback, merchandise packers and wagoners passing between England and Scotland a century ago.

In this quadrangle are also many open stone sheds, with tiled roofs, stone feed-boxes and neat, slanted cobblestone floors, where private vehicles and wagoners could find temporary shelter in great numbers; and in the center of this quadrangle, set about with stone drinking-troughs, is the most tremendous ancient pump I have found in England, still creakingly serving the scanty uses of the present degenerate days.

The quadrangle behind the inn-yard is formed by what remains of the ancient stone stables, where scores of pairs of post horses could have found comfortable quarters and as many more carters' and packers' cattle have good shelter and care. In the hostel proper the huge old kitchen must have quite equaled the famous ancient kitchen of old St. Mary's Hall, Coventry. There are still to be seen a half dozen coffee and breakfast rooms, low, with deep window-seats, quaint cupboards and odd old oak paneling, where guests were served in parties and groups, instead of in a common hall. There are tons and tons of lead in the roof-gutters, about the window-frames, and still firmly holding the ancient tiny panes of glass. Little old parlors and sitting rooms, with curious windows and most ancient stucco work are still recognizable; but most interesting of all, and illustrating the customs of that early time is a tiny tap-room opening into the rear of the inn-yard.

It has low oaken settles built stationary into wall and floor. Its huge fire-place is full of tiny cranes for steaming kettles. In one corner is an oaken bed, enclosed in a closet-like frame, where landlord or barman could not only retire at night completely from sight, but also lock himself in against uproar and disturbance, and the window to this room is a low, portly bow, in the center of which, above a tiny stout shelf, is a single hinged pane. Through this the stablemen, hangers-on, the late night travelers, who might be honest or otherwise, were served with usquebaugh or a jorum

—only after they had deposited coin of the realm and the latter had reached the hostel treasury, a great buckskin bag within the dark recesses of the barman's fortified bed.

A wonderful old curio is the Unicorn at Bowes, all unknown to the people of England themselves. Like the village it is dead in its shell. Its oaken timbers, as those in Raleigh's old home at Youghal, seem everlasting; but its moaning belfry, its empty stables, its crumbling dove-cotes, its forlorn brew-house, its empty tap room, its grass-grown inn-yard, and even its present occupancy by a strange creature half ploughman and half schoolmaster, who stares listlessly up and down the Great North Road for occasional victim in wandering bicyclist, less frequent literary tramp, or yokel from the near fields, all serve to emphasize by contrast the cheer and stirring days that once were here. As everywhere in England along its grand old highways where stand these crumbling monuments to the mellow coaching days, there remains but mournful silence where there was an army of helpers and horsekeepers; where the bow-legged post-boys in their high chokers, high hats, huge buttons and gorgeous waist-coats, led lives of positive renown; where the tinkle of harness brasses and clatter of hoof were endless; where "Rule Britannia" from shrill-keyed bugles enlivened the constant departure and arrival of coaches; where the smart cry of "first pair out!" set the inn-yard and stables in high commotion; and where through the livelong day and night, a great roadside inn, like the Unicorn, was the brightest, liveliest, cheeriest, most harum-scarum and delicious place to be found in all the length and breadth of "Merrie England."

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

SOWING THE SEED.

BRADFORD, Yorkshire, June 14, 1893.—The Leeds conference embraces a large tract of country, and consists of the greatest portion of Yorkshire. It has ten Elders in the field; four laboring in the Bradford district, two in Shipley, two in Selby and two in Hull. George D. Merkle is president of the conference.

Elder Charles Elliottson and myself are laboring in the Shipley district, having but recently commenced in that field of labor. Prospects are favorable for doing good. We find here a very intelligent class of honest-hearted people, but the words of Isaiah have almost been literally fulfilled, which says: "Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people." There are so many creeds and beliefs existing today that it is a difficult matter to distinguish the difference between the true Gospel and the doctrines of men. But if searchers after truth were to take the advice of the Apostle James, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him," and ask in faith, they would readily perceive the difference.

It is said there are about seven hundred religious creeds upon the earth, and they do not seem to realize that there is but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." They will tell you in the sincerest manner that they are all aiming for one point—Heaven.