

Park, with its array of equestrians just turning out for their morning exercise; through Kensington and Hammersmith; past the famous Hounslow Heath, and other places, until Slough was reached. Here a glass of milk was very welcome, for the sun was now throwing rather bright rays across my track. I had to leave the main road to ask my way among the beautiful green lanes that ran in all directions. Alas! What is fame? Here I was within two miles of Gray's birthplace, and the first person I asked for direction had no knowledge of the poet. Another one was better posted in local history, and not only put me on the right road, but entered into a friendly discussion of the literary merits of the poet's sweetly depicted scenes of rural life. Right gladly would I have lingered in such sweet converse, but I had my task still before me, and so must needs pass on, almost reluctantly. Some two miles further ahead a Church spire, half hidden by a forest of elms, suddenly appeared in a turn of the road. A gateway on my left led down a short path, and then I was at the gate of one of the prettiest churchyards I have ever gazed upon.

How sweetly calm and quiet it was, bidden from the world by trees and hawthorn hedges! How suggestive of true repose are the stones that mark the places where

Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet slept.

How delightful it must be to spend one's life amid such quiet surroundings! What a nice nature Gray must have had to have so appropriately painted his picture of sweet rustic life! Nor can one wonder, when one has seen Stoke Pogis, at the inspiration that called forth his thoughts. Gray wrote the "Elegy" beneath a large yew-tree that still grows beside the ivy-covered Church. It is referred to in the line—

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade.
A seat is shown on which Gray is said to have sat. Near by is visible the stone under which he now sleeps; for, alas!—

The path of duty leads but to the grave.

In the Church itself is to be seen the pew he occupied on Sundays. The building is very old and has some fine windows. Here, too, one sees the private chapel of the Penn family, founders of the State of Pennsylvania, in America. Everything about the place is most quaint and old-fashioned, even to the large old key with which the sexton opened the heavy rusty-hinged door of the Church. Long did I linger in the quiet spot, after drinking a cup of tea in the sexton's rustic cottage, reading again and again Gray's beautiful lines, and each time seeming to appreciate more fully the sweet sentiments which my surroundings had aroused in the writer. As the sun sank, and the old Church's shadows began to lengthen, I reluctantly rode off, repeating in my mind—

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward wends his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Stratford-on-Avon is, I think, one of the most delightful places I have ever visited. I took train to Leamington — famed as a health resort, with its wells of mineral waters, which are said to have great curative powers

for certain bodily ailments. I did not linger here, however. My sole bodily trouble was an exuberance of spirits that sought an outlet. I mounted my "Rover," and, crossing under the railway line, was soon bowling along the Warwick-road. How light the air seemed, and how quickly was passed the two miles of beautifully hedged Warwick-road, with its hawthorns, its wild rose, and honeysuckle blossoms! And what a picturesque site Warwick Castle stands upon! I paused on the bridge that crosses the Avon, and drank in the scene in a leisurely way—the stupendous line of fortifications, with their "cloud-cap't towers" and their walls 10 ft. thick, seeming so strong on their rocky foundation by the river's bank as to be able to bid defiance to any foe. And I thought of the stirring times that it had passed through—of the many Barons and Earls of Warwick whose deeds have helped to make English history—and the soft flow of the river seemed to suggest contrasting thoughts of peace and its

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attendant blessings. So I passed on over the bridge; through the embattled gateway; through courts and keeps and towers; by the now-disused moat, and amid the dismal dungeons where in past times many cruelties have been practised upon the unfortunate prisoners. Numerous are the rooms, and interesting are the collections of paintings, tapestries, and antique furnishings to be seen within the many rooms to which the public are admitted at certain times; but I did not stay to view them. Mounting my steel steed I rode up the hill through the old town, out by the old east gateway, and sped on my way to Stratford, some eight miles off. Along a perfect road for cycling—mostly flat, but with one or two easy hills, with ever-changing views of sweet country life free from city cares—on I went like a boy out from school with long holidays before him, hardly feeling the slight exertion that my perfect-running machine required on the hill slopes.

Stratford breaks upon one rather suddenly. On my right I had been watching a tall monumental erection that forms a prominent feature in the landscape, and wondering whether that was a Shakspearian memorial. But enquiries of a native led to my being told that it was only a memorial to some one of purely local importance, and that Stratford lay further down the road. At last I turned to the right over a small bridge, and, lo! I was almost in the centre of the town. I could hardly sit still while a good meal was being prepared, so impressed was I with the beauties of my surroundings, and so anxious to make their closer acquaintance. And, as I picked up the local paper, I read how the Jubilee day had been spent in paying homage at once to both Queen and Prince—to the Queen of England in songs of loyalty and devotion; to the prince of writers in triumphal processions in which the principal parts of his great plays had been represented in character. How glad I was when my hunger's cravings were hurriedly satisfied, and I could wander amid the interesting scenes of the great dramatist's birthplace—the house wherein he was born, with its quaint fireplace in which he used to sit and smoke; to Anne Hathaway's cottage, where he used to sneak in the gloaming and whisper tales of love in the ears of the fair maid who afterwards became his partner in life; to Holy Trinity Church, most charmingly situated on the banks of "sweet Avon," wherein both were laid to rest after their life's work was finished; to the theatre and the museum that have been erected to the memory of the great writer; and to many other sights that I will not stay to enumerate. And as I slept that night in the hostelry known in Shakspeare's time as "Ye Peacocke Inn," my mind filled with the memorable sights I had seen, I fell a-dreaming, and a beautiful maiden in purest white came and whispered in mine ear—

Good-night, sweet Prince,

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

Riding Leamingtonwards next day, for I must needs go, having made an appointment in Scotland, I turned aside to visit Kenilworth Castle, made famous by Sir Walter Scott. The castle is rapidly falling into ruins, and consists of part

of the outer walls of what has once been an important stronghold. Ivy and other growths now cover the walls, and in the sunlight make a picture of old ruins. But the charm of the place lies mainly in its association with Sir Walter Scott's writings.

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THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir—I wish to enter a protest against the elementary and unsatisfactory character of the papers in grammar and arithmetic set at the recent Preliminary Examination. The questions given should be as searching and as exhaustive as possible within the limits prescribed. In each of the papers under review only six questions were set, and these were

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such that any ordinary third-form boy or girl should easily obtain the 40 per cent. required to secure a pass. Are the examiners aware that when a boy has passed the Preliminary he practically drops the study of arithmetic and grammar? When one reads the regulations relating to the examination, and contrasts with these the paper set in arithmetic, it is difficult to believe that the examiner imagines that within the compass of six questions he can test a candidate's familiarity with the principles and processes of arithmetic and elementary mensuration. It is a miserable farce. Grammar and arithmetic are the most important factors in a boy's education, and yet here is the University belittling itself by setting a ridiculous standard. I have known many candidates whose knowledge of grammar was of the most superficial character get through. The attitude of the University authorities is in this respect antagonistic to true educational progress. Many teachers condemn the examination entirely. The standard set for a pass in the "Junior" is certainly low enough to satisfy any one, so that there is no need to introduce such a trivial, begotten-for-the-sake-of-the-fee examination as the Preliminary. May I invite an expression of opinion on this matter from the heads of the Colleges and schools?

I am, Sir, &c.,

E. A.

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THIS DAY'S EVENTS.

[AS ANNOUNCED IN TO-DAY'S "ADVERTISER."] EVENING.

University, 7.45—Lecture by Professor Mitchell.

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TO-DAY'S ENGAGEMENTS.

(As announced in this day's issue.)

EVENING.

7. 5.—University—Professor Mitchell, "Structure of the Mind."

"The Advertiser," 7th September, 1897.

Mr. W. H. Sallmon, M.A., travelling secretary of the Australasian Students' Christian Union, will be welcomed by the members of the Adelaide University Union at the University library this evening.

"The Advertiser," 11th September, 1897.

MOUNT BARKER, September 10.

The third of Mr. R. W. Chapman's University extension lectures on "Astronomy" was given in the Institute hall on Wednesday evening, the attendance being large. The planets were dealt with in an instructive and entertaining manner, and excellent limelight views were shown by Mr. C. F. Clough.

"The Advertiser," 13th September, 1897.

It has been found necessary to postpone delivery of the second portion of the extension lectures on India for a week or two in consequence of Mr. Oldham's illness.

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LECTURES ON INDIA.—In consequence of Mr. Oldham's illness the delivery of the remainder of this course of lectures is postponed for a week or two.