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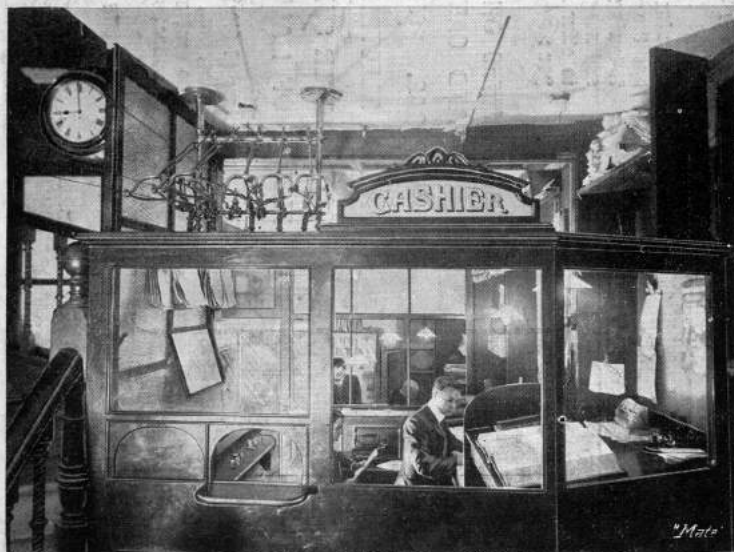
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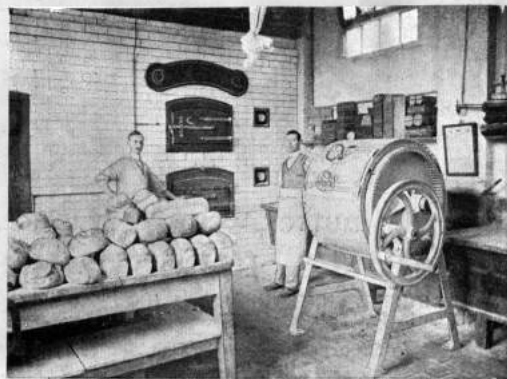
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View of Baxter House.



View of 26, Mill Street.



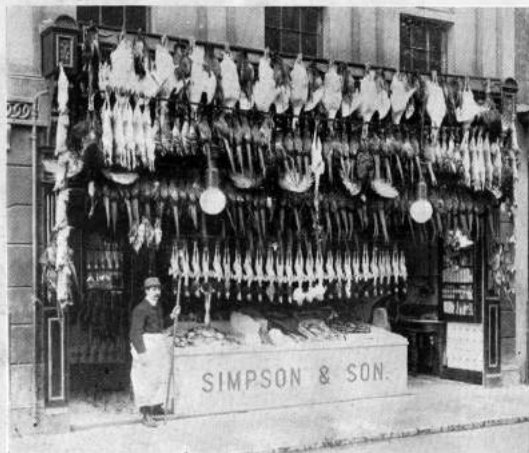
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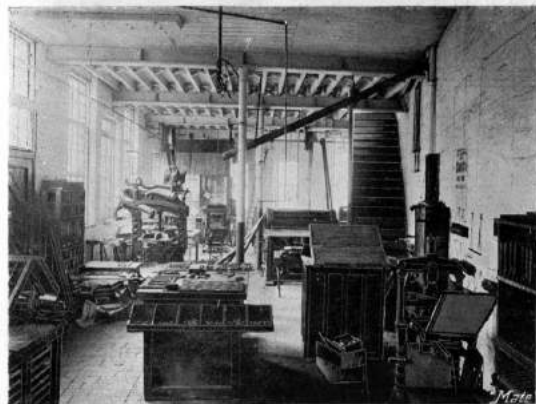


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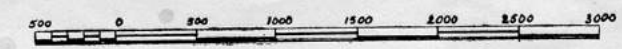
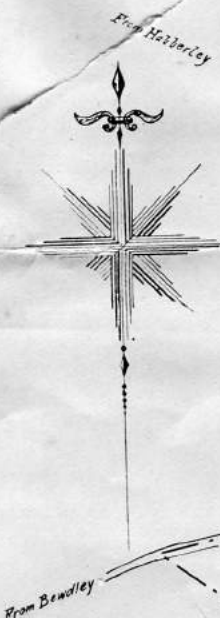
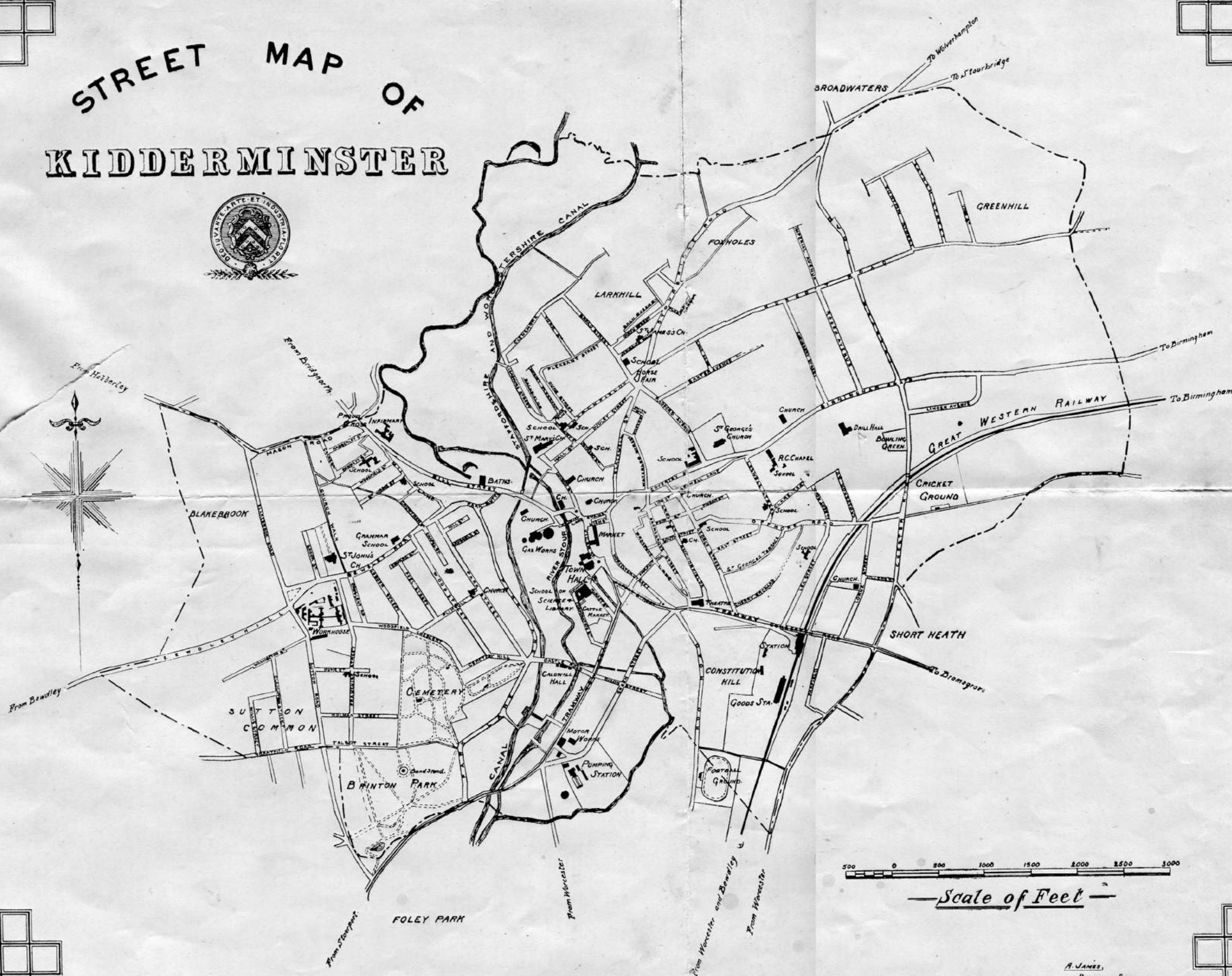
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STREET MAP OF KIDDERMINSTER



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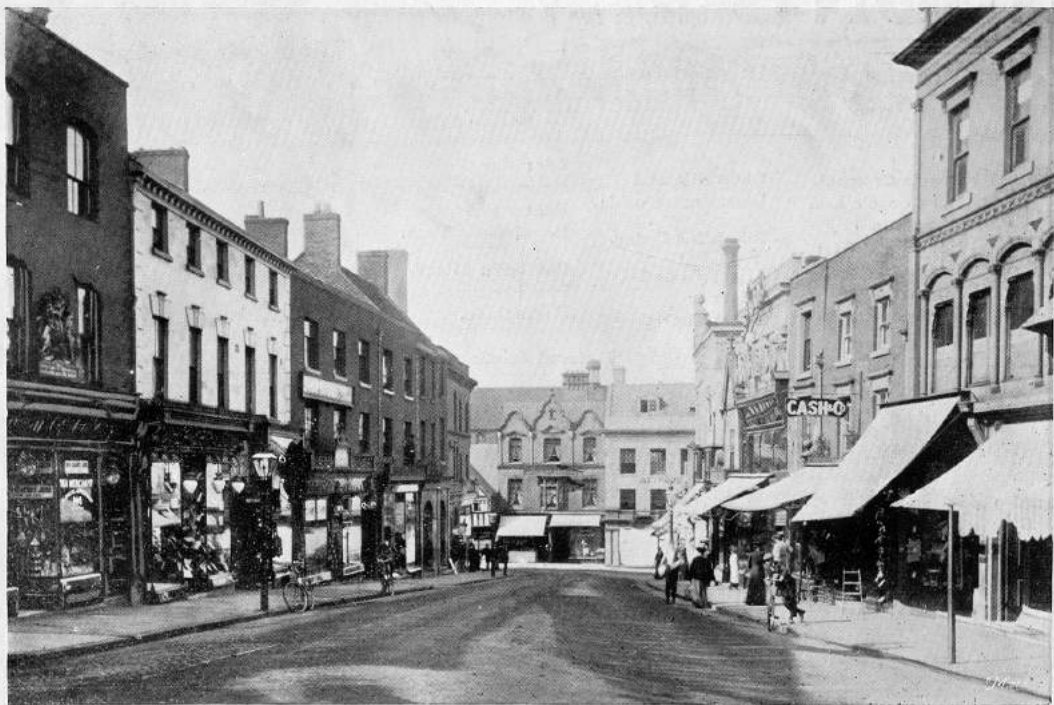


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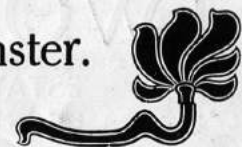
SHOP INTERIOR.



THE YARD.



Mate's Illustrated Kidderminster.



INTRODUCTION.

IN issuing this little Guide to the town of Kidderminster and its interesting and beautiful surroundings few words are necessary by way of introduction. As will be seen, and as its name in fact indicates, Kidderminster is no town of mushroom growth but has passed through ages big with change and improvement since the early years of the first century to which it dates its foundation. The Kidderminster of those days had little resemblance to, or influence upon the thriving town of to-day though the times left their mark in the shape of place-names, etc., but very early in the history of the textile industries the town became famous for the making of carpets and the

lead it obtained then it has since retained and improved upon until the terms Kidderminster and carpets have, throughout the world, become synonymous. But it is not as a thriving business or manufacturing town alone that Kidderminster appears in this book, but rather as the centre of a district rich in attractions alike to the Historian, Antiquary, Geologist, Naturalist, and indeed to all who have an eye "to read fair nature's open book." To all such we commend it in the hope that it may, by its many-sided appeal, attract large numbers of visitors and assist in some measure to further popularize the town.

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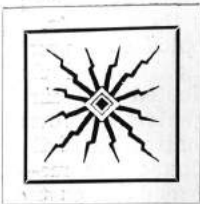
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KIDDERMINSTER, one of the centres of the carpet trade, whose sons have founded branches in Yorkshire, Scotland, and in the United States, is, it must be acknowledged, an unattractive though improving town, situated on the low-lying banks of the Stour, but within easy distance of varied and picturesque surroundings of hill and vale, dense woods and rich pasturage.

It lay on the line of Roman road connecting Gloucester and Uriconium, and a part of a Roman mill-stone was found in Mill Street about fifty years ago. Roman camps may be distinctly traced in the neighbourhood of Arley Wood, Trimpley, and on Clee.

Of Saxon, or rather Anglian, days we are reminded by the termination "bury"—a fortified hill, *e.g.*, Woodbury, Wychbury, Stagbury; and the numerous

"eys"—clearings in the forest land—which gradually became villages—Chaddesley, Wolverley, Hagley, &c.

Its foundation dates possibly to 736, when Ethelbald, King of the South Angles, granted by Charter a piece of land to Earl Cynebert on which to build a church in the district which had previously been known as "Sture in Usmere." It is quite possible, however, that this church only replaced a previous structure, founded by St. Chad, the Bishop of Lichfield, and Apostle of the Midlands, about 665, similar names being found in Chaddesley (in Domesday, Cedeslai); Chaseley, in South Worcestershire (in Domesday, Chaddeslai); and two villages, Catsley and Catshill—one near Kinlet, and one near Bromsgrove.

In Domesday survey, 1086, Chideminstre, with sixteen berewicks or outlying farms, is entered as Royal property. No mention of a church occurs, but it must be remembered that Domesday was only an entry of the lands and goods of subjects liable to taxation; hence its silence

as to the existence of a church then proves nothing. This royal demesne embraced about 2,400 acres of arable land, together with extensive commons and woods four miles in extent: mills, salt works, fisheries, freemen and serfs. Its population is not supposed to have been over 300.

There is no mention of a Castle here in Norman days, and the unsuitability of the position is a sufficient reason for its non-existence; and when afterwards in the stormy days of Henry IV. and Owen Glyndwr—the Welshman who occupied Woodbury and pillaged Worcester—the Lancastrian King did build a castle here, its best defences were the morasses and branches of the Stour which environed it.

Henry IV. made Sir John Phelip its first castellan, but his occupancy was short-lived. Within ten years of its erection, the nation was summoned to accompany Henry V. to his French wars. Sailing from Southampton and landing at Harfleur, 1415, that town was invested, but held out obstinately. Illness broke out among the invaders, and one of its victims was Sir John Phelip. We may safely assume that Kidderminster men fought valiantly at Agincourt shortly afterwards under their deceased lord's son, Sir William.

In the floor of the Chancel of the Parish Church we have Kidderminster's oldest relic—the monumental brass representing Sir John Phelip in the armour of the period, and wearing his "SS" collar. It is a fine specimen of Flemish work, and seems to prove his attachment to the Lancastrian Kings, Henry IV. and

V., no doubt shared by his successor and townsmen; while Bewdley was a rallying point for the Yorkists.

The "SS" collar is generally accepted as a proof of Lancastrian attachment during the Wars of the Roses, and is said to have been distributed by Henry of Hereford to his followers and supporters at Dover when exiled by Richard II. It is a contraction of the French "*Souveigne sese de moi*"—Remember me—and was used as a watchword for re-assembling on the return of the banished Duke.

But as the brass is found in the Church, we may be certain that the Church is older than the brass. Our earliest record is that in 1315—a hundred years before Agincourt—the greater altar was consecrated; though in 1170 we read of a rectory, and in 1256 of a Rural Dean of Kidderminster.

During the Civil Wars of Charles I. and Cromwell, our interest centres around the Royalist Sir Richard Clare, and his opponent, Richard Baxter; revived at the battle of Worcester, 1651; and in the retreat of Charles II. along the outskirts of our town to Boscobel.

The two chief residences here in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the Castle and the Hall. The Castle was the home of the Cookseys, Wyntours and Clares: at the Hall lived Waller, the Blounts, and the Childes.

Its former trades were the weaving of various stuffs, cloths, bombazine, damasks, and cap-making. The cloth trade flourished for over 300 years, and then gradually decayed. The weaving of carpets is said to

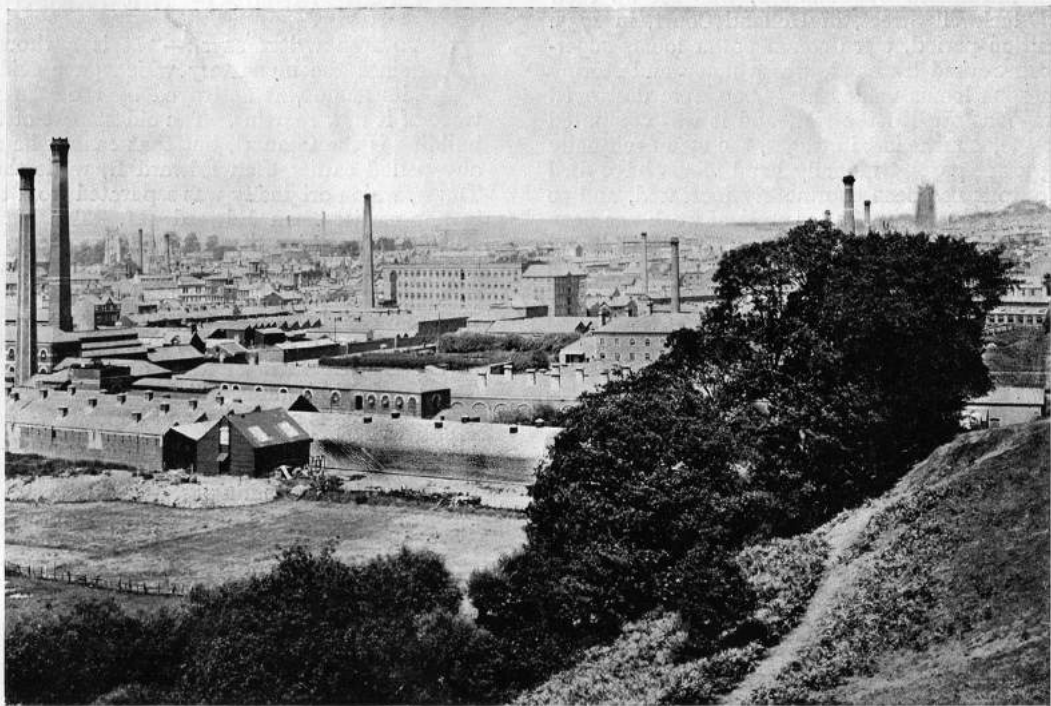


Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

General View of the Town.

have been introduced by Flemings, who set up their looms in Blackwell Street, in Holland Court, in 1735. The transition period, when steam power looms superseded those worked by hand, was a noisy and stormy time. In 1828 looms valued at £3,000 were destroyed before dragoons quelled the riot, and it was computed that over £50,000 was lost in wages, the men eventually accepting lower pay. Gradually hand looms have died out, the output has been enormously increased, and so has the rate of wages. A better style of work has been fostered by the influence of the School of Art; and by the Factories and Workshops Acts, work has been better regulated.

By the Reform Bill of 1832, Bewdley, which had hitherto returned two M.P.'s, was deprived of one, and Kidderminster secured direct representation.

In 1835, Kidderminster was constituted a Corporate Borough, with Mayor, six Aldermen and eleven Councillors, and adopted the arms of the Clare family—Azure: two chevronels or; each charged with four hurts, between three bezants.

The canal—connecting the Severn with the Weaver and Trent—was formed about 1780 under the direction of James Brindley, who for a time occupied Union Hall, near Kinver.

The railway—at first known as the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway—was constructed in 1852, eventually passing into the hands of the Great Western.

The Corporation first supplied water for household purposes in 1872, and in 1878 the new Cemetery of the Borough was consecrated.

Ecclesiastical—THE PARISH CHURCH.

A FORMER writer says:—"It is a thousand years since the monastery which gave Kidderminster its name was destroyed by the Danes; and no trace of it now remains. The oldest part of the present building is the Chancel, but that cannot be ascribed to any period earlier than Edward I., while the beautiful Tower, which originally was separated from the Church, is not earlier than Edward III. The Nave is later still." No mention of a Church here occurs in Domesday, possibly because Kidderminster was a Royal demesne; but in 1170 we read of a Rectory, and in 1256 of a Rural Dean. The greater altar was consecrated by the Bishop of Worcester, in 1315. No title is given to the Church until Baxter's day; it is simply "the Church of Kidderminster."

The Church is a massive and imposing structure, built in the Decorated and Perpendicular styles of architecture, the Chancel is Late Decorated, while in the Nave the Perpendicular predominates. The Tower is said to be only a casing of its predecessor, but is of majestic proportions. The Clerestory is Perpendicular, and the oak roof is of singularly good taste and simplicity, but the stained glass windows are of a mixed character, the finest both in design and execution being the Awdry windows in the South Aisle of the Nave. There is a peal of eight bells, none, however, earlier than 1754; and in Baxter's time there were as many as five galleries. The alabaster Reredos representing the Last Supper, and surmounted by fine canopy work, dates from 1880,



St. Ambrose Church.

Photo by Cheshire & Sons, Kidderminster.



St. Mary's Church.

Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

and the Choir Cloister was added in 1887. The Clerestory windows (1897) commemorate the labours of Bishop Claughton, Vicar here 1851—1867. In 1894-5 the whole of the exterior of the Tower, West front and battlements were thoroughly re-faced by the liberality of our townsman and former M.P., Mr. John Brinton.

TOMBS AND MONUMENTS.

The Altar Tomb next the rails of the Sanctuary in the North wall of the Chancel is that of Sir Hugh Cooksey and wife (A.D. 1445), who lived at the Old Castle at Caldwell.

A little farther along is that of Sir Thomas Blount and his wife (1580-5), surmounted by semi-circular tablet with representation of their children.

The effigies of Sir Edward Blount and his two wives stood originally in the South wall of the Choir, under a beautiful canopy, but were removed when the Chancel was widened, and are now replaced near their former position.

Undoubtedly the finest monument in the Church is the brass on the floor of the Chancel, in the centre of the Aisle, to the memory of Sir John Phelip, his wife Matilda, and her first husband, Sir Walter Cooksey. Sir John Phelip died at the Siege of Harfleur, just before Agincourt, 1415. (*See Article on Kidderminster*).

At the East end of the South Aisle of the Nave is the site of the Chantry of St. Katharine, founded in 1463 by

Lady Joyce Beauchamp, whose tomb occupied the South wall. It is a beautiful specimen of Perpendicular work, and contains an effigy of its foundress, in a niche under a carved canopy; it has been regrettably mutilated to allow the supports of a former gallery to rest on the canopy.

On the floor, under a slab, immediately in front, is the grave of Sir Ralph Clare, the Royalist Knight of Caldwell, surmounted with the Arms of the Clares, and inscribed: "Here lieth the body of Sir Ralph Clare, son unto Sir Francis Clare in this County: servant unto Prince Henry, Knight of ye Bath, at ye Coronation of King Charles I., whom he attended through all his glorious misfortunes: servant to King Charles II., both in his banishment and retourne . . . who died full of days and fame in his 84th year—1670."

At the West end of the South Aisle in the North-East buttress of the Tower, about six feet from the floor, is a mass of stonework, apparently the support of a pulpit for out-door preaching when the Tower was detached from the Church, and somewhat resembling the pulpit in the Refectory at Shrewsbury Abbey.

The Old Churchyard Cross, mentioned by Leland (Henry VIII.), which was defaced under the direction of a Parliamentary order in Baxter's time, now covered with evergreens, is probably an old preaching station, when service was held in the Churchyard. A similar Cross may be seen at Badger, near Bridgnorth.

The New Gates, generously given by the late Mr.



Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

Interior St. Mary's Church.

John Corbett, of Impney, are copies of the originals, and are of the Queen Anne style of hammered work.

It is to be regretted that when the Canal was constructed by Brindley, about 1710, the face of the rock was allowed to be cut away. Previous to this, there was an entrance to the Church from Mill Street, over the ground now forming the Canal lock and wharf.

At the East end of the Church is a building in the Tudor style, known as the Chantry, used until 1848 as the Grammar School, and now serving for Choir practice, meetings, Sunday school, etc.

The "OLD HALL," or Manor House of the Blounts, Childes, etc., stood at the top of Hall Street, adjoining the Churchyard, and was possibly the site of the old Monastery. It was Elizabethan in style and had a sun-dial over the entrance. Another sun-dial may still be seen at the South-West angle of the Tower, overlooking the Canal.

OTHER PLACES OF WORSHIP.

Two other Parish Churches may well be visited—ST. GEORGE'S, built in 1824, extremely light and airy, and possessing great accommodation, both on floor and in the galleries; and ST. JOHN'S, built originally of blue brick, with Bath stone dressings, dating back to 1843. Proving insufficient to the growing demands of

a greatly increased population, additions so extensive have been made as to engulf the former building. The present edifice, erected by the self-denying labours of clergy, parishioners, and friends, by continuous and nobly sustained efforts for a number of years, is a handsome, commodious, and well-fitted building.

The Roman Catholic Church of ST. AMBROSE stands on the Birmingham Road, and is attractive and well attended.

The Nonconformists have also replaced most of their old meeting houses by buildings of a more ecclesiastical style than would have commended itself to their forefathers.

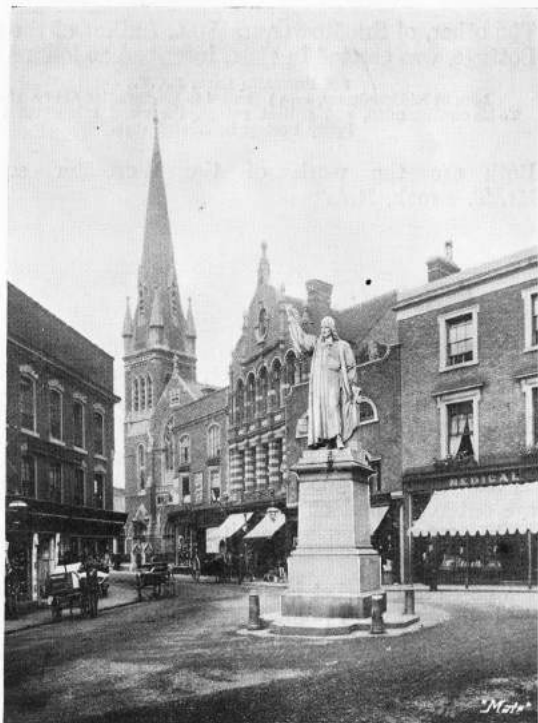
The BAXTER CHURCH, formerly the Old Meeting, stands near the Bull Ring, on the banks of the Stour, and is considered the finest building belonging to the Independents in the County.

The UNITARIANS, or New Meeting, have a Chapel in Church Street, with a stone frontage in the Perpendicular style.

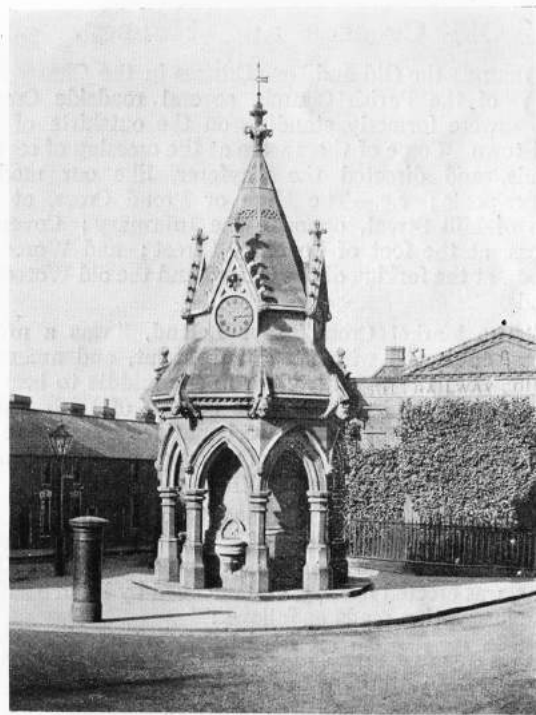
The WESLEYANS, whose old Chapel, erected in 1803, is in Mill Street, have recently built a larger and more convenient Church in the Birmingham Road. □

The BAPTISTS' Chapel is in Church Street, at the foot of Arch Hill.

The COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON'S FREE CHURCH is in Park Street—another recent erection. — —



Baxter Church and Statue.



The Brinton Fountain.

Photos by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

Old Crosses and Houses.

BESIDES the Old and New Crosses in the Churchyard of the Parish Church, several roadside Crosses were formerly standing on the outskirts of our old town. Some of them were at the crossing of several roads, and directed the wayfarer, like our modern finger-posts; e.g.—The High or Proud Cross, at the top of Mill Street, opposite the Infirmary; Coventry Cross, at the foot of Coventry Street; and Worcester Cross, at the forking of the Oxford and the old Worcester roads.

“The Market Cross,” says Leland, “was a pretty cross, environed with six pillars about, and arches of stone, with the seventh pillar in the middle to bear up the fornix,” and stood at the bottom of High Street. From this Market Cross, proclamations were made by the High Bailiff, and banns of marriage published during the days of the Commonwealth.

The Statues, of singular beauty of pose, are in the centre of the town. That of RICHARD BAXTER, Curate of the Parish Church in the stormy days of the Civil War, was erected in 1875, and unveiled by Dean Stanley. The inscription reads as follows:

Between the years 1641 and 1660 this town was the scene of the labours of RICHARD BAXTER, renowned equally for his christian learning, and his pastoral fidelity.
In a stormy and divided age he advocated unity and comprehension pointing the way to
“The Everlasting Rest.”

Churchmen and Nonconformists united to raise this memorial,
A.D. 1875.

The other, of SIR ROWLAND HILL, Author of the Penny Postage, was erected in 1881, inscribed as follows:

SIR ROWLAND HILL, K.C.B.,
born at Kidderminster, 1795; buried in Westminster Abbey, 1879.
To his creative mind, and patient energy, the world is indebted for the Penny Postage introduced 1840.

Both are the work of the Worcester sculptor, Mr. T. Brock, R.A.

Markets.

THE Markets of Kidderminster are well known throughout the district, being abundantly supplied and extensively attended by purchasers from Birmingham and the Black Country.

At the Auction Stock Market, held on alternate Tuesdays, about 300 cattle, 1,000 sheep, and 600 pigs are entered; and at the Wholesale Vegetable Market, on Thursdays, a vast quantity of fruit, vegetables, etc., is disposed of.

The Retail Market is held in the Market Hall, and is well supplied with poultry, fish, vegetables, etc.

The population of Kidderminster at the Conquest is computed to have been about 300; in 1801—8,000; in 1851—21,000; and in 1881—27,000.

(Collected mainly from the writings of Nash, Burton, and Grove).



Photo by H. Levett, Kidderminster.

Mill Street.

WORCESTERSHIRE, STAFFORDSHIRE AND SHROPSHIRE.

NOCK & JOSELAND, F.S.I., Auctioneers,

*Land Agents, Surveyors
and Valuers.*



SALES BY AUCTION of

Landed Estates, Town Properties, Household Furniture, Farming Stock, &c. Timber, Machinery and Manufactured Goods, Shares, &c.

VALUATIONS for Estate Duty, Probate and Transfer. VALUATIONS of Property, Farming Stock, Furniture, Tenant Right, Timber, &c.

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The best all round Market in the Midlands.

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Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

The Cattle Market.

Harry E. James,



GENTLEMEN'S

HATTER, HOSIER, GLOVER,
AND SHIRTMAKER.

LATEST NOVELTIES IN NECKWEAR.

Morley's Superior Underwear,
"Guaranteed Unshrinkable."

CRICKET, BOATING,
AND OTHER SPORTS OUTFITTER.



CORRECT STYLE, STERLING VALUE, AT

Harry James, Oxford St., Kidderminster.



Photo by Cheshire & Sons, Kidderminster.

Town Hall and Rowland Hill Statue.

Kidderminster Worthies.

WHEN the Conqueror took possession of our land, Kidderminster became a royal demesne and so continued until Henry II. bestowed it on his dapifer Manser de Biset, but no vestige or sign of a Norman castle is left, indeed the nature of the ground forbade it; nature had encompassed it by river and swamp, but no rock was sufficiently commanding and secure to invite the erection of a fortress.

The manor and mill of Caldwell then e passed to Sir JOHN PHELIP, who married the heiress of Biset. The mill appears to have been enlarged and castellated by Henry IV. as a rallying place for his supporters during his wars with the Welsh under Owen Glyndwr after the sack of Worcester, and fortified by dividing the Stour so as to encompass it and form its moat. This Sir John Phelip became its first Castellan, and afterwards accompanied Henry V. on his invasion of France, 1415, and died at the siege of Harfleur, just before the battle of Agincourt. He is commemorated by an ancient brass of Flemish workmanship on the Chancel floor of the Parish Church. COOKSEYS, WYNTOURS and CLARES became in turn the owners of Caldwell; while the Blounts, Waller and Dobbins occupied the old Hall near the Church.

SIR RALPH CLARE, of Caldwell, was a staunch Royalist, and great was the rivalry during the dark days of the Civil War between the supporters of the two factions. Overthrown, fined and imprisoned for his zeal and attachment to Charles I., Clare readily and ardently

joined Charles II., and took part in the final struggle at Worcester, 1651. Again he was fined and imprisoned, and when ultimately liberated he joined his Prince in his exile, until at the Restoration, Clare returned joyfully to Caldwell, and lived peacefully and undisturbed until his death at the age of 83. He lies buried at the east end of the south aisle, at the foot of the Beauchamp tomb.

As Sir Ralph Clare championed the Royalists, RICHARD BAXTER, the Puritan preacher, who then provisionally occupied the pulpit at the Parish Church, constituted himself the leader of his opponents until on the return of Charles II. and Sir Ralph Clare. Baxter—unwilling to accept the terms offered by Morley, Bishop of Worcester, and the Church party—relinquished his pastoral work at Kidderminster for the remainder of his life, leaving behind him a god-fearing parish, and a multitude of writings embracing "The Saints' everlasting rest," and "A call to the unconverted."

SIR JOSIAH MASON, the inventor of the now universally used steel pen, was born in Mill Street, 1795. When he came of age he left his native town for Birmingham, and in various mechanical callings he amassed a large fortune, which, at his death in 1881, he bequeathed to found and endow the well-known Almshouses, Orphanage and Science College at Birmingham bearing his name.

SIR ROWLAND HILL, perhaps the greatest and most practical of Kidderminster's sons, was born in Blackwell Street, in 1795, and was therefore contemporaneous with Sir Josiah Mason. Like him, he quitted his birth-



Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

Borough Mace and Loving Cup.

place in early life, and spent several years as a school teacher in Birmingham, where he rapidly made a name both for himself and his school; and gathered a band of zealous workers for self-improvement and personal advancement. Especially did he turn his thoughts to a thorough simplification and reform of the postal system; nor did he relax his efforts in this direction until in 1839 "Penny Postage" became the law of the land. He next became Chairman and Managing Director of the London and Brighton railway, and again showed his originality by inaugurating excursion and express trains. He afterwards returned to Parliamentary life where honours, grants, and hearty national thanks were showered upon him. He died 1879, and was honoured with a grave in Westminster Abbey.

Carpet Weaving.

FOR over six centuries Kidderminster has been a community of weavers. In early days they wove cloth, caps, woollens, bombazines, and tapestries for hangings. Baxter says—circa 1650—"My people were not rich, but there were very few beggars, because their trade of stuff-weaving would find work for them all."

In the eighteenth century trade was greatly depressed, until the weaving of carpets was introduced by Flemish and French weavers, who settled just at Wilton and Axminster, and began weaving the carpets which still bear these names. Another Flemish weaver was brought

over by one of the Kidderminster employers, and the first loom is said to have been erected by him in Ho'land Court in Blackwell Street, 1735, for weaving Brussels carpets. Gradually the older employments were deserted, and the weavers turned their entire attention to the new industry which rapidly expanded, although restricted to the produce of hand-loom. When in 1794, it was proposed to manufacture carpets by the aid of machinery, bitter opposition was manifested by the Kidderminster weavers who anticipated certain ruin unless the use of machinery was interdicted by law, and owing to the want of employment many enlisted, and were formed into the 87th and 88th Regiments of foot, and were then drafted across the Atlantic, where they fought during the war of American independence. Carpets were generally woven in hand-loom until between 1850 and 1860, when power looms, which demanded larger buildings, better adapted for the trade came into more general use.

The various Factories' and Workshops' Acts have greatly improved and regulated the conditions of labour, while the influence of the School of Art has raised the tone of designs adopted by the trade. In recent years the looms have been considerably widened, and Axminster carpets—introduced 1878—are now manufactured in ever-increasing quantities, and almost unlimited in their colouring and width. Axminster carpets are manufactured by an inverted process, and are singularly soft to the tread owing to the thickness and density of the pile. First introduced in 1878, they have rapidly gained for themselves the premier position in the carpet



Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

School of Science and Art and Free Library.

world owing to their richness of design and colouring, being unlimited by the number of frames as in Brussels and Wiltons. In Brussels carpets the bed consists of jute, with which the woollen surface is entwined; all Brussels carpets are three-quarters of a yard wide and are to be preferred for constant use. In Kidderminster carpets—woven mainly in Scotland and Yorkshire—the carpet is reversible, but of slighter make. Wiltons or Velvet-pile have a soft smooth surface which yields agreeably to the tread, and are manufactured by slitting the loops formed over the wires, and then shearing the wool level.

Habberley Valley and Trimpley.

EVERY visitor to Kidderminster must go to "The Valley," about three miles from the Station, and to which conveyances run from both town and station on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays; fare, 4d. each way.

Habberley Valley and the neighbouring hill of Trimpley offer a fine field for study to the geologist. "The hill of Trimpley," says Roberts, "was the first bit of dry land that appeared above the waters in North Worcestershire," and is an agglomeration of various strata that have heaped their rocks against this ancient mass of Devonian Upper tilestones, forming the cap of the hill, crowned by the imitation Norman Church at the farther extremity of the green. This

Devonian mass forms an anti-clinal against which rest the newer rocks—Devonian Cornstones, the Shatterford Coal Measures, Permian breccias, and the New Red, which latter underlies most of the vicinity of Kidderminster. And how different in texture as well as in age are these various layers. Fossils, consisting of fragments of scales of fishes, belonging to the old Red Sandstone; and calamites and sigillaria found in the Coal Measures, may occasionally be found, bearing silent testimony to the time ere man was a dweller on our planet. Then when Wales was an elevated mass, and England only slowly rising from its submerged state, the Severn straits formed the line of division between the older and newer lands, which joined the estuaries of the Dee and Severn, and carried on their bosom the remains of glaciers from the icy regions, and their burden of both animals and rocks which they had involuntarily borne from their Northern home. "The course of the Severn straits through North Worcestershire was pleasantly diversified by little bays on either side: hollows which the dashing waves had worn in the sides of the hills that confined their waters, and one of these little bays was Habberley." In process of time the advancing and receding waves threw up a sandbank, still to be traced in the sand dunes of Warshill Common; the little bays became detached from the parent waters, and gradually formed salt lagoons; and to this day marine plants, descendants of a lost flora, may be found struggling for their existence, and visited occasionally by sea-birds as though in search of a



Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

Corporation Baths,

long-lost home handed down by their natural instinct, but compelled to retire baffled in their search.

In the bed of the valley will be seen the Giant's Grave, a sedimentary mass of sand, gradually welded and consolidated by the waves into a concretionary mass, and overlooked by the lordly Peaked Rock, standing like a sentinel on guard, defying the restless and aggressive waters of the mere. At the far end of the valley—rooting its gnarled and knotty roots deep into the fissures of the rocks which form the barrier across the termination of the valley, is its oldest living inhabitant—an ancient and venerable yew. What generations of mankind has it outlived as it has gazed o'er the extensive and commanding view to the south, embracing the valley of the Severn as far as the Cotswolds, and broken on our right by the Malverns, Storrige, Ankerdyne, Abberley, Stagbury, etc. And what a wealth of light and shadow is garnered by the blending of the sand dunes of Hartlebury Common, dotted here and there with patches of gorse and heather, bordered by the well wooded slopes of the neighbouring hills, and towered and softened by the hills that “dim and distant rise.”

Quite close to us we see Wars-hill, enclosing the remains of a quadrilateral camp where Roman soldiers watched for any sign of an advancing enemy, as evidenced by the recent finding of a Roman coin there. Wars-hill evidently was one of the chain of hills occupied first by Briton and then by Roman during the long-continued struggle for supremacy between Ostorius and Caradoc, and which was carried on from the Wiltshire

Downs into the heart of Central Wales, where the final and decisive battle took place, A.D. 51.

The least-visited and wildest part of the valley is at its southern outlet, where a long ridge of sandstone, terraced by pines and firs, and gradually eaten away, first by the dashing and gurgling waves, and then by the disintegrating power of frost and rain, stretches as far as the road from Franche to Bewdley. Here and there the rock has fallen, leaving a rich and ruddy surface of the bluff exposed; yonder are clumps of heather enriching and diversifying the landscape. Fine silvery sand has been washed down from the heights above, flecking and toning down the view as we wend along the winding path at its foot.

The ferns with which Nature has bedecked and carpeted the valley are gradually being cleared away, and few except the common Bracken and the Male fern, together with the Polypody in scattered and unfrequented spots, are now to be found; though in the neighbourhood one may occasionally meet with the Blechnum, Soft Shield, and Green-stem Lady Fern; and in an old stone wall, where after each storm the rain will trickle to the roots embedded in the mortar, the Wall-rue Spleenwort.

Carefully preserved in the museum at Worcester is a spear-head, found when excavating for the foundations of Trimpley Church, 1844. The skeleton of a warrior taking his long and last rest, with hound on one side and spear on the other, suggests that the bones are those of a Danish skald who fell during the attack made by King Alfred on the retreating Danes after

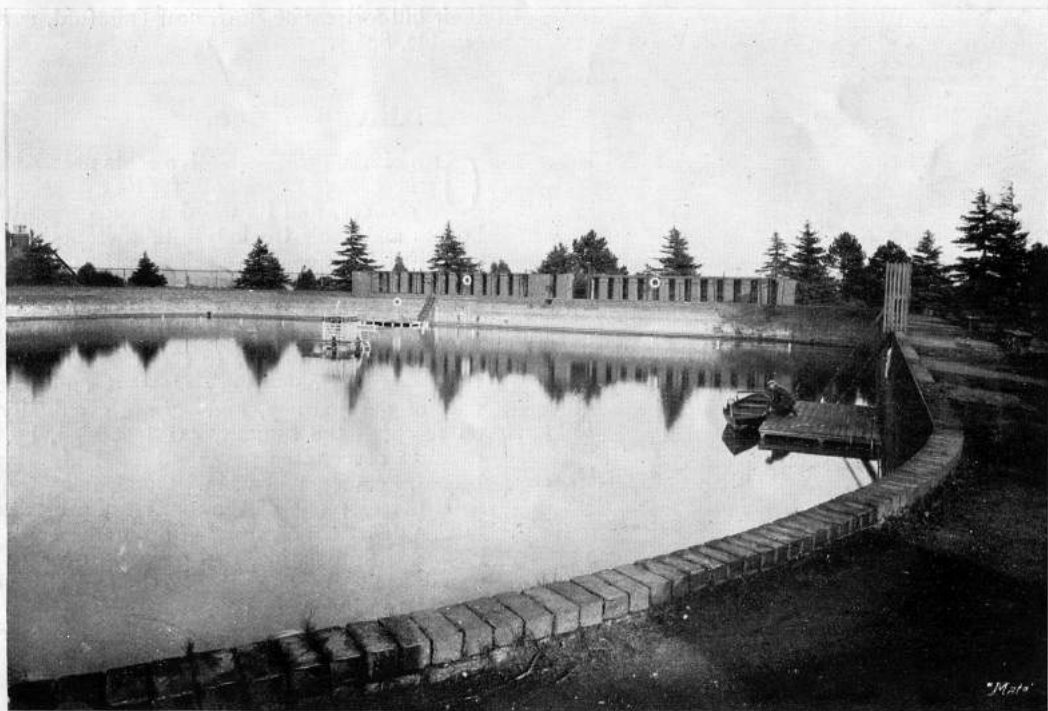
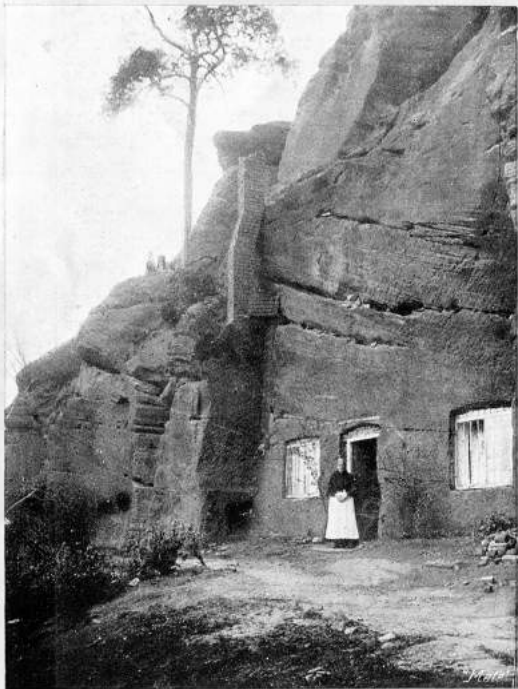


Photo by W. Thompson, Kilderminster.

Open-Air Swimming Bath,



Rock House, Kinver.

Photo by Cheshire & Sons, Kidderminster.

their hill-fortress at Burf, near Quatford, was no longer tenable, 896-7.

Kinver Edge.

ONE of the most attractive spots near Kidderminster is Kinver Edge, both for its extensive and varied scenery, and its weird legends regarding its rock houses and their troglodyte inhabitants.

Kinver lies about five miles north of Kidderminster, and a conveyance may be taken to Cookley, half-way. Follow the footpath past Debdale Farm to Blakeshall, and, on coming to the forking of the road near the Common, take the lane to the left and the path across the fields in front. Very pleasant and breezy is this part of our journey, and we are eventually rewarded on reaching the summit, 411 feet high, by a glorious expanse of country garnished by Nature with gorse, broom, heather, and whin. Overlooking the valley we shall perceive one of the many hill-camps so frequent in this district, and forming a parallelogram 300 yards long, 200 yards wide, and covering over 12 acres. It was defended by an embankment and outer ditch, and is said to have been constructed by Wulphere, a sub-King of Mercia from 657 to 675, and is therefore over 1,200 years old.

In front, a path will be observed leading down the slope of the hill towards Enville—a charming walk. Follow it half-way down, where it crosses a similar but wider path; here turn left and visit “Nanny’s Rock,”

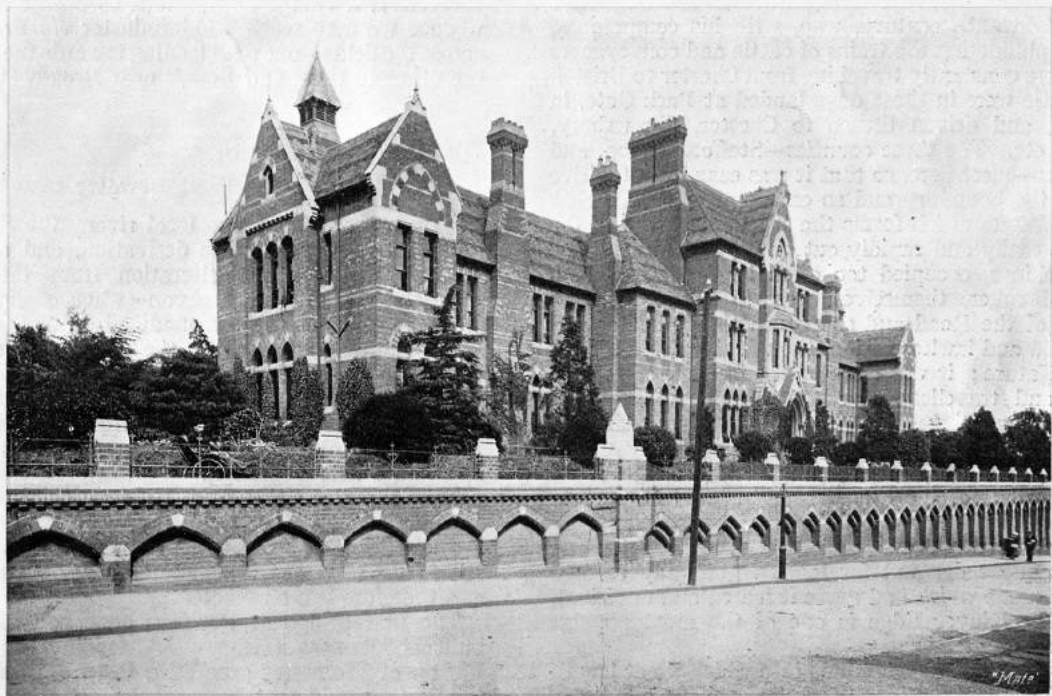


Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

The Infirmary.

the reputed home of a noted highwayman and desperado of the eighteenth century, who, with his companions, lived by plundering the trains of cattle and conveyances which were constantly travelling from Chester to Bristol. Irish cattle were in those days landed at Park Gate, in Cheshire, and driven thence to Chester, Shrewsbury, London, etc. The three counties—Stafford, Salop, and Worcester—meet here, so that it was easy for a fugitive to cross the boundary and so escape arrest. The New Red Sandstone which forms the southern barrier of the valley is easily and rapidly cut away, and formed into cave-dwellings, occupied too often by families who, if not law-breakers themselves, were in league with the Knights of the Road and sharers in their plunder. It was a wild and lawless region, though singularly beautified by Nature; it was close to the frequented road of dealers and travellers, whose pockets were generally well filled, and the many tortuous passages leading to and from their rock-dwellings afforded a ready means of escape, even when closely pursued. (*Baring Gould's* book "Blady's of the Stew-pony" should be read to throw a lurid light on this wild district 140 years ago). The digging of the Canal, by Brindley, about 1780, and the consequent demand for labour, gradually rescued it from a name which had made it feared and unvisited, and to-day Kinner Edge is one of the most popular resorts in the vicinity.

How varied is the sandy lane into which we at length emerge, near Vale's Rock; surely here we are "Far from the madding crowd!" Let us follow the lane to the west, past Baxter's Monument and Drakelow, to

Wolverley, a village dating back to Saxon times, from whence we may reach Kidderminster *via* Franche; or across the fields—one path leading towards the Infirmary, the other to the "Old Bear," near Broadwaters.

Up the Severn—

From Bewdley to Arley.

THE names of our two local rivers, the Severn and Stour, are of Celtic derivation, and are formed with but slight alteration from their British names, *Ys Hafren*—the Avon—whence Severn; and *Ys dŵer*—the river—now modified into Stour. The three prettiest reaches of the Severn are said to be—the curve round the Breiddens above Shrewsbury; the valley beneath Apley park and woods above Bridgnorth; and the winding stretch from Arley to Dowles, through the old forest of Wyre. This last is in our immediate neighbourhood.

Take a return ticket from Kidderminster to Bewdley (4d.), and walk up the river on either bank: the east is the prettier, but more troublesome from its numerous stiles; the west, or Bewdley side, is the old towing path, and therefore less obstructed.

The first bridge at Bewdley appears to have been built about 1447 (Henry VI.), for in that year the Bishop of Worcester granted a forty days' indulgence to all who would contribute money, materials, or labour towards completing the new bridge at Bewdley. It seems that this structure was greatly damaged during



Photo by Cheshire & Sons, Kidderminster.

The Pool, Brinton Park.



Wye Forest, Bewdley.

Photo kindly lent by the Photographic Society.

the Wars of the Roses, and was repaired 1483 (Richard III.). The present handsome and well-proportioned bridge was erected by Thomas Telford, 1798, at that time County Surveyor of Salop, at a cost of £11,000. He also built Montford Bridge, four miles above Shrewsbury; and the first bridge of iron spanned the Severn near Broseley where the irregular town named Ironbridge has since grown up. Telford also altered and greatly improved the high-road between Shatterford and Quat, making the new road wide, straight, and at a lower level, with easier gradients than the old road.

A mile above Bewdley, the Tenbury branch of the Great Western Railway crosses the Severn by the Dowles Bridge, a slight but pretty bridge of iron resting on blue-brick piers with stone dressings. Just below the bridge will be seen the old church of Dowles. This parish was formerly known as *Achisey*, the island or land bordering a river planted with oaks, and was, with its fishery, appropriated to the Priory of "Moche Malverne." As we ascend the river, the fords are numerous, and impede the free flow of the river more and more since the regular dredging of the river has been discontinued.

On our left we have the forest of Wyre, on our right Eymore Wood. The Severn Valley Railway skirts the east bank of the river; the meadows on either hand afford rich pasturage, and yield a profusion of wild flowers and grasses.

The newly-built bridge over the Severn, below the Falley ford, carrying the pipes for supplying water to Birmingham from the great Elan reservoirs near



Photo by Cheshire & Sons, Kidderminster.

The Band Stand, Brinton Park,

Rhayader, was a very difficult task, as no firm foundation could be found for the piers on either bank. The bridge consists of one span only, carries six rows of pipes, and was the most costly piece in the whole course of 97 miles from the reservoirs in Radnor to the terminus at Frankley.

Half-way between Bewdley and Arley, we find the river pretty well stopped for traffic by the Falley ford. *i.e.*, the ford at the fall below the island. Here was also in bygone days a *gorges* or weir for catching fish. Just above the island will be found on the east bank the remains of an ancient camp, parallelogram in form, apparently Danish, for defending the passage of the river at the Seckley ford; and opposite the camp, and on the north side of a tributary streamlet, may be traced up the steep hill side an old British track-way or pack-horse route, leading to the west through Wyre Forest. The names Lax Lane, Beverey, Hawkbatch and Owlbatch point to a time when the forest, more dense and extensive than now, afforded shelter to hawks and owls, while the river was frequented by salmon and beavers.

Round the bend of the river and above another island, the Severn Valley Railway, hitherto on the east bank, crosses the river by the Victoria Bridge, which was justly esteemed a triumph of engineering skill at the time of its erection. It was constructed at the Coalbrookdale Works, a combination of stone and iron, and crosses the river at an angle.

A mile up the stream we arrive at Arley, known to our forefathers as *Earneley* and *Erneley*—the home of the

eagle, and charmingly situated on the banks of the river four miles above Bewdley. The manor is first mentioned as having been presented to the College of Wolverhampton by Wulfruna, widow of the Earl of Northampton, in 996, and hence in Lichfield diocese and County of Stafford. (It was restored to the Diocese of Worcester in 1905). The Church was built by one of its first barons, HENRY DU PORT (Henry II.). In the reign of Henry III., HUBERT DE BURGH, that king's Justiciary, became its possessor, and married Margaret, sister of William, King of Scotland. ROBERT BURNEL, who codified English law in the time of Edward I., and who also resided at Acton Burnel in Salop, built the North Aisle and Chancel. The manor next became the property of the MORTIMERS, Lords of the Marches, who held castles at Wigmore, Cleobury, Bridgnorth, Montgomery and Chirk.

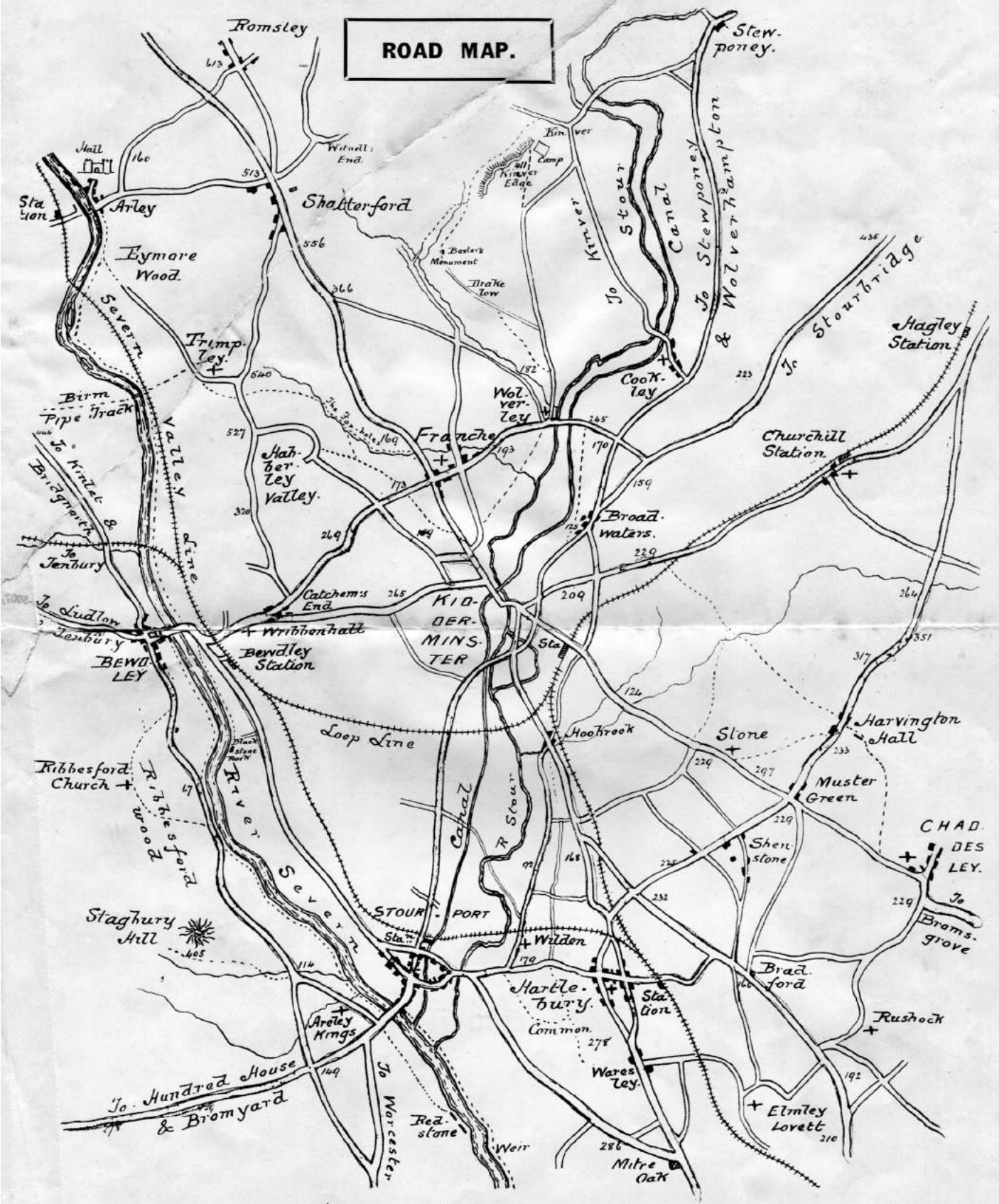
The village is also known as Upper Arley or Over Arley: near Stourport stands Lower Arley or Arley Regis.

Walks Around Kidderminster.

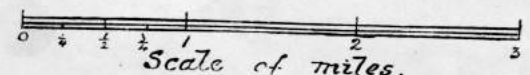
1.—HABBERLEY VALLEY AND TRIMPLEY.—Two miles from the town, two-and-half miles from Station. Wagonettes run frequently from Station and Bull Ring on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays; fare, 4d. each way. (*See Special Article.*)

2.—ARLEY (UPPER).—Take ticket to Bewdley (3d. single, 4d. return). Walk up Severn to Arley 4. to 5

ROAD MAP.



Height above Sea in feet... thus 279.



Scale of miles.

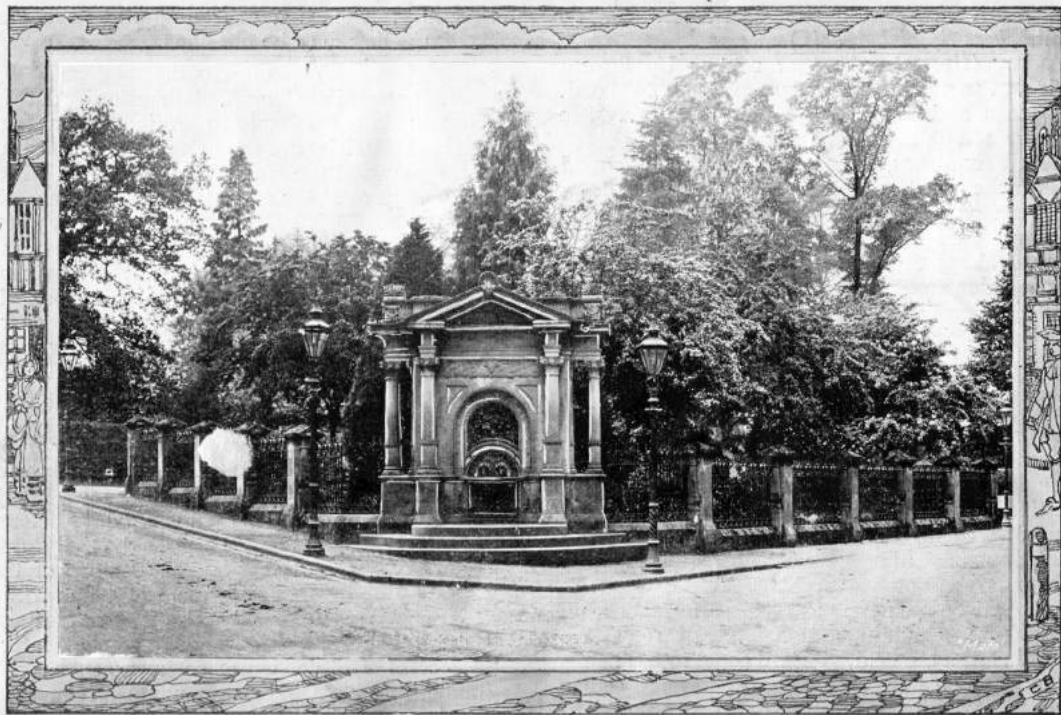


Photo kindly lent by the Photographic Society.

The Fountain, Blakebrook.

miles, and return *via* Pound Green and Button Oak—10 miles in all. (*See Special Article.*)

3.—ARLEY (UPPER).—Another route. Up Severn side to Arley, 4. to 5 miles, and return *via* Eymore Wood, Trimpley Green and Habberley Valley—9 miles. See route on map 1 mile south of Arley.

4.—THE FOX-HOLES.—Follow the Bridgnorth road through Franche until you come to a brook first on right and then on left hand. Turn through gate just past a cottage on left. This walk through the fields will take you along the brook side; then up a steep hill, and *via* fields to Trimpley Green. Here turn left and return *via* the valley. The walk may be lengthened and varied by crossing the road at Trimpley Green, turn left, and follow the fields and lane to Hall's Farm; by the side of the brook past Grey Green Farm and the Crundells, to Severn side just above Bewdley.

5.—DOWN SEVERN from Bewdley to Stourport—4 miles. Over the bridge and past the church, up Park Lane, then left across the park, over the stream, and along the line of trees to the road. Straight on, down the avenue of trees to Ribbesford Church, the exterior and interior of which will repay the visitor, especially the tympanum over the porch—(*See Note*). Opposite the east end will be seen the old rectory tithe-barn, an immense solid stone building; and passing through the iron gate and across the field, you will come to the banks of the Severn. You may then either follow the course of the river to Stourport (3½ miles), or keep to the high-road for about three-quarters of a mile, and turn left up a steep path through the woods to the summit of

Stagbury, whence a charming bird's-eye view of the Severn valley may be obtained.

NOTE.

St. Leonard's Church, Ribbesford, dates back to Norman times, probably to William II. or Henry I. Its chief peculiarities are the oak pillars supporting the roof and separating the Nave from the South Aisle, and the tympanum over the entrance through the porch, on the north side. This tympanum, thoroughly preserved for centuries by a coating of plaster which was carefully removed about fifty years ago, represents a Norman archer, who, aiming at a deer, missed it, and lodged his arrow in another animal, apparently a beaver.

Many of these ancient architectural carvings enshrine some quaint local history or custom; and in alluding to this, *Nash* says: "The villeins of the manor were bound to furnish weirs and nets for catching fish, and proper implements of hunting; and the plenty of game here formerly might be alluded to by the sculpture over the north porch." *Noake* says: "The most likely supposition is that as Ribbesford in those days belonged to the Monastery of Worcester, . . . the sculpture is merely an embodiment of this leading feature of the locality where an abundance of game might be procured. The Normans were in the habit of perpetuating in stone these local peculiarities, and at a much later date the bosses of Gothic churches represent the botanical productions." Quaint remnants of monkish wood-carving may also be seen at the east end of the Nave; and carvings—by some thought to be emblematical—on the stone capitals of the shafts in the north porch,



Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

Football Field,

Some of the stained windows are rare examples of ecclesiastical art, and some fragments of ancient glass are specially rich in colour.

The visitor will not fail to recognise the loving care with which the churchyard is kept, a credit to all connected with it.

6.—FROM BEWDLEY TO TICKNELL & STAGBURY—5 miles. Over the bridge and same route as No. 5 until the road is crossed. Here turn right to Horse-hill Farm, where stood until 20 years ago the old Gospel oak of Ribbesford—(See Note). Follow the lane, from which commanding views will be obtained of the Severn valley and as far as the Clents. At the bend in the lane to right, keep straight on along a timber track which will eventually bring you out on the shoulder of Stagbury, and so on to the high-road below. Turn left for fifty yards or so, and then follow the path by the river side to Stourport bridge. The termination "bury" in Worcestershire hills shows that at some period it was an occupied and defended summit: *e.g.* Woodbury, Stagbury.

This walk may be varied and lengthened by following the road at the afore-mentioned turn to the right, descending the hill, crossing the Gladder brook, a stiff climb, then take first turn to left (a cottage will be on your left), down a curious lane where a brook occupies the roadway, and so back to Severn, or across the meadows to Areley Kings church.

NOTE—GOSPEL OAKS.

There are, or were, several of these in our neighbourhood:—The OLD OAKS at Shatterford (recently blown

down) and at Ribbesford; the APOSTLE'S OAK at Abberley, unfortunately destroyed about 1740; and the MITRE OAK at Crossway Green, Hartlebury.

They were generally at the junction of the parishes, and served as landmarks and parish boundaries. Under their wide-spreading boughs the Gospel was wont to be preached ere churches were in existence, and perambulations of the parishes were duly made from one landmark to another. The poet Herrick says:—

"Dearest, bury me under that holy oak, the gospel tree;
Where, though thou seest not, thou mayst think upon me,
When thou yearly goest in procession."

These processions were the perambulations of the parish boundaries, which took place on the Rogation days each spring-time, and served to preserve the knowledge of the limits of the parish, and as occasions when all could unite in common prayer for preservation from war, disease, and famine.

The APOSTLE'S OAK at Abberley is one of the many localities claimed as the meeting-place of Augustine and the Welsh bishops, A.D. 603.

The MITRE OAK still stands by the road-side at Crossway Green, $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles south of Kidderminster, on the Worcester road, and marks the extent of the domains belonging to the See of Worcester. When Elizabeth made one of her "progresses" to Hartlebury Castle, the Bishop accompanied her on her departure as far as the Mitre Oak, *i.e.* to the limit of his demesne.

7.—HARVINGTON HALL was the old moated Elizabethan mansion belonging to, and probably built by, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, one of the Secretaries of State to that Queen. Like so many of the residences



Photo kindly lent by the Photographic Society.

Habberley Valley Road.

of the Romanists in this district, it lies away from, and yet within easy reach of, the main roads, and was furnished with a Chapel and hiding-places in the roof, where their priests might find refuge if required. Adjoining the Hall is a Roman Catholic Chapel and residence for the priest.

Follow the Bromsgrove road past the station to just beyond Stone Church, then through the fields to left, and across the brook to Harvington. Return *via* Muster Green—6 miles.

8.—STONE FINNEY and Finney rough—4 miles. Go along the Bromsgrove road to the foot of Comberton Hill. At stream turn left over fields; left again along rails and past Middle Dunclent along the foot of Mount Segg. Cross the stream and bear to left by Danesford and Bissell Wood, and come into Birmingham road near Park Hall. Then left, and so back home.

This walk may be varied by ascending Stone Finney. At end of two fields beyond the wood, turn left through one field, then diagonally half-way across field to right, then left over the common and rabbit-warren near the Mearse Farm, and so to foot of Mount Segg.

9.—ARELEY KINGS, Redstone Hermitage, and Lincombe Weir. Over Stourport bridge, first turn to right, and then up the steep hill on left to Areley Kings Church. Walk round the church and view Severn Valley. Walk in (key at Rectory, adjoining the churchyard). The church, which is most complete, has been recently restored, and dates from Norman days. Notice the font inscribed "Layamon's," who was priest here during the reign of John, and the author of "Brut," one of our earliest books. "Brut" was a translation

of the writings of the Norman Wace, and is both alliterative and rhythmical in style, and was professedly a history of England from its earliest times. Of over 30,000 lines, less than fifty words are Norman. Layamon was a recluse of Redstone Hermitage, and his pulpit in the sandstone rock existed until quite recently, when it was ruthlessly destroyed by pea-pickers. In the churchyard may be seen a number of blocks of sandstone inscribed—

"Lithologema quare?
Reponitur: Sir Harry,"

which may be translated, "If it is asked why this collection of stones? it is answered, 'Sir Harry.'"

Just beyond the churchyard is the old school-room, now converted into a stable. Round it are the staples and rings to which the horses were fastened, belonging to distant farmers who had driven to service.

Now retrace your steps, cross the main road, and follow the old road, now disused, which led to the Redstone ferry, previous to the building of Stourport bridge in 1770. Here the body of Prince Arthur was conveyed when brought from Ludlow to Worcester in 1502. Notice the size of the old ferry-inn, fully occupied by travellers when Severn was in flood.

Ascend the path leading to the summit of the hill, and then half-a-mile further to the side of Lincombe Weir.

10.—HARTLEBURY COMMON. Railway ticket to Hartlebury, 3½d. Go straight through village to Hartlebury Castle, the home of the Bishop of Worcester, surrounded formerly by a moat. Then left, following the stream through Hill Edge copse, and skirting the common to Titton. Ascend the hillside on left for view



Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

Haberley Valley.

of Lincombe Weir, and then follow path to river, whence one may return either along the towing-path or *via* stream to Titton, and while away a pleasant hour on the dunes of the common. Walk either to trams, or home *via* lane and fields along the ridge of the hill to Hoobrook.

II.—WYRE FOREST AND DOWLES BROOK. Take a return ticket to Bewdley, 4d. Then over bridge and along the road to Cleobury, steep ascent for two miles but affording pleasant and extensive views of the forest, Abberley, etc. At finger-post turn left to Cleobury, left again at top of Lemp-brook Hill, and so to Furnace Mill, an ideal spot for the photographer after rain has swollen the brook. Follow the stream down through the forest to its junction with the Severn, one mile above Bewdley. Several mills will be passed, pointing to a time when *Aquafluens* was a power in the land, and when every farmer was compelled by law to grind his corn at his lord's mill.

12.—KINVER EDGE. Go along Stourbridge Road as far as Old Bear Inn, turn left by Broadwaters Pools, and across fields, road, and Lea Castle Park. On emerging through the hole in the wall into the road, turn left for forty yards, then right over canal and Stour by side of disused iron-works, then through the coppice and fields into the lane. Up a long gentle rise to Blakeshall. At forking of roads turn left across the fields to the Edge. Again left by Nanny's Rock, Vale's Rock, and so to Baxter's monument, Drakelow, Wolverley, and home. (See *Special Article*.)

13.—MONSTER'S HILL. Four miles North of Kidderminster, on the road to Bridgnorth, stands

embosomed in Arley wood, the remarkable geological protuberance, known as "Monster's Hill"—possibly so called from some gigantic wild animal, bear or wolf, having made his lair in the dark and gloomy recesses which lie at the foot of the towering granite forming the cap of the exuded volcanic mass—and still clasping the gnarled roots of ancient yews, and enshrouded with an overgrowth of hardy ferns and lichens.

Roberts in his "Rocks of Worcestershire" thus describes it—"Shatterford is mainly composed of dhu-stone (dhu-black), and is an outcrop of pure basalt, contorted and upheaved into every imaginable form, and which seems to belong to the close of the Carboniferous epoch. As may be expected, this intrusion of volcanic rocks among the coal measures has made great changes, roasting, tilting, and altering them, until they are as black as the basalt itself and abundantly interspersed with fossilized ferns."

Following the path through the wood from the quarry whence the basalt has been extracted for road-making, we may perhaps discover the remains of an old Roman camp, occupied by those old warriors during the summer months as an agreeable sylvan change from their pent-up quarters in some town. Nash says of it "A large Roman camp also remains here, situated in Arley wood, being nearly an exact square, with double, and on one side treble ditches. It was possibly the work of Ostorius (circa 51 A.D.), who fortified many places near, and upon the banks of the Severn during his conflict with the Silures."

The remains of an old road runs close to the camp, along which herds of Irish and Welsh cattle were

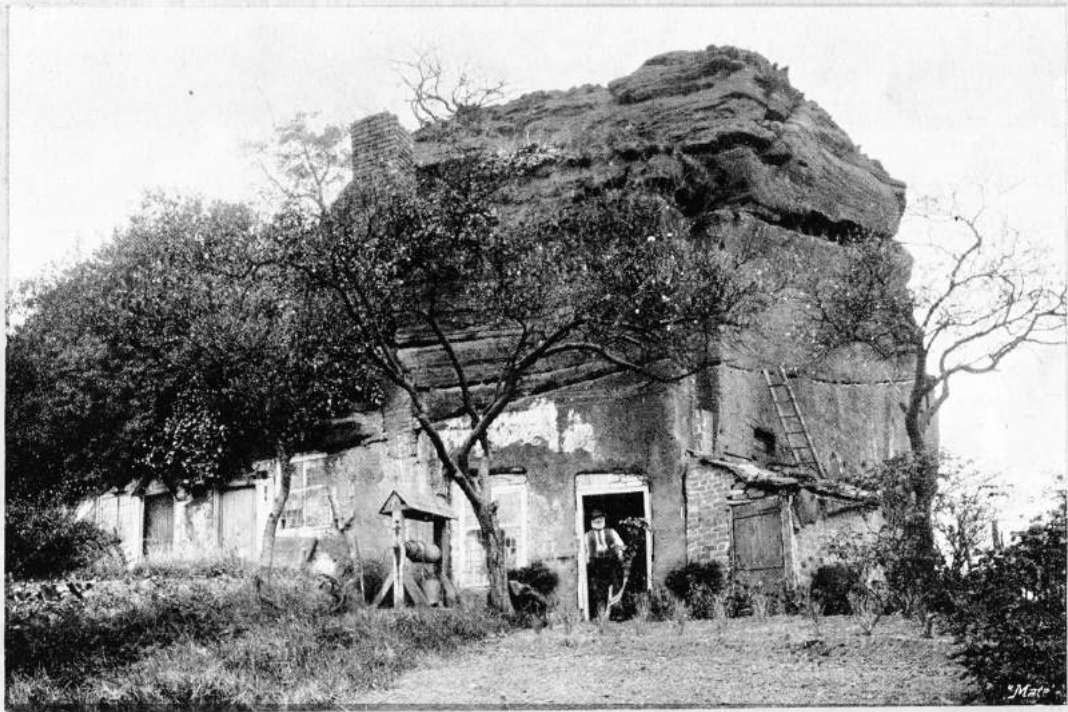


Photo by Cheshire & Sons, Kidderminster.

Rock Houses, Kinver,

formerly driven, after having been landed at Park-gate in Cheshire. The farmhouse known as Castlehill is said to have been a favourite retreat of King John; it was one of the chain of hill summits occupied during the frontier wars of Henry IV. and Owen Glyndwr; and in the forest recesses many Royalist fugitives are said to have been secreted after the "crowning mercy of Worcester" 1651.

Cycle Rides.

1.—TEWKESBURY. Recommended to cross the bridge at Worcester, and ride *via* Upton and Forthampton; cross Severn at Lower Lode (by which Queen Margaret escaped after battle, 1471); walk down riverside to Deerhurst, one of the most perfect Saxon churches in the land—Odda's Chapel. Back to Lower Lode, ride into Tewkesbury, visit Abbey—fine Norman architecture and mortuary chapels. 65 miles.

2.—TONG AND BOSCOBEL, *via* Bridgnorth, Sutton Maddock, Shifnal, Tong Church (Elihu Burritt calls it the "Westminster Abbey of the Midlands"), Boscobel; view House, chapel, hiding-places in cheese-room and stairs, secret exit through cupboard, and Royal Oak. Return *via* Codsall, Wergs, Trysull, Himley, Wall-heath and Stew-poney. 65 miles.

3.—TENBURY AND LEOMINSTER, *via* Clow's Top, Newnham and Tenbury (fine wood-carving, timbs and windows in Burford Church), Woolferton, Brimfield, Leofric's Minster, now pronounced Lemster—two churches under one roof—Norman and Early English.

Quaint carving on stone capitals, ball-flower ornament, Ducking-stool. Old Town Hall on recreation ground. A fine but hard ride. If tired, train may be taken at Newnham at 4.56 or 6.57 to Bewdley, for self and cycle, 1s. 6d. Total distance, 60 miles.

4.—LUDLOW AND CLUN, *via* Bewdley, Cleobury, Clee Hills. Dangerous descents here and there, but commanding view from summit of ridge, and easy coast from Angel Inn to Ludlow. View St. Lawrence's Church, Castle, and the round Norman Church. Ride *via* Bromfield to Stokesay, a mediaeval combination of moated castle and monastery: Craven Arms and Clun. Fine Norman church and Castle of Fitz-Alan (Stephen). Visit British Camps at Bury Ditches, three miles north, and Caer Caradoc, three miles south, amongst the finest in the country. Return *via* Corve Dale and Bridgnorth. About 85 miles. An interesting two days' ride.

5.—STOURPORT, WITLEY, Stanford Bridge, Teme Valley, to Ham Bridge. Return *via* Martley, Ockeridge, Holt Bridge, and Ombersley. About 30 miles.

6.—TENBURY, *via* Stourport, Witley, Stanford Bridge, Fox Inn. Return *via* Teme Valley, through Rochford and Eastham, cross Teme, and on to Lindridge, Hundred House, and Stourport. Recommended. 40 miles.

7.—BRIDGNORTH, *via* Bewdley, Kinlet, and Billingsley. Return *via* Quat and Shatterford. 33 miles. Fine.

8.—BRIDGNORTH (another), *via* Stewponey, Enville, Highgate Common, Halfpenny Green, Claverley, Worfield. Return as in No. 7. About 36 miles. Recommended.

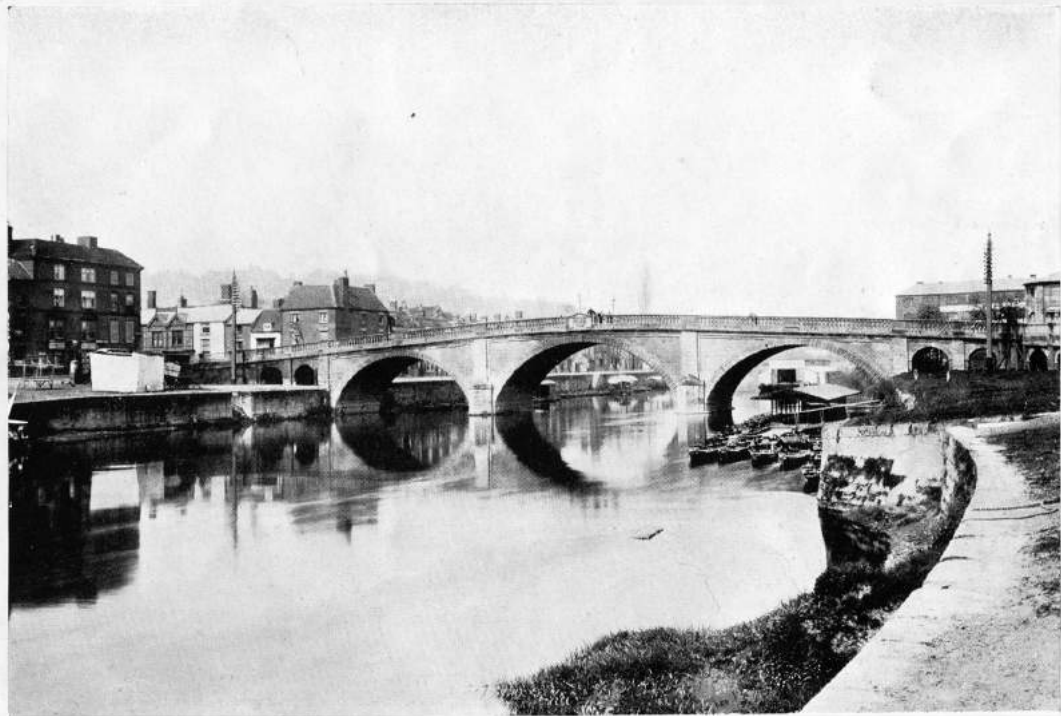


Photo by Cheshire & Sons, Kidderminster.

The Bridge, Bewdley.

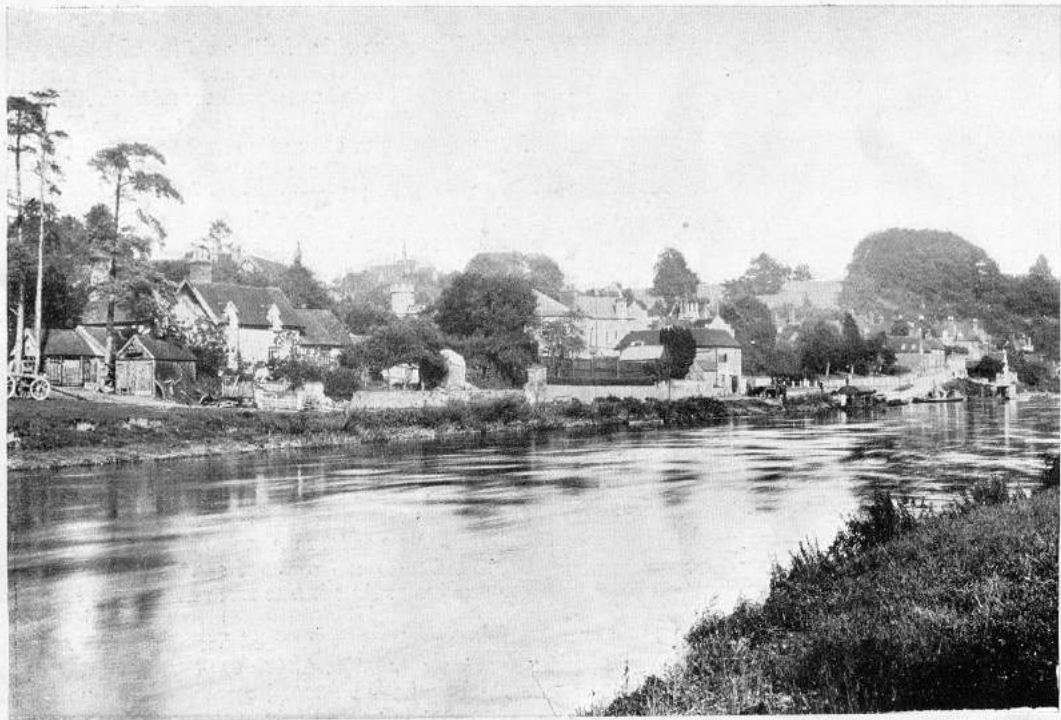


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Arley Village.

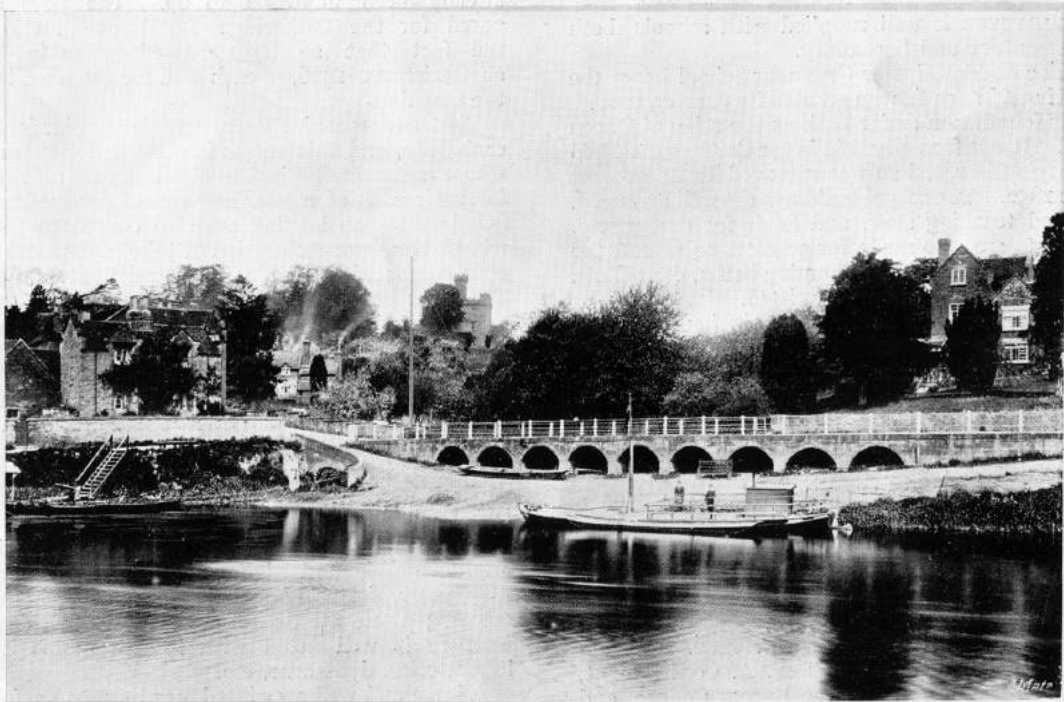


Photo by Cheshire & Sons, Kidderminster.

Ferry Station, Arley.

Scholastic.

KIDDERMINSTER is well supplied with schools both Elementary and Secondary.

The Kidderminster Grammar School bears the name of King Charles I., who granted its charter, though it traces its foundation as far back as the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It was formerly held in the Chantry attached to St. Mary's Church, but was removed to its present site about 1850. The school buildings are well arranged, have a good teaching staff, and fields for games, etc. Arrangements are also made for scholars to attend the Schools of Science and Art, swimming baths, etc. Both boarders and day scholars are admitted.

Other Grammar Schools in the neighbourhood are those of Wolverley.

Wolverley School is situated about two miles to the north of Kidderminster. It was founded in 1620 by William Sebright, who left properties in London which supply the greater part of its large endowment.

The School was originally in the village, but the Governors acquired a new building site in 1881 on a hill near Wolverley Parish Church, and have since built a large School there. There are two boarding houses, one in charge of the Headmaster and the other in charge of the Second Master.

The School was reorganised in 1904, when the present Headmaster (Mr. R. C. Lucas, B.A., B.Sc.) was appointed. He and his colleague (Rev. A. Cecil Knight, M.A.) were both house-masters at Epsom College, and Wolverley boys now have the advantage of a public school education. The number of boys, which on the arrival of the present Headmaster was 23, has

already been increased to 60. The boys are prepared for the Cambridge Local examinations, and the fact that 20 boys passed (some in Honours) at Christmas, 1906, speaks well for the effectiveness of the teaching.

The Governors give Entrance Scholarships for boarders each July, and this makes it possible for those parents whose means are limited to obtain a first-rate education for their sons at a boarding school for moderate fees. Scholarships on leaving are also offered to those who win University Scholarships or take high places in other open competitive examinations straight from the School. The boys have a large cricket and football field, and enjoy the use of a 300-yard rifle range in the summer. They are all drilled twice a week and possess a gymnasium and carpenter's shop.

For girls there is an excellent High School at Proud Cross, recently placed under the supervision of the Worcester County Council.

Kidderminster borough is a separate and independent educational unit, though working in harmony with the County Authorities.

Its School of Art has established and maintained an honourable and high position in the country for fifty years, fostering artistic design and harmony of colours; while the School of Science which dates back to 1887 is well fitted with lecture rooms, chemical laboratories, dye-house, etc.

A large and well-appointed Reading Room for newspapers; a Reference, and a Free Library, form part of the block of Municipal buildings adjoining the Schools of Science and Art, opposite the General Post Office.



Photo by Cheshire & Sons, Kidderminster.

Wolverley School.

Wolverley School, Kidderminster.

Head Master:

R. C. Lucas, B.A.
(Lond.), B.Sc. (Lond.)

*Late House Master
and Senior Modern
Language Master at
—Epsom College.—*

Second Master:

Rev. A. Cecil Knight,
M.A. (Cantab.)

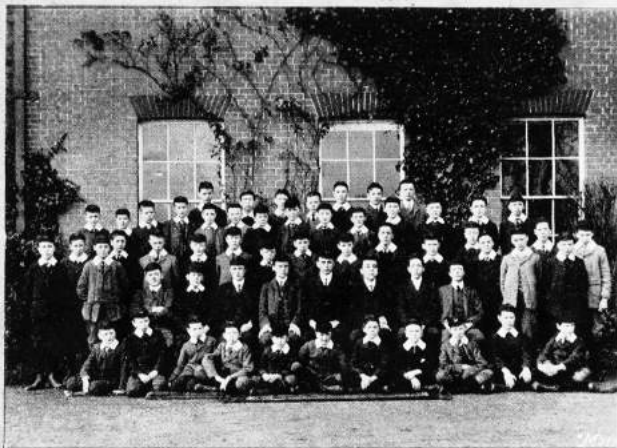
*Late House Master
at Epsom College.*

Assistant Masters:

C. A. E. Whish, B.Sc.
(Lond.)

G. C. Irwin, B.A.
(Oxon.)

Assisted by three
non-resident masters.



SCHOOL GROUP.

THE School is situated in the country, on the top of a hill, about 3 miles from Kidderminster Railway Station (G.W.R.)

The excellence of the endowment enables the Governors to offer a first rate education of a public school type for very moderate fees.

A Boarding School for Boys.


THE School has its own Gymnasium, Sanatorium, Chemical Laboratory, Playing Fields, Carpenters' Shop, Out-door Bathing Establishment & Rifle Range. Boys may enter the school between the ages of 8 and 16.

Particulars of Scholarships for boarders, who wish to enter the school, may be obtained from the Headmaster.

The Governors offer leaving scholarships to those who win University Scholarships or take high places in the examinations for entrance to Woolwich or Sandhurst.


The numbers have more than doubled during the last three years.

*Wolverley
School,
Kidderminster.*



PLAYING FIELD.

A Boarding
School
for Boys.



THE DINING HALL.



THE BIG SCHOOLROOM.

The Carpet Industry.

NO account of the town of Kidderminster would be complete without some special mention of the trade with which it is so intimately associated. Kidderminster has been the home of the carpet industry for nearly two centuries, for although the manufacture of Brussels carpet does not date back much more than a hundred and seventy years, even before that time the town had been engaged in the production of materials for floor-covering, and at the present time, although there are other carpet-manufacturing centres in the North of England and in Scotland, and though the industry flourishes in France, Germany, and the United States, Kidderminster still claims to be the centre of the carpet trade of the world.

Of the various fabrics made at the present day in the town, precedence is naturally accorded to Brussels, the manufacture of which was first introduced from Belgium to Wilton, whence it was soon adopted here, together with the velvet fabric which takes its name from the latter place. Though these two articles are still the staple product of the town, they have had to yield greatly in popular favour to Axminster, which is, of course, manufactured in large quantities and various qualities in the local factories. Besides these well-known makes, there are the Chenille Axminster; the Tapestry, or printed carpet; the Kidderminster or Art square; and even the Hand-tufted Seamless Axminster; while special fabrics that are made under patents, or are modifications of the classes mentioned above, are produced by most makers.

The first Brussels and Wilton looms were worked by

hand, a boy being employed to lift the coloured threads as required for each "lash" or row of the work; and the looms were generally operated in the home of the weaver. All this, however, was changed by the introduction of the power loom, which tended to cheapen and increase production to a great extent, and to cause the assembling of looms in a well-built shed.

Axminster power looms were of a good deal later date, being introduced into Kidderminster from the United States about 1877. The Chenille Carpet loom, more particularly in its application to wide seamless carpets, has been a comparatively recent development, but its productions seem to be rapidly increasing in popularity.

The development of the carpet trade in Kidderminster for the past thirty or forty years has been mainly along the lines of mechanical invention, and the manufacturers have been quick to take advantage of any improvement in the method of making carpets, whether of local or external origin. Keen rivalry of this kind, accentuated by bitter competition of French, German, Belgian, Austrian, and Oriental carpets, has tended to produce in Kidderminster carpet-manufacturing plant of the most ingenious workmanship and of the highest efficiency.

Visitors who are interested in "seeing how things are made"—and few manufactures are more interesting than that of carpets—will be well repaid for any trouble they may take in obtaining an entrance into one of the many carpet factories of the town, of which the following does not claim to be an exhaustive list.

Messrs. Brintons, Limited, whose offices face the Post Office, are manufacturers of Brussels, Wilton, and Axminster carpets in various qualities. The firm was



Photo kindly lent by the Photographic Society.

Victoria Bridge and Seckley Ford.

founded in 1819 by Mr. Henry Brinton, the father of Mr. John Brinton, the present Chairman of the Company, who has been actively associated with the business for no less than sixty-five years. The firm was formed into a limited liability company in 1881, and the present directors include two grandsons of the founder. Its progress has been steady, about 140 Brussels and Wilton looms being employed at the present time, while within the last few years an Axminster Department of considerable importance has been added.

Reference has been made to mechanical developments in the carpet trade, and Messrs. Brintons have been very fortunate in this respect, having developed a Patent Axminster Loom of remarkable ingenuity, which has enabled them to cater for the public taste in this fabric by means of an exceptional range of qualities. One of the looms working under the patents produces a carpet fifteen feet in width, and is claimed to be the largest loom of its kind in the world. Messrs. Brintons have also established, within the past few years, a department for the manufacture of hand-tufted real Axminster carpets, which are now gaining a reputation under the name of "Kildare." These are made of practically any size in one piece, and are knotted by hand in precisely the same way as the Oriental carpets are and have been made for centuries.

In addition to their carpet looms, Messrs. Brintons possess a woollen spinning plant, designed to meet their own requirements for woollen yarns. They were among the first people in the town to adopt electrical motive power for looms, and at the present time are contemplating a general electrification of their works.

Messrs. Cooke Brothers have been established at the Worcester Cross Works since 1902 for the manufacture of Chenille Axminster carpets and rugs. Starting in a modest way with eight looms, most of which were worked by hand, they have now increased to 40 looms, and their plant contains some of the most modern types of machinery used in the Chenille trade. Their various fabrics include the well-known qualities of Dhamar, Premier, Ideal, and Eclipse Rugs, and Shahrud Axminster squares. This latter article is the most recent production of the firm, being a very heavy deep-pile carpet, which does justice to the most delicate shades or the richest Turkey effects. A further speciality is the range of billiard and corridor rugs with fine Oriental colourings. The distribution of these productions is effected by means of a staff of travellers, supplemented by warehouses in London, Glasgow, and Manchester.

Messrs. James Humphries and Sons, Limited, are manufacturers of Brussels, Wilton, and Axminster carpets, and possess over 120 looms.

Messrs. Harrison, Kempson and Co., Limited, are fortunate in occupying a very well built modern factory at Long Meadow Mills, and are energetic manufacturers of Brussels, Wilton, and Axminster.

Messrs. T. and A. Naylor, of Green Street, are the only local makers of the kind of carpet once known by the name of the town, but their special fabrics are now the "Roman" and other Art squares. They are also woollen spinners.

The Carpet Manufacturing Company comprises the two firms of Morton and Sons and Richard Smith and Sons, both of whom are manufacturers of Brussels and



Photo kindly lent by the Photographic Society.

Hay Bridge. Wolverley.

Wilton, and of Chenille and tufted Axminster, seamless and in the piece. Messrs. Smith also make twill and Dutch carpets, and finger and beam rugs.

Messrs. Tomkinson and Adam, who are the original patentees of power-loom Axminster carpets, are the largest makers of this fabric and of the Chenille Axminster in the town, with 156 looms for the former and 78 for the latter. They have also several wide looms for the manufacture of tufted Axminster, which are marvels of workmanship and are operated in a specially constructed building.

The Victoria Carpet Company is the only firm manufacturing tapestry and velvet squares in the town. It has only been established within the last few years, but has gained a good name for the excellence of its products.

The firm of Messrs. Woodward, Grosvenor and Co., Limited, holds a high position in the carpet world, and has magnificent offices and warehouses, which the visitor to the town cannot miss as he enters Kidderminster.

The firm was established in 1864, succeeding the then old firm of Messrs. Henry Woodward and Sons, and the present head of the firm, Mr. Grosvenor, was associated with Mr. H. T. Woodward in establishing the present concern. The Stour Vale Works were the locale of the enterprise, and a commencement was made with 14 Brussels looms and the necessary concomitants, the number of hands being about 50. Extension after extension has been made, till now the firm has 126 looms and finds occupation for a large number of employees of both sexes. In 1883 the firm, just before the lamented death of Mr. Woodward, entered into possession of the very fine buildings at Worcester Cross,

not as a substitute for, but in addition to the Stour Vale Works, where the Brussels and Wilton carpets are still made, while the Axminster looms are located in the modern and up-to-date "sheds" immediately at the rear of the offices, show-rooms, and designers' studios. The Brussels sheds are also most commodious, and the machinery and plant is of the best. The dye-house, with the latest mechanical contrivances for securing perfection in the very important process of dyeing, is a model, and has attracted much attention for its compactness and the excellence of its appliances.

The carpets made by the firm are well known throughout the world. Their carpets have a reputation second to none, and are now made by the firm in practically all qualities to meet the demands of all classes of buyers. The cut-pile Wiltons and Axminsters have been very popular of recent years; these are made in large quantities by the firm.

Of all the detailed processes of manufacture it is impossible to treat, but it suffices to say that the latest machinery and methods, and many special patents, are employed by Messrs. Woodward, Grosvenor and Co., Limited, who are in the happy position of having works of the most compact, commodious, and convenient character, enabling the firm to turn out goods as perfectly finished as artistically designed.

Space does not suffice for mention of other factories, or of the allied and supplementary industries such as Worsted and Woollen Spinning, and the manufacture of various mechanical specialities for the carpet trade; all of which, however, combine to render Kidderminster a spot of exceptional interest as an industrial centre.



Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

Harrington Hall.

Harrington Hall.



Photo by W. Thompson, Kidderminster.

Witley Court.

BRINTONS LIMITED, Kidderminster.



MANUFACTURERS OF _____
AXMINSTER, BRUSSELS, and WILTON CARPETING,
SEAMLESS AXMINSTER CARPETS, and of
SEAMLESS HAND-MADE AXMINSTER CARPETS & RUGS,
WOOLLEN SPINNERS.

TELEGRAMS :

"Brintons, Kidderminster."

TELEPHONE 5.

Agencies—Glasgow, Paris, Berlin, Lisbon,
Copenhagen, Athens, Constantinople,
Alexandria, Toronto, Capetown, Mel-
bourne, Shanghai, Tokio.

London Warehouse—

10, 11, 12, IVY LANE,
TELEGRAMS: "BRINTONS, LONDON."
TELEPHONE 7529 CENTRAL.

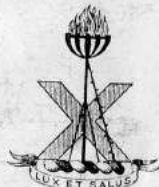
Manchester Warehouse—

33, MOSLEY STREET,
TELEGRAMS: "BRINTONS, MANCHESTER."
TELEPHONE 4739.

Glasgow Warehouse—

142, QUEEN STREET,
TELEGRAMS: "BRINTONS, GLASGOW."
TELEPHONE 3121 ROYAL.

TRADE MARK





The Stour Vale Mills.—Messrs. Woodward, Grosvenor & Co.



Telegrams :
"Cooke Bros., Kidderminster"
"Clunn, London."

Telephone :
121, Kidderminster,
4921, Holborn, London.

COOKE BROS.,

Axminster Carpet
and
Rug Manufacturers.

LONDON - 14, 15, Carthusian St., E.C.
GLASGOW - 142, Queen Street.
MANCHESTER - 32, Faulkner Street.

WORCESTER CROSS WORKS,
KIDDERMINSTER.

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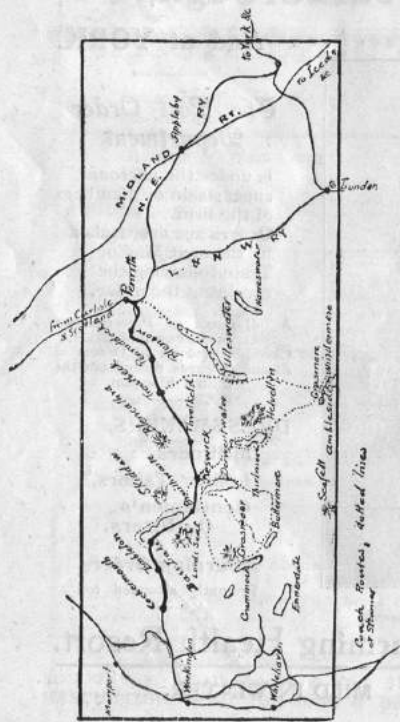
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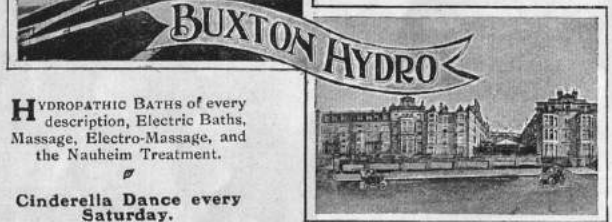
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