FAIR BOURNEMOUTH

Edgar L. Wakeman's Third Letter About the Great English

SEASIDE SUMMER RESORTS.

One Place That is Unique Among Them all--A Real Boom Town Where an American is Made to Feel at Home--Curious Features About the Resort--Notable Surroundings.

[Copyright, 1891.]

Special Correspondence of the Intelligencer.

BOURNEMOUTH, ENGLAND, Aug. 24.—Regarded from almost any standpoint, Bournemouth is unique among the great seaside resorts of England. It is truly a health giving spot without certification. Its senic, outlook is grandly beautiful without appeal to guidebook, which it does not possess, or to the imagination, which it lovingly prompts. It is rich without being vulgar; aristocratic, though not insufferably so; popular, and yet dreamfully quiet. The omnipresent 'Arry, 'Arriet and "Tommy Atkins" of every other known resort in England are here unknown. And, more noticeable than all else to the American loiterer, it is in England and yet glows with newness and progress.

While it ever recalls the brightness and sunny gaiety of our own best resorts, we have not any one to which it can properly be likened. Take the almost matchless foreshore of Old Orchard Beach, put behind it the picturesque and ragged surroundings of Bar Harbor, add a million pines from the trackless forests of Maine, give these the tender somnolence of dear old Newport and then permeate the whole with that breezy spirit of endless unrest which has wrought the magic in such places to Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Denver, Spokane, Seattle and Tacoma, and you will have something like the delicious composite that wins your steadfast affection here.

There is something in the very dash and vigor of Bournemouth that lays hold of the American heart. It gives a tingle and glow to know that our hearty Western word "boom" is known and applied here with pride. To find anywhere in England such radiant activities is a feast of delight in a desert of conservatism, inertia and antiquity. They say that but a trifle over fifty years ago the beautiful situation of Bournemouth was still undiscovered, although some years before George the Third held his court at Weymouth, but a little distance away, and the military band played "God Save the King" whenever His Majesty emerged from his bathing-machine to indulge in a sea bath. It was in 1836 that Sir G. W. Tapps Gervis plunged in the pine forest and made a clearing. He built a house here and there, leaving the pines with their saffron-colored cones standing between. The interlacing valleys lent themselves to the *formation of roads*, which were made fir-fringed and pine-plumed. Other builders extended the settlement and dotted their villas among the pines, until a grandly beautiful and wide-spread city of nearly 30,000 inhabitants, the greater portion being members of the English aristocracy and nobility, has been planted in a pine forest, sloping down to the "chines," or tiny canons, which open out to the circling cliffs of sand for the wash of the mighty sea.

SOME BOOMERS.

Many romances of sudden wealth have been written in Bournemouth's growing. Sidney Brown, one of the men who helped to rebuild Chicago after the flames had swept that city into world-heart fame, learned there his lesson of opportunity so well that in building here he is now become one of the millionaires of this "Paradise of Pines." The great Durant estate, comprising the entire Bourne valley, three miles long, running through the centre of Bournemouth, and covered by its most princely buildings and lovely pleasure gardens, is owned by one marriageble maiden, a Miss Durant. This lady's father came into possession of the property after years of litigation and discouragement so great that he finally offered his solicitor, one Fox, an attorney at Norwich, £3,000 to accept his equities in the property, pay the cost and rid him of responsibility. The honest or hesitant Fox refused, but has made in fees and commissions a hundred times that amount out of the estate, while the lonely heiress is worth millions. The Shelley estate, formerly a few hundred acres of sand dunes and pines, now owned by Lady Shelley, widow of the late Baron Percy Bysshe Shelley, the poet's son, is valued at a million pounds sterling, and is receiving £50 annual ground rents for countless half acre lots. It lies between Bournemouth pier and Christchurch head, on what is known as East Cliff.

The present Lord Malvern, one of the Bank of England directors, though always a man of great wealth, added millions to his properties through the peculiar influence he exercised over two old ladies—Lady Talbot and sister—who both died within a few months' period at above *ninety years of age some* seven years since. They owned 800 acres of this once pine wilderness. Lord Malvern accommodatingly became their business "adviser"—a sort of financial lady's maid to the eccentric old couple. On their death the community was startled to learn that every iota of the vast estate had been bequeathed to Lord Malvern, who immediately made short shrift of all the old servants and other dependents.

Pages of similar romances and tragedies in the marvelous increase of values in Bournemouth, though the city's history is a brief one, could be related. The practical side of the development is also curious and entertaining. The city has no "streets." All its thoroughfares are "roads," "avenues," "crescents" and "quadrants." They are all winding and there are no "squares." The splendid improvements have been almost exclusively made by speculative architects and builders. As values advanced, parcels or tracts were apportioned them by the agents of various estates, the latter providing improvements in adjoining thoroughfares. These sites are all acre or half acre lots, and with the exception of those of one estate, they are leaseholds of ninety or ninety-nine years' duration, on annual ground rentals of from $50 to $900 per lot, payable half yearly, and with what is known here as "peppercorn," or free ground rent for the first year, in deference to the builder's risk.

A CURIOUS THING.

The *curious* thing about Bournemouth residence property from first to last is, that no sooner is any villa erected and ready for occupancy, whatever its price, than it is already sold to some London gentleman or nobleman. The struggle here is not to sell houses already built, but to force building sites from the rich estates. The result must be that with unlimited outlying piney tracts, the city will become one of tremendous area and always a city of villas and garden-girdled, palatial homes. Only one estate sells freehold [illegible] and these are on conditions which render the word a ridiculous misnomer, and equity of redemption is securable only at thirty years' purchase. To illustrate: If a building site is secured at $500 per year ground rental, after thirty years and the payment altogether of $15,000 it becomes "freehold," subject to all manner of restrictive covenants, such as that the property be not used for business purposes, that the building upon it shall not be in any manner changed, that no additional buildings shall be erected on the same site, etc. Every such change imposes a new agreement and additional fees. I believe it requires a license fee of twenty-five dollars to merely add a bow window to one's house. A few rooms are being added to the Bourne Hall hotel property on Poole road, and the license fee for the change is $3,500. So that while there are from 200 to 400 residences in Bournemouth each one of which cost $25,000 and upward, and from twenty to fifty which have each cost $125,000 and upward, there are practically no people in Bournemouth who absolutely own their homes, save the half dozen possessors of the great estates.

Nature and invalidism have made Bournemouth. The climate of Great Britain is death veiled in humidity, ever leaving in nearly every household ineradicable pulmonary disease. There are in the two islands enough aristocratic invalids, or titled and untitled rich people who have this sort of invalism in their families, to build anywhere in England another city, rich and great as London, in which to house them. The pines, the sands, the sea and an almost semi-tropical climate are found in this magical city of the "English Rivera." They altogether exist nowhere else in Britain. This is solely why a wilderness, where heath covered, pine hid sand dunes worth half a century since less than $60 per acre, has been transformed into a spot more beautiful than the royal gardens of Kew, *where the same land* in many instances has a profit making value of more than $600,000 per acre.

NATURE BLENDED WITH ART.

Bournemouth is less than three hours' time from London, and is reached by the London & Southwestern railway. The first scent of the sea air is at Poole. Three miles more and you are at Bournemouth. There are Bournemouth east and west stations. These are set far out from the crescent, pine embedded city, so that those who come within the fairy place shall see no railway smoke and grime and never be disturbed by the locomotive's whistle. There is no dirt or poverty at Bournemouth. The most startling noise is the swell of the great orchestral bands. Birds sing here as in the wildwood. The primeval forest is still standing, and the threnodies of the wind in the pines go on and on when night has stilled the birds.

Where the people have felled the pines they have planted rhododendrons, the arbutus, the laurestina, myrtle and bay, and a myriad of other shrubs and evergreens instead. These grow on the south coast in almost tropical luxuriance. The silvery Bourne, springing along the heath at Kinson, scarcely more than a blue thread here, shows the sinuous valley depth, with the wide, fair city ascending to the east and west. Its journey is a pathway through a noble garden. Just before it reaches the city edge and the sea it wimples through an ever green and ever shaded arboretum, sweet, solemn and still. These gardens are interlaced walks, drives and devious wooded nooks. Avenues of ancient pines are softly melodious here. The sun steals through the vaulted roof in flecks and splinters of light. This is the famous "Invalid Walk."

The shore and seacape at Bournemouth are the most beautiful to be found in Europe. The shore is a perfect crescent, facing the south, twelve miles in length, terminating on the east in the bold Christchurch head, and on the west in the still bolder headland and stacks of the Old Harry Rocks. The foreshore penetrated by one of the handsomest piers in England, is an eighth of a mile in width, golden and level, with no pebble upon it as large as a pea. Behind this, broken only where the Bourne meets the sea and shows its sides terraced with superb villas and almost palaces is a continuous cliff of pure sand, here and there indented with tiny "chines." The cliff is from 100 to 300 feet in height. All the "chines" are merry burrows for children and lovers. Lookout houses and "shelters" line the edge for miles above. By night the shore ablaze with light, the sea ablaze with harbor and sailing lights. By night or day the eye never rests upon the sea without glimpses of hundreds of hundreds of steamers and sails. Straight across the Solent, toward France, is the Isle of Wright, the Needles foam-white at their feet. The whole is a dream of majestic beauty and repose. Bournemouth ideal—for the rich. The poor man can but look upon it and steal the ravishing picture for distant striving hours.

INTERESTING SURROUNDINGS.

Although Bournemouth itself is new one does not have to remain long a visitor to find it, its near headlands and islands and its *outlying moors* and forests, rich in associative interest. In its beautiful St. Peter's church is a fine memorial window to the poet, Keble, who died in the "Evergreen Valley," leaving to the region the legacy of a saintly name and blameless life. Ancient Swanage, just over there to the west beyond Old Harry Rocks, where time itself seems dreaming, was the favorite haunt of that grand man and noble writer, Charles Kingsley.

Near is the Isle of Purbeck. Its dark purple marble is found in nearly every cathedral of England. The same island has also been made noted in the "Life of Lord Eldon." He used to "breathe long columns of air" here, it is related. When he was lord chancellor and lived in Purbeck his mansion took fire, and through this circumstance England temporally lost its historic great seal. His first care at the time of the great conflagration, he told a friend, was for the great seal, of which the lord chancellor is custodian. By way of securing it during the confusion he buried it. The next morning when he came to reflect, he could not remember the spot, and his whole family and retinue of servants were set probing and digging about the walks and carriage ways until it was found.

At Corfe Castle one is reminded that Sir Christopher Hatton so loved the place for its healthfulness that he induced Queen Elizabeth to alienate it from the crown lands in his favor. The ivy does not cling thicker to old Heron Court, the seat of Lord Malmsbury, than do literary associations. The founder of the family wrote "Hermes," perhaps the greatest tome of reasoning since the time of Aristotle. When its author entered the house of commons Charles Fox thought it no place for him, for the great writer on grammar and harmony was sure, in Fox's opinion, to find "neither the one nor the other" within that august body. The late Lord Chancellor Cairns lived and died at Bournemouth, and is splendidly remembered in the Cairns Memorial hall. Among the heath hills of near New Forest, you may see the relic tree of King William Rufus, and at Stony Cross Hill is the stone set up to the memory of the same red headed ruffian whom Tyrrel shot purposely or by accident.

Then there is the noble minister at Wimbourne, the wonderful old Norman priory at Christchurch, and everywhere along shore, among the chines and caves of Tilly Whim, mementoes of smugglers and pirates. Not so very long ago the freebooters did a thriving trade between this coast and the opposite coast of France. The coast guards many a time found their match in these daring fellows, and blood was let nearly as often as brandy and tea were taken. The coastwise folk believed smuggling no crime, and one who lost his life battling against law died the hero's death. In Kinson churchyard you may still read this inscription over the grave of one who fell by the hands of the crown myrmidons: "To the memory of Robert Trotman, late of Royd, in the county of Wilts, who was barbarously murdered on the shore near Poole the 24th March, 1765.

"A little tea, one leaf I did not steal.
For guiltless I lood I to God appeal;
Put tea in one scale, human blood in 'tother
And think what 'tis to slay thy harmless brother."

If there is a shrine in England sacred to the poet Shelley it is here at Bournemouth. He was born at Field Place, in the County of Sussex, and was drowned in the Gulf of Spezzia in July, 1822. His body was recovered and was interred in the burial place at Rome for Protestant strangers. Mary Woolstonecraft Shelley, his wife, died near Bournemouth, and was buried in February, 1851. She was fifty-four years of age at the time of her death. Their son, Sir Percy Bysshe Shelley, died two years hence at the family seat, near Bournemouth, where his widow, Lady Shelley, still resides. They had no children, and the title of baronet passed to Col. Shelley, of Avinton, near Winchester. The latter is a nephew to the poet and cousin of the son, the late Sir Percy. In the quaint old Priory church at Christ-church Head, at the eastern edge of Bournemouth, may be seen a beautiful memorial to the poet and his wife. It is an exquisite marble effigy of Shelley, recumbent, supported in the arms of his kneeling wife.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

News From Japan.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALA., Sept. 4.—The steamship Gaelic arrived to-day, twenty days from Hong Kong, and thirteen from Yokohama.

The Japanese consul at Shanghai reports that cholera has broken out at Soo Chow. One case of cholera is reported in Yokohama.

The Presbyterian churches of Victoria, Australia, are commencing missionary work in Korea, and the Rev. Mr. MacKay, of St. John's, Ballarat, will be sent to that country. Fusan will probably be fixed upon as the location of the mission.

STATE OF OHIO, CITY OF TOLEDO, } ss
LUCAS COUNTY, }

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