Romantic KLYDE and Enville

With legends and folk-lore.

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M Poole

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This booklet is dedicated to
THE KINVER WOMEN'S INSTITUTE,
on whose behalf it was compiled.

LIST OF AUTHORITIES

Acknowledgments for the use of authorities used are due to:—

1. "Scott's History of Stourbridge and its Vicinity"
   (A.D. 1832, J. Heming, High Street, Stourbridge).

2. "The History of the Royal Forest of Kinver and the History of Stourton Castle."
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   Ida Mary Downing (Cornish Bros. Ltd., 39, New St., Birmingham. 1927).

5. Smiles' "Self Help" (to the publishers) for extract quoted.

6. Brochure of Stewponey Hotel.
   Designer and Producer, Murray Watson of Dudley.

7. Brochure of Ye Olde Whittington Inn.
   (Cavalier Publishing Co., Ltd., 105, Station Street, Birmingham).

8. Extracts from "Birmingham Gazette."

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CONTENTS

Miss Nancy Price

Chapter I.

THE ROYAL FOREST OF KINVER.

The Parish of Kinver is bounded on the North by Kingswinford, East by Old Swinford and Pedmore, South by Churchill, and West by Enville. It has an area of six square miles.

At one time several other parishes were included in the vast forest of Kinver : Pedmore, Hagley, Old Swinford, Chaddesley, Kidderminster, and Churchill.

Kinver takes its name from 'Chene Vare' in Doomsday Book, and is described as a lofty Ridge. The sharp cliffs made it in older times an obvious position for defence, the more gentle slopes to the East only as protection; there must have been springs of water to supply the garrison and the cattle; by the Saxons it is described as Chene ('royal') and fare (a road). Some historians own that the word is taken from "Cefn vaur," a sandy rock, 542 feet high.

We are told that Ethelbald granted a piece of this land to Earl Cynebert, for the purpose of founding a 'retreat.' Cynebert may have given the name Kynfer.

The first information we get of the country round about Kinver comes from Ptolemy of Alexandria, the Greek writer of the early part of the second century A.D. He describes the Early Britons of this district as belonging to the Carnavii. We are told by Camden, the Elizabethan writer, that few ancient earthworks of the Britons still remain in the district of Kinver. On the eastern side of Kinver Edge there is a large square camp some 300 by 180 yards across. It is probable, however, that the tribesmen of the Midlands were not very numerous. It is well known that the Romans settled only where there was a population to govern and tax, or where the earth would yield her riches to their industry. Much of Kinver in those days must have been covered with forest and swamp, through which flowed the sluggish Severn and her tributaries.

The Romans having conquered this part of the country, do not seem to have pursued the Britons, but to have contented themselves with taking precautions to prevent them re-crossing the Severn. They made roads through the forest to various strongholds. These roads are now main thoroughfares from

Wolverhampton to Kidderminster and Worcester, and from Dudley and Stourbridge to Bridgnorth and on to Chester.

After the departure of the Romans, the Britons along the banks of the Severn were for some time independent, but in 577 the West Saxons conquered this part of the country as far as Worcester. The King of Powis drove them back six years later, and in 628 the English settlers on the Welsh March becoming more and more strong, were united under Penda (625-655) and formed the Kingdom of the Mercians, or of the Men of the March.

Wulfhere, the first Christian King of Mercia, who flourished in the 7th century, brought Kinver into history by fortifying its red sandstone Edge, and after 1,300 years may still be seen the remains of the embankment thrown up by his soldiers and serfs. There the garrison had advantage of a strong defensive position combined with a most agreeable prospect. Here King Wulfhere of Mercia held his camp. So far is sure that the Saxon Church of Kinver on the extreme eastern Edge of the cliff, is dedicated to his two sons, Wulfhad and Ruffinus. The place of their martyrdom was Stone, in Staffordshire, but it is possible that their bodies were removed to Kinver.

The West Saxons were driven south again and became part of Mercia. This kingdom, with Tamworth as residence of the King and Lichfield of its Bishop, continued a strong and prosperous state, until the death of Offa (796). During the Saxon Heptarchy it was far and away the largest kingdom in England.

Early in the ninth century Egbert Earl of Wessex (802-839) claimed the overlordship and Mercia was absorbed into his kingdom, becoming an Earldom subject to the 'Central Powers.' Kenwulf was the last King of Mercia—his only son Kenelm being murdered when seven years of age, near the spot in the parish of Hagley where now stands the Church of St. Kenelm.

Scarcely had Egbert entered upon his rule before the Danes invaded England. On the West they sailed up the Severn, pillaging and destroying the towns as they passed, anyhow as far as Bewdley. In those dark days everything fell into confusion till Alfred (871-899), when the Danes had been converted to Christianity and civilisation, sought to repair the havoc which had been wrought. In his reign Mercia was first governed by Ethelred the Ealdorman, a weak, incompetent character. He married Alfred's eldest daughter Ethelfreda, a woman of marvellous capacity,

and it was she who soon governed the Kingdom of Mercia, subject to her father's Royal Kingship. Three generations after this Mercia was 'vested' in Leofric, Earl of Leicester and Mercia.

On the death of Edward the Confessor, Harold, son of Godwin, Earl of Kent, was crowned King of England (1066). At this time Edwin, fourth son of Leofric and Godiva, was Earl of Mercia, having succeeded his brother Algar, who had been outlawed in 1055 and died 1059.

Much misconception seems to prevail as to the agriculture and husbandry in England in these Saxon times. The earliest records which come down to us show that, partly in consequence of the Roman Occupation, the already advanced husbandry greatly improved. Fields were divided by hedges and ditches, there were commons of pastures and private meadows and arable lands, where ploughing, sowing and reaping were being carried out. Severe laws existed to ensure dividing hedges being kept up, also in protection of woods and timber.

All Saxon Kings who had ruled over principalities large and small, had their Royal Forests. In fact, Kings and Queens only could hold a forest—the greatest of the nobility could only possess manors, woods, parks and chaces, within their own lordships. Royal forests extended over great areas, and smaller woods stretched in all directions to protect farms, sheep and cattle from the bleak winds, and to supply timber for building purposes. The idea that Britain was a continuous dark damp forest is absolutely wrong.

The great delight of lords and commons in those days was the hunting of wolves, wild boars, deer, hares and rabbits. The Saxon Game Laws were mild and liberal; before the kings went to hunt no one was allowed to disturb the woods, but at other times every man might pursue game on his own land. The forests were not enclosed, but lay in open country, and their boundaries were declared by law within certain metes and bounds. They were not all necessarily wooded, but were localities set apart for the rearing and collecting of game. Public roads were continued across, and villages grew up within them.

Each of the Saxon kingdoms had Royal forests according to their size. Mercia, with its immense possessions, must have had many, and amongst others those of Chenefare or Kinver, Cannock, Needwood, Uttoxeter and Leek in Staffordshire. Harold,

on his coronation, accordingly took possession of all the Royal lands which belonged to the Confessor, and among them our own Royal Forest of Kinver. After Harold's death at Hastings (October, 1066) William the Conqueror in like manner appropriated to himself all the possessions of the Crown, as seen in Doomsday Book, and the status of Kinver was shown 1088 A.D.

Edwin Earl of Mercia and Morcar his brother, Earl of Northumbria, submitted themselves to William at Barking, 1067, swearing allegiance and loyalty to the Conqueror, and received back their estates. After Edwin's Staffordshire rebellion, 1069, the property of the Earl of Mercia was added to the Crown as "Terra Regis." A large amount of it, however, was handed over to his followers or to the Church.

According to Doomsday Book we find the King actually held, in 1085, several forests in Worcestershire, and in the county of Stafford some 55 villages and hamlets, including King's Swinford and Kinver. When Earl Edwin was slain portions of his estates fell to the share of William fitz Ansculf, and amongst others the Manor of Dudley. Here he built the castle, probably on the site of some primitive fortress. Nearly half of his estates lay within 8 miles radius from Dudley Castle, and accordingly lay within the bounds of Kinver Forest.

Normally in a forest there were the following officers:—

1. A Steward or Chief Forrester, often called Chief Warden or Custos.
2. Foresters—(a) Foresters in fee, an hereditary office. These would be mostly of knightly rank. (b) Rangers, appointed by the King for life. The Foresters were in charge of the administrative work within the forest. Under them were certain Bayliffs, who administered their bayliwicks under his supervision, but were appointed by the Crown. These bayliwicks may or may not have been hereditary, but perhaps ancestorship may have been a recommendation or implied qualification for the office.
3. Verderers. Chosen by the freeholders of the county to maintain the Forest Laws.
4. Reguarders. Chosen by the King through the Chief Justice of the Forests. They were the surveyors and valuers who made note of waste in the King's demesne, the condition of the timber, fences, etc.

5. Agisters. These men received and accounted for the monies received for herbage and pannage (putting swine out to feed in a forest).
6. Woodlands. In charge of woods and vert.

1165. In the reign of Henry II Philip Holgate held both the Manor and Forest of Kinfare as a serjeantry, rendering direct service to the King himself. He also accounted for the King's pannage. This was rent paid for farming, £9 per annum.

1189. Richard I gave town and forest of Kinfare with Stourton to Philip Holgate and his heirs. They took the name of Bobynton, a neighbouring parish, rendering military service for the King. Philip Holgate was also known as Lord of Barlston.

1219. Kinver was disafforested by virtue of the Charte-de-forestes granted by Henry III. Aids and scutages were omitted, also the summoning of the council of archbishops, bishops, earls, barons.

1257. John Fitz Philip was granted a fair and market at Kinver.

1255. It was recorded in the Seisdon Hundred Roll: "John Fitz Philip holds the Manor of Kinfare of the King in fee farm rendering annually £9 for frank pledge 5s. 6d., which the said John receives. And he has a free court and does suit at two general Hundreds and appears at the King's Manor by twelve (Justices) and he has the donation of the Church and Lee holds it, worth 20 marks p.a., and the said John holds the Castle of Stourton, pannage and herbage from the Feast of St. Michael to the Feast of St. Martin, and there is no castle guard. He has a tollage from the King's Manor.

About 1292-3 there seems to have arisen some trouble in connection to John's claim to the Manor of Kinver. Several entries are found in the Stafford Assize Rolls where John asserts his claim, and the jury presents that John, son of John Fitz Philip of Bobynton, holds the Manor and advowson of the Church worth £26 p.a.

This same John was called upon at different periods of his life to undertake military service. In 1277 he was summoned to meet the King at Worcester to take part in the subjugation of the Welsh under Llewellyn. In 1282 he had two more similar summonses. In 1297 he was returned by the Sheriff of Salop and

Staffordshire as being among those who held £20 of lands and upwards in those counties. He was therefore summoned to attend at London to perform military service in person with horse and arms in parts beyond the sea. Again in 1301 amongst those holding £40 in land he was called upon for personal service in the Scotch Wars and to attend the muster at Berwick-upon-Tweed. He would probably display his own banner and bring into the field a retinue of Knights and Squires.

In 1308 John, son of John Fitz Philip, sued his nephew, Hugh de Hepham, and Joan his wife, in a plea that they should warrant to him the third part of the Manor of Bobynton, which Margaret, formerly wife of John de Wanton, claimed as dower. John died in 1309 and leaving no issue (or only illegitimate issue) the King granted custody of Storton and of the Forest of Kynfare to Richard de Clebury. In 1311 Richard exchanged this custos for the Hundred of Bradeford with Sir John de Vaux.

1310. In the reign of Edward II, John-a-Vause was Lord of Kinver.

1327. In Edward III's reign, Tyrell was in possession of Kinver and Stourton.

1461. During Edward IV's reign, John Hampton was Lord of Stourton and its Castle. He was also made ranger of Kinver Forest. He died in 1472 and was buried in Kinver Church. An alabaster monument, now much broken and injured, was described in 1743 by Bishop Lyttelton as belonging to him.

1492. A Deed during the reign of Henry VI reciting a former one of Richard I appears to have confirmed to the family of Hampton privileges which were also expressed in a subsequent deed of Henry VIII, 1509.

It does not appear how long this family continued in possession of these lordships, which had in later years become the property of the family of Foley of Prestwood, 1650.

1629. A document in which Charles I confirmed to the tenants and inhabitants of Kinver the privileges granted by previous charter is still preserved in the vestry of Kinver Church (1949).

It is possible that Henry II, in his journey southwards from Carlisle in 1186, halted at his Staffordshire aula or hunting lodge at Kinver.

It was during the reign of Henry II that Thomas Murdac was murdered at the Castle. His wife was suspected, and after a long drawn out trial, she was sentenced to be burnt. 1320.

Chapter II.

STOURTON CASTLE

The history of Stourton Castle is also the history of the Royal Forest of Kinver. It was primarily built as a house for the head forrester, and was used probably as a headquarters by King John for three of his royal progresses.

1472. "John Hampton Armiger sued William Lowe of Enfield for bonds which were unjustly kept, also John Taylor of Kenefare for entering his free warren, and chasing his game and taking fish from his several fishery." Such was the history of that period.

On the 11th of May, 1500, Cardinal Reginald Pole was born at Stourton Castle. To-day there is a framed document hanging on a wall of the bedroom in which he was born, recording this event. His descent was illustrious, being the fourth son of Sir Richard Pole, Lord Montague, cousin to King Henry VII. His mother was Lady Margaret Plantagenet, daughter of George, Duke of Clarence, brother to King Edward IV. Reginald Pole was elected Cardinal 1536. He was elected Archbishop of Canterbury but died the same year. 1558.

Cardinal Reginald Pole was a younger brother of Lord Montague, a Yorkist kinsman of Henry VIII. Montague led a rising against Henry in Devonshire in 1538, and was executed as a result. His mother, the Countess of Salisbury, was also executed.

In earlier years Pole had been among those who had seen very clearly the need for reform within the Church. But above everything else he desired to keep the Church united under the Pope, and he had endured years of exile rather than agree to support Henry VIII's reformation. In 1539, Pole was urging the Emperor Charles and Francis, King of France, to unite in an attack upon "heretic" England, but this invasion did not come to pass. In 1538, he had made a futile attempt with Pope Paul III to depose Henry by a Papal Bull.

When Mary, daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, came to the throne at the death of Edward VI, in 1553, she imprisoned Thomas Cranmer and appointed Cardinal Reginald Pole as Archbishop of Canterbury. He now returned to receive the erring English sheep back within the fold of Rome. In 1554, as the Pope's legate, Pole landed in England, and on November

30th, amid scenes of infectious emotion, Mary, Philip of Spain her husband, and Parliament, bowed themselves in humble penitence and supplication before the Pope's representative for his solemn absolution of the nation. England had returned to the bosom and unity of Christ's Church.

Mary Pole and Bonner, Bishop of London, were responsible for the fatal policy of burning 300 Protestants in less than four years in an effort to restore Catholicism in England. They temporarily undid the reforming work of Henry VIII and Edward VI.

Pole and Bonner were Englishmen of the older generation who failed to realise that there was little Catholic zeal left in the country, and that instead there was a growing Protestantism and a more humane attitude towards the agonies of the martyrs. The fanatical attitude of Mary, Pole and Bonner did more than anything else to ruin the chances of restoring the power of the Pope in England.

On November 17th, 1558, about seven o'clock in the morning, Mary died. Cardinal Pole died twelve hours later.

Cardinal Pole's tomb is against the north wall of the easternmost chapel of the Cathedral at Canterbury. This chapel is the principal apse of the Cathedral and is named the "Corona" or "Becket's Crown." Pilgrims were shown here a jewelled reliquary, shaped like a man's head, which was supposed to contain part of Becket's tonsure. Here now stands St. Augustine's Chair of Petworth marble, completed about 1205. Every archbishop of Canterbury uses it at his enthronement. On the south wall of the chapel, opposite to that of Cardinal Pole, the kneeling figure of another Archbishop, Frederick Temple (died 1902) is framed in a monument of Cornish marble.

1641. The family of Whorwood were proprietors of Stourton and Compton. Sir William Whorwood sold Compton to Thomas Foley, Esq., in 1650, and his son Wortley sold Stourton Castle and Kinver to Philip Foley, Esq.

1644. Stourton Castle was a garrison at the period of the Civil Wars between Charles I and Parliament. Moreton Briggs, the second son of Sir Moreton Briggs, the first Baronet, was killed at Stourton Castle on the side of the King. Henry Grey, it is stated, had maintained a garrison against Parliament at his house at

Enville. He was in arms 1643-1644 for the King in the fight at Stourton Castle. "Tinker Fox" had garrisoned the Castle, and placed 300 men at the disposal of his brother. Gerrard's army, however, was too strong, and the "Jovial Tinker" had to make good his escape. The cannon ball which pierced the front door of the Castle was shot, it is supposed, by Sir Gilbert Gerrard, and it is said knocked a porringer out of the hands of a domestic who was carrying it across the Castle yard. The door is still preserved and shows the damage done to it in those times.

After the disastrous battle of Worcester, King Charles fled through Kidderminster to Kinver. Here they were said to have lost their way in the dark, and stayed the night at Round Hill, before making their escape through Stourbridge to Boscobel House.

Another family of distinction resident at this Castle was that of Talbot. William Talbot died there 1686, to whose memory a monument is erected in Kinver Church.

Stourton Castle was also the birthplace of Dr. William Talbot, successively Bishop of Oxford, Salisbury and Durham, 1699, 1715, 1721.

The Castle at this time was really a farm house occupied by several families, successively tenants, the last one being Thomas Sellick Broome, Esq. Mrs. Stewart was also known to have been in residence there in 1789.

In 1805, Thomas Worral Grazebook entered upon the lease of Stourton Castle. Mr. Foster succeeded to the tenancy in 1833. He made many alterations. After Mr. W. O. Foster left Stourton, Mr. G. R. Collis became tenant for a short time. The next tenant was Mr. Arkle. He died in 1856. After this the Castle remained empty until it was bought by Mr. Francis Grazebrook. It was put up for sale with the rest of the Foley Prestwood estate in July 1913.

The first we hear of the actual building of Stourton Castle is in the Pipe Rolls of Henry II, 1184-5, in which an entry is made for constructing entrenchments round the King's House, £6, and in 1186 for enclosing the King's Lodge 42 shillings (£252 at present money value). These were probably ordered by the King in person, when travelling South from Carlisle.

In 1186-7 Philip de Kenefara spent £22 2s. 6d. for the King's Chamber.

[Note.—Previous to these days it is more than probable that the building was only of wood. The Saxons long adhered to their wooden houses, refusing to follow the Norman example in building or dress.]

Again in the Pipe Rolls, 1195-6, note is made of the extensive building of an "Aula in Foresta de Kenefara," a fortified Hall or Lodge in Kinver Forest, with adjacent offices, kitchen and chambers for the King, good vivary, a gate with "Breteschia" for its defence, a Palisade 16ft. high, etc., costing £24 18s. 9d., or a sum equal to £3,000 in to-day's money. The walls were of stone. These fortifications were no doubt owing to the Welsh inroads. Before this it had only been a hunting lodge for the King. In 1194 Fitz John Philip was custos of Kinver Forest and held "Stourton Castle." Henceforth the word castle is often used.

In 1222 the 'Castle' was again further strengthened. A plan of the castle as it was in 1820 was drawn up by Mr. George Grazebrook, about 1850, with the help of his father, who had been there constantly in his youth and early manhood, and he remembered everything. The entrance tower had its original door of ancient oak 3½in. thick. This door was pounded by Gerrard's cannon in the Civil War, though only one ball is said to have actually pierced it. A gravel carriage-way led to the front door. Near by was the trap door of oak studded with nails, leading to vaults and dungeons beneath the walls of the tower. The walls were about 6ft. thick. A small chapel was walled off from the first floor storey.

When Mr. Foster took over the lease in 1832, many improvements and alterations were carried out. In 1838 the Lodge gate was built and a drive to the Castle was laid to do away with the narrow lane across the fields. A wall 9ft. high was erected, where the fence used to run along the highway stretching down to the bridge over the Stour, and upwards as far as the pasture fields attached to the Castle.

Mr. Francis Grazebrook, on buying the estate in 1913, found extensive repairs were needed after being unoccupied for nearly 80 years. Electric light was installed, and the Castle heated by hot water. Mr. Foster's conservatory and several glasshouses in the gardens have been removed and the old "Stouri Pons" over the river, has been reconstructed by the Staffordshire County Council.

Chapter III.

OTHER BUILDINGS OF NOTE.

(a) Prestwood House.

This mansion is beautifully situated on the verdant banks of the Stour near to Stourton Castle, above the junction of the river Smestal with that of the Stour and also of the Stourbridge Canal, with the Trent and Severn Navigation.

During the reign of Henry III, 1223, it was occupied by John de Somery, later Sir Roder de Hillary, who bore arms in the reign of Edward III, 1327, was Lord of the Manor of Prestwood, the family of Dudley and also of Lyttleton follow as possessors of Prestwood in the reign of Edward VI. In the reign of Mary, Prestwood Farm, as it was then known, passed by licence to John Lyttleton, and then to Gilbert, his son. John Lyttleton built an elegant house, Sir Thomas Lyttleton sold the estate to Edward Seabright, Esq. During the reign of Charles II, 1660, Sir Edward Seabright sold to Thomas, father of the first Lord Foley. His son Philip resided in the mansion for many years, 1776-1783, afterwards came into possession by marrying a great-grand-daughter of Philip Foley. The Hon. Edward Foley married (1790) Eliza Maria, a daughter of Mr. Hodgetts, and so became possessed of Prestwood; afterwards his son, John H. H. Foley, lived there. A more modern mansion was built on the site at a much later period. The chapel surmounting a Gothic gateway in front of the house was taken down in 1821, and the mansion was stuccoed. In addition to the natural beauties of Prestwood, the masterly hand of a Repton has been applied, to confer upon the scene the various beauties of the English Garden. (It is supposed to be haunted by a Grey Lady.)

The little Church of St. Peter is a chapel-of-ease for Kinver. This is built of red sandstone, for which the district is famous.

(b) Ashwood.

Was once comprehended within the Forest of Kinfare, at the beginning of the 18th Century. It appears to have retained its woodland character. Before then there was a large range of cultivated fields. Public roads on a wide scale have been formed in various directions. There are still traces of the old Roman road from Wolverhampton to Stourbridge running along the high ridge. A Roman Camp was said to have been in existence for

many years, near to where now stands a very important waterworks. There is a noted ridge called Green Hill, at the base of which is a fountain issuing from the sand-rock which was once celebrated for the cure of various diseases. Near by, on the Gothersley Canal, stood for many years a Roundhouse.

(c) Green's Lodge.

Near by is Summer Hill, the site of several elegant residences. Near to Green's Forge was Green's Lodge, where Mr. Dudley was born (1599). He was the first man to substitute coal for wood, used in his father's furnaces and forges.

Dud Dudley was a man of action, a scholar, a scientist, a man of outstanding business ability, and to him all succeeding generations owe a debt of gratitude. For he was responsible for re-establishing the iron industry when it was at its last gasp. Throughout the whole country iron-foundries were closing down—not because of lack of business, but because of lack of fuel. Forests had been cut down and the countryside denuded of trees in order that the furnace-fires might be fed. And it was when the position had become critical that Dudley began experimenting.

To quote his own words: "The waste and destruction of the woods in the counties of Warwick, Stafford, Hereford, Monmouth, Gloucester and Salop by these ironworks is not to be imagined. If some care be not taken to preserve our timber from these consuming furnaces there will not be oak enough to supply the Royal Navy and our mercantile shipping."

His experiments were so successful that, in 1621, he was granted the monopoly of " the mystery and art of melting iron ore and of making the same into cast works or bars, with sea-coal or pit-coal, in furnaces, with bellows."

His early experiments were carried out at Pensnett Chase; his first commercial blast-furnace was set up at Cradley. And its success was such that (he tells us): "I made annually a great store of iron, good and merchantable, and sold it at £12 per ton. I also made all sorts of cast-iron wares, such as brewing-cisterns, pots, mortars, and the like, better and cheaper than any yet made in the nations with charcoal." And so the Black Country was born.

But alas, Dudley's success was his misfortune. The charcoal-founders stirred up the populace against him on the

grounds that the new method would lead to loss of trade and reduction in wages.

There was much opposition to his inventions. He was prevented by riots, law-suits and wrongful imprisonments to use his patents. After many years of setbacks he succeeded in presenting a petition to Charles II, as no other person in England, Scotland or Wales had as yet used coal instead of wood for the purpose of converting iron into steel. He also enumerated the advantage of coal for brick making, glass making, refining of salt, casting of metals, etc., etc.

On a large monument in the Church of St. Helen, Worcester, were memorial inscriptions in two columns of Dud Dudley and Eleanor his wife. This church is now dismantled and the monuments have been removed.

(d) Yew Tree Farm.

North of Prestwood, near to the cross roads, bordering the Lawnswood Estate, is a well built dwelling and good farm lands once owned by Farmer Price. It had large mullioned windows, one famous one having 365 panes of glass of all conceivable shapes and colours. On one of the kitchen windows is inscribed the name of Price and two daughters. Nancy Price, the famous actress, is the grand-daughter, and the names inscribed are those of her two aunts.

Other farms of very long standing are those of **Halfcot (e),** in the North extremity of the parish of Kinver and bordering on Prestwood, and **Stapenhill (f),** near a small wharf on the Stourbridge Canal. Adjoining Stapenhill is a bed of fine red sand. At one time nearly 4,000 tons were annually used for casting. A few houses near the wharf bear the name of **New Town (g).**

(h) Dunsley.

This villa is situated on a rock which commands a view of the vale of the Stour, a scene of picturesque beauty, crowned with a clump of trees. In 1316, Gilbert le Dunsley held the Manor and water mill. He is recorded as being witness in an inquisition regarding lands granted by Edward II to John de la Lea of 'Bobynton.' This villa, now known as Dunsley Hall, became tenanted by Mr. Hancox and then passed to the ownership of Mr. Robins, a farmer. One member of this family was murdered by a highwayman.

The highway from Wolverhampton to Stourbridge passed this spot, and the story is told of a highwayman named Howe, who was hanged on a gibbet near by for shooting a farmer and making off with his money, as he returned from the market at Kidderminster. Howe was the last man in England to be gibbeted (1805).

The gibbet tree still stands to this day, at the entrance of Gibbet Lane. This same road passes through the 'Gibbet Woods,' where a doctor was placed in an iron cage and hanged, for stealing a dead body. Many trees have been felled and to-day large sand-pits are gradually changing the face of the wooded hillside into that of huge quarries, rather awesome in their their enormity. Hundreds of tons of sand have been excavated for building purposes.

There was at one time a Troglodite habitation scooped out of the Dunsley Bank Sandstone. Until quite recently people were living in this part of Kinver, which went by the name of 'Gibraltar.'

(i) **Whittington** is of a rural cast. It contains a distinguished mansion, in Doomsday Book spelt as Widdington. Sir William de Whittenton was owner of the estate. In the reign of Edward III his son sold it to Thomas de la Lowe. It is said that Richard Whittington, thrice Mayor of London, who died during the reign of Henry V, is mentioned after the last William. In a monthly magazine, March, 1828, is a brief memoir of Sir Richard stating that according to City Records he was Sheriff in 1939 and Lord Mayor in 1397, 1408, 1425, and that a stone at the foot of Highgate Hill, London, commemorates his approach to London. The writer adds that, having lent £60,000 to assist Henry V in equipping his army, he burnt the King's bond at a city feast.

On Henry's returning from the conquest of France, Richard exclaimed, "Never before had subject such a King." A compliment which Henry returned by rejoining, "Nor King such a subject."

Further Note on Dick Whittington. Born 1358.

It is contrary to the facts that Dick Whittington was the poor and friendless boy represented in the fable. At that time the rustics were tied to the soil and to their native village. Also

the Civil Laws of London were that no one could be bound apprentice for the customary seven years without he was either a son of a freeman of the City of London or came of a good and honourable family. Another fact is that he was bound apprentice to Baron Fitzwarren, a London merchant who was despatching ships to all the marts of the then known world, and it is difficult to conceive that such an influential man could take a vagrant out of the streets to live with his family, as the custom then was—a vagrant who would have been absolutely illiterate and in all likelihood verminous. Now Baron Fitzwarren's estate adjoined that of Dick Whittington's grandfather (Mansell) and it seems a reasonable assumption that Fitzwarren knew all about Dick Whittington beforehand and that the apprenticeship was fixed up at these estates, and Dick, instead of walking to London, with his bundle over his shoulder, probably rode on horse-back with possibly a servant riding behind him.

During the reign of Henry VI the manor, together with Enfield (Enville), passed to the family of Greys. This home, although fronted in the modern style, possesses marks of antiquity, which entitle it to consideration, as the ancient residence of the Lord of the village and manor.

Whittington once contained ironworks belonging to the family of Knight, one of which was long remarkable for wheels of uncommon dimension, and extraordinary velocity of motion. Its celebrity is now diminished by improvements of modern times. The family of Knight have been ranked amongst the most eminent ironmasters this country has produced.

Whittington, though founded on a rock of hard sandstone of some extent, borders upon rich loamy soil. A very noted inn at the foot of the hill is named after the owner of the estate. Whittington Inn was once visited by Qeen Anne, whose large seal is still placed on a prominent part of the front door. Lady Jane Grey (proclaimed Queen 1583) spent part of her childhood here. Her ghost still walks along the corridor, so it is said.

(j) **Iverley** is the eastern extremity of Kinver. It consists of a range of hills of moderate elevation, gently declining into a plain. There are acres of waste land, subject to the claims of Common Right, appertaining to farms. Iverley or High House, of grotesque architecture, situated on the brow of Hay Hill, was built by Thomas Millward, Esq., who improved the district. Near

by is the Round Hill, of King Charles fame. The old Roman road to Kidderminster from Kinver passes through this district, and traces of Roman baths may still be seen to this day.

(k) The Stewponey Hotel. The legend of the Stewponey Hotel is written around a charming old-world setting. Witches and giants, saints and kings, gypsies, rebels, hangmen and highwaymen—they all have a place in the rich store of folklore, legend and romance which has been woven around the ancient Stewponey Hotel.

Where history ends and romance begins none can tell, for in the dim, distant days when the Stewponey first had its being, men were content to eat, drink and be merry, unhindered by apprehension of what the morrow might bring or of what history might say of them.

When it was built we do not know. More regrettable still, by what means the curious "Stewponey" became its name is still a matter of conjecture.

Some maintain that the famous castle of 'Stourton,' within whose shadow it shelters, so frequently had Royal patronage that the Inn was built to accommodate those who followed in the Royal wake. They argue that since Latin was in common usage, "the hostelry at the Stour Bridge" became "Stour Ponte," and from that was gradually corrupted to Stourpone and thence to Stewponey.

It is more likely that the name came from the 'Stew pores,' in which was poached fish for Friday's meal, the fast day ordered by the Roman Church.

Others aver that it was established by an old soldier who, in the wars of Queen Anne, had been quartered in Estepona, in the South of Spain. He had, so the legend runs, married a Spanish girl, and the "Estepona Tavern," which he called his enterprise, in honour of his wife and in reminiscence of his military days, quickly became 'Stewponey' in the English mouth. A large size picture of the Spanish lady is still to be seen hanging on the wall.

But whether the attraction was the King, or the excellence of the Spanish wine which the old warrior is said to have imported, it is certain that the hostelry soon became one of the best known and most fashionable in the country.

The Inn was the headquarters of the Iron Trade, when the Quarterly Meeting of the Iron Trade gave prices to all the world about the time of the Crimean War and later. The Iron Trade came to the Black Country because of the local coal and local ironstone. The first iron mills were driven by water power and the Stour provided the ironmasters with their power.

The tin plate trade began on the Stour. Seabright, Knight and Crowther Baldwin were the founders of that industry, all based on this river, and forges and mills littered its banks as far as Stourport.

It was beneath the old oak beams of the Inn that the gentry of Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire would meet to debate at the approach of an election, to decide on the Candidates they would propose.

The great Irish Road from Bristol to Chester (then the port for Ireland) brought within its doors scores of travellers afraid to risk their lives and their purses at the hands of the footpads and highway robbers who lurked in the Stourton Forest and upon the heaths of Kinver.

In such an atmosphere it was inevitable that there should be legends about the old hostelry, and legends there are, by the score—legends of fleeing Royalists who found refuge in its secret rooms—of highwaymen and smuggled goods hidden in its vaults—of the giants from the cave dwellings on Kinver Edge, and of witches who mixed their devilish concoctions in the nearby forest.

Most popular of them all the story, half legend, half romance, of Bladys, daughter of one landlord, who became the prize for a bowling tournament upon its green. The legend has it that after being carried off by a hangman she was rescued by her lover and with him sought refuge in the caverns of the Holy Austin Rock on Kinver Edge. With witches to aid him, the hangman followed but, as in all the best legends, the assistance of the Devil was of little avail against the forces of good which supported Bladys, and the villain crashed to his death from the Holy Rock, leaving true love to pursue its time-honoured course.

To-day there stands on this very same site of romance and adventure a most excellent hotel luxuriously providing for the every pleasure of mankind. Quite near to many large towns, it provides a ready retreat from city life without unnecessarily long journeyings and isolation.

(l) **Stourton Court** is in the historical Parish of Kinver. It is built on red sandstone foundations, and is situated on the summit of Stourton Hill, about 360ft. above sea level. It commands magnificent views over the beautifully wooded and undulating country of the famous Kinver Edge and the Enville Sheep Walks, with the Malverns, Cotswolds, Abberley and Clees in the distance.

It was built in 1850, razed to the ground by fire in 1877, and re-built by the late Captain Foster in 1883. The grounds are artistically laid out; there is a vinery and fern house, span roof, peach and fig house, also seven acres of woodland and about four and a half acres of pasture land.

(m) **Stourton Farm** is opposite, and facing Green Forge Lane (once the old Roman road to Kidderminster).

(n) **Stourton Hall.** Noted for its famous glasshouses for tomato growing (supplied to Covent Garden, London). Was also the home of Mrs. Downing, poetess, who wrote many poems of the district. She wrote "Close Downs" for 5 IT, 1927. Several good class residences are in the vicinity, situated on the main road to Enville.

Compton, in the Kinver area, is divided into Upper and Lower. The place contains an ancient mansion, once the residence of the family of Whorwood, who intermarried with the house of Grey. Compton Hall is now much reduced in size, and is to-day a substantial farm house.

(o) **Union Hall,** not far away, was the residence of the famous T. Brindley, Esq., who engineered the various canal systems of the district. This family have also resided at Prestwood and Gothersley. The continuation of Compton leads to the beautiful Sheep Walks (supposed to be dunes built by the Saxons as burying grounds in honour of those warriors killed in battle).

Enville Estate and Hall.

This celebrated and delightful spot is situated near the south-west border of Staffordshire. Separate from the Midland Ridge, the rising grounds of Enville form numerous pleasant undulations.

The extended hill, broken into furrows and watered by

rills, presents a sylvan and pastoral view. The beautiful Sheep Walks, forming a continuous link uniting Enville with Compton, is a scene of wonderful beauty. The following is an extract from "Scotts."

During the reign of Edward VI Thomas Grey built a very proper and goodly house made of brick in the fine park at Enville. The southern front view was dedicated to Harry Grey, Esq., and in 1759 many extensive additions and improvements were made, and the Hall became celebrated for its elegance and beauty. Still more improvements were made by Harry, 5th Earl, who also laid out the grounds in such an interesting manner that the poet Shenstone praised mansion, chapel, cascade and grounds. The Honourable Booth Grey, brother to the 5th Earl, rendered valuable help.

The ornamental grounds are surrounded by woodlands and glades, with verdant upland lawns, noble expanses of water, an elegant boat house, bridges and rocky glens complete the picture. An interesting menagerie once formed part of this establishment. The winding way from here to the garden ground near to the mansion containing billiard room and green houses, is conducted through the wood, many interesting scenes opening to view during its course. The uncommon perfection of trees, shrubs, etc., which adorn the plantation, lawn and pasture form a pleasing sight.

The Church of Enville is of Saxon architecture. Two rows of massive pillars forming a nave, regularly pewed on each side, have a pleasing effect. Several antique carvings bearing some resemblance to those which decorate the churches of St. Kenelm and Pedmore, attract the notice of visitors, and the monuments are displayed to great advantage. The name of Rogerus de Morfe is inscribed on the lid of a stone coffin, with a cross dug up in 1762 below the foundation of the west end of the church, which, together with an ornamented stone bearing a cross with a fleur-de-lis, was deposited at the north entrance of the church. The figures became almost obliterated by the steps of the heedless passenger. These, and anothr relic consisting of a large slab of stone, bearing the resemblance of a recumbent figure, discovered in 1830 on excavating some deep trenches round the outer wall of the church for the purpose of drainage, were transferred to the floor of the south porch.

There are numerous memorials of the family of Grey, Whorwood, Hale of the Hollies, Bowles, Bromwich, Wright, Amphlett, ancestors of the family of Grove of Four Ashes, Moseley of Mere, Hickman of Stourbridge, etc.

At the time of the Norman Conquest, Gilbert was in occupation of Enfield. He may have adopted the surname of Enfield, and this Enville estate was for a long period in possession of persons of that name. During the reigns of Henry III and Edward I Richard de Evensfield held it. His son Walter became William with his two sons, William and Robert, appear also upon record, were designated Efnefeld. When Roger Somery died about the year 1242, Andrew de Enfield, son of Richard and brother of Walter, held Enville of William de Birmingham, and the said William of Roger de Somery by the service of a Knight's Fee, together with the adversion.

Others of the Enfield or Evensfield family held it till the reign of Edward IV, in the 15th century, when Richard was in possession. A short time afterwards it became the inheritance of Lowe of Whittington, of which family John became first Lord of Enville, leaving that title to Humphrey, his son, whose daughter Eleanor carried the estate to the family of Grey.

There are various branches of the family, of whom one was Sir Henry Grey. He was created Baron of Groby 1603 by James I. He died without issue, and was succeeded by his eldest grandson, son of Sir John Grey, whose father was Henry, first Earl of Stamford and second Lord Groby. He married Anne, daughter of William Cecil, Earl of Exeter. His son John resided for some time at Enville. Harry, another son, became third Earl of Stamford; he died 1673.

After the death of Harry, Thomas, his brother, became third Baron of Groby. He was appointed, in 1696, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Derby, and in the following year Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Lord Lieutenant of the County of Leicester. In the year 1694, at the funeral of Queen Mary, consort of William III, Lord Thomas carried one of the banners of England and France, and on the accession of Anne was made a Privy Councillor. Lord Thomas married twice but outlived all his three sons and one daughter. When he died in 1719 all honours and estates of the family went to his first cousin Harry, son of John. He became third Earl of Stamford and the fourth

Lord Groby. He married Dorothy, daughter of Sir Nathan Wright, of Caldecot Hall, Warwickshire.

There were five sons, and Harry, the fourth son (surviving his elder brother) became fourth Earl. He was made member for the County of Leicester at the time of his father's death. In 1736 he married Mary, only daughter and heiress of George Booth, the last Earl of Warrington. He made great improvements in Enville. He died in 1768.

He was succeeded by his son, George Henry Grey, fifth Earl of Stamford, in whom the title of Earl of Warrington, Baron Delamere, was revived in 1796. He married, in 1767, Henrietta Cavendish Bentinck, second daughter of the second Duke of Portland. This lady dowager died in 1827, aged 91. His lordship. dying in 1819, aged 82, was succeeded by George Harry, who married a daughter of Lord Elcho, son of the Earl of Wemys. Other sons and daughters of the fifth Earl are: Henrietta, wife of Sir John Chetwode, Bart.; Maria, married to John Cotes, Esq., of Woodcote; Louisa; William Booth; Amelia, married to John Lister Keay, Esq., of The Grange, Yorkshire. Other residences of this family are Dunham Massey in Cheshire, seat of the Earl of Warrington, and Stewarts' Hay, Leicestershire, once the seat of Lady Jane Grey, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk.

Chapter IV.

KINVER EDGE.

According to antiquity, Kinver Edge was once surrounded by the sea. It stood up as a great buff, haunted by seagulls. Also at that time a singular irregular sandstone rock, that projected upwards as an immense tooth, near the roots of the headland, stood detached in the water. This isolated rock of red sandstone, on and about which Scotch firs have rooted themselves, goes by the name of Holy Austin Rock.

Whether a priest of Augustian Order ever lived there is a point on which history and tradition alike remain silent. It is believed to have been occupied by giants who scooped out for themselves caves in the sandstone. Much jealousy prevailed between them and the Enville giants, and once upon a time, in a

fit of rage, a huge stone was hurled from the head of the cliff. It fell and planted itself upright, and for many generations bore the name of the Bolt, Baston, or Battle-stone, and in the language of tradition, 'The Giant's Thunderbolt.' It stood six feet high and extended a considerable distance into the earth. It was four yards round and had two clefts in the top. Its site was in a leasow about a mile away, near to the Comptons. In 1848 the farmer in whose field it stood blew it to pieces with gunpowder.

It is well known that Holy Austin Rock was peopled by Troglodites. There are about 10 dwellings with two or three storeys. The topmost habitations have their faces built up, but the chambers are all excavated. Subterranean passages lead to inner caves with chimneys built from them, and doors and windows added. These caves are said to be warm in winter and cool in summer.

Tradition has it that Holy Austin Rock was the dwelling place of the village schoolmaster, who was also Knobbler over the boys at the church on Sundays. He was nicknamed Holy Austin, after the traditional hermit. He was a good man and much revered by villagers and children alike. Another famous rock, known as Nannie's Rock, is half a mile away. This also had famous rock houses.

On the western side of Kinver Edge there is a perpendicular wall occasionally swelling into rugged caves. Desolate as is the exterior appearance of this rough line of obdurate rock, its caves are also formed into rustic dwellings. One of the cavernous habitations of the ridge is the natural recess still bearing, as in olden times, the name of Meg-o-Fox Hole, also the supposed retreat of some Christian hermit. It is also reputed to have been a hiding place for loot obtained by highwaymen who frequented the three great highways which once crossed Kinver and Kinver Forest.

The habitations of Meg-o-Fox Hole are now completely ruinous. Its last tenant left about 130 years ago. Since then it has been wantonly destroyed by the mischievous. Although the interior remains unaltered, the doors and windows have been ripped out, leaving larger holes than ever. There are, however, five chambers left, with the vestibule, kitchen and fireplace. There was also a chimney that carried up in such a manner as to disperse the smoke that issued from it, among the bushes which have over-

grown its outside walls, also a flight of steps, which lead out on to the Downs of Kinver Edge. This series of caves has its walls inscribed with names of visitors and tenants. The earliest dated one is that of H. Kindar, Scriptor Londini, 1700, and the next in antiquity is that of B. Knight, 1749, the great ironmaster who founded this famous family, till recently represented by Sir Frederick Winn Knight, of Wolverley, on whose land the caverns were. From the extremity of this chain of vaults, it is commonly believed that a passage extends to the River Stour, two miles distant. It has been proved that the passage extends half a mile to Drakeslowe, a circle of sandstone rock which is riddled in every direction, so as to make it suitable for habitation. At the foot of the amphitheatre of rock houses at Drakeslowe was a meeting house or chapel, and on a dark Sunday evening a singular spectacle was presented by the people emerging from their holes with their lanterns and descending the stages of the cliff in which they dwelt. It would be harder to find a sweeter, lovelier, quainter spot. It may be reached very easily at the point where Shropshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire meet.

From the narrow plateau of the Edge the view for several miles includes that of the Stour Valley and on the western horizon the beautiful Sheep Walks of Enville. To-day the Downs of Kinver Edge, with its acres of gorse, woodland and heather, are visited yearly by hundreds of tourists, and it is a cause for thankfulness that it is owned by the people of England through the National Trust.

Thus is averted the menace of urban development upon this fair eminence. It is here that the War Memorial to the Fallen of Kinver in two World Wars, 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, stands. There is an interesting line of trees across the brow of the Edge. They are called the "Twelve Apostles," but their original history is unknown.

This lovely spot has been termed the "Switzerland of the Midlands." A very health-giving sanatorium has been built near this spot. Many patients have been restored to normal health after treatment here.

Opposite this beautiful red brick building the Boy Scouts have an ideal Camp along the wooded and secluded slopes of the Edge. It is finely equipped and has a long hutment with a Log Cabin at the rear. The Girl Guides Company is progressing

favourably. The first Guide Company Hut was recently opened by the Divisional Commissioner, May 7th, 1949, called ' Guidemere.'

Chapter V.

KINVER VILLAGE.

Kinver Village occupies a basin in the side of the great rocky ridge that runs for many miles through the country and ends abruptly at the Edge, a bluff of sandstone crowned by earthworks.

Regrettably the former market town offers no incentive for the eye to linger on it. Its layout owes nothing to old-world quaintness or modern planning. The ancient town of ' Kinfare,' as already intimated, is situated at the base of the mountain, on the right bank of the Stour and near the Trent and Severn Canal. It appears to have been of great antiquity. It consists mainly of one straggling street, which was part of a highway used by the Romans. At one time the inns for the use of travellers were plentiful. Some of the old names still remain. ' The Woden,' ' The Gilpin,' ' The White Hart,' all speak of days of the early Saxons. At the White Hart was the " Nailers' " yard for pack-horses. It was also an old coaching inn.

The market, formerly held on Tuesdays, has long been discontinued. Fairs were held on May 14th and December 14th. The Town Hall, or Market House, which once contained some pieces of armour, is now taken down, and its reconstructed timber framework once occupied a solitary corner of an inclosure in the Stourbridge Road, near to Barrett's Coppice. The Roman Road and the Great Irish Road passed through Kinver to the great emolument of the town. Another turnpike road from Dudley to Stourbridge and Bridgnorth, Salop, made in 1816 by Act of George III, crossed the great Forest of " Kinfare." There are still a few old toll houses left in the district.

Many years ago there was a woollen factory situated at the west end of the town, and the cloth could be seen stretched out to bleach near to the sandy caves of the Edge. Special scarlet flannel was manufactured here.

In those days many sheep were reared in the district.

During a very considerable period ' Kinfare ' has partaken in common with other towns and villages on the banks of the Stour of the advantages of the iron trade. At the south-eastern extremity of the town the ' Hide Iron Works ' was the first rolling and slitting mill erected in England. This was worked by a water mill. A gentleman of the name of Brindley introduced this machine from Germany, whose posterity enjoyed its advantages for many years. A number of these slitting mills soon sprang into existence on the banks of the Stour, which meanders through the district. These became famous.

At Prestwood was a flourishing Wire Works owned by the Foley family. Stourton had its rolling mill, the Hyde its slitting mill, Kinver Village had a slitting mill, Whittington a slitting mill, and Wolverley a slitting mill and forge.

All these have now disappeared and the town of Kinver has once again become changed to a rural village, with a parish council under the Urban District of Seisdon.

In reference to the above mentioned mills, much had been written of the famous Richard Foley, Brindley's son-in-law, who went to Sweden to find out how nails could be produced cheaper and better. His aim was to find out the secrets of the slitting machine. He travelled as a poor fiddler. At Dannemora he was received into the works as a capital musician and pleasant fellow. He was so much liked that he was allowed access to every part of the works there. Here, after a second effort, the ' fiddler ' mastered the mechanism of iron splitting. The result of his second trip was entirely successful. By his skill and industry ' Fiddler Foley ' soon laid the foundation of a large fortune, and at the same time restored the business of an extensive district. He himself continued during his life to carry on his trade, aiding and encouraging all works of charity and benevolence in his neighbourhood. The family was ennobled in the reign of Charles II.

Owing to difficulties of transit the Hyde works were the first to be closed and levelled to the ground.

There are still to be seen in Kinver a few fine half-timbered houses of the 16th century. At the foot of Church Hill is one of outstanding preservation once used as a ' Workhouse.' A little higher up this hill is a well preserved Tudor building once used as a Grammar School, with the old vicarage adjoining. It is said that a secret passage led up to the Church from this Vicarage.

Close by is the beautiful old world dwelling where the Kinver-born actress Nancy Price lived. It is not surprising to note that she always felt that pixies and fairies occupied the caves in "Rock Mount" garden. The Holloway called Church Hill contains several very handsome houses.

The Church. Superbly sited on the extreme east end of the cliff top, stands the magnificent church of 'St. Peter of the Rock' The church is a neat structure of stone containing several vestiges of antiquity. Bishop Lyttleton considered the circular form of the arch over the north windows to be indicative of priority to the Norman Conquest, or at least co-eval with that event. The chapel adjoining the chancel is supposed to have been erected by the Hamptons, who were Lords of Kinver in the reign of Edward III. Monuments with arms of the families of Hamptons, Grey, Worwood and Compton (inscribed as Comber) of Kinfare Hall, are to be seen. A portion of the church is known as the Foley Chapel, and the living was a perpetual curacy in the gift of the Foley family until quite recently.

Many ancient books and documents are preserved in the vestry of the church.

The prospects on every side in the churchyard are extensive and beautiful, making a complete panoramic view of the subjacent village.

The story is told of a hunter who lost his way on Kinver Edge. He heard the curfew just in time to prevent him falling over a rocky ledge. He left a legacy to the church to pay a verger for all time to ring the curfew. In time, however, it fell into disuse. Many years ago it was revived when a little girl was watching her pigeons in a pigeonary made from a cave. She lost her footing and fell over a cliff. A curfew bell was tolled at 8 p.m. until the late war, 1939.

The churchyard is finely shaded with trees forming an avenue on the north side.

The Lectureship in olden times was subscribed by the villagers. A spacious and well built vicarage is situated some little distance from the church. It was here that Baring Gould wrote his book 'Bladys of the Stewponey' while spending a holiday in Kinver.

There is to be seen on the slope of the hill from the Parish Church a small Roman Catholic meeting place.

A substantial Methodist Church is situated in the main street of the village and another at Potter's Cross. It is probable that here the Troglodites worshipped on the Sabbath Day.

The School for boys occupies a commanding position in this unique district of Kinver. The Girls' and Infants' schools seem to be tucked away out of sight along the incline leading to the vicarage drive. The British Legion Hall, situated in the Hyde Meadows, affords accommodation for social village life.

Canals. The Stourbridge Canal was undertaken during the reign of George III, 1776, for making and maintaining a canal from or near the town of Stourbridge to join the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal at or near Stourton and Kinver district, and two collateral cuts, one from Pensnett Chase and another to join the Gothersley for Wolverhampton.

There was much trading in sand and coal, and before the railways, manufacturers from Birmingham and the Midlands used these canals for transit.

The canals at Prestwood, Stourton and Kinver pass through beautiful verdant and wooded country.

At one time Sunday School trips were taken in decorated boats along these canals to Kinver. One could hear the laughter and singing of children while waiting in the many locks of the district, near Stewponey.

Kinver Pumping Station. This pumping station was opened in 1939 in order to help supply the Dudley area with water. The water is pumped from two boreholes below the station. The boreholes are driven into the red sandstone and are 750 feet in depth. In order to prevent pollution by surface water, the boreholes are lined to a depth of 250 feet with steel lining tubes which shut out the surface water.

The water is very soft and pure; it is filtered naturally as it passes through the sandstone into the boreholes, and requires no further filtering or chemical treatment before being supplied to the consumer.

The water is pumped by vertical spindle turbine pumps. The pumping rate is 125,000 gallons per hour—that is 3,000,000

gallons per day. There are actually two pumps on each pumping unit, a borehole pump and a force pump. The borehole pump is 230 feet below ground level; this pumps the water to the force pump, which in turn forces it into the pumping main.

The pumping main is 24 inches in diameter and 12 miles in length. Its route is along the old tram track as far as the Stewponey. It then runs along the Wolverhampton Road as far as Wallheath. It then turns off and runs through Gornal and on to Shavers End Reservoir, Dudley.

Foxhunting is indulged in as a winter sport. It is a most pleasing sight to watch the "Meet" (the Albrighton Woodland Hounds) start off for the day's sport.

The Population of Kinver at present is about 4,000 inhabitants. One hundred years ago the population was just 1,981 males and 1,781 females.

The Sewerage Farm and its Bird Life. Kinver Parish contains the greater part of Whittington Sewage Farm, and it is there where the most interesting congregation of birds in the Stour Valley are to be found. Just a few of these are curlews, redshanks, Ray's wagtail, grey wagtail, pied wagtail, pewits, gulls, corncrakes, wild duck, kingfishers. These have been tabulated by T. J. Beeston, F.R.G.S., F.S.A., Cookley.

Chapter VI.

REMEMBRANCE

By Nancy Price

Staffordshire, I salute you, for in your versatility lies that village which is in my heart—Kinver.

To write of a place that one loves and knows as home is difficult. Every house in its attractive, irregular street, which I knew so well as a child, I can see vividly to-day, and every one of them had a friendly face for me, probably because of the affection its inmates had for my mother and father.

The old white house on the rock, where I was born and spent my childhood, will always be the dearest in the world to me, and I can still enjoy the scent and beauty of those huge bowls and great jugs full of flowers gathered from the generous store of the rich Staffordshire earth. No one ever went from our door without a posy and fruit and vegetables in season. The boys of the village soon learnt that they could have as much fruit and as many nuts as they liked provided the birds my parents loved so well were left unmolested. Those birds—how we loved and guarded them—and, as I know you are interested, I send you a greeting from my feathered companion of to-day, my parrot, Boney Whiteoaks, without whom life would lose most of its glamour and savour. Then there was my fat white cob and attendant fox terrier, who companioned me all over that varied countryside.

The unique rock houses were a joy to me then, and a wonder to me now; all our washing was done at one of these, with water which had to be drawn from a deep well! How white and sweet were the clean clothes when they came home. These were carried to and fro in a large basket, the three miles, by two sisters. I think I could paint them to-day, with their kindly, rosy, weatherbeaten faces.

Another more lonely rock house, or perhaps I should say cave, held "Nanny" and bore her name; she was regarded with awe but held an irresistible attraction all the same for the village folk, who still believed, somewhat shamefacedly, in the potions and charms distilled. Then one day, Nanny disappeared and was never seen again; like the wild creatures she chose to live among, she had obviously crept away to die.

Many a walk did I have, as a child, with Baring Gould, the novelist, who wrote much about these interesting rock houses. There were great thrills in these conversations for me, and though he was an old man in years, his young heart matched well with my tender years.

The old Norman church on the hill was, and still is, unrivalled in my heart. Here, the worshippers toiled up the hill, through the cuttings between the sandstone rock, at least twice, sometimes three times, on Sunday. I do not think we ever missed, save through illness. In that church there is a lectern and candlesticks presented by my mother, in memory of my little sister, who died when she was five years old, and a window in memory of my father. How well I remember my mother and I insisting there should be flowers and birds in this window, because my father had loved them so much.

The church's old beadle-cum-sexton terrified me when I was a child; he was misshapen and his appearance was rather like a gargoyle, but he was really a kindly soul and I still possess some of his little gifts. On Sundays, he wore knee-breeches and a blue broadcloth coat with brass buttons and carried a long stick with an iron knob at the end. During the sermon he walked up and down the aisles and leaned over the square pews; if there was a luckless sleeper inside, he or she received a sharp rap. My father always kept two bags of sweets; one—the most delectable variety—was reserved for a long dry sermon, the second grade for sermons that were more of the wide-awake order. It interested me that only the other day, in Sussex, I went into an old church still possessing the square pews, and each was provided with a little cupboard, which the understanding old parson told me contained refreshments of various orders, and "Why not?" said the dear old man, with a sigh, "I fear I am very tedious sometimes and some of my congregation are very old, this combination necessitates stimulant!"

Kinver Edge. What has happened to that lovely wild area? There were no baskets for litter when I was a child, indeed, none were required—no litter was strewn about. Perhaps more people were occupied and there was less leisure, fewer holidays; parents may have been stricter. Whatever the reason, there is no doubt that to-day litter has increased. I have often thought what wonderful work the women of the Institutes throughout England could do in the way of instilling into their own youngsters and

those of their neighbours the desirability of keeping our fair countryside still fair, as far as it is possible in this mechanical, utilitarian age.

Then I think of the meadows, for Kinver and the district was rich in meadows, with buttercups and daisies that always seem so essentially English, and the water meadows with kingcups, iris and forget-me-nots, and the silvered willows. And again, I think of those tall, thick hedges and quiet lanes; they have gone, I fear, and live only in memory.

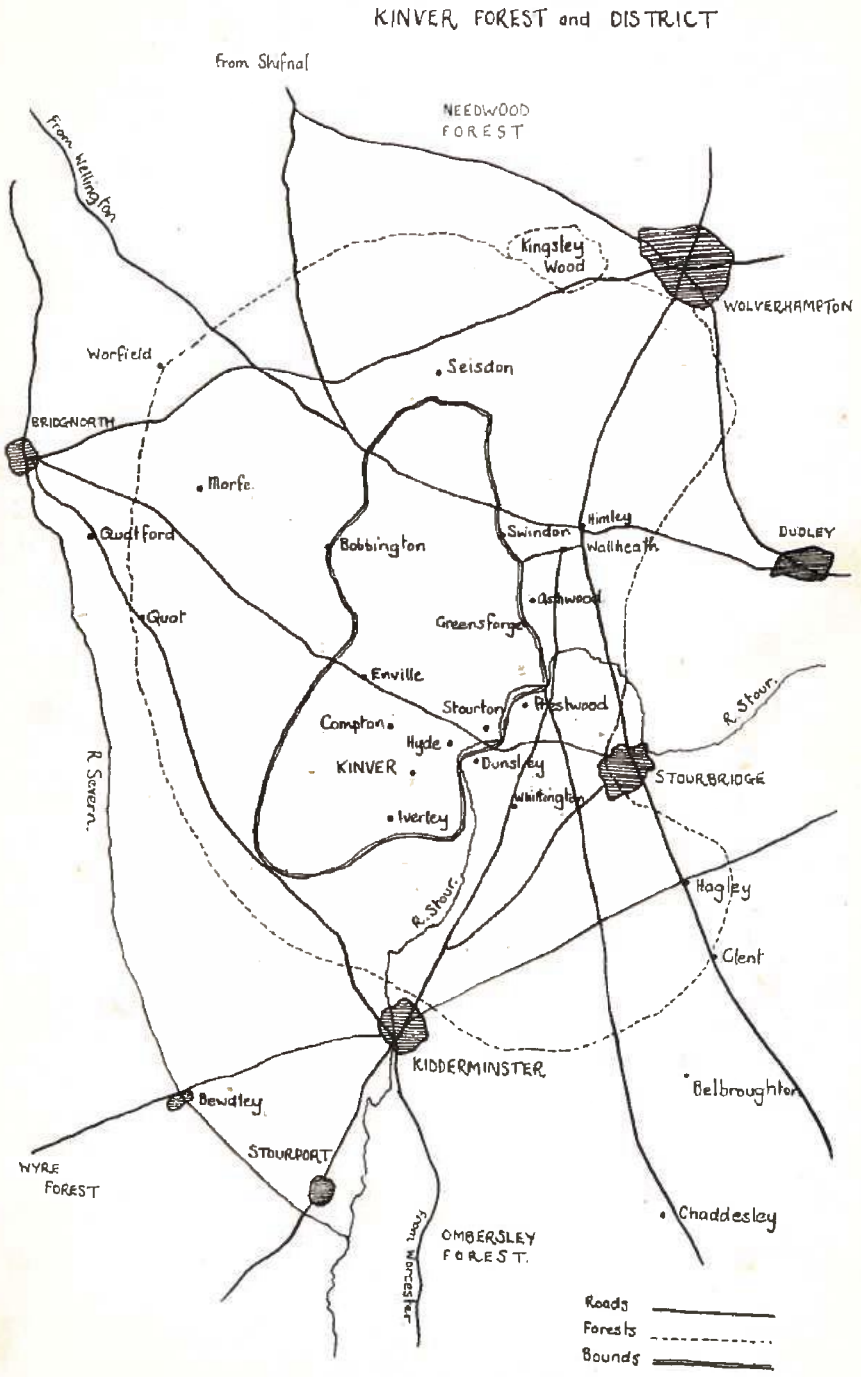
As a child, I was always walking or riding and never hindered or stopped in either of these pleasures, although I believe it was thought extraordinary, by many, that so young a child should have been allowed such liberty; but what a love of nature has this comradeship with the countryside given me. I sometimes feel, even to-day, that the people I know best are the "people with the green-heads," as Stevenson called the trees, and the creatures of hoof, pad and claw.

The Future

by Ida Mary Downing, of Stourton Hall, Kinver (1927)

The Future looms ahead . . . a mystery,
Where grey clouds gather in the golden west,
Remembrance paints her pictures on fair skies
That blush in answer to the amorous sun!
The Past, starred here and there with priceless gems,
Fades o'er the hills of labour and unrest.
Whilst in the shadows lurk the germs of things
Which shall enrich the years that are to come.
Together we shall see the light, the dawn,
The lasting radiance of a peace that lives;
Shall listen for the voices that have been
The genius of the past of those who sowed
Rich seed in humbleness where others ploughed,
Proud that great peoples watch the harvesting,
The glorious recompense of patient toil,
The mastery that comes to those who serve!
The distance is not distant to the mind
That seeks with understanding Nature's pulse;
The Future looms ahead, an open book,
Wherein we hope to leave no worthless page.

[From poems read by Percy Edgar, of 5IT Broadcasting House, Birmingham, 1927.]



APPENDIX

THE FULL STORY OF "FIDDLER FOLEY"

In 1600 Brindley's son-in-law, Richard Foley, known as "Fiddler Foley," undertook a journey to Sweden, at a great risk, further to perfect the methods of the manufacture of nails.

William Brindley had already gone to Sweden some years before, affecting the character of a harmless half-witted wanderer, and rambled among the ironworks there. His oddities and eccentricities ensured him general good-will, but with very careful notice he was able to gain the knowledge he required and on his return improved his works at the Hyde.

Smiles, in "Self Help," relates Foley's enterprise as follows: The father of Richard Foley, the founder of the family, was a small yeoman living in the neighbourhood of Stourbridge in the time of Charles I. That place was then the centre of the iron manufacture of the Midland districts, and Richard was brought up to work at one of the branches of the trade—that of nail making. He was thus a daily observer of the great labour and loss of time caused by the clumsy process then adopted for dividing the rods of iron in the manufacture of nails.

It appeared that Stourbridge nailers were gradually losing their trade, in consequence of the importation of nails from Sweden, by which they were undersold in the market. It became known that the Swedes were enabled to make their nails so much cheaper by the use of splitting mills and machinery which had completely superseded the laborious process of preparing the rods for nailmaking then practised in England.

Richard Foley having ascertained this much, determined to make himself master of the new process. He suddenly disappeared from the neighbourhood of Stourbridge, and was not heard of for several years. No one knew where he had gone, not even his own family, for he did not tell them of his intention, lest he should fail.

He had little or no money in his pocket, but contrived to get to Hull, where he engaged himself on board a ship bound for a Swedish port, and worked his passage there. The only article of property which he possessed was his fiddle, and on

landing in Sweden he begged and fiddled his way to the Dannemora mines near Upsala. He was a capital musician as well as a pleasant fellow and soon ingratiated himself with the ironworkers.

He was received into the works, to every part of which he had access, and he seized the opportunity thus afforded him of storing his mind with observations, and mastering, as he thought, the mechanism of iron-splitting. After a continued stay for this purpose, he suddenly disappeared and no one knew where.

Returning to England, he told Mr. Knight and another person at Stourbridge what he had found out, and they advanced the money for erecting buildings and machinery for splitting iron by the new process. But when set to work, to the great vexation and disappointment of all, and especially of Richard Foley, it was found that the machinery would not act, at all events, it would not split the bars of iron.

Again Foley disappeared. It was thought that shame and mortification of his failure had driven him away for ever. Not so! Foley had determined to master this secret of iron-splitting, and he would yet do it. He had again set out for Sweden, accompanied by his fiddle as before, and found his way to the ironworks, where he was joyfully welcomed by the miners; and, to make sure of their fiddler, they this time lodged him in the very splitting mill itself.

There was such an apparent absence of intelligence about the man, except in fiddle-playing, that the miners entertained no suspicions as to the object of their minstrel, whom they thus enabled to attain the very end and aim of his life. He now carefully examined the works, and soon discovered the cause of his failure. He made drawings or tracings of the machinery as well as he could, though this was a brand of art quite new to him, and after remaining at the place long enough to enable him to verify his observations, and to impress the mechanical arrangements clearly and vividly on his mind, he again left the miners, reached a Swedish port, and took ship for England.

A man of such purpose could not but succeed. Arrived amongst his surprised friends, he now completed his arrangements and the results were entirely successful. By his skill and industry he soon laid the foundations of a large fortune, at the same time that he restored the business of an extensive district. He himself continued, during his life, to carry on his trade, aiding and en-

couraging all works of benevolence in his neighbourhood. He founded and endowed a school at Stourbridge, and his son Thomas (a great benefactor of Kidderminster), who was High Sheriff of Worcestershire in the time of the "Rump," founded and endowed a hospital, still in existence, for the free education of children at Oldswinford.

All the early Foleys were Puritans. Richard Baxter seems to have been on familiar and intimate terms with various members of the family, and makes frequent mention of them in his "Life and Times." Thomas Foley, when appointed High Sheriff of the county, requested Baxter to preach the customary sermon before him, and Baxter in his "Life" speaks of him as of so just and blameless dealing, that all men he ever had to do with spoke of his great integrity and honesty, which were questioned by none.

In passing it is interesting to note that to-day may still be seen a monument in the form of an obelisk, near to Blakeshall, on the top of a rounded knoll, set up as a memorial to Richard Baxter, probably by some member of the Foley family.