



Let us take the direction to Droxford, indicated as five miles, and remember from the start that we are on an historic pilgrim's way, and also by old tradition the route that William Rufus and his courtiers often took, on his hunting expeditions to the New Forest. It was customary in those times to take the direct road leading over the hills; it was safer from ambush. Another old tradition was that the pilgrims planted yew trees at intervals along the route and certainly these, or their progeny are still in existence.

Passing along the road we leave the grounds of Leydene behind us and proceed westwards crossing Chidden Down along the rough gravel road which was only laid in recent years, and after $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles come to the cross-roads on Teglease Down. They are not sign-posted but the road continuing straight on leads to West Meon and Warneford. Our road is sharp left and, after about 150 yards, sharp right where we begin to descend. Soon the lovely Meon Valley country begins to open out. Prominent on our right is Old Winchester Hill, easily distinguishable by its camp-like appearance. The area was used as a battle training ground during the war and conspicuous red notice boards in the distance give warning of the danger of unexploded bombs.

The landscape stretches for many miles, dipping to the Meon and rising again to distant Beacon Hill, with a panorama of fields, some bright green, some brown from recent ploughing and others with a carpet of yellow, all weaving a pattern of indescribable beauty and dotted here and there with lonely farm houses.

We keep straight on until we come to Meonstoke, a typical quiet English village with its mixture of thatched cottages, Georgian residences and a few more modern red brick villas. The swiftly flowing Meon skirts its southern side. One quaintly shaped thatched residence halfway up the street on our right, has been irreverently called the "Tea Cosy." Over its gateway are some obviously very old ship's oak beams. It seems that a reminiscence of a splash of naval history rests here. A little further on we come to the Church which is 13th Century and has a sculptured Norman font inside. The Church fits sublimely into its background of tall elm trees and flanked on one

side by the Meon river. In a small meadow adjoining the boys play cricket. It is all so very English and Meonstoke still remembers with pride the sacrifice she made in the first world war, when twenty-two of her men lost their lives from the hundred families residing there. Passing the 'local' "The Buck's Head" (or calling in for refreshment as the mood takes us), we come to the main Fareham-Alton-London road, but instead of turning left we go a short distance to our right to visit the ancient Anglo-Saxon church of Corhampton. Away back in the days of William the Conqueror the country folk assembled here for worship, and the bell still tolls on Sundays for Divine Service. Successive generations have stopped to admire the beautifully sculptured sun-dial wrought by an Anglo-Saxon craftsman, and to the left of the Church porch there is a large Roman stone coffin, which was found in recent years in a Meonstoke field with the skeleton of a man inside. We may rest in the pews a few minutes and reflect on the changing periods of English history, wherein men and women who played their part in their generation also sat in these self same seats.

But time is passing and we may not linger longer and so on along the Meon Valley road to Droxford, another $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. In this village lived for some time Isaac Walton, author of the most famous book of fishing lore "The Compleat Angler." He married the Rector's daughter and wrote of the country hereabouts "It exceeds all England for swift, shallow, clear, pleasant brooks and store of trout." The village clusters along the main road and we pass (or do we?) "The Baker's Arms" and "The White Horse" also Studfield Lodge, home of Captain the Hon. J. Bruce, R.N. (Ret'd) a former Signal School Officer. We soon arrive at the cross roads to take the road indicated by the sign-post to Soberton, following thereafter the road to Hambledon, and as our legs are getting somewhat weary we plod Leydenwards taking the short cut across the fields to avoid the "Bat and Ball" road triangle. Our walk has taken us some twelve miles, but remember George Borrow, who sometimes walked 40 miles before breakfast, but compensated himself for it by dishes of eggs and bacon unknown to our times.