



WOOLWICH, FROM THE RIVER.

CHAPTER II.

WOOLWICH.

"See where the river in branches divides,
Cut in two, all the same as a fork,
How proudly the *Commerce* with *Industry* rides,
Then the *Blarney*—oh! she's bound for Cork;
There's the homeward-bound fleet from the Downs, only see,
So taunt their top-gallant masts bend;
There's the *Silkworm*, the *Beaver*, the *Ant* and the *Bee*,
And all standing on for Gravesend."—DIXON.

Situation and Extent of Woolwich Town—Its Etymology—Domesday Record of Woolwich—Descent of the Manor—A Curious Tradition respecting North Woolwich—Roman Occupation of Woolwich—A Market Established here—Acreage of the Parish, and Census Returns—Description of the Town—Steamboat Piers and Railway Stations—Early Naval Importance of the Town—Pepps' Official Visits to the Dockyard—Dangers of the Neighbourhood—Woolwich a Century Ago—Omnibuses and Steam-Packets Established—Hanging Wood—Woolwich as a Fishing Village—The Parish Church—Other Churches and Chapels—The Goldsmiths' Almshouses—Parochial Almshouses—Lovlace, the "Cavalier" Poet—Grimaldi—A Centenarian.

WE will now commence our exploration of the southern portion of our allotted district at the point at which our perambulation ended in OLD AND NEW LONDON,* namely, on the further side of Charlton and Greenwich. The town of Woolwich, which adjoins these places on the east, extends for some two miles down the banks of the river, and for about half a mile upwards from the river to the brow of the hill, where are the Royal Artillery Barracks and Hospital. A considerable portion of the parish, as we have already seen, lies on the

opposite side of the Thames, surrounded by Essex, and yet geographically within the county of Kent. This is called North Woolwich, and is connected with the town by means of a steamboat ferry. Owing to this singular circumstance, a local proverb has it that "more wealth passes through Woolwich than through any other town in the world," referring, of course, to the traffic to and from the metropolis continually passing along the Thames between the two divisions of the parish.

In the time of the Saxon Heptarchy the name of this place was written Hulviz, which, in the language of that people, signified "the dwelling on

* See Vol. VI. p. 233.