

Mr. West placed the following inscription in the summer-house of his garden :—

“ Hic mihi nec procul urbe situs nec prorsus ad urbem,
Ne patriar turbis, utque bonis potiar ;
Et quoties mutare locum fastigia cogunt,
Transeo, et alternis rare vel urbe fruor.”

AUSONIUS AD VILLAM.

“ Not wrapt in smoky London's sulphurous clouds,
And not far distant, stands my rural cot ;
Neither obnoxious to intruding crowds,
Nor for the good and friendly too remote.

“ And when too much repose brings on the spleen,
Or the gay city's idle pleasures cloy ;
Swift as my changing wish, I change the scene,
And now the country, now the town enjoy.”

The following poetic version, addressed by Lord Lytton in 1740 to Mr. West at Wickham, is taken from the “Elegant Epistles” :—

“ Fair Nature's sweet simplicity
With elegance refined,
Well in thy seat, my friend, I see,
But better in thy mind.
To both from courts and all their state
Eager I fly, to prove
Joy's far above a courtier's fate,
Tranquillity and love.”

Among the visitors to Wickham during West's residence here was Glover the poet, author of “Leonidas.” An amusing anecdote is related of the latter's absence of mind. One morning Lord Lytton, happening to glance from his dressing-room window, saw Glover in the garden below, evidently in a fit of poetical frenzy, pacing to and fro with a whip in his hand, and slashing right and left with it. To the horror of his host, every flick of the whip decapitated some scores of beautiful and valuable tulips which Mrs. West prized above all things. Of course Lord Lytton hurried from his post of observation to stop the “massacre of the innocents” which the poet was perpetrating. Yet so occupied was Glover with his thoughts, that even when the scene of devastation was pointed out to him, he could scarcely be brought to believe that he was the ravager.

Before proceeding on our way to Addington, we may be pardoned for making mention of a recent discovery in Church Field of a large number of palaeolithic flint weapons and implements by Mr. George Clinch, of Hayes, who has given in the “Natural History Notes” the following description of the locality where they were found :—

“The palaeolithic weapons and instruments were all found near together, and occupying a space about 100 yards across. The soil in which they were imbedded is a stiff ferruginous clay, which has stained the flints described. The group of wrought

flints was situated upon the side of the western bank of a small valley which runs through the field north and south, and towards the south-west corner of the field. Exactly in the south-west corner there is a small patch of sand with Tertiary pebbles, in which I have found only a few neolithic flakes and cores. Although the whole surface of the field is more or less thickly covered with flints, yet I have only met with wrought flints in those parts of it above mentioned. This, in my humble opinion, seems to indicate that the area covered by wrought flint weapons and instruments may have been at some time the site of a dwelling or dwellings, or at least a shelter of some kind (perhaps among the shades of the forest trees which, doubtless, covered this spot in days of yore), where the wild men and their families sought protection from the weather or from enemies.

“After a consideration of these antique relics, one is naturally curious to know something of the occupation and mode of life of the men by whom they were made and used. Beyond the evidence of the wrought flints themselves, we have no data upon which to found an opinion, yet they seem to indicate that their former possessors were not unacquainted with warlike practices ; and if the workmanship of their implements of bone and wood bore any resemblance to that of some of the wrought flints, we may fairly assume that, taking into consideration the immense space of time which has elapsed, the condition of these people was not worse than what we might expect. The absence of pottery should remind us, however, that their condition must have been one of great wretchedness.

“It would be interesting if the former possessors of Church Field could be proved to have had any connection with the important tribe which formerly occupied the British camp in Holwood Park, Keston, but in order to do this a thorough examination of that camp would be necessary.” *

From the foot of the hill on which Wickham Church stands, a roadway branches off towards Coney Hall Hill, an eminence shut in on each side with woods. A group of oak-trees at the base of this hill, observes the author of Mr. Unwin's “Half-Holiday Guide,” will attract attention by their remarkable size ; and it was at one of the hollow old oaks in this wood that Mr. Millais painted his celebrated picture of “The Proscribed Royalist.” “On the left side of the road running through the wood,” he continues, “stands the finest specimen of the oak tribe to be seen in the neighbourhood. It

* “Natural History Notes,” Second Series, Vol. I., p. 62.