



THE "BALD-FACED STAG."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES (*continued*).

"A praty town by Tamise ripe."—LELAND.

The Coronation Stone—Monarchs crowned here—The Town Hall—Historical Reminiscences of the Market Place—The Drinking Fountain—The Assize Court—Old Houses in the Town—The Drill Hall and Barracks—Public Free Library and Literary Institution—Cleave's Almshouses—Healthy Situation of the Town—Railway Communication—New Kingston—Modern Improvements—The Cemetery—St. Mary's Chapel—The Free Grammar School—Fairs—Public Amusements—The Fairfield—Thames Angling—Surbiton—St. Mark's Church—St. Andrew's—Roman Catholic Church of St. Raphael—Norbition—Churches and Charitable Institutions—Residence of Lord Liverpool—Coombe Wood—Jenny Abershawe the Highwayman and the Doctor.

THE coronation stone, upon which seven—some say nine—of our Anglo-Saxon monarchs sat during the high ceremony by which their reigns were inaugurated, is by far the most interesting relic preserved at Kingston. All honour has been done to it by the Kingstonians, who have within the last thirty years given it a conspicuous position opposite the assize courts. It stands on a foundation of granite, and is surrounded by a handsome but massive railing, the granite pillars of which are surmounted by Saxon spear-heads. The seven sides of the base are inscribed with the names and dates of the kings crowned here. Previously to being set up in its present position, the stone had been preserved for ages in the church.

The date of the venerable relic is uncertain. It is quite possible that it was placed here during the Saxon Heptarchy; but if it is over a thousand years

old, it may be two thousand years old, for all that is known to the contrary, and be a relic of the Roman occupation of this country. If so, the probable solution is that it was connected with the worship of the god Terminus, and used to mark a boundary. Thus Ovid writes:—

"Terminæ, sive lapis, sive es defossus in agro  
Stipes, ab antiquis sic quoque nomen habes."

"The Tounish men," writes Leland, "have certain knowledge of a few kinges crownid ther afore the Conquest." In his commentary on the *Cygneia Cantio*, he gives the names of Ethelstan, Eadwin or Edwy, and Ethelred, as having been crowned here; and adds:—"I have been told that this was done in the midst of the market-place, a lofty platform being erected, that the ceremony might be seen from afar by a multitude of people: which,