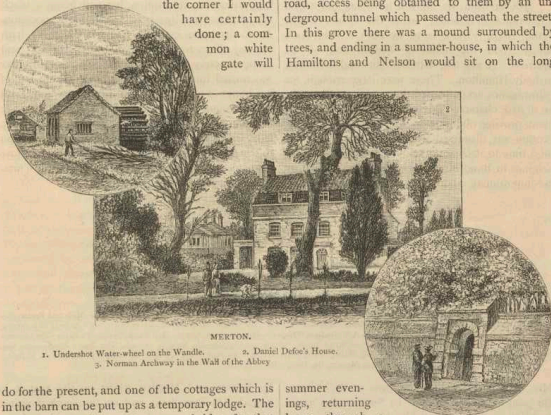


Many passages might be quoted from Nelson's letters to Lady Hamilton, all showing how fondly attached he was to Merton, where doubtless he spent many of his pleasantest hours, in the company of a woman whom he so passionately adored. The following extract from one of these will serve as a specimen:—"I would not have you lay out more than is necessary at Merton. The rooms and the new entrance will take a deal of money. The entrance by

the corner I would have certainly done; a common white gate will

The house and furniture, the grounds, and all their contents, were sold about the year 1808 to Mr. Asher Goldsmid, a Jewish banker, who made the place his abode for a time. Nelson's study, as Mr. Hudson informed me, and some of the other rooms, were long preserved in the same condition as when they had been left by Lady Hamilton, and the library was not sold till about sixty years ago.

The stabling, as well as one pleasure garden and grove, were situated on the opposite side of the road, access being obtained to them by an underground tunnel which passed beneath the street. In this grove there was a mound surrounded by trees, and ending in a summer-house, in which the Hamiltons and Nelson would sit on the long



MERTON.

1. Undershot Water-wheel on the Wandle. 2. Daniel Defoe's House.  
3. Norman Archway in the Wall of the Abbey

do for the present, and one of the cottages which is in the barn can be put up as a temporary lodge. The road can be made to a temporary bridge, for that part of the 'Nile' one day shall be filled up. Downing's canvas awning will do for a passage. . . The footpath should be turned . . . and I also beg, as my dear Horatia is to be at Merton, that a strong netting, about three feet high, may be placed round the 'Nile,' that the little thing may not tumble in, and then you may have ducks again in it."

To this may be added an extract from Nelson's "Diary," given by Sir Harris Nicolas:—

"Friday Night, 13th September, 1805.

"At half-past ten drove from dear, dear Merton, where I left all that I hold dear in this world, to go and serve my king and my country. May the great God whom I adore enable me to fulfil the expectations of my country!"

summer evenings, returning home through a green gate which opened in the wall by a key from within. The stables, after having been made to do duty for a time as cottage-residences for persons of the working class, were finally pulled down in 1882, and the site in due time will be covered by houses.

The little estate occupied by the Hamiltons covered about thirty acres; it stood just to the south of the old abbey walls, from which it was severed only by a narrow lane, called then, as now, the Abbey Road. The house was only one storey high above the ground-floor, built of plain brick, and almost surrounded by a verandah, up which the rose, clematis, woodbine, honeysuckle, and other creepers, grew freely at their own sweet will. It did not face the road, but looked south, to