That Mysterious Major...

...BY...

ETHEL A. SOUTHAM

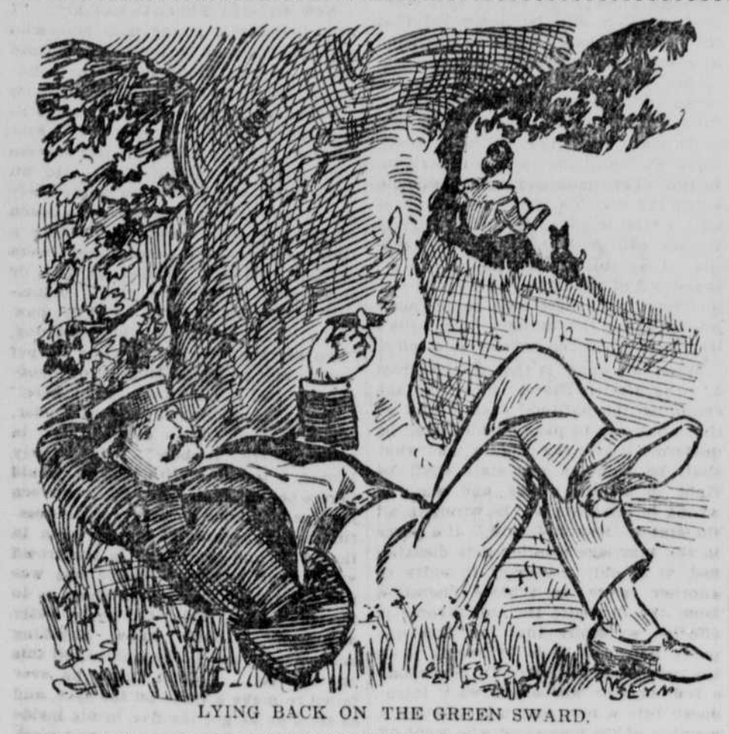
CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

But all thoughts of a stroll in the town had entirely forsaken him now. He also, like Miss Luttrell, had suddenly been seized with a longing for a quiet afternoon under the trees, in his case to pursue an interesting debate in the Times; and, with this idea in view, he immediately turned away from the window, caught up the first paper which came to his hand, and went out into the hall. Yet five minutes later, as he sauntered leisurely across the lawn, glacing cursorily from side to side, a slight feeling of guilt for the first time came over him as a gap in the trees revealed a glimpse of a familiar white parasol.

Fiddlesticks! Because Miss Luttrell had chosen to bring her book into the garden was no reason why any of the other inmates of the "Royal George" should not feel something of the same inclination.

Ruminating thus, the Major moved slowly on his way, passing first one enticingly shady nook and then another, until he reached a high overhanging bush about 20 yards from the group of trees which Miss Luttrell had selected, where he threw himself down upon the dry burned-up grass and gave himself up to the delights of a peaceful summer afternoon.

And yet, as he took out his cigar-case and lighting a fresh cigar, glanced casually down the columns of the newspaper, it was evident that something besides the perusal of the Times had brought him to that secluded spot, or he would have at least exhibited some annoyance when, instead of finding himself in possession of that star of London daily literature, he discovered himself aimlessly scrutinizing the visitors' list and the many advertisements which occupied at least two-thirds of the Saltcliffe Chronicle.



LYING BACK ON THE GREEN SWARD.

No wonder therefore that after some minutes he quietly discarded it, and, lying back on the soft green sward, tilted his hat far over his eyes and prepared to enjoy the perfect calmness of the day.

But half an hour had passed quietly; his feelings of perplexity had given place to hopelessness, and hopelessness to a general sense of lassitude, which had brought him to that stage when the sights and sounds around him had grown vague and indistinct, and before long he was traveling peacefully in the land of sleep.

Thus he was quite unconscious of the fact that a little black French poodle had discovered him and had sniffed suspiciously round him for two or three minutes, and also quite unconscious that, when that little black French poodle had disappeared, his cigar-case, which had been lying on the grass at his elbow, had disappeared also.

Meanwhile Miss Luttrell, who had comfortably ensconced herself in a large bamboo chair, was deeply absorbed in the thrilling incidents of her three-volume novel. So deeply was she absorbed indeed that she had not the remotest idea that Major Brown had even crossed the lawn, or that Sambo, who had been lying on the rug at her feet, had grown tired of making little grabs at the army of gnats and flies which had been hovering round his head and had gone trotting off to pay a visit to that hapless individual.

Yet, when he returned again and settled himself in silence by her side—a silence which was perhaps ominous of coming evil from the very fact that any unusual calmness upon Sambo's part generally foreboded mischief—she bent forward and, raising her eyes from her book, asked what he was doing.

"Sambo!"

Horror and dismay were depicted upon her countenance, her tones were filled with the keenest reproach, as she sprang up from her chair and paused in consternation at the sight which met her eyes.

CHAPTER V.

There was Master Sambo literally surrounded by a mixed collection of cigars and cigarettes, whilst between his paws was calmly reposing a silver-mounted Russian leather cigar-case, at which he was gnawing with apparently as much enjoyment as if it had been one of the most tasty bones.

"Sambo, where did you get it? Oh, you bad dog! Whose in the world can it be?"

In an instant Evelyn had seized hold of the cigar-case and dragged it away from the poodle's clutches, but, alas, not before the whole of the leather had become indented with well-defined tooth-marks, whilst one of the corners had been entirely nibbled away!

"Well, Sambo, you have quite surpassed yourself this time!"

Evelyn held up the cigar-case before the culprit with a threatening air, and then gave him a couple of small pats with it on his two front paws.

But what was she to do about it? To whom could it belong? That was more to the point than scolding Sambo. She raised her head and looked round anxiously, but drew back as her eyes fell upon a familiar form.

"Sambo, surely you have never touched anything of that man's?"

Yet, as she gave a hurried glance at the initials engraved upon one side of the case, her heart sank within her. Yes—it was too true.

Should she make her escape into the house, and leave Sambo, surrounded by the litter, to settle his own difficulties? It would certainly be the easiest thing to do; but certainly that Sambo was her own dog, and that she was responsible for his actions, would not it be rather a mean way of getting out of the mischief? She took up her book and set off with Sambo.

"This will be a very good test as to whether he is an educated man," mused Evelyn. "Common people can never disguise their feelings. Anyhow, it has to be done; so come along, Sambo, and bear the brunt of his wrath!" And, with an admirable assumption of indifference, as if prepared for any reception, Miss Luttrell braced herself up for the encounter and advanced slowly towards the recumbent form of the Major, who was still lying stretched at full length beneath the shade of the overhanging trees.

But, as she reached his side and was just about to begin a carefully prepared apology she paused, then hurriedly drew back, for the gallant Major was still indulging in the proverbial "forty winks."

Must she wake him? No—decidedly not; it would never do to disturb his slumbers. Any annoyance that he might feel would be ten times increased if he was so summarily roused. Besides cogitated Evelyn with a sigh of relief at the thought of a respite, if he were accustomed to dropping off to sleep in that way nobody could possibly be held accountable for what in the meanwhile might happen to his belongings. She would put the cigar-case down by his side, and then—well, she might as well go into the hotel and think of what course to adopt next. It would not be nearly so disagreeable to confess that Sambo was the delinquent if at the same time she could provide him with another cigar-case the facsimile of his own. This new idea seemed so preferable to her first one that, as she stepped forward to place the case on the grass by his side, her heart almost ceased beating in her anxiety not to wake him. It was therefore with an expression of absolute dismay, which could scarcely have been more suggestive of guilt had she been detected in the act of committing some heinous crime, that, as the Major suddenly opened his eyes, she started back, and, dropping the cigar-case at her feet, stood the picture of hopeless confusion.

"I—I am so dreadfully sorry!" she stammered, thoroughly taken aback. "I—hope I have not disturbed you."

"Disturbed me!" echoed the Major, looking perfectly mystified. "Oh, dear no—not at all!" He had sprung to his feet, and, raising his hat, was vainly trying to collect his scattered senses.

"The fact is—I had come to ask you if you have lost anything," began Evelyn hesitatingly, looking round helplessly and forgetting in toto the calm dignified apology which she had intended to make; "because I am afraid my dog has been doing some dreadful mischief."

"Really?" returned the Major. "It is very good of you, I am sure. But what has your dog been doing? Is it anything so very serious?"

"Well, yes—that is what he has done!" answered Evelyn, with a rueful glance at the cigar case, the dilapidated state of which plainly told its own tale. "And now I want to know if it belongs to you, as, if so, I cannot tell how I am to apologize for Sambo's dreadful behavior. Where he discovered it, and how he came into possession of it, I have no idea, as I found it in his mouth only about a minute ago; but——"

"Then do not trouble, please!" said Major Brown courteously. "It is mine, certainly; but it does not matter in the least. What is of more importance is, Has he eaten any of it? Because I should think that Russian leather is not the easiest thing in the world to digest."

"No." Evelyn gave a dubious shake of her head. "Sambo knows better than to swallow anything of the kind. He is too fond of gnawing my shoes not to have learnt by experience that leather is a bad thing for his digestion."

"Ah—so this is not his first offense?" He asked the question anxiously fearing each moment Miss Luttrell would bring the interview abruptly to a close by walking off imperiously with her head elevated as she had done on the previous morning.

"Oh, dear, no! He destroys something every day; but as a rule, he takes care not to spoil anything that does not belong to me. That is one good thing, or he would be everlastingly in disgrace."

"I see; he evidently considers it a sort of mark of esteem, which he reserves entirely for his mistress," was the Major's reply, made in a somewhat speculative tone. "If that is the case, I must look upon myself as an honored individual, since he has condescended to bestow his attention upon something of mine. Come, Sambo, shake hands."

"Yes, Sambo—put out your paw and shake hands like a gentleman, and say you are sorry for what you have done. But please let me have that unfortunate cigar-case," she added suddenly, coloring slightly, as the Major bent forward to take up the remains of that once elegant article. "There will be so many different kinds, I suppose, and, if possible, Sambo would like to get another exactly like it."

"It is very kind of him, I am sure"—there was a gleam of amusement in his eyes—"but, all the same, I shall value this one far more than I ever could a new one of Sambo's choosing; and, if I may be allowed, I shall always keep it in remembrance of him and"—here he hesitated and glanced down admiringly at the disturbed pretty face before him—"his mistress!"

And so at last Fate had been kind to him.

As, five minutes later, the Major tucked his newspaper under his arm and took a leisurely stroll round the garden, he came to the conclusion that, even had the French poodle devoured a hundred cigar-cases, he would have been perfectly compensated by that rather short interview with Miss Luttrell of Luttrell court.

(To be continued.)

What Sleeplessness Means.

Medical scientists have now demonstrated that a brain cell actually loses part of its substance during action. The cell of the exhausted brain, instead of being plump and full of nervous matter, is found to be hollowed out, or "vacuolated," a cavity having formed without its substance, which has become filled with water. This means that a part of the cell substance has been actually consumed, precisely as coal is consumed when one gets heat from a furnace. It has been found that if an animal whose brain cells are thus exhausted be permitted to sleep, its cells readily recuperate, new material is supplied from the blood until the cell is as good as new. The brain of a person, therefore, who is beset by sleeplessness is in the condition of a locomotive which runs night and day without going to the repair-shop.—Science Siftings.

Fed by the Eye.

A lady went into a pastry cook's shop the other day. On the counter were displayed all sorts of toothsome dainties. The only attendant was a little girl about 10 years of age. "Isn't it a great temptation to you my dear," asked the lady, "to see all those nice things? You must always be wanting to eat them." "Oh, no, ma'am," was the answer; "it is enough for me to see them made."

An Innovation.

"In our house," said the base ball crank with a new baby, "the rules of the game are reversed. Four bawls put me off my base."—Philadelphia North American.

The reason why some persons are so quiet is that they only say what they think.

THE DREAM OF LOVE.

"It's spring in good earnest," said Petro Peterson, as he sat at his window, his heels poised on the extreme outer edge, and a fragrant Havana perfuming the surrounding atmosphere. "And my house not let."

Petro Peterson was a stout, bald-headed gentleman of some six-and-forty years of age, with bright hazel eyes and a neat, compact little figure.

"I don't see why Mrs. Parker wanted to give up the house," went on Mr. Peterson, in his unsyllabled soliloquy. "She says it's because the price of board is falling, and she can't afford to keep up the establishment! A great mistake! She's the only woman I ever knew who could make a real French omelet, or knew what cafe noir meant! Dear me, what can all that ringing at the bell mean?"

He had just tossed his cigar out of the window, with the intention of himself hastening to the rescue, when a red-haired servant girl came up to his apartment, breathless and eager.

"What is it, Hannah?" he cried irascibly.

"If ye please, sir, the misthress is gone to mar-r-ket, and there's no one to show the house."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Peterson," cried a voice as soft and sprightly as the notes of the bluebird now tuning its silver pipe in the far-off woods, "but mamma and I have so many places to go to, and we thought you wouldn't mind our seeing the house!"

It was Jeannie Cope, a brown-eyed, dimple-cheeked little fairy, with curls like the April sunshine, a fresh complexion, and the trimmest of all imaginable figures. She stood in the doorway balancing a fairy parasol on her finger and looking with saucy artlessness round his bachelor sanctum, while Mrs. Cope's matronly countenance appeared in the background.

Petro Peterson kicked a stray slipper under the table and threw his dressing gown over a huge meerschaum stand.

"Very happy to see you, I'm sure," he said, turning very red, and wishing he had "tidied up" a little before he sat down to his matutinal cigar. "Anything I can do for you—"

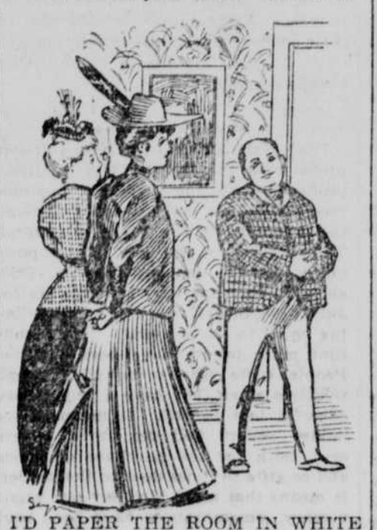
"You can allow us the privilege of looking at your house," said Jeannie, coaxingly. "I—that is, mamma, has got to move, and although the rent of this house must, of course, be very high, she thought, by taking a few boarders, she might contrive to meet expenses."

"Exactly so," said mild Mrs. Cope.

"Are you going to move elsewhere?" asked Jeannie of our hero, as she glanced at the half packed trunks.

"My landlady is," groaned Petro Peterson. 'It's awful to be at the mercy of a landlady, Miss Cope!"

"But it's all your fault!" cried Jeannie with a roguish sparkle in her lovely blue eyes.



I'D PAPER THE ROOM IN WHITE AND GOLD.

"All my fault?"

"To be sure—why didn't you get married?"

"Because I was a fool," said our bachelor, inspired by roses on Jeannie's cheek and the coral of her laughing lip.

"And why don't you get married now?" pursued the relentless little sprite.

"Would you," questioned Mr. Peterson, gravely, "if you were I?"

"Of course I would. Get married and board with us. Mamma will give you this room, and—"

"My dear!" checked Mrs. Cope, gently.

"My dear madam," cried Mr. Peterson, still with his eyes fixed on Jeannie's lovely face, "I assure you I think it is an excellent idea!"

And all through their journey from cellar to French roof, while Mrs. Cope considered the relative advantages of this room and that, and Jeannie fluttered to and fro like a graceful little humming bird, Mr. Peterson kept revolving this same "excellent idea" in his mind.

"Miss Jeannie," he said, somewhat awkwardly, as they returned downstairs, "supposing I should—ahem—adopt your sugestion, what would be your fancy in furnishing a suite of rooms?"

"Let me see," said Jeannie, looking composedly around. "I'd paper the room in white and gold, and I'd fill the windows with canary birds and plants, and I'd have a blue carpet and blue silk chairs and sofas."

"You like blue?"

"Very much; it is my favorite color."

"Blue it shall be, then!" cried the delighted bachelor. "Mrs. Cope, if you should decide to take the house you will please reserve these rooms for me, and—and Mrs. Peterson, ma'am, at $50 a week."

And with a tender pressure on Jeannie's little white velvet hand Petro Peterson bowed the widow and her pretty daughter down the brown-stone steps.

"It's as good as settled," muttered Mr. Peterson, rubbing his hands complacently. "By Jove! she's grown to be the prettiest girl in town. Mrs. Petro Peterson—it don't sound so very bad after all. I'll show the young slips what an old bachelor can do in the way of matrimony."

As he turned, chuckling, to enter the front door, already in imagination leading Jeannie Cope to the flower-decked altar, a light footfall sounded on the steps behind him, and a slender, good-looking young man of some four or five and twenty stood before him.

"Good morning, uncle," he cried, breathlessly.

"Good morning, Joe," returned Mr. Peterson, nodding to Joseph Franklin, his only nephew. "What brings you here in such a hurry?"

"Is your house let yet, uncle?"

"Yes—no—I don't exactly know," responded Mr. Peterson, a little awkwardly. "What does it matter to you whether it is or not, hey, you young scapegrace?"

"Much, sir. To tell you the truth, I was thinking of renting it myself."

"You!"

"Yes, I. I'm going to be married next week, uncle."

"A very sensible plan," said Mr. Peterson, beamingly.

"I'm glad you approve of it, sir, and in case my wife and I conclude to take a few boarders can I have your promise to consider you as one?"

"That is, in case you take the house?"

"Yes."

"I can't promise; in fact, I think I've already engaged myself," said Mr. Peterson, importantly. "To speak frankly, Joe, I've some idea of marrying myself."

"You, uncle?" exclaimed Franklin, in amazement.

"And why not?" testily demanded Petro Peterson, his bald crown turning pink with excitement. "I'm not Methuselah, neither am I a Catholic priest. Why shouldn't I get married?"

"There's no reason on earth why you shouldn't, uncle," responded Joe, smothering a laugh; "only, you see, you took me rather by surprise. In that case, why shouldn't we have the pleasure of accommodating both Mrs. Peterson and yourself?"

"Because, sir," said Mr. Peterson, sententiously, "because my mother-in-law that is to be takes boarders, sir; a few boarders, in a genteel sort of way, and I've all but promised myself to her."

"All but! There is a chance, then, of——"

"A very slender one," unwillingly admitted Mr. Peterson.

"And if you should make no other arrangement you will let us have the house?"

"Y—yes, I suppose so."

"There can be no harm in my bringing her to look at the house this afternoon after office hours?"

"No, I suppose not."

And with this ungraciously accorded permission Joseph Franklin was forced to be content, while Mr. Peterson went back to his room to think about Jeannie Cope.

"I do believe I'm in love," thought our middle-aged hero. "I'll take a cigar—no I won't either. Jeannie may object to smoking and a man that's as good as married ought to be a little careful about such things."

He was making a little pencil estimate about the probable cost of refurnishing the apartments he occupied with velvet and satin, according to Jeannie's not particularly economical ideas, that same afternoon, when Joseph Franklin entered, flush and proud.

"She's down in the parlor, uncle."

"Is she?" said Mr. Peterson.

He followed his nephew resignedly down to the parlor, thinking the while of far other things, and suffered himself to be led to a little sofa in the bay window, where a slender young lady was sitting, toying rather nervously with a pink parasol.

"Uncle," said Joe, proudly, "this is my promised wife. Jeannie, this is Uncle Petro Peterson."

"Jeannie Cope!" gasped the astonished bachelor.

"You'll give me a kiss, uncle, won't you?" said Jeannie, putting up her coral lips in the most bewitching way in the world. "I said it was mamma this morning, but it was really Joe and I that wanted the house."

"It was, eh?" said Mr. Peterson, with a curious commingling of sensations.

"Yes, and you know you promised to get married and board with us. He did, indeed, Joe."

The bachelor burst into a hysterical laugh.

"I was only joking," he said. Married, indeed! I'm not such a fool yet. Give me the kiss, Jeannie. I'll stay here, but I'll not refurnish the rooms this year."—New York News.

Thanked Providence and a Railroad.

A curious vote of thanks was recently passed at a camp meeting in Georgia at the last meeting of the series and was in the form of a resolution which was adopted by a rising vote. The preamble declared the tender of thanks to those named in the clauses which followed. The seventh and eighth clauses read: 7. To the railroad for the reduced rate of one and one-third fare for round trip to persons attending the meeting. 8. To Almighty God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for calling so many of his people together and meeting with them in power and demonstration.

The New Color.

Burned bread brown is now the color that captivates all tastes, and that promises to gain a great following when the autumn clothes come in. It is the one brown tone that does not make the skin grow sallow when in its neighborhood, and gloves of it, shoes, belts and straws as well, show, by their richly-bronzed skins, what sway the new color is already exerting.

DOCTORS ARE PREFERRED.

Literary Women Seem to Seek Physicians as Their Husbands.

It has often been remarked that literary women manifest a decided penchant for doctors as husbands. At any rate, there are a great many of them who do not have to send a servant tearing down the street for a physician every time they have a spell of nervousness. They have simply to call in the services of "hubby" and all is well. Someone has compiled a list—it is only partial, however—of the authoresses who have chosen their life partners from the medical profession. Helen Mathers, the clever authoress of "Coming Through the Rye," married Dr. H. A. Reeves, a well-known surgeon, in 1876, when the fame of her first success was fresh on her. At the same age—24—Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett married Dr. Burnett of Washington. She had begun to write six years before her marriage, when she was a girl of 18, but it was not until she had been married for four years that fame came to her on the wings of "That Lass o' Lowrie's," published in 1877. Mme. Sarah Grand was but a "wild young Irish girl," impatient of home control and already fired by high ambitions, when she married at 16 a young army doctor called Mr. Fall, who died a year ago. She traveled with her husband for some years in the east, and it was only when her restless spirit had tired of new scenes and new faces that she settled down happily with her pen and began to write "Ideala." Miss Annie S. Swan, who began to write children's stories in the paternal farm house in Scotland, also met and married a doctor, Dr. Burnett Smith. Mrs. Flora Annie Steel married a Bengal civil servant more than thirty years ago and spent her married life in India until 1889, when she found fame awaiting her in England. "John Oliver Hobbes" waited until she was 30 before she married Reginald Craigie. "John Strange Winter" was 28 when she married Arthur Stannard, a civil engineer, and two years later her charming book, "Bootle's Baby," with its wonderful knowledge of infant and military life, made her famous. Miss Olive Schreiner waited long before she was content to part with her freedom to Mr. Cronwright, a south African gentleman farmer, and, like herself, "a child of the velt." "Rita" has twice tempted Providence at the altar, her second husband being W. Desmond Humphreys, a gentleman of County Cork. Thackeray's gifted daughter, the author of so many delightful novels, is known to her friends as Mrs. Richmond Ritchie.

ROMANCE OF WEALTH.

Story of Revenge and the Discovery of $300,000.

Chadron (Neb.) correspondence St. Louis Globe-Democrat: Tip Morton, who formerly resided in Chadron, but who for the past few years has been prospecting in and about Lead City and Custer, S. D., was here for a few weeks visiting old friends, and while here related a story of an old German who resided near his claim for years, and who died recently, which reads like a romance. The old man's name was William Bismarck, but he was known there as Prince Bismarck. When quite young he was deprived of his fortune in his native land by an unjust law, and, being deeply mortified at having lost his fortune and also caste with his former friends and associates, he at once determined to come to America, make a fortune, and then return to his native land and lord it over those who cut him. Before he lost his fortune he married a very highly educated and highly connected but rather poor lady. He thought, of course, after she left her old associates, she would change, and so broke the news to her of his determination to leave Germany. But she refused to accompany him. Just after arriving in New York he joined a party of prospectors bound for the Black hills. This was early in the '70s. Upon arriving in the hills he took several claims, and was fortunate in disposing of them at a big sum. Soon after this he married a German girl, the daughter of a well-to-do ranchman. They worked hard and were frugal. He kept his money secreted somewhere in the vicinity of his house, but even his wife did not know the place. When he was about ready to return to the scenes of his childhood to wreak vengeance on his former wife and his associates he suddenly died, without leaving a will. From that day until a short time ago a constant search was conducted for his money, but until a few days ago unsuccessfully. In a claim close to the house a small cave was discovered. It was explored, and in this cave poor Bismarck kept burying his money for years in the solid stone, carefully covered by a slab of stone. Mr. Morton says that $300,000 was taken out of the rock. The widow of Bismarck paid the party well who unearthed the money, and it is said she will soon leave for Germany and, to the extent of her ability, try to carry out her husband's wishes.

Old Ruins to Be Sold.

The ruins of Chepstow Castle, in England, in which Henry Marten, one of the judges of Charles I., was confined for upward of twenty years after the restoration, are to be sold at public auction. They cover an extensive area near the mouth of the Wye, and the walls on one side are nearly perpendicular with the cliff, which overhangs that river. The castle itself is said to date from the time of William the Conqueror, and it stood two sieges during the revolution. It has been successively in the hands of the Fitz-Osbornes, the Clares, the Bigods, the Herberts and the Somersets, and it is now placed on the market by order of the new Duke of Beaufort.