CASTLE.

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~~labourers~~

FOTHERINGHAY CASTLE.

The Traveller as he journeys by the high road between the towns of Peterborough and Oundle may be, as was the writer and his party, induced, by seeing the words 'Fotheringhay Castle' on the map to visit the famous spot. Should he elect so to do he will have to branch off to the right for some four or five miles and enquire his way. The roads are good the oak and the ash vie with each other for pride of place, the time is autumn, the scene ~~ery is England at its best.~~ ery is England at her best, and were one freed from the harrassing doubt as to whether one was on the right road to Fotheringhay, the journey would be delightful. But the housess are far apart the road, is unfrequented for it is harvest time, and the people are in the fields. Through a gap in a hedge, or standing by a style, one hails the

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labourers from afar, as to the direction in which Fotheringhay Castle lies. With a little hesitation and some apparent amusement the whereabouts of the Castle are indicated. A fair sized village with a handsome church is at length reached-the village and churh of Fotheringhay-and enquiries are renewed as to the position of the Castle. A five-barred gate to the eastward of the main street of the village is indicated as the landmarkto be sought for; but the gate when reached clearly leads to an open field with neither rise or dip to indicate ought that belongs to the ruins of a mighty castle. Clearly there has been some mistake, so, from a bridge near by, the country around is examined for pinnacle or buttress, for ivy clad tower or gate-way, or anything in the way of a stick or stone appertaining to what one associates with a castle or its surroundings. The search however is all in

vain; whilst ~~one~~ a doubting member of the party remarked, "I told you so, Fotheringhay is in Cumberland". That ~~is~~ might well be for all we could see, and had it not been that there stood ~~on~~ the words plainly marked on the ordinance map the search would have been given up. Relying ~~therefore~~ however on the correctness of the survey department we again sought information in the village, and once more went in the direction of the previously indicated five-barred gate. We entered ~~&~~ the field this time, when we reached yet another ~~gate~~ gate leading ~~this time~~ to a farm yard, where some farm labourers were engaged in building a stack of wheat. They ceased their work in astonishment evidently at our questions "Where is the Castle". Just beside the stack-yard rises a grassy mound of some twenty feet in height and we are ~~height and ~~ told that there is the object of

our search. In chastened silence we cross the low dilapidated fence between the stack yard and the ~~moundd~~ mound, dip into a shallow ~~dip~~ ditch where no doubt once ran ~~the moat~~ the moat, ~~and~~ where the nettles threaten even our very faces, and ascend the modest eminence. On gaining the summit words fail us, and a feeling creeps over us that we have been duped either by the villagers or still more gallingly by our own ignorance. Where is the Castle which in the days of our youth we were wont to associate with the last days of Mary Queen of Scots? Where the stately walls from which the castle lights streamed forth on the waters, that castle-like, lapped the castle as represented in ~~the pictures of the travelling panar~~ the pictures of the travelling panoramas that delighted our school days? Where were the surroundings that served

our search. In chastened silence we cross the low and ragge

to clothe with solemnity the poem our parents taught us to recite of which only the words "the ~~scene~~ scene was changed" are all that come back to us. ~~at the moment~~.

The scene is ~~changhed~~ changed indeed for the summit of the mound is bare;a rabbit hole here and there disturbs the surface of the coarse, short, dry grass which covers it.A mound indeed,a burial mound, resembling those in the village church-yard near by, and virtually fulfilling the same purpose,namely to indicate where "all the dead forgotten lie".Ah! there, on the little stretch of green sward between the base of the mound and the still waters of the river Nene, is evidently a piece of the old castle wall that has fallen from its place.On it there is sure to be an inscription of some sort to commemorate the fact that it formed part of the historic edifice. No! the poor piece of masonry is dumb,it bears no mark of its value;it has not even been deemed

worthy to bear the distinguished initials of the cockney tourist; there it lies unnamed and forgotten.

Another cherished idea of our youth shattered; a wish that we had never come here, and that we had gone on thinking of the Fotheringhay of the panoramas, and of the Castle as it once was "when the scene was changed; these are some of the feelings that haunt one as the mound and village are left behind, and yet a deeper feeling, one of reproach and something akin to shame that such should be.

The accounts of Fotheringhay have it that the castle was founded soon after the conquest by Simon de St. Liz; that it was rebuilt by Edmund, son of Edward III, and that it was for many years a favourite residence of the Princes of the House of York. These facts do not appeal to us keenly now-a-days, but although it was so long ago as 1586, since Mary Queen of Scots was

imprisoned there, and although it is 314 years since that fateful morning in February when " the scene was changed" the dramatic episode in our history has taken a deep and lasting hold upon us.

What has become of the Castle? The usual answer is that it was erased by order of Mary's son, James VI of Scotland, and I of England, in order that the spot so hateful to a Stuart might be forgotten and its name and fame for ever obliterated. A mythical tale we are told is this; the demolition of the castle was never ordered by the King; but as can be easily understood the building was dismantled. No Stuart would care to live in a building stained with Mary's blood and alive with all the sad memories of her life and death; and so the residence was allowed to crumble away to ruins. But the ruins where are they? where the stones of this immense building that dominated the district for over

500 Years? A few may remain buried in the funeral mound that marks the site of the once stately edifice, but the majority have been used to build the neighbouring houses. Stolen in fact were these stones; the practical Saxon has demolishedd the strong-hold where once dwelt his Norman master; he has irreverently chipped the chiselled stones and those that bore the coats of arms of the dwellers, to form corner stones for his garden wall or lintels for his door-ways. The revenge has been complete; for the oppressor is gone, and the very stones of his house stand no longer one upon another. But surely "the Norman and the Saxon foe are long since dead and gone;" and the once hated name of Stuart disappeared with the romantic rising in the '45. These feelings of resentment are not now dead? and we can not afford to forget, instead, to cherish and preserve the relics of our history in some tangible form. Judging from what has taken place at

the neighbouring town of Huntingdon ~~the~~ feelings of the kind ~~do~~ are not so readily ~~discount~~ quashed; for in Huntingdon neither monument, or tablet, nor indication of any sort exists to say that Oliver Cromwell lived there. The mention of his name amongst English folk brings forth no feelings of sympathy or sentiment, nor even of admiration for his ~~powers and transcendent~~ genius. The sons of the people that refer to his time record the exploits of his opponents; and his arch enemy is styled 'the Martyr'. Such is the fate of the home of the man who laid the foundation of British freedom, and in the same manner also has been treated the dwelling place of the romantic Queen. The fact is that both Cromwell and Mary disturbed the calm of political and religious life in England; the one by the violence of his protestantism ~~not done~~, the other by her equally violent adherence to the cause of Popery ~~Roman Catholic faith~~. They both

in their different fashions ruffled the surface of political calm and it has taken all these years to smoothe over the disturbance they caused. Although their names cause no active outcry, their memories and their places of abode are treated with the surest signs of a people's opinion, namely neglect. The tribute paid to our actors and actresses of former days, by having the place of their abode commemorated, is denied to the dwelling places of two of the foremost political and epoch-making personages of our history.

The future maps of England will not have Fotheringhay Castle marked upon them , otherwise they will be guilty of untruthfulness; for the castle, even as a ruin, has ceased to exist. In a few generations therefore the number of persons who think that Fotheringhay Castle was "somewhere in Cumberland" will increase.

Surely it behoves us as a nation proud of our history, and of our fight in freedom's cause, to mark the places render

-ed sacred to us, and to fence around Fotheringhay Castle Castle actually and historically. Is there not a public, or semi-public, body whose business it is to preserve our national places of interest; if so the members of that body have in this instance, sadly neglected their duty. Is it is because they are of opinion that by this studied neglect they are interpreting the wishes of the sovereigns of the Stuart line; if so let them disillusion themselves of any such idea. That the Stuart Kings deserted the place was only natural; but no Stuart King could have anticipated or wished that an abode consecrated to the national history by the blood of a Queen of their dynasty, should be allowed to completely disappear from the annals of the people of their nation.

Surely the place of abode of one + tragic death, whose descendents occupy the thrones of almost every country in Europe, is of sufficient interest to be commemorated in some tangible form. It is therefore no parochial legend that is being neglected, but one in which the whole of Europe in a more or less direct manner is historically interested.

Any interest ~~in Queen~~ taken in the history of Mary Queen of Scots is generally ascribed to persons belonging to the Church of Rome; in this case that argument does not hold good, the writer does not belong to the Church of Rome. ~~It is~~

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one of the most interesting spots in England.
I propose that the committee, consisting of persons
interested in this matter be formed in London and
Edinburgh to deal with this ~~Fotheringhay castle~~
subject

James Cantlie

46 Devonshire Street, Portland Place London W.

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Fotheringhay Castle

Preserved by the Government

Dear Sir,

As editor of a local weekly I feel it my duty to bring to your notice the following letter which appeared in this week's Northampton Chronicle & Echo with the request that you will bring the subject before the Government.

Yours faithfully

Editor

To Government Secretary, Portland Place, London W.