

with a small stream running through it, The green slopes on both sides of the hollow, for half their heights, from the summits downwards, retain all their old irregularities of surface, unscarred by plough or harrow : a few green fields, and a few picturesque cottages environed by hedge-rows, with an old mill and mill-pond, occupy the lower declivities and the bottom ; and just where the valley opens into the level country we find the little ancient village of Clent, one of the prettiest and most characteristic of all old English villages. It stands half enwrapped in tall wood, and half embraced by the outstretched arms of the valley, with its ancient, time-eaten church rising in the midst, like the central obelisk in a Druidic circle, and its old, venerable dwellings betimbered with dark oak and belatticed with lead, and much beshrouded in ivy and honeysuckle, scattered irregularly around. There were half-a-dozen children at play in the grass-grown street as I passed ; and a gentleman, who seemed the clergyman of the place, stood in earnest talk, at one of the cottage doors, with an aged matron in a black gown and very white cap ; but I saw no other inhabitants, and scarce any mark of more : no noisy workshops, — no stir of business, — nothing doing, or like to be done. Clent, for the last nine hundred years, seems to have had a wonderfully easy life of it, — an indolent, dreamy, uncaring, summer-day sort of life. It was much favored by Edward the Confessor, as a curious charter, exempting its inhabitants from the payment of tolls at fairs, and from serving as jurors, still survives to show ; and, regarding itself as a village fairly provided for, it seems to have thrust its hands into its pockets at the time, and to have kept them there ever since. Its wood-embosomed churchyard, as might be anticipated from its years, seems vastly more populous than its cottages. According to the practice of this part of the country, the newer tombstones