

## CHAPTER XVI.

Yardley Oak ; of immense Size and imposing Appearance. — Cowper's Description singularly illustrative of his complete Mastery over Language. — Peasant's Nest. — The Poet's Vocation peculiarly one of Revolution. — The School of Pope ; supplanted in its unproductive Old Age by that of Cowper. — Cowper's Coadjutors in the Work. — Economy of Literary Revolution. — The old English Yeoman. — Quit Olney. — Companions in the Journey. — Incident. — Newport Pagnell. — Mr. Bull and the French Mystics. — Lady of the Fancy. — Champion of all England. — Pugilism. — Anecdote.

HALF an hour's leisurely walking—and, in consideration of my companion's three score and eleven summers, our walking *was* exceedingly leisurely—brought us, through field and dingle, and a country that presented, as we ascended, less of an agricultural and more of a pastoral character, to the woods of Yardley Lodge. We enter through a coppice on a grassy field, and see along the opposite side a thick oak wood, with a solitary brick house, the only one in sight, half hidden amid foliage in a corner. The oak wood has, we find, quite a character of its own. The greater part of its trees, still in their immature youth, were seedlings within the last forty years : they have no associates that bear in their well-developed proportions, untouched by decay, the stamp of solid mid-aged treehood ; but here and there, — standing up among them, like the long-lived sons of Noah, in their old age of many centuries, amid a race cut down to the three score and ten, — we find some of the most ancient oaks in the empire, — trees that were trees in the days of William the Conqueror. These are mere hollow trunks, of vast bulk, but stunted foliage, in which the