

fox shelters and the owl builds, — mere *strulldbrugs* of the forest. The bulkiest and most picturesque among their number we find marked by a white-lettered board: it is a hollow pollard of enormous girth, twenty-eight feet five inches in circumference a foot above the soil, with skeleton stumps, bleached white by the winters of many centuries, stretching out for a few inches from amid a ragged drapery of foliage that sticks close to the body of the tree, and bearing on its rough gray bole wens and warts of astounding magnitude. The trunk, leaning slightly forward, and wearing all its huger globosities behind, seems some fantastic old-world mammoth, seated kangaroo-fashion on its haunches. Its foliage this season had caught a tinge of yellow, when the younger trees all around retained their hues of deep green; and, seen in the bold relief which it owed to the circumstance, it reminded me of Æneas' golden branch, glittering bright amid the dark woods of Cumea. And such is Yardley oak, the subject of one of the finest descriptions in English poetry, — one of the most characteristic, too, of the muse of Cowper. If asked to illustrate that peculiar power which he possessed above all modern poets, of taking the most stubborn and untractable words in the language, and bending them with all ease round his thinking, so as to fit its every indentation and irregularity of outline, as the ship-carpenter adjusts the stubborn planking, grown flexible in his hand, to the exact mould of his vessel, I would at once instance some parts of the description of Yardley oak. But farewell, noble tree! so old half a century ago, when the poet conferred on thee immortality, that thou dost not seem older now!

“Time made thee what thou wast, — king of the woods;
 And Time hath made thee what thou art, — a cave
 For owls to roost in. Once thy spreading boughs
 O'erhung the champaign; and the numerous flocks