

Salesmanship

Some traders think this means selling what a customer does not want. We've never had that idea of salesmanship. We believe in serving so that the customer comes back again. That's good salesmanship.

SHOP AT
DERRICK'S

F. Martin & Son
Monumental and
General Masons

MEMORIALS IN GRANITE,
MARBLE AND STONE
Designs and Quotations
on application

All work executed and reinstated
in the best manner

CHAPEL STREET
BERKHAMSTED Tel. 225

It pays to
buy good shoes

WHITE & SON
The Footwear Specialists
High St., Berkhamsted
Phone 68

Also at Hemel Hempstead
& Chorley Wood

OUR REPAIRS are
noted for smart-
ness and durability

The Changing Face of Castle Street

"WITH the exception of the Grammar School, and the little quaint Gothic chapel then known as the 'Independent,' there was scarcely a house in the whole street making any pretensions to architecture. The cottages were all more or less in a state of dilapidation and of the plainest description; these have nearly all been replaced by modern buildings of a better class, a few only remaining as specimens of a bygone age."

In these words, Henry Nash, author of "Reminiscences of Berkhamsted" (published in 1890), recalled the Castle-street he knew in the days of his youth, more than a century ago. No doubt such a staunch campaigner for modern sanitation and better housing as Mr. Nash was justified in saying that the old cottages were neglected—some were wretched little hovels with earth floors—but artists and photographers would not have shared his view that they were "of the plainest description."

On the contrary, between the Bulbourne and High-street were cottages of many periods, styles and sizes, most of them half-timbered and a few with straw-thatched roofs. Early photographs suggest that many old cottages in Castle-street were no less picturesque than the "sunken" row still surviving near the canal bridge.

Bygone Cottages

For instance, a well-preserved photograph of the 'sixties or early 'seventies shows some particularly interesting buildings between the Bulbourne and the site now occupied by Deans' Hall. Variety of style was certainly not lacking: small and large cottages of ancient vintage jostled one another, and poplars beside the mill-stream and in the back-gardens towered above the tiled roofs. Some of the cottages were pulled down to make way for the "St. George and Dragon" temperance hotel (described in last month's *Review*) and for the adjoining house—formerly Mr. "Dick" Ward's fish shop—which was built at night by workmen employed elsewhere during the day.

It is interesting to find the following advertisement in the very first issue of the *Berkhamsted Times* (April 17, 1875): "The Governors of Berkhamsted Grammar School are prepared to receive tenders for the whole of the materials of the two cottages facing Castle-street, Berkhamsted, and adjoining the Grammar School Playground."

The School Playground

Many years after the cottages were demolished, two neighbouring houses were pulled down to clear the site for Deans' Hall. One, a fairly modern double-fronted house, was occupied first by Mr. George Lingard, the stone-mason, and then by Mr. Harry Bedford, the carrier, whose wagonettes were in great demand for excursions. Next door

was a little house where the father of "Billy" Godman, a former town crier, plied the trade of cooper. He must have been a busy man when Berkhamsted had three breweries! Mr. Godman's house was afterwards Mr. J. G. Knowles' corn shop.

Beyond this shop stretched a long, high wall to the School entrance—then, of course, without its attractive gateway. The land now occupied by the chapel and other modern school buildings was a large playground, and an 83 years-old resident still has painful recollections of being hit by a cricket ball while walking along Castle-street. The playground was the scene of great excitement on Guy Fawkes' Night. Huge bonfires, consisting largely

BEORCHAM'S 100th "Review" Article

of furze gathered on the Common, were built by the boys, who spent all their pocket money on fireworks purchased at the baker's shop (formerly Keen's) adjoining the Gardeners' Arms.

Few local institutions have grown so rapidly as Berkhamsted School—always known as "the Grammar School" in Victorian days. Henry Nash, who died at the turn of the century, was old enough to remember the bad days when the school had been without pupils for a quarter of a century. "The fine schoolroom," he tells us, "was used as a lumber-room for the convenience of the master, who, with the usher, his son, was living in idleness on the revenues of the school, while the rising generation was starving for lack of knowledge."

Reorganised in 1841, the School steadily prospered, and in the past 60

IN THE DARK

Memories were stirred by last month's references to the "St. George and Dragon" temperance hotel in Castle-street. A parishioner points out that this private enterprise, with the blessing of Lord and Lady Brownlow, succeeded despite the failure of a parochial attempt to provide "a public house without intoxicating drinks" in the High-street in 1874.

Many old residents recall temperance meetings at the hotel, or "coffee tavern," as it was more usually called. On one occasion a lantern lecture was promised, and the room was packed with children who, after paying their pennies, waited in vain for the lecture to start. They were literally left in the dark while the lecturer hurriedly left the town—perhaps to spend his ill-gotten gains in a non-temperance hotel!

BATTLE SCENE

Much interest was aroused by references in last month's issue to a curious painting on an interior wall of one of the "sunken" cottages which was pulled down when the Castle Hotel outbuildings were extended about 60 years ago.

An old parishioner states that the painting was above a bedroom mantel-piece. It was a battle scene, with men on the outer earthworks (and some in a boat on the moat!) attempting to wreck the Castle with cannon-fire. The water in the moats was "a beautiful blue."

This picture must have been based on the nonsensical legend that the Castle—which was in ruins fully a century before the Civil War—was destroyed by Cromwell's army. Prince Louis of France and the barons certainly had no cannon when they staged the one and only siege of the Castle in 1216!

Unfortunately, this mural work of fiction could not be preserved. It was painted on plaster, which crumbled away when the cottage was demolished.

years the playground has become a "built-up area." Castle-street and Mill-street have been graced by handsome modern buildings, but the greatest source of interest will always be the original schoolroom facing the churchyard. In Tudor days it was described by an enthusiastic visitor as "the fairest school building in the land," and another early writer declared that it was the only building in the town worth seeing. A pity he did not notice the parish church! Incidentally, it was in Castle-street where Prince Charles (afterwards Charles I) halted "to hear an oration pronounced by one of the schollers of the free schole."

The Pawnbroker

Most of the buildings on the east side of Castle-street are comparatively modern. Here, on the fringe of the Pilkington Manor estate, we find houses which have been converted into shops, and former shops which are now private houses. A particularly attractive house of uncertain age, believed to have been the home of the Manor House coachman, was converted into a shop for Bailey's, the watchmakers.

A few doors away, in the premises now occupied by "Kathryn," the hairdresser, a pawnbroker's shop was started in Victorian days by Mr. Chilton. Queues were not unknown on Monday mornings, when housewives popped in to "pop" the family's Sunday best clothes until their husbands were paid on Saturday night! Some people, however, were too proud to be seen going into a Berkhamsted pawnbroker's shop; they preferred to walk to and from a similar establishment at Chesham, hoping that no neighbour would choose the same time for a similar errand. The Castle-street pawnshop, afterwards kept by Mr. Gill, was closed about 30 years ago.

Old and New

Mr. H. S. Brown's newspaper and confectionery shop is not so modern as it looks. It was converted from an old cottage which, standing at the corner of one of the drives to the Manor House, may originally have been the home of the squire's head gardener.

In two rooms behind the shop there formerly lived an old character named Charlie Wedgerfield, who made a living by taking goods to and from the station in a wheel-barrow!

One Street, Two Newspapers

In the tall building just above Manor-close, the late Mr. George Loosley opened a newspaper's shop and edited the *Berkhamsted Times*, which was printed in Holliday-street, the presses being driven by the steam-engine of Read's saw-mill. The *Times*, now incorporated in the *Watford Observer*, had a rival in the *West Herts Post*, which was first printed and published in the building at the corner of Key's yard, now occupied by G. and M. Motors. The *Post*, transferred to Watford many years ago, still appears every Thursday.

A Tudor Cottage

Next door to Mr. Loosley's shop stood a picturesque Tudor cottage which was pulled down a few years before the war, when the houses in Manor-close were built. William Cooper, founder of the chemical works, lived in this cottage for a short time, and afterwards it was the home of Mr. E. G. Page, proprietor of a little tobacco factory at Northchurch. In the first issue of the *Berkhamsted Times* (1875), Mr. Page advertised "good fine shag" at 3s. 3d. per lb. (3s. 4d. if supplied in half-ounce packets) and "best Cuban cigars" at 8s. or 8s. 6d. for a box of 100. He strongly recommended smokers to try his "cool, fragrant and exhilarating mixture" at 4d. an ounce.

Later, Mr. Page's house became noted for such delicacies as tripe, cowheel, chitterlings and black puddings! Mrs. Bishop, wife of a travelling slaughterman, had no difficulty in obtaining all the offal needed for this business, which was afterwards carried on by her daughter, the late Mrs. Halsey.

(To be continued.)

Telegrams:
MATTHEWS, Berkhamsted

Builders, Contractors
and Decorators

Telephone
15

H. & J. Matthews Ltd.
Funeral Directors,
Cremations, Embalming
CASTLE STREET, BERKHAMSTED