

March 1939.

successive white-topped waves, and the ship is only vaguely distinguishable through the haze of spray; block and tackle rattle against the firmness of her straining masts. Little sail is visible now, only the top-gallants, whipped by the fury of the wind, clack incessantly up aloft. Heeled right over, her bows occasionally plunging down into a huge green wave, spars and ropes running riot among the striving crew on deck, she presents a grand sight. The superiority of man maintained against the elements of wind and sea. Here are the waters doing their utmost to destroy man's work and

life, but the ship presents an intangible and elusive foe. Rising to the waves and sailing confidently over thin white-crested summits guarding her crew in a small world apart from other man.

Again the scene changes and she lies once more in the brown sluggish water of the river. She has lived her life, as a butterfly might weather a shower; and for what? To become a coal hulk, and supply the smaller fry of her kind with fuel to fight the sea, in the same way as she fought it, with her canvas.

C. A. BODENHAM.

### OLD INNS — "THE TRAVELLERS' REST."

The "Travellers' Rest" was a small inn lying just off the road leading from Hastings northward to London.

It was a rudely-built, badly-thatched and unattractive place to look at from the outside, but within it did full credit to its title. There was always a cheery company of wayfarers, farmers, yeoman, serfs, to be found there of an evening; good ale and wine flowed in abundance, and jokes were cracked and stories told.

To-night everyone was in a state of uneasiness: the pile of logs that lay burning in the centre of the single room, seemed to be stiflingly hot and making clouds of thick smoke; men would not eat or drink or sit down for more than a few seconds it seemed, but were for ever rushing forth to the door and peering forward into the fast-falling gloom. Was it true, what everyone was saying, that the late King had broken his promise made to the Duke of Normandy that he should become his successor, and now that dreaded man had come and defeated the royal army on the south coast? In the year 1051 William, Duke of Normandy, had come on a friendly visit to England, and on his

departure King Edward had promised sincerely to make him his successor. Now things had changed: this year, 1066, the well-loved Edward had died and Harold, son of the Earl Godwin, had been crowned King at Westminster, nobody wanting the foreign Norman Duke. Now that stern Duke, everyone said, had overthrown Harold and was coming to rule this country with an iron hand. Uneasiness spread among the inhabitants of the inn: the only people who seemed quite unaware of it were those who had fallen asleep with drink on the skins provided round the wall. In the centre of the inn was the fire of logs burning away merrily enough; the smoke, after having gone all over the room, finally found its way out through a hole that had been cut for the purpose; near to the fire a table stood consisting of several long boards laid across a couple of casks. On this table wine and ale and drinking mugs stood; men sipped at them and glanced about them; everything seemed oppressive, chickens and slaughtered pigs hung from a beam and seemed in the way . . . there were shouts and cries away to the south—the Conqueror was coming! . . . .

The "Travellers' Rest" is always visited by tourists on their way from London to the coast; it presents a strange sight with its tudor gables, curious latticed windows, and almost hovel-like buildings and stables nestling round it. It is supposed to have a long and varied history behind it: some hold that it was burnt to the ground soon after William the Conqueror landed, because the inhabitants shouted curses at him and his army as they passed by; others have it that the Conqueror himself tarried and had a mug of ale there; but there seems no evidence for either story. It saw the days of Cromwell and his burnings and plunderings, and was half demolished when some royalist troops made a brave attempt to hold out against him there; this, in some way helps to explain its curious outer aspect. Within, the ceiling is not more than about 6ft. 2ins. from the ground, and is supported by huge, roughly-hewn, oaken beams. The upper storey is reached by a narrow staircase which, on turning a corner, turns into a

ladder. Naturally in a strange old building like this, stories of ghosts, of romantic happenings that must have, time and time again, taken place in and around the "Travellers' Rest," are told; stories of a desperate duel fought between two pale figures on the green beside the inn, of the tramp-tramp-tramp of feet along the road, but nothing to see, and of a stage-coach stopping at the inn and disappearing. Certainly no one who has remained there for a night seems anxious to do so again, and the owners were always changing until the place was bought up by a Hastings's brewery. It is also said that a motorist, not long ago, driving from Reigate late at night, happened to stop at the "Travellers' Rest"—he left his car by the roadside and was overwhelmingly surprised to see several uncouth figures and curiously dressed figures peering forward into the dark, then distant shouts were heard and the figures disappeared

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M. H. R. TOLKIEN.

### THE ORATORY SCHOOL, September 1880 to July 1888.

Looking back, most of my recollections seem to be of most trivial things, such as the apparently great age of the Prefects in the school, Wilfred Crewse, Cuming, O'Connell and others. The smallest boys began life in the school in "the Darlings" room of St. Mary's dormitory, a small room next to the Matron's quarters. The Matron, Miss Emily Bowles, held her position on the strength of her being a convert friend of the Cardinal and possessing some literary ability; she had written a book or had composed a poem; she was more at home when wielding the pen than when administering a pill. The day of the qualified nurse as Matron was still far distant, and we showed that nature will cure all ills in spite of the doses we had to swallow.

The intense heat of modern houses and trains was also not to come for many decades. Water, hot and cold, was carried from the basement; the hot water was probably not very hot, so it is likely that we did not wash so often or so thoroughly as the modern generation, and this may account for our good complexions; at an early age when our skins were delicate and tender they were not so highly tried by alkali and the other ingredients of toilet soap. There were bath arrangements for St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, but I cannot remember them and I presume that we did bath sufficiently not to be noticeable. We must have felt the cold, though we were not aware of it as our homes were also healthily and unpleasantly cold, and I