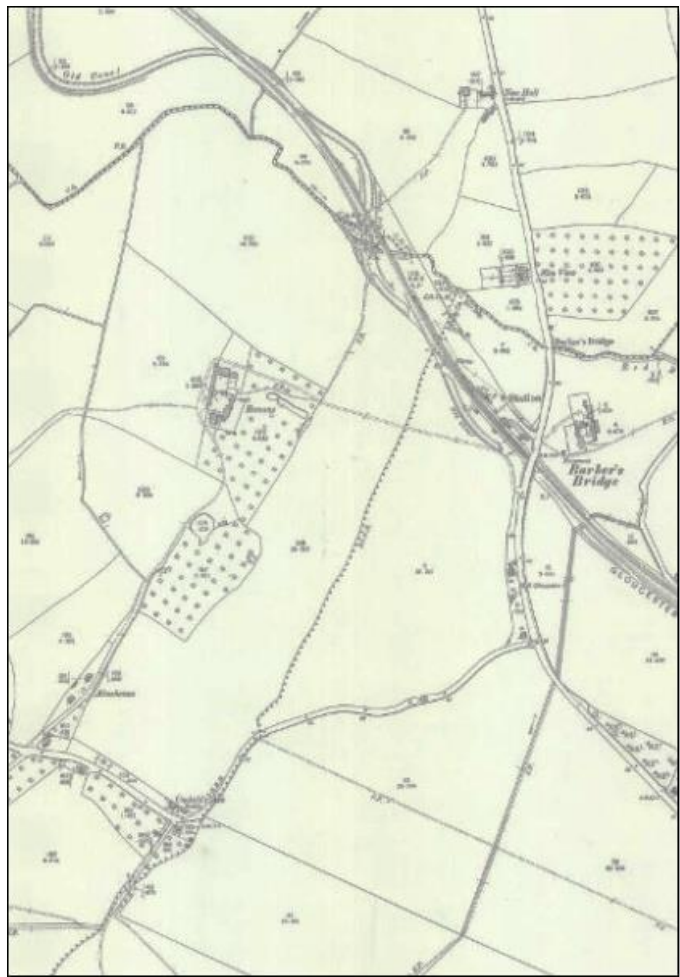


A RAMBLE THROUGH TIBBERTON IN AUGUST 1887

A dreamy haze
Played on the uplands, but the hills were clear
In sunlight. and no cloud was on the sky.
It was the time when deep silence comes
Upon the summer earth, and all the birds
Have ceased from singing, and the world is still
As midnight. (From the Epic of Hades by Lewis Morris)

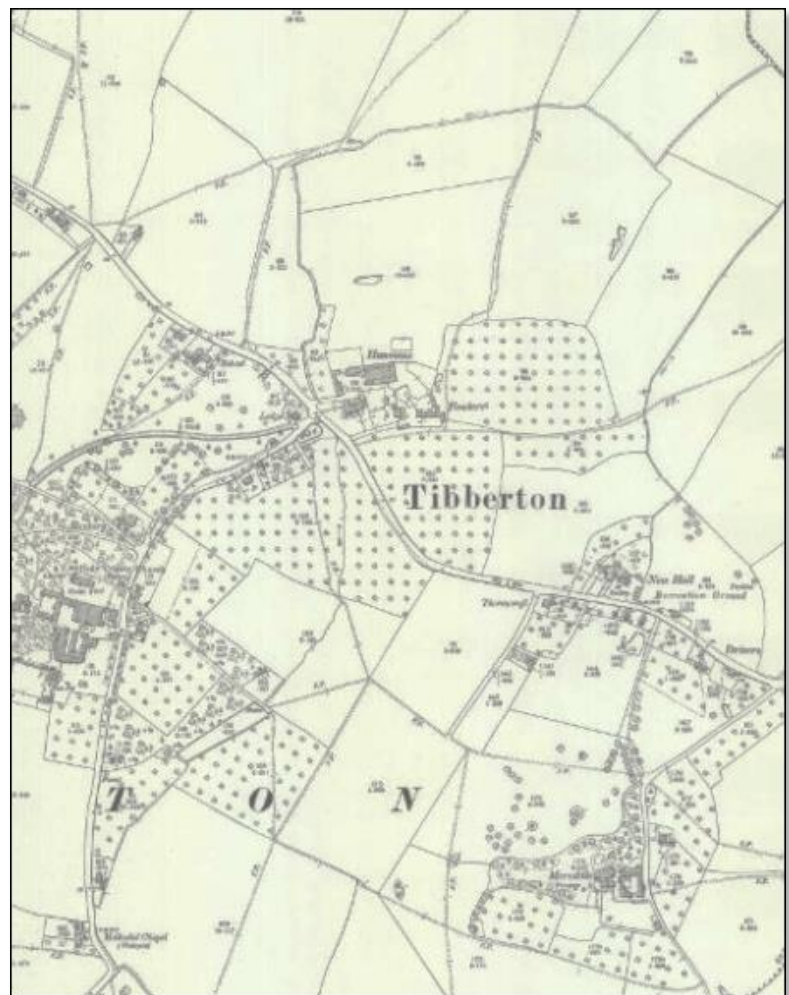
It was on a bright and beautiful day in the latter half of August, such a day as the author above must have had in mind when he wrote those lines, as we rambled among the quiet lanes and villages that lie on the western side of the Severn valley from Gloucester. Arriving by the 3.20 train to Barber's Bridge at the scene of a sharp conflict in the Civil War time. Two hundred and fifty years ago, the forces of Col. Massey fought the Welsh forces under Lord Herbert. After we had looked at the monument in the field just above the station which Mr. W. P. Price erected a few years ago in memory of that sanguinary struggle, we set on through the fields for Tibberton.

It was a pleasant half hour's saunter, over green meadows and fields bristling with short stubble from which the corn had all been gathered, and through shady orchard whose trees were heavy and glowing with the ripening fruits. At the first farm we approached, we received a noisy and suspicious greeting from its faithful guardian, a dog of mixed colour and breed, with a bark like the blare of the last trumpet. We endeavoured to cultivate the dog with kindly regard and insinuate ourselves into its good graces. Speaking in most persuasive tones, and artfully and affectionately calling it "good dog, good dog" soon we very much enjoying its brief society and confidence. Then we came across an old man, whose limbs were worse for wear with rheumatism, enjoying a short chat, whose memory was a hale and vigorous as in his youthful days.



A little further on we passed through an orchard flanking another farm, where the harvest was gathered into bright and glistening stacks, an orchard whose green floor was dappled with soft lights and shadows. There is a peculiar, subtle, and indescribable charm about an orchard on a clear summer or early autumn day, a charm that we look for in vain elsewhere. The landscape flooded with the light of spring is very beautiful to look upon, but its charm is very different. Then when the lights and shadows chase each other over the broad valley, or a hillside clothed with woods, it almost seems as if a wandering and changeful spirit were flashing its own nature upon all things. Everywhere there is movement, haste, and racing and changing colour. But in the orchards on a bright day in summer the shadows are motionless, save for their imperceptible movement towards the east as the sun takes its westward slant, and as they cluster together, yet separated by narrow splashes and broad spaces of golden light, the feeling they create is one of rest, of ample, perfect, and sweet repose.

When we had passed through the orchard, we were on the road close by the lodge of Tibberton Court, where, taking the lane to the left of it, we strolled on beneath the rich shade of overhanging elms, and between broad banks of laurel, to the old, grey church of Tibberton. The old name was Tebriston, probably meaning in Saxon times, as an old Chronicler suggests, "Tebri's town". The church was dedicated to the Trinity. It is a quaint little building, of great age, and is beautifully situated between the lane and the woodland of Tibberton Court, and on three sides of it is sheltered by the trees. Our visit was not very fortunately timed, for the chancel was hidden by a large canvas screen, and the pews had all been cleared away, and the repairers were busily at work on the floor and walls. As we wandered round its "God's Acre" where, side by side, the grey-haired man and the little child, the lord of many acres and the humble tiller of the soil, rest in their last long sleep, we were reminded as we have often been of the way in which this country is related to distant lands.



Where we least expect it, we find memorials of those who have had some share in the making of the Empire. and brief inscriptions telling of those who have fought and bled on fields of battle or suffered more cruelly among the icefields of the North, or performed brave deeds, or rendered services worthy of honour and record. And so, in the little churchyard at Tibberton, far away from the sweltering plains of India, we found a memorial to one who was familiar with the scenes of that great Dependency, Sir John Wedderburn, of the Bombay Civil Service, who died July 2nd, 1862. And close by it way the place where only a few months ago was laid to rest one who was known and honoured in this county, and to whom all willingly rendered the tribute due to his true and sterling worth, William Edwin Price MP aged 44. Through the gate of the "sanctuary of burial" we could just discern on the brass affixed to the wall the inscription to his memory, and as we read it, it seemed but as yesterday that the sorrow which fell on those who knew and loved him best covered the city with its shadow. And as we wandered in the summer stillness among the grey memorials that surround the church, I feel its peace and power, and the more completely do my sympathies go with John Henry Newman's lines:

"So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone.
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

We left the quiet and peaceful scene and went on through the woodland and the laurels to the great meadow which slopes away from Tibberton Court. There a beautiful vision broke suddenly upon our sight; fair green hills boarded by dark hedge lines and fields of glistening stubble; here and there a little cottage or farmstead just showing through the trees; whilst before us the landscape rolled away in dark woods and sunny slopes until it swept upward and melted away in the ragged lines of firs that crown May Hill.

Then we turned to the right and west down through the fields until we reached the road. There, near a cottage, we crossed a stile and entered the fields again. We wandered leisurely on, through field after field, and at the little stream that joins the Leaden at Rudford we stopped for a moment to watch the silent movement of a water rat, as it worked its way in and out among the reeds, plucking a sweet memorial of our walk, a spray of "forget-me-not," which, all unseen, lifted from the shelving bank its mild blue eyes to heaven. Soon we had crossed the railway through another meadow then onto on the Newent Road at Highleadon Green and down the winding road to where we arrived at Barbers Bridge.

*Edited extract from an article in the Gloucestershire Chronicle Saturday 10th September 1887, page 3.
Maps from 1903 Ordnance Survey prints courtesy of the National Library of Scotland.
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