

A White Christmas in England

The snow is everywhere. The shrubs are weighed down by masses of it; the terrace is knee-deep in it; the plaster Apollo is more than knee-deep in it and is furnished with a surplice and wig, like a half-blown Bishop. The distant country looks the very ghost of a landscape; the white-walled cottages seem part and parcel of the snow-drifts around them—drifts that take every variety of form, and are swept by the wind into faery wreaths and fantastic caves. The old mill-wheel is locked fast, and gemmed with giant icicles; its slippery stairs are more slippery than ever. . . the grey church tower has grown from grey to white; nothing looks black except the swarms of rooks that dot the snowy fields.

Cuthbert Bede, 1853.

Mad Dog an Englishman

First Clown: *He that is mad, and sent into England.*

Hamlet: *Ay, marry; why was he sent into England?*

First Clown: *Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, 'tis no great matter there.*

Hamlet: *Why?*

First Clown: *'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.*

—Shakespeare: *Hamlet.*

Brighton by the Sea

In Steyne Gardens, Brighton, the lodging houses are among the most frequented in that city of lodging-houses. These mansions have bow-windows in front, bulging out with gentle prominences, and ornamented with neat verandas, from which you can behold the tide of humankind as it flows up and down the Steyne, and that blue ocean over which Britannia is said to rule, stretching brightly away eastward and westward. . . . It is the fashion to run down George the Fourth, but what myriads of Londoners ought to thank him for inventing Brighton! One of the best physicians our city has ever known is kind, cheerful, merry Doctor Brighton. Hail thou purveyor of shrimps and honest prescriber of South Down mutton! There is no mutton so good as Brighton mutton; no flies so pleasant as Brighton flies, nor any cliffs so pleasant to ride on; no shops so beautiful to look at as the Brighton gimcrack shops, and the fruit shops, and the market.

—William Makepeace Thackeray, 1853.