

CHURCHYARD BOTTOM WOOD.

We are not likely to commit the mistake made by the generation which allowed vast districts of East London to grow up without a single oasis of green turf. The foresight and munificence of some individuals, aided by the wisdom of public bodies, have surrounded the outskirts of the Metropolis with a chain of open spaces, and now it seems that another link may be added. Churchyard Bottom Wood, of which some illustrations are given, covers fifty-two acres of the great Highgate Estate, owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in right of the See of London. The Commissioners take a large view of their duties as trustees for the public, where open spaces are concerned, and offered the wood to the Hornsey Urban District Council for £25,000, or about one-half its market value, on condition that the Council should preserve it as an open space. This generous offer was limited to a period of two years.

To raise so large a sum, however, in the locality proved no easy matter, and the time allowed by the Commissioners had almost elapsed

Nothing else remains to redeem this lovely spot from the hands of the builder than that the public should come forward in the spirit of one anonymous donor who offers one-fourth of his income on condition that twenty other persons will give fifty pounds apiece.

The wood lies close to Highgate Station, and visitors may quickly reach it from Broad Street, Moorgate Street, and King's Cross Stations. After passing through the densely populated districts of Dalston, Barnsbury, Canonbury, Highbury, and Islington, he will find it hard to overestimate the importance of saving this space of open ground. While there is one acre of open space to every 682 people in the West half of London, and to every 7481 in the East half, it would be unwise to destroy a playground in such a splendid situation. The wood lies on the hollow side of a hill, and a wide prospect is commanded from the top. Oak for the most part covers the slope, with an undergrowth of that willow which clothes itself in spring with downy yellow flowers. Among the trees a tiny stream has cut a deep groove in the clay, and many Londoners will be surprised to learn that here, within five miles of Charing Cross, the children gather wild primroses and wood anemones.

Apart from its natural beauty, the wood is a romantic piece of



CHARACTERISTIC SCENES IN THE WOODS.

when Mr. Cory-Wright, Chairman of the District Council, came to the rescue. An extension of time was granted, first to the end of June, and then to September 30. Miss Octavia Hill and Sir Robert Hunter, considering the wood as a space of the first importance to London itself, brought the great open-space societies they represent to the help of Mr. Cory-Wright, who headed the list with a large donation. Hornsey had already voted to contribute £10,000 from the rates, and offered to maintain the wood if it was handed over in such a condition as to demand no additional outlay of capital. This left £15,000 to be raised for the purchase of the wood, besides about £3000 needed for fencing and draining and for building a ranger's lodge. The wealthier inhabitants, however, subscribed between £2000 and £3000, while the donations of sympathisers have swelled this sum to over £4000. The Vestry of St. Pancras have promised £2000, and the Middlesex County Council a sum not exceeding £5000, if Parliament will grant them powers to make these contributions. St. Pancras have also expressed a desire that the wood should be saved, and have referred the matter to their Parliamentary Committee. It is to be hoped that the Legislature will remove the technical difficulties in the way of these contributions being made by passing the two Bills which have been laid before them for this purpose.

antiquity. It was but the other day in its history that a plague-pit, used in the Great Pestilence, gained it the sombre title it now bears. Always part of the Forest of Middlesex, its growth has never been disturbed even by cultivation. Let us hope that London will help Miss Hill and her colleagues to make sure the builder shall never uproot the oaks from their immemorial freehold in this patch of primeval forest.

Donations sent to 1, Great College Street, the official address of the committee for saving the wood, will be thankfully acknowledged by Mr. C. F. Cory-Wright or Miss Octavia Hill.

Some more choice examples of the humours of examinations; not from the candidates' point of view. "Holiday" has lately been given the following ingenious explanation: "Holiday comes from an old English word, and was used when the Britons cut the holly"! I suppose that mistletoe also had something to do with it. Item No. 2: Among the nouns derived from the verb "tell" are "telescope, telegraph, and telligence," the last spelt without an apostrophe. My third instance gives "priest" as the past participle of "pry," and "swine" as the past participle of "sow." But how "past" and why "participle" I can't for the life of me make out.