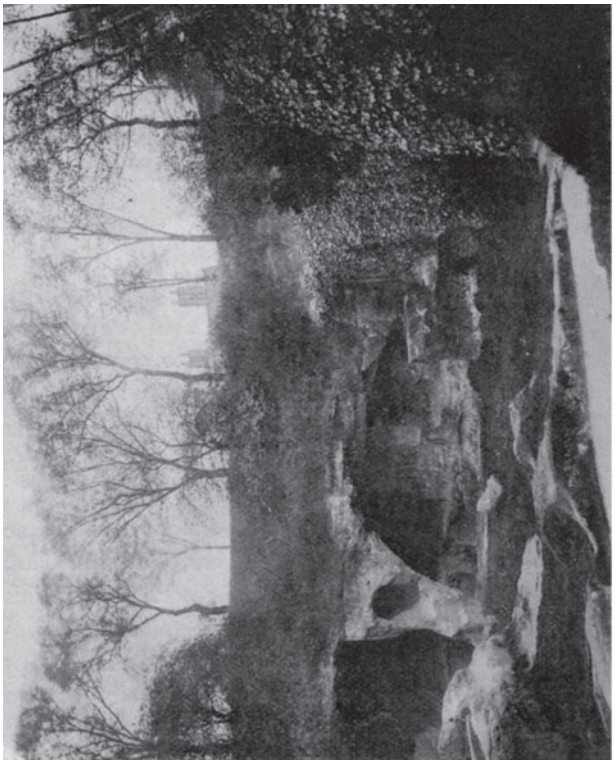
1. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Meaning and Origin of the Words. Shire and County.

A visitor is not long in Nottingham before he hears of the caves in the Castle Rock and elsewhere, and is taken to see them. To-day they are merely curiosities, but in bygone years some of them were used as dwellings. The earliest historic notice of Nottingham refers to the place under the British name Tigguocobauc, which means "the house of caves." From this has arisen the erroneous impression that the present name also has the same meaning.

Before it was modified by Norman influence the name had several forms, e.g. Snothryngham, Snottingaham, Snottingham—but Snotengaham was the earliest. This ending "ham" is akin to the word home, and is of Anglo-Saxon origin. It tells us of a people who came to this country—not, as the Romans did, to exploit—but to colonise and to make for themselves a home. It is not at all unlikely that Snottingham was the home of an Anglian family—Snot (the wise) by name. Thus with the possessive "ing" the whole word means "The home of Snot."



Caves in Rock Cemetery, Nottingham

With the City of Nottingham is associated a large extent of country known by the interchangeable names of Nottinghamshire and the County of Nottingham. These also reflect the influence of the Anglo-Saxons and Normans respectively. The suffix "shire" is akin to the word "share," and like it signifies a division, something cut off. "County" only dates from Norman times and denotes the domain of a *Comte* or Count. There is no historical account of the coming into existence of Nottinghamshire. At one time the area it covers seems to have been divided between the kingdoms of Mercia and Lindsey. It certainly existed as a shire before 1016, for the word Snotingahamscire occurs in writings of that date. Probably it was created a century before by Edward the Elder. This king in order to consolidate the newly acquired portion of his kingdom, situated in the region now called the Midlands, placed "shares" of it under the control of chief men or Ealdormen. Usually each share or shire, as it was called, consisted of those portions of the country that were within easy reach of a military centre. Nottingham was such a centre, situated not far from the old Roman Fosseway, and at a point where an important road to the north crossed the Trent. It thus dominated the country through which these three ways passed. That country was naturally made into a shire administered from Nottingham and therefore called Nottinghamshire. On the other hand the shire may have been formed from the district which was settled by that Danish army which had its head-quarters in Nottingham.

As has just been remarked, the expressions County of

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are used indifferently. But shire and county do not quite mean the same thing. Though we speak of all the divisions of England collectively as counties not all of them are strictly so—as for example the Duchy of Cornwall—nor is the suffix shire applied except to such divisions of our land as once formed part of the early English kingdoms. There are other counties, such as Kent, Essex, Suffolk, etc., which reveal their origin in their names—the kingdom of the Cantii, of the East Saxons, of the people south of the Little Ouse and Waveney—and these, it should be observed, have in most cases kept their boundaries unaltered to this day.

As a rule, however, our counties are by no means fixed quantities, and their boundaries—even in spite of the fact that they are mainly dependent on the natural delimitation of river or range, and not as in America marked out with a ruler—have often altered. They are, in fact, altering now, and the county of London has come into existence within the recollection of all of us.

2. General Characteristics.

Nottinghamshire has no seaboard. Nevertheless those reaches of the Trent which form part of its eastern boundary are influenced by the tide and can carry ships of 150 tons burden. Throughout the length of the county the Trent has always been an important highway and a dominant factor in its history and commercial development. During the nineteenth century

the river became overshadowed by the railways and its traffic declined. Recent years have brought with them a renewed interest in it which is leading to a realisation of its possibilities as a commercial highway.

Thus in spite of its inland position this county has some of the advantages of a seaboard. In other respects it exhibits a mixed character. To the north-west lies

Nottingham from The Meadows

upland England, with regions rich in mineral wealth and thickly peopled with an industrial population. To the south-east is lowland England, pastoral and agricultural, and dotted with residences and parks. Nottinghamshire lies on the boundary between the two and participates in the characteristics of both.

Its highest ground is on the west and is the extremity of a spur from the Pennines. Throughout the whole of

its eastern border the ground is very low, never reaching an altitude of 100 feet.

The higher ground of the west furnished a few streams capable of supplying water-power for driving machinery during the early days of the industrial revolution. In the same part of the county the presence of abundance of coal served still to retain the industries when water-power was replaced by steam.

In the east no such natural advantages existed to favour the development of industries. That part of the county therefore remains purely pastoral and agricultural. In the heart of the county palatial residences and extensive parks are so numerous that this region is often called "The Dukeries."

3. Size. Shape. Boundaries.

Nottinghamshire is one of the North Midland counties. It is bordered on the north-west by Yorkshire, on the west by Derbyshire, on the south by Leicestershire, and on the east and north-east by Lincolnshire. The most northerly point is situated at the junction of its boundaries with Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. The most southerly point is where the Fosseway enters the county. The line joining these two is the longest in the county, and extends 51 miles. The greatest width is 27 miles, along a line running close to Selston and Newark.

The area of the ancient or geographical county is 539,756 acres or 843 square miles. These figures include

3426 acres of water. In area this county occupies a central position among the English and Welsh counties, of which 25 are larger, and the same number smaller. It is one-seventh the size of Yorkshire, and six times larger than Rutland. It is practically equal to Herefordshire, which has an area of 842 square miles.

Creswell Crags

(*Derbyshire to left, Notts to right of gap*)

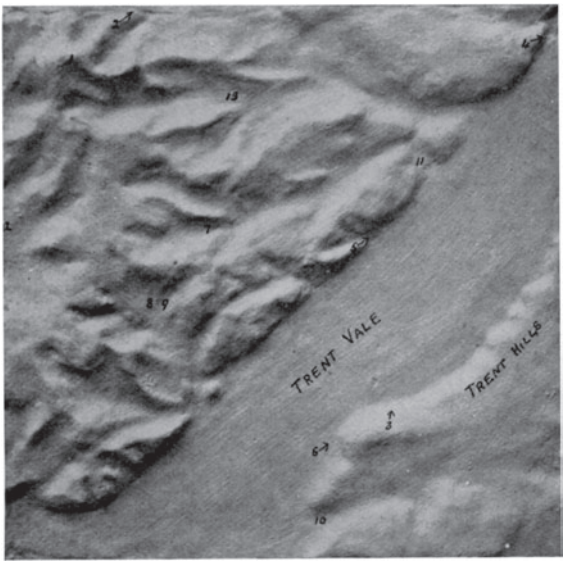
The general shape of the county is that of an oval, with its long axis lying nearly north and south. The circumference of this oval is about 120 miles, but numerous irregularities increase the length of the actual boundary to over 180 miles. One half of this is artificial, the other half is naturally defined by rivers and streams.

There are three long stretches of natural boundary. One starts close to the source of the Erewash in the extreme west, near Pinxton, and follows down this stream almost to the Trent. Another starts near to the mouth of the Erewash and follows up the Trent, the Soar, and one of its tributaries to near Rempstone. The third, in the north-east, follows down the Trent from North Clifton to West Stockwith. This one is broken by a slight deviation close to Dunham bridge, where one Nottinghamshire field lies on the Lincolnshire side of the river. This field is the nearest approach to a detached portion of which the county can boast. Close to Bole the Trent formerly flowed round two remarkable loops with narrow mouths opening into Lincolnshire. The land thus nearly surrounded by water belonged naturally to that county. In 1797 the river assumed its present course across the narrow necks of the loops. It is only on the latest maps that this land is represented as belonging to Nottinghamshire.

4. Surface and General Features.

Our county lies in the southern portion of the large plain whose drainage falls into the Humber. This portion is called the Vale of Nottingham. It is bounded on the west by the Pennines, and on the east and south by the Lincoln Cliff and its natural continuation the Belvoir Escarpment. These boundaries all lie outside the county but nevertheless have greatly influenced its history and

commerce. At the south-west corner there is a gap of low country towards which the valleys of the Erewash, Derwent, Upper Trent, and Soar converge. This gap is the natural gateway from western and southern England



Relief-Map of the District N.E. of Nottingham

1. Cockpit Hill. 6. View point, p. 14. 7. Lambley.
8. Gedling Colliery. 10. Radcliffe. 11. Lowdham.
13. Woodborough

into Nottinghamshire and thence to the north. Three minor gaps leading from Lincolnshire and the south occur at Lincoln, Ancaster, and Grantham.

The county is largely lowland in character. Only one fifty-sixth of its area is above the 600-feet contour, and no less than two-fifths is below 100 feet in altitude. Generally, as we have seen, the lower ground is in the north and the east; the higher in the south-west. The latter is formed partly by a continuous range of hills which flanks the Pennines, but is separated from them by the valleys of the Erewash and Rother. These hills slope steeply westwards and gently eastwards. The highest ground in the county is situated in the district round the Robin Hood's Hills, just where this range is joined by the watershed between those two rivers. It culminates near Hucknall-under-Huthwaite in a height of 651 feet. North of this the range lies outside the county, southward it passes as a gradually declining spur which disappears west of Nottingham. This range will be afterwards referred to as the Western Hills.

The highest ground south of the Trent is formed by a northerly spur of the Belvoir Escarpment. This is known as the Wolds and dominates this corner of the county.

A broken range of hills commences in the eastern suburbs of Nottingham, and sweeps northwards along the central axis of the county, ending abruptly at Gringley-on-the-Hill. Its course thus lies parallel to and 15 miles from the Belvoir Escarpment and the Lincoln Cliff. The detached portions of these central hills decrease in height from 580 feet at Cockpit Hill to 253 feet at Gringley. From their summits the ground falls rapidly to the west and very gently towards the east. The