

The text is based on whichever edition reads most felicitously and relevantly, but major additions or alterations between the two are indicated in square brackets. Minor changes in phraseology are ignored. The purpose of this transcription is to show Banbury as it was in the 1860s. Historical descriptions of the Charters and the Civil War, etc (probably based on Beesley) are omitted.

THE STRANGER'S GUIDE THROUGH BANBURY:

[The train draws nigh;] The engine-driver blows off the steam; the guard and fire-man apply their respective breaks [*sic*], with about as harmonious a noise as the sharpening of a saw; the panting, puffing, whistling, screaming substitute for a horse, which has been dragging that enormous load along, is brought to a stand-still; the carriages draw up at the precise spot where they are wanted; whilst “Banbury!” “Banbury!” tripping lightly from a porter’s tongue, informs the traveller that he has arrived at the place of his expected destination – the far-famed Oxfordshire “Land of Cakes.”

“Bus, sir?” enquires a civil conductor of one of those commodious vehicles of street traffic, which, among many other things with which we are perfectly familiar, were wholly unaware to the “wisdom of our ancestors” – whose ideas of “busses” were generally associated with pleasing reminiscences of quiet corners, rosy lips, and a suitable opportunity. “Bus, sir!” is repeated in a still more insinuating tone, as the conductor holds open the door of his vehicle by way of an inducement for the traveller to enter – an invitation with which he may possibly decline to comply.

“No, thank you! but if you will, you may take that luggage on to some inn – supposing you have such a thing as an inn in the town.”

“Inns, sir, did you say? I should think we have! if you can find cash we can find comfort. There is the White Lion and the Red Lion, both first class hotels – you can’t beat them in London, sir – so you make choice of either colour that you like best; or if you should prefer a horse to the forest king, we have the White Horse and the Flying Horse, both capital inns; and besides these, sir, there is the Plough, the [Buck and] Bell, the Coach and Horses, the White Hart, the Rein Deer [*sic*], the Wheat Sheaf, and the Bear, at any of which you will meet accommodation. Indeed from the Albion to the Case-is-Altered, and back to the Three Pigeons, you need be at no loss for a dinner, as you may get suited anywhere either according to your inclination or your purse.”

“Then take these things to the Red Lion, I shall walk.”

“All right, sir! drive on, Dick!”