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*Higham Ferrers has a very special place in my affections: not because I was born there, but because almost all the really golden days of my childhood seem in retrospect to have been spent in and about it. In those far-off horse-and-trap days I rolled down the slopes of the old castle mound, picked the sweetest of summer pears in the orchard behind the Church Yard, watched Brazier the coach builder put the sparkling finishing touches to his spanking floats and carriages in Wood Street, changed into my football boots in the Bede House and mingled every summer with the vast market-square throng on Feast Sunday.*

*So deeply ingrained is this ancient little borough in my mind that at least half-a-dozen of my novels and many more of my stories are set either wholly or partly in it, and it still delights me to feel that the countryside I describe in those pages, nostalgically recalling the lark-song of childhood and the call of yellow-hammers on burning summer afternoons, was the same countryside that Henry the Fifth's great Archbishop, Chichele, knew centuries ago.*

*It is a fine little town and I hope its citizens will never lose sight of the fact that they have in it a very dear possession.*

H. E. BATES.