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Frontispiece.

NORTHUMBERLAND:

ITS HISTORY,

ITS FEATURES, AND ITS PEOPLE,

BY

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Acting Chaplain to H.M. Forces;

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"O! the oak, and the ash, and the bonny rowan tree,
They flourish best at home in the North Countree."

Seventeenth Century Northumbrian Ballad.

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DEDICATION.

To my Dear Wife, herself a Northumbrian, who for many years has greatly assisted me in all my work, and to all who love their Native County at Home and Abroad, this work is Dedicated by their Fellow-Northumbrian.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In issuing the second edition of this work, which was originally prepared as a popular Lecture, and delivered before the Tyneside Geographical and Carlisle Scientific Societies, I would take occasion to express a deep sense of gratitude at the reception which the first edition met with both from the public and the press.

To the present edition I have added four chapters, the last in the book, and all of them immediately connected with Otterburn. The public will understand with what interest these Chapters have been written, when I mention that Otterburn is my birthplace, where, for some years I was successor to my father, who laboured as the first Presbyterian minister of the place for a lifetime.

Just as Angelo D'Elchi expresses it:—

> "Apollo sang the wars of Troy,
> Its deeds of valour and renown;
> And listening Homer heard the song,
> And wrote the heavenly verses down,"

so it has given me unqualified delight, in my humble way, to embalm the memories of my native village and its associations, and this all the more, seeing that Otterburn may be accepted as a typical village of a County for which all Northumbrians bear a strong love, and for which my own interest has not grown less, although residing in a neighbouring one for a number of years.

JAMES CHRISTIE.

Carlisle, October, 1904.

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NORTHUMBERLAND: ITS HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

The Spell of the Word Northumberland—The Roman Domination—The Roman Wall and Dr. Bruce—Watling Street—Conversion to Christianity in the times of the Saxons—The Great Missionaries, Paulinus, Aidan, and Cuthbert—Battles of Otterburn, Flodden Field, Hedgeley Moor, and Hexham—Jacobite Outing and the Earl of Derwentwater.

NORTHUMBERLAND! Shakespeare asks:—"What's in a name?" and replies, "That which we call a rose, by any other word would smell as sweet." No doubt it is so with the grand northern county of England, and who shall deny that the very word Northumberland has a royal look, as well as a royal ring about it? As it is with the name, so it is with the county, its people, its history and associations.

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own *North-umber-land!*
If such there breathe, go, mark him well."

What we have to deal with is not the Northumbria of our early English History, that is, the

whole country lying between the Estuary of the Humber and the Firth of Forth, but that most northern county of the England we live in, which, from its physical appearance, forms a triangular apex to our "right little, tight little island."

The history of our own times about any English county is full of interest and impulse; but when the storied past, which kindles the imagination with its witchery and glamour, is added to the more prosaic record of the present hour, a nameless charm is imparted to the short study. The wand of Merlin is laid alongside the more potent rod of our modern knights of industry, and the javelin of the Roman infantry, the sword of Douglas, and the spear of Hotspur, measure their exact force with the battery of modern artillery which hits with an unerring aim at the distance of several miles. Among English counties none lends itself better to the inter-blending of the old and the new than Northumberland. The past is rich in legend, and in the moving records left by the tramp of legions, and the shock of battle between warring hosts; the present is instinct with many-sided and unwearied endeavour to keep England foremost amid the van of nations.

In the galleries of the palace of Holyrood there is a long-extending line of the portraits of Scottish Kings, with regard to some of whom it is most likely, that we do not greatly err when we say, they go far beyond the historic period. We have no desire thus to deal with our study of Northumberland, and accordingly it is hoped that it will satisfy the most exacting, if, assuming the stride of a Colossus, we bring beneath the purview of the reader a period extending over no less an interval than nineteen hundred years and treat of Northumberland and its people.

From every point of view the beginning of the Christian era must form an altogether exceptional opening for a record of any kind, and it is with the dawn of Christianity that Northumberland first emerges from what, we are ready to admit, was until then impenetrable obscurity. It was then she had planted upon her well-marked and rugged features a work of almost imperishable endurance. Of course we refer to the Roman Wall. England was the last attempt at conquest made by Rome in the west, and although internal disorders soon compelled her to withdraw her legionaries, she has left such a stamp of her might behind her, that

we, the English of to-day, who amongst the nations most resemble the Romans in our powers of colonising, and our general force of purpose, and endurance in endeavour, may well guard as a sacred treasure whatever relic of Roman dominion remains entrusted to our care.

Cæsar, Agricola, Hadrian, Severus, are all names which readily occur to us in association with the Roman occupation of Britain, and upon the best authority, the Emperor Hadrian was the builder of the wall. That authority is the late Dr. Bruce—*ultimus Romanorum*, and a Roman he looked every inch of him. Of all the cohort of antiquarians, Dr. Bruce has done most for the Roman Wall. It was his life-long study; and the *Lapidarium*, and that *magnum opus*, "The Roman Wall," are destined to endure. Here are a few lines upon the Doctor and his work:—

> "A chief among these famous men is Doctor Heavytome,
> Who has achieved a greater fame than all gods of Rome,
> For Rome was not eternal, we know it by her fall,
> But the Doctor has decreed her an everlasting wall."

There is only one error in these lines. The Doctor was anything rather than a *Heavytome*.

Both as a preacher, lecturer, and writer, he was as interesting as he was scholarly, and there cannot be a doubt that the witty writer of the humorous lines only introduced the word because of the unbending exigency of rhythm.

Cæsar landed in Kent about half-a-century before the birth of Christ, and Hadrian built the wall most likely about the year 120 A.D. Rome's power was great, but it was even then upon the wane. Domestic feuds and servile wars, and the threatened incursions of barbaric tribes troubled and weakened the heart of the empire, and as one legion after another was called back to Italy, it was necessary to make the position of those serving in distant colonies as secure as possible. Hence the reason, as we conceive, why the Roman Wall was built between Wallsend and Bowness-on-Solway, covering a distance which Horsley estimates at sixty-eight miles and three furlongs. It was erected for the purpose of checking and thrusting back the Picts and other northern barbarian hordes. It may be mentioned here that British remains exist throughout the county to a considerable extent. Greaves Ash and Three Stone Burn, near Wooler, are the principal, while Mote Hills are to be found at Elsdon, Wark, Haltwhistle, and

Morpeth. The Mote Hill, or council chamber as we should now say, at Elsdon, is probably the finest and most perfect to be found in the country.

What a massive and noble structure the wall must have been at its best, with its stations, and mile castles, and watch towers, and roads, it is easy to suppose, and even now, after a lapse of eighteen centuries, during which interval, for hundreds of years, it was just a quarry for any and every kind of building all along the isthmus, the ruins that remain are enough to testify to the skill and purpose of the builders.

Imagination is fain to picture the stirring scenes that must have been witnessed when the wall was building. The short, thick-set, muscular Italian, the fiery Gaul, the olive-skinned and sedate Spaniard, the phlegmatic Batavian, one after another, must have been employed upon it, while of course the poor natives, *nolens volens*, would be impressed as beasts of burthen and slaves. Nor are we to suppose that the enemies issuing from the Caledonian forest would not often put themselves *en evidence* while the work was being carried forward. Thus might it be in the building of

the Roman Wall as it was in the re-building of the wall of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah, in the one hand they held the trowel wherewith to build, and in the other they held the sword wherewith to drive off the enemy.

As often as we have walked along the wall, so often have we wondered how so stupendous a work could have been effected. If the country was then anything like what it is to-day, the population must have been exceedingly sparse. A few raids for foraging purposes would speedily exhaust all supplies, and if, as has been suggested, the troops were fed from York as a base —a distance of ninety or one hundred miles —the difficulties of transport must have been well nigh as formidable as they are to-day between Zanzibar and Uganda.

He who would have the best idea of this famous work should start early in the morning from Chollerford—where the piers of the old Roman bridge that crossed the North Tyne, are still to be seen when the river is low—and walk along the wall, where wall, and ditch and vallum, are still entire, to the north, past Haltwhistle, and along the Nine Nicks of Thirlwall, where the wall follows in the strangest manner possible

the sinuosities of the Whinstone Dyke, which runs right through Northumberland.

Another marked feature of the Roman occupation is Watling Street. This was the great Military Road in Britain. It begins at Watling Street in the City of London, where the first milestone may still be seen in the wall of a Church, and then branches off in different directions. The Northumbrian portion of Watling Street after crossing the Tyne, goes north-west by way of Corbridge, Ridsdale, Woodburn, and Rochester, and then after passing through interminable moors strikes Scotland at Chew Green. One of the peculiar features about Watling Street is that it pursues the even tenor of its way, just as the crow flies, and over the highest ground. This latter circumstance makes it a stiff enough road for conveyances and loaded vehicles in our day; but undoubtedly it had its advantage for the Romans, giving them so commanding a view of the surrounding country, that the native tribes had little chance of taking them at a disadvantage.

It is on the line of Watling Street that two of the finest Roman stations in Britain are to be seen. These are Bremenium and Habitancum, the modern Rochester, and Risingham near

Woodburn. A number of years ago they were opened out, and antiquarians had some of their richest finds. The Duke of Northumberland, Algernon the Good, assisted greatly in these explorations, and it is a melancholy reflection that the excavations have in a great measure been filled in again lest danger should befall sheep and cattle, or chance passers by.

With the beginning of the fifth century—411 A.D.—the Roman dominion ceased, and when at the end of the sixth, and the beginning of the seventh centuries, our attention is again directed to Northumberland the Saxons are the over-lords. With the struggles and fierce contests there were for supremacy we shall not deal, but rather dwell for a short time upon that phase of God in history, which has a perennial interest attending it, namely, the conversion of Northumberland to Christianity.

From first to last this period is replete with a nameless charm, and while the pencil of the artist, the genius of the poet, and the pen of the historian have often been employed in representing, each in its own way, the leading incidents, wide fields still remain in which imagination is free to revel and to roam.

Who shall say that some at least, if not all the boys who were exposed for sale in the slave market at Rome—very likely in the great Forum itself—and attracted the notice of Gregory, the Roman deacon, who afterwards assumed the Pontificate, and sent Augustine, with forty monks, to sow the seeds of Christianity in what was then this heathen country, were not Northumbrians? To our mind it has always appeared self-evident that it could not be otherwise. The country between the Forth and Tyne was then called Bernicia, and that between the Tyne and the Humber, Deira. In a war between the two kingdoms—and it was a strife between conquerors—Ella, King of Deira, defeated the northern kingdom, and with a portion of the spoil hastened to fill the slave market at Rome. The story that follows is so well known that it might seem almost unnecessary to repeat it, but so irresistible is its spell that we cannot forbear. Among the slaves that were brought from many lands those from Britain could not fail to be the observed among all observers. Their faces were fair, their bodies were white, their stature and mien were noble, their locks were yellow gold. As Gregory passed through the market and stood astonished before this singular group, he asked

the dealer who they were. "They are Angles," [that is, English] he replied. With a heart full of divine pity, Gregory answered, "Not Angles, but angels, with faces so angel-like." "And from what country do they come?" "From Deira," replied the merchant. "De Ira," said Gregory, with vivacious word-play, "Aye plucked from God's wrath and called to Christ's mercy." "And who is their King?" "Ella," was the answer. Seizing the word as of good omen, Gregory exclaimed, "Alleluia shall be sung in Ella's land;" and as Mr. Green has beautifully put it in his *Making of England*, "he passed on, musing how the angel faces should be brought to sing it." And brought to sing God's praises the Northumbrians were in the seventh century, and somewhere about the year 627. The good work begun at Canterbury by Augustine at length reached these northern lands. Edwin the king was happy in having espoused as his queen the Christian Princess Ethelburgh, daughter of King Ethelbert. Zealous for the faith, Edwin, moved by her prayers, promised to believe in God if he returned successful from a fight he had on hand. He did return, and that as the Victor, but—man-like—slow to redeem his pledge, he spent a whole

winter in silent musing, until Paulinus stepping down, troubled the pool of his reflections, and roused the king to action, whereupon Edwin declared himself a Christian and summoned the wise men of Northumberland to take their oath upon the faith he had embraced.

The debate that followed, as related by Bede, shows admirably what is the trend of the human mind from the finer and the coarser side. To the finer mind, the charm of Christianity lies in the light it throws on the darkness encompassing our lives, both in the future and in the past. To the coarser fibre, it consists in the revelation it gives of the utter helplessness of heathenism. From amid the ranks of the Ealdermen of the Saxon Witan, there stood forth an aged man, and addressing King Edwin exclaimed:— "So seems the life of man, O King, as a sparrow's flight through the hall when one is sitting at meat in the winter-tide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, but the icy rain-storms without. The sparrow flies in at one door, and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other, vanishes into the darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of a man in our sight; but what is before it,

what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tells us aught certainly of these, let us follow it." This argument prevailed with the wise men, while with the coarser crowd this word and action succeeded:—"None of your folk, Edwin, have worshipped the gods more busily than I," said Coifi the priest, "yet there are many more favoured and more fortunate. Were these gods good for anything they would help their worshippers." Then, mounting on horseback, he hurled a spear into the Sacred Temple at Godmanham, and with the rest of the Witan embraced the religion of the King.

Thus were Woden and Thor, the gods of Scandinavia and the German forests dispossessed of their pre-eminence, and the mild and merciful religion of the lowly Nazarene substituted for cruel and bloody rites. That this was done in a day, we are not so foolish as to imagine. Christianity had many a hard fight before lingering superstition was dissipated as into thin air. The people were ignorant, and old creeds and old ways, as a rule, die hard. The missionaries of the Christian faith, however, had all spiritual forces at their back, and were encouraged by the knowledge that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;

they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

They were indeed noble men, and the mere mention of the name of any of them is sufficient to make the better manhood within every one of us do them reverence. Let us briefly outline the life and labours of three of them, Paulinus, Aidan, and Cuthbert.

We have already mentioned the name of Paulinus. He came over in the train of Augustine, at the bidding of Pope Gregory, and like all his companions spent his entire life in self-consuming labours. When Ethelburgh was married to Edwin, King of Northumberland, Paulinus went with her as her Chaplain, and that he might be invested with all the dignity of office he was consecrated Bishop of York. In appearance, he is represented as being tall and stooping, slender in form, with an aquiline nose, and black hair falling round a thin worn face. A striking personality enough, which, coupled with never-wearying labours, continued from morning to night, and all through his life, made the name of Paulinus long remembered in the north. The field over which he travelled as a Christian missionary was indeed a wide one. It

could not be otherwise. No church then existed between the Forth and the Tees, and Hexham Abbey, which dates from the time of Wilfrid, who was one of the Northumbrian monks of Lindisfarne, was the sixth stone structure in all England. Wherever Paulinus went as a travelling preacher, crowds attended him, as they did John the Baptist when he went preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and confessing their sins, he absolved them in the name of Christ. Many spots in Northumberland are identified with this early Apostle of the North. Pallinsburn, that is, Paulinus Burn, is one of them. But dearest to the memory of a Northumbrian, is the Lady Well at Holystone, in the vale of the Coquet. There, in a secluded spot, is the holy well. It is neatly railed round, and a thin belt of trees surrounds it. The background of purple mountains heightens the effect produced, while the clear waters of the mountain-fed river as they flow over their pebbly bed with a soft and musical rhythm, woo the reflective mood. Hither, in the year 627, Paulinus came, preached the Gospel to the rude Northumbrians, and baptized. It was the centre of a wide district. They must have come from the slopes of the Cheviot on the north, and the water-shed of the

Tyne and the Rede on the south; from Alnwick and Rothbury, Elsdon and Otterburn, from Harbottle, rude hamlets all of them, yet containing men who felt a divine impulse working within them. As when there was of old the sound of a-going on the tops of the mulberry trees, God in Christ was revealed by the tongue of Paulinus as the friend and the Saviour of every man. While the traveller sits on the wooden bench within the inclosure, and gazes into the clear waters of the large oval-shaped well where the perch chase one another, days speak, generations speak, centuries speak, and, as reflexions flow, he ceases to wonder at the meaning of the great words of the holy Apostle, for he is here face to face with their interpretation:—"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." A large and graceful Runic cross has been erected in the centre of the well bearing this inscription on the plinth:—"In this place Paulinus the Bishop baptised 3000 Northumbrians, Easter, DCXXVII;" while on the pediment there is this other:—"In this fountain, called the Lady's Well, on the introduction of

LINDISFARNE OR HOLY ISLAND.

Christianity in the Saxon reign of Edwin, and early in the seventh century, Paulinus, an English bishop, baptized above 3000 people."

It was Colomba, the Irishman, who set up a mission station for the Picts at Iona, a low-lying island off the West Coast of Scotland, and thence came Aidan at the summons of Oswald to evangelise the Northumbrians. The first missionary who was sent failed of success, and upon his return to Iona he reported that among a people so stubborn and barbarous as these Northumbrian folk success was impossible. "Was it their stubbornness, or your harshness?" asked a brother sitting by, "did you forget God's word, to give them the milk first and then the meat?" All eyes were fixed on the speaker, who was none other than Aidan. He was reckoned the fittest person to undertake the abandoned mission, and accordingly in the year 635 he fixed his Bishop's Stool or See in the island peninsula of Lindisfarne, the Holy Island of to-day. There, from a monastery, he poured forth preachers all over the land, and himself wandered on foot, preaching among the peasants. Great was the good that this holy man effected. But he was not suffered to continue by reason of death. Who should take

his place? God always holds some one in readiness to succeed a labourer when his task is o'er. To Moses, Joshua succeeds; to St. Paul, someone else; and to Aidan, St. Cuthbert.

In the hagiography of Northumberland, St. Cuthbert undoubtedly stands first. Christian devotion, added to romance, gives him the foremost place in the bead-roll of the consecrated host. He was born on the southern edge of the Lammermoors, those long-backed ranges of hills which run eastward to the sea at Dunbar, and which, since St. Cuthbert's day, have proved the rearing ground of many a true-hearted and successful minister of the blessed Evangel. As a boy he was swift of foot, quick of wit, fond of laughter and of fun, and even from the spring of his lifetime was gifted with a poetic sensibility which was ever calling him to higher things. Attacked by a lameness, his religious impressions were deepened, and as he kept his master's sheep on the bleak uplands where the Leader flows into the Tweed, his bent was to a religious life. Thus he came to spend the night watches in prayer while his comrades slept; made these high lands resonant with hymns and holy songs, and with that *spirituelle*

imagination of his, saw, in the falling stars, and in the wonder-filling *Aurora borealis* of these northern skies, angel hosts ascending and descending between earth and heaven. Moved to action by the widely-rumoured death of Aidan, he made his way to the straw-thatched log huts of the mission station at Melrose, and became a missionary through the length and breadth of Northumberland. He needed no interpreter. His lowland training made him as one of the Northumbrian peasants themselves. He could *burr* as well as they. Their frugal lives suited him. He was patient, good-tempered, full of common sense, had a pleasing countenance and an enduring frame, and it is not to be wondered that he was adored. Many were his troubles and vicissitudes. The secession that followed upon the Synod of Whitby gave rise to endless disputes and sadly reduced his company. He fled to a solitary island not far from Bamborough, the Northumbrian fortress of Ida, the flame-bearer, and spent years of seclusion in a rude hut. Reverence for his growing sanctity, however, at length dragged this Apostle of the Lowlands back to fill the vacant See at Lindisfarne. This was in the reign of the Saxon King, Ecgfrith.

But extensive though the See of Lindisfarne was, St. Cuthbert bore ecclesiastical sway, and had over-lordship, over an additional domain. The learned Chancellor Ferguson in his *History of Cumberland* argues from the position of the far famed Bewcastle monument, and the Runic inscriptions upon it, that in the seventh century, Cumberland was more or less subject to, or a tributary of Northumbria, and that therefore at that time the history of the one was as that of the other. Victorious over the Britons in Cumbria, King Ecgfrith gifted the conquered country to the See of Lindisfarne, so far as concerned the ecclesiastical jurisdiction: and according to Symeon of Durham, on account of the insufficiency of the grant of a village and three miles round, at Craik, near Easingwold, in Yorkshire, the king also gave him land within a circuit of fifteen miles at Carlisle. By this, we are no doubt to understand the town and the area included in the old parish of St. Cuthbert Without-the-walls. "It occupies," says Chancellor Ferguson, "the angle between the rivers Eden and Caldew, and was probably the only land then cleared from scrub and cultivated in the vicinity of the town."

It is in connexion with this jurisdiction in Cumberland, and over-lordship of Carlisle, that an exceedingly interesting incident occurs in the life of St. Cuthbert. Entering Carlisle in 685, at a time when King Ecgfrith had gone north to punish the Picts who had risen in rebellion, he found that all were anxiously awaiting the result of the great struggle which must be at hand. The Venerable Bede, in his life of St. Cuthbert, relates that a day or two after his arrival, when some of the citizens were taking him round for the purpose of showing him the walls of the city, as he leant over a Roman fountain which still stood unharmed among the ruins, the anxious bystanders thought they caught words of ill omen falling from the old man's lips. "Perhaps," he seemed to murmur, "at this very moment the hazard of the battle is over." When they questioned him he would only say:—"Do you not see how marvellously changed and disturbed the air is? and who among mortals is sufficient to search out the judgments of God?" On the following Sunday the burden of his discourse, as he preached to the brethren of the monastery, was "Watch and pray, watch and pray." "In a few days more," writes Mr.

Green in *The Making of England*, "a solitary fugitive, escaped from the slaughter, told that the Picts, under Bruidi their king, had turned desperately to bay, as the English army entered Fife; and that Ecgfrith and the flower of his nobles lay a ghastly ring of corpses on the far-off moorland of Nechtansmere." What the feelings of St. Cuthbert must have been, as in one day the Northumbrian King and supremacy fell—for Mercia and Galloway at once claimed independence—it is more easy to imagine than to describe. The hand of the Lord was indeed heavy upon him: but it was His hand, and so he kissed the rod and blessed the smiter, and after a life in which joy and sorrow rapidly alternated, and where the self-denial was as marked as the service, Cuthbert died as he had lived, a true Apostle of the living God. And not even did death terminate his wonderful career. The troubles of the times, after the invasion of the Danish host, made it necessary for the monks of his order to carry his body about from one hiding place to another. The story of the wanderings of the body of the great missionary—the chiefest treasure of Lindisfarne—reads like a romance. For seven long years they carried the bones of the Bishop through

the six northern counties of England, and a portion of the south of Scotland, and for one hundred and thirteen years these bones rested at Chester-le-Street, in the county of Durham. Faithful serving-men carried the mummified body of David Livingstone down from the very heart of the dark continent of Africa to the great wide sea, whence it was transported to our shores, and amid the prayers of a vast multitude for the opening up and the conversion of Africa, was finally laid to rest in the nation's shrine at Westminster. Faithful men, with loving hands, carried the body of St. Cuthbert about from place to place, like another ark of God. Wherever it rested, men say a church arose, dedicated to the glory of God, and in honour of the saint; and when at length the wandering foot and the weary breast of these St. Christophers—for they lovingly carried the body of him who under Christ was himself a Christ to men—found rest, they laid the revered remains in the holy shrine on the banks of the Wear at Durham, where they shall sleep till the morning of the resurrection, when St. Cuthbert shall come forth a glorified saint, and joining the monks, and peasants, and shepherds of Northumberland, his converts shall join in the

laud and chant and praise which shall rise to Him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb.

Time would fail to tell of all the progress that was made in many ways in Northumberland during the Saxon domination, or of the desolations that followed when the Danish invasion succeeded in the ninth century. Valiant, forceful men were these Danes. Quickly roused and masterful in war, they were patient, plodding, and much-enduring in the arts of peace. What they were, such are the men of Northumberland to-day. The Danish invaders of the ninth century live again in the Northumbrians of the present century. A mere tyro in ethnography, who traverses Northumberland, and then crossing the North Sea, visits Denmark, cannot mistake the fact. The two peoples are one. The very physical appearance is common to the Dane and the Northumbrian. The fair hair, the blue eye, long limbs, and plenty of bone are there in either case, while the genius of the two peoples, so friendly, and so happily allied by the strong ties of royalty, is akin.

The tale of conquest and of struggle bulks largely in the staple of every country, and particularly so till there is dynastic settlement

and security. Scotland and England were long full-blooded enemies, and during their mutual struggles, as might be expected, Northumberland was often called upon to bear the brunt of war. These struggles—internecine they might almost be called, but now long ago happily terminated for ever—crystallised into commanding proportions at the battles of Otterburn or *Chevy Chase*, and Flodden, and we need not say that their detail stirs pulses to this hour all round the globe.

The Rev. A. H. Drysdale, in his article "Round about the Cheviot," in *Good Words* for January, says:—"Otterburn is the real original Chevy Chase of the ballads, and type of all that followed. And so it has lodged its impression deep on every one of them from first to last."

In the battle of Otterburn it is as if the heroic ages had been transported into the fourteenth century. During that moonlight night, betwixt the twilight of evening and the twilight of the succeeding morn, another Homeric Idyll, a lordly Iliad, is worked out, perfect in every detail. Hector and Achilles, Priam, and all the Immortals, live over again in Douglas and the Percys, Sir Hugh Montgomery, the valiant Widdrington, and all the

Knights and Squires, who, amid the bracken and the bent, shouted alternately, "A Douglas!" "A Douglas!" "A Percy!" "A Percy!"

> "For Witherington needs must I wayle,
> As one in doleful dumpes;
> For when his leggs were cutted off,
> He fought upon his stumpes."

The battle was fought on August 19th, 1388, in the twelfth year of the reign of Richard II. The Scotch, under James, Earl Douglas, invaded and harried Northumberland and Durham. In a skirmish outside the walls of Newcastle, the Scottish Earl seized the pennon or the gauntlets of Henry, Lord Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland, known in history as Hotspur, and, as might be expected, such an affront deserved and met with reprisal. Nor was it long in coming. Marching thirty miles to Otterburn, a party laid siege to the Castle there, and the Scottish army encamped on the northern slope of the river Rede, about a mile to the west of the village. Hotspur followed with a strong force, and without resting his men after the long march, began the attack as soon as he reached the Scottish camp. It was a moonlight night, but owing to the uncertain

light there was not a little confusion. Single combats were common all over the field—the pure Homeric style of fight—and the rallying cries of either party, intermingled with the ring of battle-axes and the clash of spears. The tide of victory, according to concurrent testimony, was with the Scotch; but it was a dead man that won the field. Early in the fight Douglas was borne down to the ground. He had performed prodigies of valour, but having advanced too far into the ranks of the enemy without being supported, he received a sheaf of the English spears, and if not slain outright, was wounded unto death. They laid his body below a bracken bush lest a panic might seize the Scottish army—for neither party generally knew what had happened—and when day broke, and the issue was decided, victory was more bitter to the conquerors than defeat was to the vanquished, for the valiant and noble Douglas was stark in death. On that night, Hotspur and his brother were taken prisoners and held to ransom. In Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* the heroic ballad of *The Battle of Otterbourne* is given with all Homeric circumstance.

We insert a few stanzas from this famous ballad:—

"It fell about the Lammas tide,
When moorsmen win their hay;
The doughty Douglas bound him to ride,
In England to take a prey.

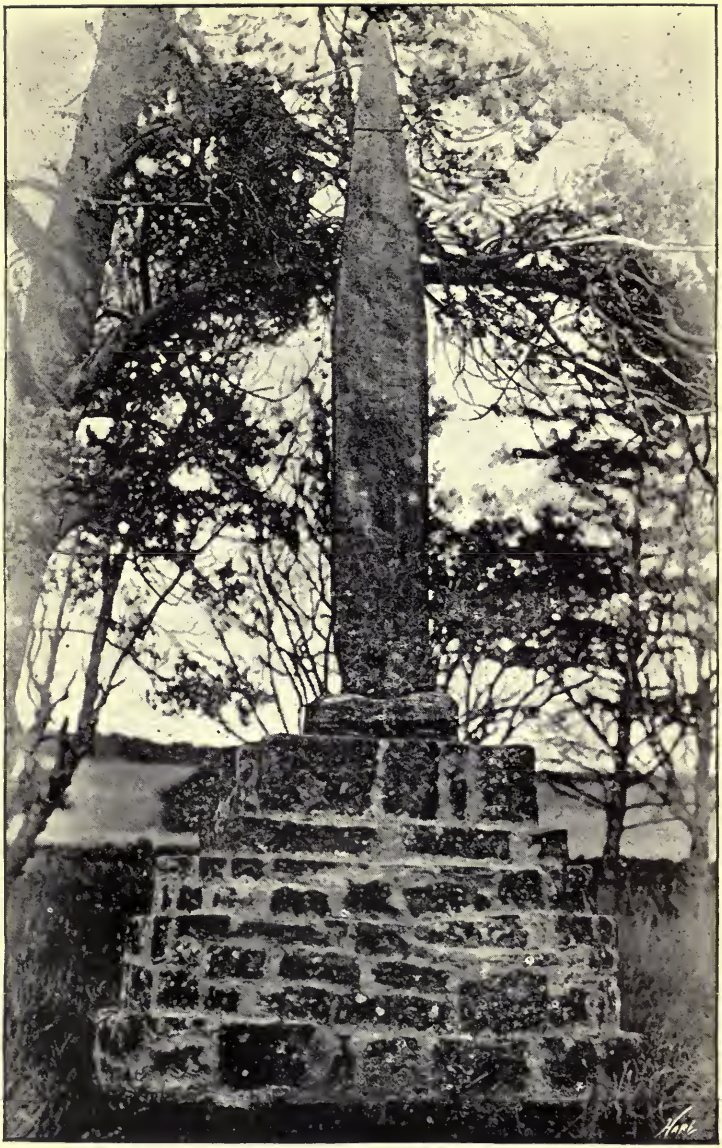
And boldly brent Northumberland,
And harried many a town;
They did our Englishmen great wrang,
To battle that were not bound."

Then follows a full and particular account of the fight, and the concluding verses are as follows:—

"There was slain upon the English part,
For truth as I you say;
Of nine thousand English men,
Five hundred cam away.

The other were slain in the field,
Christ keep their souls from woe;
Seeing there were so few friends,
Against so many a foe.

Then on the morn they made them beeres
Of birch and hazell grey;
Many a widow with weeping tears,
There makes them faint away.



THE BATTLE STONE AT OTTERBURN.

This fray began at Otterburne,
Between the night and day;
There the Douglas lost his life,
And the Percy was led away."

A battle-stone—singularly enough called Percy Cross—has been erected to mark the spot where Douglas fell, although we imagine that event happened more to the north; and from time to time the plough—so long as there was any tillage in Redewater, has turned up relics, of what Froissart says "was the hardest and most obstinate battle that was ever fought," and of which Sir Philip Sidney said—"I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart more moved than with a trumpet."

Happily the union of the English and Scottish crowns put an end to the warlike raids of the Percys into Scotland, and of the Douglas and other Scottish nobles into Northumberland. We say warlike raids, for we are reminded that even in very recent times there have been raids of the Percys across the border. Just twenty-five years ago a certain young Northumbrian nobleman—Lord Percy—made a raid into Argyleshire, and carried off as his bride from Inverary Castle, a fair daughter of the house of Argyle, in whose

veins flowed the commingled blood of Campbell and Douglas. "The whirligig of time brings about strange revenges." The future *Châtelain* of Alnwick Castle is of "the best Scotch bluid," and we may hope that for centuries to come, a long string of Dukes of Northumberland will look back with loving pride to their ancestors, that Earl and Countess of Percy, who in the reign of Victoria, worthily upheld the best traditions of the distinguished families to which they belonged.

To Scotland, the field of Flodden was as disastrous as that of Bannockburn was glorious. Flodden Field is close to Ford Castle, about eight miles from Wooler, and only a short distance from the Scottish Border. With regard to the quarrel which brought on the battle, it is not necessary to say more than that when James the Fourth of Scotland ascended the throne, he married Margaret, the eldest daughter of Henry the Eighth of England. This alliance, it was thought, would inaugurate an era of peace. Henry, however, in spite of the protests of his son-in-law, declared war against France, with which country Scotland had been long in close alliance. No sooner had Henry set out for France, than James, for the purpose of creating a diversion

in favour of his ally, declared war against England, and in the short period of three weeks, one hundred thousand men were mustered for the fight at Blackford Hill in the vicinity of Edinburgh. Marching south, the Scottish army met the English host at Flodden. The battle was fought on September 9th, 1513, and owing to a tactical error, as great as that committed by the English at Bannockburn, the Scottish forces were completely routed. History relates that on the night of the battle of Gravelotte, outside Metz, in 1870, so terrible had been the slaughter during the day, that there was not a noble family all through Germany from whose hearth-stone a bitter wail did not ascend, similar to that which ran through Egypt when the first-born was slain. It was so throughout Scotland after Flodden. The English archers twanged their bow-strings to such purpose, that while on their side comparatively few of note were slain, the ranks of the Scottish chivalry were depleted—"The flowers o' the forest were a' wede away." The king was slain. The hierarchy shared his fate, for they had followed in his train; twelve earls, fifteen lords and chiefs of clans, and in one family or clan—that of Douglas—two hundred gentlemen fell.

The battles of Hexham and Hedgeley Moor, fought in 1464, between the houses of York and Lancaster, during the Wars of the Roses, only need to be incidentally referred to, while the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, for adhering to which the unfortunate Earl of Derwentwater suffered so severely, saw the last muster on Northumbrian soil for the fight. It is known to everyone how the gallant but mistaken Earl was compelled to capitulate at Preston, and after being imprisoned in the Tower till 1716, was suddenly hurried to the block on Tower Hill. The whole of the Earl's estates were confiscated and handed over to Greenwich Hospital, which draws a large annual revenue from them. Within the last thirty years we have had the *fiasco* of the so-called Countess of Derwentwater.

NORTHUMBERLAND: ITS FEATURES.

CHAPTER II.

Natural Features—Sheep Farmers—Large *v.* Small Holdings—Among the Northumberland Moors—Willie Winter's Gibbet—The Rivers and Burns—A Northumbrian Winter—Northumbrian Castles—Mineral Treasures—Towns.

THE natural features of Northumberland are much diversified, as might be expected in so large a county. The Northumbrian plain, though large, is not to be compared with that of Cumberland, which is perhaps the most extensive in the kingdom. It is that part of the county which borders upon the German Ocean, and begins at the base and spurs of the Cheviot range. The valleys are generally long, and only moderately wide. They all bear testimony to the thickly-wooded character of the country in earlier times. In some places considerable patches of primitive alder and birch still survive where the repose of nature has never been molested. Fine specimens of black oak are frequently unearthed, or dug out of the bed of the streams and rivers,

and several of the county houses contain articles of furniture which have been made out of it. A strange phenomenon occurs at Meadowhaugh near Otterburn. In the centre of what must have been at one time a large morass bordering upon the river Rede, there is a pool of some considerable circumference, known as the Silver Nut Well. The waters are in a continual state of unrest, and as they keep boiling up, they bring to the surface the *debris* of forest trees and hazel nuts, which are still in a state of perfect preservation, and so beautifully silvered by chemical action that they give their name to the well. These "silver nuts" are often bottled and carried away, and when the vessel is hermetically sealed they are an enduring curiosity. According to venerable tradition, a man with a horse and cart laden with hay, once disappeared beneath the waters of the well. *Credat Judæus!* Many of the names of places also bear testimony, in their reference to the fauna, to the unsubdued character of the country in former times. There is, for instance, the *wolf*, as Wolf Crag and Woollaw; the *wild cat*, as Catcleugh; the *fox* or *tod*, as Todholes; the *otter*, as Otterburn; the *hart*, as Hartburn; the *raven*, as Ravenscleugh.

The uplands of Northumberland are long-reaching, and the mountains of the Pennine range—the backbone of England—which begin at Cheviot and run down through Derbyshire, are only of a comparative height, and are rounded and covered with heather or grass. Cheviot itself—the glory of the "north countree"—is 2,676 feet high. Hedge Hope, Yeavering Bell, Hartside and Windygyle, Carter Fell, and the Simonside range, are imposing in form, and stand out in splendid relief against the sky outline. The northern part of the chain is porphyritic, the southern mainly carboniferous. The great geological feature of Northumberland, the Whinstone Dyke, crosses the county from east to west. It appears first at Holy Island, zig-zags between the mainland and the coast as far as Bamborough and Dunstanborough, and then follows a well-defined and sinuous course by way of Ratcheugh, Rothley, Gunnerton, Sewingshields, Craig Lough, and Thirlwall, to Gilsland, where it enters Cumberland.

After leaving the alluvial plain on the east of the county, one range of hills succeeds another until the Scottish border is reached. The plough above the ground, and the miner

below it, mostly occupy the lowland, while a race of sheep farmers tenants the higher grounds. These farmers are all alike hardy and enterprising, and as flock-masters they possess splendid herds of the most beautiful sheep in the kingdom. The Cheviot breed is now domiciled all through Scotland and in many parts of England, not to speak of other countries, and they turn well to profit, owing to their hardy nature. Clean-limbed, with a fine intelligent head and eye, and a good constitution, they can manage to hold their own anywhere. The breeding of black-faced sheep has also attained to great perfection in Northumberland, and we need only mention the names of Messrs. Robson, Dodd, Thompson, and Mc.Cracken—all famous breeders and flockmasters—to prove that the Northumberland flocks are little likely to pass out of repute.

When summer is in the land, it is a delight without alloy to be among the Northumbrian moors and highlands from early morn till dewy eve. Such is the fineness of the air that the well-shod pedestrian seems never to tire. The aroma that arises form the wind-swept grass and heather, and in autumn, from the newly-mown hay, is as that which poets attach to

Araby the Blest. The prospects are wide, the farther the tourist travels there always seems something to lure him beyond, and indeed he follows no *ignis fatuus.* Should nature claim a brief repose, a bed on the bent or the heather for half an hour replenishes the springs of vigour, and should he feel that a modest repast would agree well with a short rest, there is not a farmer's or a shepherd's house where generous hospitality will not be found. Many a live-long day we have spent among the moor-lands of Northumberland, in their broad expanse, seeming to get wider views of men and things, and in the freedom we enjoyed to wander at our own sweet will, we formed to ourselves conceptions of liberty which enrich the mind, and transfigure the soul, and ennoble the entire manhood, far beyond the power of the gems of Golconda, or the fictitious creations of any of the courts of earth.

So far as we are aware, only one relic of the Draconic administration of the law in the past, remains to disfigure any moor in Northumberland, and that is to the south of Elsdon, where a gibbet—Willie Winter's Stob it is called—still stands. Early in last century, Winter, together with some women, murdered Margaret Crozier,

an old woman, at the Raw, near Elsdon. The gang seems to have belonged to the vagrant besom-making tribe, and the circumstantial evidence against Winter lay mainly in the fact, that Robert Hindmarsh, a shepherd boy, had noticed and counted the number and curious arrangement of the nails in Winter's shoe on the day preceding the murder, as he sat on the grass whittling sticks and making besoms, and that after Hindmarsh had mentioned this circumstance, when footprints were discovered at the Raw, he, upon being confronted with the murderer, at once identified him and his shoes. After lying in Newcastle Jail for about a year, Winter and his companions were tried and condemned. Carted to the town moor, they were executed—Winter confessing his guilt—and then the body of the murderer was brought out to Elsdon Moor and hung in chains high on a gibbet, overlooking, in the distance, the scene of the murder, and to be seen from afar over a wide area. As the body dropped to pieces, the shepherds buried the fragments on the moor; and then, when it had altogether disappeared, a frightful looking effigy in wood was strung up, to remind passers by and the country side of the crime. That, too, in time, fell into decay, and

now the figure of a Moor's head, erected by the late Sir Walter Trevelyan, dangles in the air, to awe children, and at the same time to remind those who are of an older growth, how much milder the administration of the law is in the benignant reign of Queen Victoria than it was when Willie Winter did the deed of blood.

When the dry and searching east winds set in with the month of March—as they generally do—the Northumberland hills and moors present a rare spectacle, especially at night. It is customary for the shepherds to burn large patches of old heather, and bent or coarse grass, for the sake of the young heather which comes up in the one case, and the succulent grass which succeeds in the other, and when a stiff gale is blowing, it occasionally takes the beaters all their time to keep the flames from overleaping at one bound all bounds. The statutory time for moor-burning closes with the twenty-fifth of March, when the game birds begin to nest. In seasons however, when the weather has been very severe, we have known the burning continued far into the month of April. While the moor-burning continues, the atmosphere is invariably hazy by day, the smell of the burning heather—by no means a disagreeable thing—fills the air,

and at night large patches of answering flame appear on every hill side, while the roar of the fire can be heard from afar. On a fine spring night, the wondering eyes of all are drawn to the striking scene. It is as though chariots and horsemen of fire were all drawn up in serried array ready for the charge, or as when the beacons were fired at the time of the Invincible Armada, or, as when, on that magnificent night in June, 1887, the day of the Queen's Jubilee, bonfires were alight on every hill.

The Northumbrians are famous bee-masters, and had Homer and Virgil lived among them, they would have had neighbours entirely to their mind. The great bulk of farmers and cottagers keep a few hives. They carefully feed them during the winter, are greatly interested in them when the swarming season comes on, and then, when the heather comes into bloom, they often transport them considerable distances to the moors, that "the little busy bee" may be near its work. For a small remuneration, the shepherds undertake to keep a friendly eye upon the "skeps," and at the close of the season, when that has been favourable, many stones of golden honey—honey in the comb—are distributed through the length and breadth of the county.

Before modern methods were introduced, it was common to destroy the industrious workers in order to get at the honeyed sweet, happily, however, methods more humane and economic now prevail.

We have already alluded to the sheep and tillage farmers of Northumberland, and here it may be remarked that the farms are mostly large, and that men, horses and carts, stacks, and the general surroundings of a farm are on a corresponding scale. A small farm is now the exception; but it was not always so. Not only in the Northumbrian valleys, but on the lower ranges of the uplands, it is the commonest thing to come across a few solitary trees, or even one, it may be, together with ruined walls, and an ample crop of nettles or mounds, so green and turfy that they tell only one tale, namely, that where there is now an unbroken solitude, there were once small farm-steadings and cottages. These have all disappeared. They have been merged into large farms, and consequently the population has sadly dwindled in rural Northumberland. Whatever advantage in one way may have resulted from so trenchant a change, we are far from thinking that it is an unmixed good. Why the plethora of our town

and city population, and that sad iteration of the monotone of distress whenever trade languishes at any time? It is because, owing to circumstances beyond their control, the rural population has been disinherited, as much so, indeed, as the once sturdy sons of the Highlands and of Connemara, who now people Canada and swell the ranks of American citizens. That this present state of matters is always to exist we are slow to believe. Rather do we think—and we are not ashamed to say that in this case the wish is father to the thought—that if by some radical, that is, some thorough and righteous alteration in our land laws, the sons of the soil in Northumberland, and all through this England of ours, should be brought back to their domain once more, and given fresh facilities for industry and endeavour, that a brave peasantry, which is every country's pride, will reduce to a condition of rich cultivation much of the land that is now unprofitable, and that rural England will yet be a granary filled with bread stuffs for man and beast.

> "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> When wealth accumulates and men decay."

And if the high grounds of Northumberland are an eyrie for the young and the strong and

the intrepid, her rivers and burns have no less a charm for the angler, and such gentle souls as take their pleasure in a quiet mood. With one exception—the Till—the rivers have all a rapid flow, and as for the not-to-be-numbered burns, there is not a yard of ooze or sedge about them from source to mouth. The Till, just mentioned, is full of dangerous pools, and its banks are exceedingly treacherous. The Border rhyme runs: —

> "Quoth Tweed to Till,
> What gars ye rin sae still,
> Quoth Till to Tweed,
> Sae still's I rin and sae fast's ye gae,
> Whar ye droon ae man I droon twae!"

The Tweed, so far as it flows along the English border, the Breamish, the Aln, the Coquet, the Wansbeck, the Rede, and the North and South Tyne, are the very pride of Northumberland, and the Tyne is the foremost of them all. Rising above Alston in the lead mining country, and so near the source of the Tees, that in a time of need their waters have even been intermingled, the South Tyne rushes down to Haltwhistle by leaps and bounds, and then flows on through sylvan glades—every one of them a vale of Tempe—and with the most graceful

windings, until it loses its individuality when it blends its waters with those of the North Tyne, a short distance to the West of Hexham. The North Tyne again, rising at the water-shed near Riccarton—the tiny stream on the one side trickling down to the Atlantic, and on the other to the German Ocean—flows on amid far-famed sheep walks, past Keilder Castle, through straggling patches of natural wood, and onward to its mouth, amid scenery as grand as that of any Highland river, and replete with legendary lore.

A mile below Bellingham, the North Tyne receives its darker-coloured tributary, the Rede, which, rising in the Carter Fell, flows past Rochester, Otterburn, and Woodburn, and for twenty-four miles drains a purely pastoral country. The romantic scenery of the Rede, in the vicinity of Rochester, Horsley, and Woodburn is not to be excelled, and the river flows on through the fat pastures at Otterburn with stately mien and many a graceful sweep. The following lines occur in the twentieth Canto of Rokeby in connexion with Redesdale, and more particularly with Otterburn and Woodburn:—

"Do not my native dales prolong
Of Percy Rede the tragic song,

Train'd forward to his bloody fall,
By Grisonfield, that treacherous Hall?
Oft by the Pringle's haunted side,
The shepherd sees his spectre glide.
And near the spot that gave me name,
The moated mound of Risingham,
Where Rede upon her margin sees
Sweet Woodburne's cottages and trees,
Some ancient sculptor's art has shown
An outlaw's image on the stone;
Unmatch'd in strength, a giant he,
With quiver'd back and kirtled knee.
Ask how he died, that hunter bold,
The tameless monarch of the wold,
And age and infancy can tell,
By brother's treachery he fell."

Below Hexham, every additional mile of the course of the Tyne finds its volume swelled by tributary streams, until by the time it reaches Newcastle it is a proud river, where there are many galleys with oars and many gallant ships passing by. When speaking of the Tyne, it is worthy of remark that Mr. Gibson of Hexham, a skilful amateur operator with the camera has produced some very beautiful specimens of river-side and Northumbrian scenery.

The Coquet, farther to the north, is from head to foot the playground of the inhabitants of the large towns lying between the Wansbeck and the Wear. Nor is this to be wondered at, for every prospect pleases. Rising in the spurs of the Cheviot range, the Coquet, clear as crystal, flows on with most musical cadence past Linn Brigs; Harbottle, with its ancient and ruined castle; Holystone, where the spirit of Paulinus still haunts the wooded glades; Rothbury, nestling at the foot of frowning Simonside (seen by the sailor far out at sea), and where the Thrum draws wondering eyes; past Brinkburn with its Priory; Weldon Bridge, and Felton, and finally loses itself in the North Sea at Warkworth, right opposite Coquet Island. The sylvan scenery of Coquetdale is highly romantic. As the express rushes along from Morpeth to Berwick a very fine peep is to be had where the line crosses the viaduct from Morwick to Barnhill, but the entire course of the river is well-nigh the same.

Among fishing streams, the Tyne, Rede, and Coquet are renowned, and in *The Old Fisher's Challenge,* the famous Thomas Doubleday, who, in association with Robert Roxby, wrote "The

Coquet-Dale Fishing Songs," thus sings the praises of the Coquet:—

> "O! freshly from his mountain holds,
> Comes down the rapid Tyne;
> But Coquet's still the stream o' streams,
> So let her still be mine.
> There's mony a saumon lies in Tweed,
> An' mony a trout in Till;
> But Coquet—Coquet aye for me,
> If I may have my will."

But even beyond the rivers, the Northumberland burns are the source of never failing delight.

> "Many a burn from unknown corries,
> Down dark linns the white foam flings;
> Fringed with ruddy rowan berries,
> Fed by everlasting springs."

To right and left of the great arterial streams, the burns pass up to the hills, mile after mile, beautiful with rippling laughter and glee in summer, and awesome as they rush along with curved and tawny mane in winter's wrath. They are well-wooded in many parts. The "bonny white gowans," of Ailie in *Guy Mannering*, deck the green sward next the stream, the purple heather paints the rising fells, the alder droops, the sturdy hazel invites

the traveller to fill his pockets with ripened treasure, the bleaberry beds and the juniper breaks are happy hunting-grounds for laughing youth, the whin scents the air with her perennial blossom, the peewit utters her plaintive note, the curlew, with wide-spread wing, describes many a graceful curve, a covey of grouse shoots across as if borne on the wings of the hurricane, the black cock looms up large on the distant dyke top, an occasional bleating of the sheep falls upon the ear, no human foot-fall is near; the burn ripples, rushes, halts, and rushes again, now kisses the pebbles, and anon plays hide-and-seek beneath the overhanging grassy bank, one moment its face is limpid sunshine as the heavens above are bright, the next it frowns and threatens as the dark cloud passes over; the trout now leaps into the air, now rushes to its safe retreat, and anon lies in all its silver and golden sheen panting its dear life out upon the grass. Morning passes into afternoon, and that again yields to the soft witchery of the evening hour. He who from busy haunts has sought the solitudes where nature most soothes and refreshes, gathers himself together, and as he slowly descends the burn, and listens with keen set

ear and thankful heart to its artless, childlike, simple evening hymn of praise, he blesses the common Father of all as he exclaims:—

> "These are Thy works, Father of good,
> Thyself, how wondrous great!"

It is thus that Mr. Swinburne depicts the natural beauties of Northumberland in his tragedy "The Sisters":—

> "I just ask you where you'll find its like?
> Have you and I, then, raced across its moors
> Till horse and boy were well-nigh mad with glee
> So often, summer and winter, home from school,
> And not found that out? Take the streams away,
> The country would be sweeter than the south
> Anywhere: give the south our streams, would it
> Be fit to match our borders? Flower and crag,
> Burnside and boulder, heather and whin—you don't
> Dream you can match them south of this? And then
> If all the unwatered country were as flat
> As Eton playing-fields, give it back our burns,
> And set them singing through a sad south world,
> And try to make them dismal as its fens—
> They won't be! Bright and tawny, full of fun
> And storm and sunlight, taking change and chance
> With laugh on laugh on triumph—why, you know
> How they plunge, pause, chafe, chide across the rocks
> And chuckle along the rapids, till they breathe
> And rest and pant and build some bright deep bath
> For happy boys to dive in, and swim up,
> And match the water's laughter."

Among the botanical treasures of the county, none are more beautiful than these rare plants, the *Linnea Borealis* and the *Trientalis Europœa*, which are to be found in Redesdale. The *Linnea Borealis* has a small and exquisitely lovely pink flower. It takes its name from Linnæus, the Swede, the father of modern botany, who is interred in the Cathedral at Upsala in the north of Sweden, his unadorned and horizontal monument bearing the simple inscription : — "OSSA LINNÆI." This botanical treasure was his favourite flower. We have gathered it in quantities in the forests of Dalecarlia during the month of August, and instances have been known when Swedish emigrants to America have crossed the Atlantic again as the flowering time of the plant was approaching, just that they might look once more upon what was dear to them as country, children, wife.

But neither on moor, nor by river nor burn, is it always summer in Northumberland, any more than elsewhere. Summer and autumn are wonderfully fine, and as there is always more or less of a breeze, even on the hottest day, those who come up from the stifling heats of the south count the climate a paradise.

But winter and spring are often fell enough. When the north wind blows, and the treasures of the snow are distributed over Northumberland, the roads are sometimes blocked for weeks at a time, and not a little privation is experienced. I have sometimes walked miles over snow-wreaths, in many places deeper than the dyke tops. The worst time I ever had was one winter afternoon, when I walked from Otterburn to Knowe's Gate Railway Station, a distance of eight miles, over what were literally mountains of snow. By the time I arrived at the station my clothes were wringing with perspiration, and in that condition I travelled to Newcastle in a third-class carriage during a hard frost. It may be assumed that such exposure would, in most instances at any rate, be attended with some degree of danger. At the time however that I speak of, the gentler passion was in the ascendancy, and no harm befel me.

In the matter of courtship, Northumbrians are proverbially canny and careful not to commit themselves. I recollect that some short time after my ordination one of my elders, a large farmer, and a most kind-hearted man, addressed me one day as follows:—"Now Mr.

Christie, ye'll very likely be doing a bit o' courting some day, and let me advise you never to put it in black and white, for you'll always find a horse in my stable whenever you want one." I may mention that I used my worthy elder's thoroughbred, and thinking it well to have two strings to my bow, at the same time committed myself to black and white.

And if the winter is often severe in the low-lying grounds, six and seven hundred feet above sea level, it is not difficult to understand what the rigour must be among the mountains. The cold indeed is excessive, as it occasionally is during blizzards from the east, even far into May, and once and again hapless travellers, or belated bacchanals, have fallen victims to the cold and storm. I recollect once, when, as a boy, I was returning from the Nest Academy in Jedburgh at Christmas to my father's manse, that I rode over the Carter Fell on the top of a carrier's cart—for there was no other way then of covering the twenty-six miles, unless it was on foot. What my sensations were it would be in vain to attempt to describe, for, so far as I can remember, they left me altogether. The story runs that when an old Carter Fell carrier was asked if he did not find it very cold on the

top, he replied in terms laconic enough:—"Hoot, man, hoot, the vary deil himsel' wadna bide there half an 'oor unless he was tethered." In spring again, the east winds are generally long-continued and very trying. Such winds of God, as Charles Kingsley declared, no doubt made hardy Englishmen. But, then, what about the weaklings? As for rain, the "little summer shower" of the song is often a downright spate "in the north countree," and the burns roar and foam, and the rivers come down sometimes like a breast-deep wall. With regard to the general healthiness of the county there can be no doubt. The two unions of Rothbury and Bellingham swell the bills of mortality least in all England. Dr. Haviland, who has written on climate and disease, accounts for this on the ground that the air is pure, and because the precipitous coast of Northumberland causes the easterly winds to lose their *dynamic* force. Hence it is that there is purity without the disastrous effects of the rude blasts.

Thick fogs are by no means uncommon in autumn and summer; but horsemen accustomed to the fells have no fear. The animals they ride, hardy and wise, are never put out, and

all the rider has to do is just to give his steed a long loose rein, and he will be brought in safety "o'er moors and mosses mony O."

Northumberland is dotted throughout its length and breadth with castles and gentlemen's seats, and here, as might be expected, the Duke of Northumberland, the overlord of the county, takes first rank. Alnwick Castle is a princely residence, and in any other country would be a royal palace. It occupies a commanding position on a height above the river Aln, and overlooks a vast expanse of undulating and well-wooded country. The castle occupies about five acres of ground, and is surrounded by a massive wall flanked by sixteen towers and turrets. A few years ago Alnwick Castle was thoroughly renovated. Several Italians—the most gifted men of the day—were employed in the different departments of restoration, and the entire work cost, it is believed, somewhere about half a million sterling. In the summer of 1892, when Lord Warkworth, eldest son of Earl Percy, and heir apparent to the Dukedom, came of age, there were great rejoicings at Alnwick Castle, and princely hospitality was extended to all.

ALNWICK CASTLE.

It may be interesting to state that there is an important historic connexion between Cumberland and Northumberland with regard to the Dukes of Northumberland. For centuries, the Percys were not only the great landowners of Northumberland, but also of Cumberland. They secured large possessions after the Norman Conquest, and some three centuries later these were greatly increased by the marriage of the first Earl of Northumberland—the father of the immortal Harry Hotspur—to Maud de Lucy, the heiress of Anthony de Lucy. The Percys thus acquired the honour and castle of Cockermouth. These estates remained in the possession of the main line of the Percys till 1670, when the eleventh Earl of Northumberland died, leaving an only daughter, Lady Elizabeth Percy, who became the wife of the seventh Duke of Somerset, and upon his death in 1750—he leaving an only daughter—came "the great divide." That daughter married Sir Hugh Smithson, who afterwards became Duke of Northumberland, and was the lineal ancestor of the present Duke. The nephew of the seventh Duke became Baron Cockermouth and Earl of Egremont, and is the direct ancestor of the present Lord Leconfield. Thus, after the

lapse of five centuries, one of the descendants of Hotspur is still the owner of great estates in Northumberland, and another descendant is a great landowner in Cumberland.

The Duke's principal residence among the moors is at Keilder, in North Tyne. When the first volume of Macaulay's History of England came out, Duke Algernon and Duchess Eleanor were in residence at Keilder Castle. Every one knows with what a graphic pen the gifted historian, in his third chapter, portrays the England of the seventeenth century, and here we have one of his sonorous sentences:— "Within the memory of some whom this generation has seen, the sportsman who wandered in pursuit of game to the sources of the Tyne, found the heath round Keilder Castle peopled by a race scarcely less savage than the Indians of California, and heard with surprise the half-naked women chanting a wild measure, while the men with brandished dirks danced a war dance." The Duchess read the volume with an interest that thrilled her whole womanhood, but when she came to this sentence, she no sooner finished it than, as we have often heard Dr. Bruce tell the story, with the magnificent wrath of the strawberry leaf, she

took it, and flinging it to the other end of the drawing room, vowed that no line of Macaulay should ever come beneath her eye again.

Dilston Castle, near Hexham, was the seat of the ill-fated Earl of Derwentwater, and is now a picturesque ruin.

Chillingham Castle, the seat of the Earl of Tankerville, is renowned for the breed of wild cattle—the *Bos Brittanicus* or Caledonian Urus, the original British breed, some say—which are here parked. They are cream coloured. The inside of the ear is a bright pink, and the tips of the horns, the muzzle, and the hoofs, are black as sloes. The Chillingham cattle, together with the deer of the park, live again in the master-pieces of Sir Edwin Landseer.

Earl Grey has a famous seat at Howick, while Falloden is the seat of Sir Edward Grey, M.P., grandson of Sir George Grey, and Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Mr. Gladstone's administration in 1893. We cannot mention the name of Grey without laying it alongside that of John Scott, and that by way of contrast. Earl Grey and John Scott, Lord Eldon, were both Northumbrians—mighty men and men of renown. Whatever may be the political views

of the reader, we feel sure that radicals and tories will agree that no truer patriots ever lived. They loved their country with a full-hearted love, and we cherish their memory because we know they were true-born Englishmen to the core. It was in Earl Grey's ministry that the Reform Bill was introduced in 1832 by Lord John Russell, and when he did so, Lord Eldon declared in high British Doric that England was gone to the dogs at last. Earl Grey and Lord Eldon are now only names, mighty though they be, and old England is more vigorous, more prosperous and happy than ever. Liberal foresight and Conservative energy have each furnished the necessary quota to guide the vessel of the state in safety over seas that have in turn been smooth and stormy, and in the near future, far from expecting a cataclysm, we look for such a golden age as ancients never pictured and poets never sang, and such a Utopia as Sir Thomas More never dreamed of.

Lord Armstrong has a splendid place at rugged Cragside, near Rothbury, and Sir George Trevelyan, Minister for Scotland at one time, has his place at Wallington, near Cambo, the very garden of Northumberland.*

*See Appendix.

Bamborough, Dunstanborough, and Warkworth Castles, on the bold north coast, not to speak of Norham and other noble relics, are replete with the flavour of poetry and legendary lore, which clothe their ruins with undying interest, and place them on the bead-roll of Northumberland's choicest treasures.

Nor amid this list of country mansions and ancient castles may we omit to mention Hesleyside Hall, the seat on North Tyne of the ancient family of the Charltons. Within recent years, some portions of the large estate have been brought to the hammer; but till then, Squire Charlton could ride thirty miles on his own property over a splendid grazing and sporting country, from Tynedale to Kershope Foot. It is to the house of Charlton that the well-known incident of the served-up *spur* belongs. In ancient times when border barons and squires reived and lifted—or in less euphonious terms, stole one another's cattle—whenever the larder at Hesleyside was getting empty, the lady of the house had a spur served up at dinner as a sign to the hard-riding squires and their retainers that they must to boot and saddle at once and fetch in a herd of fat beeves from Scotland.

Northumberland abounds in mineral wealth, coal, limestone, lead, and iron, and these all contribute in a very large degree to the fertility and wealth of the county. Limestone is to be found in most parts, and the Hareshaw Moors around Ridsdale and Bellingham abound in excellent ironstone. A generation ago, these districts had extensive iron works, but as there were no railways then, the cost of the land carriage of the iron was so great as to swallow up the profit, and consequently the furnaces were blown out, and the country side is to-day an unformed heap of mouldering slag and pit *debris.*

Lead mining in Northumberland centres around Alston Moor and Allendale, high lands in the extreme south of the county, and bordering upon Cumberland and Durham. Abundant evidence exists to show that the ore was worked during the Roman occupation of Britain. It is rich in silver, and the W.B. lead—the name given to that found in Mr. Beaumont's mines—is famous in all markets. In fact, Northumberland lead is as renowned as the produce of the Cassiterides or Tin Islands of Herodotus, in whose pages we have the earliest notice of our country, and of one of its industries, which is

mentioned as being among the marvels of the Father of History. A cake of silver found in Mr. Beaumont's mines, weighing 12,162 ozs., and valued at £3,344 11s., was shown at the great exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851. These mines are said to yield one-fourth of the lead raised in England, one-sixth of the produce of Great Britain, and one-tenth of all that is produced in Europe, including the British Isles. Although the earliest method of working the ore appears to have been by sinking shafts as in the case of coal mines, horizontal levels or galleries have now been substituted. Rather more than a century ago they were introduced by Sir Walter Blackett, and are sufficiently large to admit of horses travelling in them. The Blackett Level in the Allendale mines extends underground for seven miles. The Northumberland lead miners are a stalwart, healthy, hardy, and prolific race. They are inventive to a degree; many of them traverse with sure foot the soaring altitudes of pure mathematics, and far beyond coal miners, they often secure success in their craft, not as charlatans by using the divining rod, but by following the evolutions of a recorded experience, and of a far-searching, and often unerring, inner consciousness.

The best seams of coal, as might be expected, are met with in the vicinity of Newcastle, and along the seaboard; but the coal measures, with more or less regularity, are to be found as far to the west as the Plashetts in North Tyne, and on Hareshaw, Elsdon, and Brownrigg, within the water-shed of the river Rede. Hard-headed and deft-handed Northumbrians have successfully tackled many a *trouble* in these out-lying regions, and brought the black diamonds to the surface which have been eagerly purchased by widely-removed customers. Before Roxburghshire was as well served by the railway as it is now, long strings of carts used to come over the Carter Fell to Brownrigg, or Soppit near Elsdon, for the purpose of carrying back coals. They had iron axles, and in frosty weather the ring they gave out in passing over the hard roads could be heard at a great distance. Before this time, however, and prior to the twenties, it was common to carry coal from Hareshawhead and Brownrigg over the Carter Fell in sacks balanced on the backs of ponies, which marched in cavalcade. The Roxburghshire seats of the Earl of Minto and neighbouring gentry were supplied with fuel in this way, and as the men who were engaged in the trade had

to camp out on the moors for one night both when going and coming, they often suffered severely from the rigour of the weather.

It cannot be said that there are many towns in Northumberland. Of course there is the one big town extending from Wylam to Tynemouth —for that long reach of the Tyne is as much a town as the modern city of Newcastle—but besides this, Wooler, Belford, Rothbury, Haltwhistle, Bellingham—all comparatively small places—Alnwick, Morpeth, Blyth, and Hexham, make up the sum total of Northumbrian towns, and each of these places has its own individuality as a distinctive feature in the landscape.

Newcastle, situated though it is on the banks of the coaly Tyne, where hundreds of public works pour forth clouds of smoke from Monday morning to Saturday afternoon, is a magnificent city. Indeed, it would be difficult to find anything finer than the view that is to be had from the higher parts of the Town Moor on a Saturday afternoon, when the factories are closed for the week, and a brisk wind is blowing from the west. According to contemporary accounts, Newcastle, a century ago, was one of the most picturesque of towns. Orchards and meadows abounded, and outside the walls there

stood the Infirmary with its leafy surroundings, and the Forth with its shaded walks, where Lord Eldon and his schoolfellows used to steal flowers, the former for Bessy Surtees, and the rest for their several sweethearts. Such was Newcastle when John Wesley visited it, and made the following eulogistic entry in his diary:—"Lovely place, and lovely company! Certainly, if I did not believe there was another world I would spend all my summers here, as I know no place in Great Britain comparable to it for pleasantness." The Church of St. Nicholas is the architectural feature of the city. Its lanthorn, whether seen from the railway, Collingwood Street, the top of the Side, or from afar, is a "thing of beauty and a joy for ever." Grey Street, with the noble monument to Earl Grey, is as fine a thoroughfare as is to be found in Great Britain, while the Close, and the "Chares," and other surroundings of old Newcastle are all enchanted ground to any one who is bound on antiquarian research. To the late Mr. Grainger, who covered large fields with splendid buildings which now constitute the business part of the city, Newcastle is more indebted than it is possible to say.

The quaint and never-to-be-forgotten Quay Side is indeed something to be seen. A long range of offices, with any amount of broken sky-line in the roofs, and some of the gables abutting on the Quay, after the manner of all seaport towns in the north of Europe; the swing bridge, and the High Level bridge, used alike by pedestrians and equestrians, and carriages and rollies, and the trains of the North Eastern system; the frowning Moot Hall to the north, and the rapid flowing and tawny maned Tyne to the south; the forest of shipping; the precipitous banks across the river leading up to the town of Gateshead, which is in the county of Durham; the polyglot of nationalities—in other words, seamen of all nations moving up and down; grave-faced merchants, and agile brokers' clerks who seem to know nothing of danger; the mendicant lame and halt and blind and brazen-faced; the orange lasses and the apple stalls; the loading and unloading of vessels, the whistling, and shouting, and screaming and burring;—of all this and of much more is the Quay Side of Newcastle made up. May its shadow never grow less!

The Tyne is a noble river now in its lower reaches, and is as useful there as it is

picturesque to the west. The services rendered to Newcastle by Mr. J. C. Stevenson and the Tyne Commissioners in removing the Black Middens—those dreaded rocks at the mouth of the river where so many harrowing scenes of shipwreck and wholesale loss of life have been often witnessed—and in dredging and deepening its bed till it can admit the largest tonnage at any state of the tide, are not to be forgotten. The Tyne Commissioners, equally with the Clyde Trustees, have been the makers of Newcastle and Glasgow as great commercial and industrial centres.

But what about Walker? for "there's ney place like Wālker." Walker, together with Wallsend, which is contiguous to it, is the great centre of pits and ship building, and all the allied industries. From the thin clear air of the Cheviots to the smoky atmosphere of Walker and its neighbour is a change indeed, and yet a great number of workmen have originally come from the highlands and rural districts of the north. The pitman is supposed to have in Walker his Mecca or his Jerusalem, and it is thus the local song makes him sing:—

"When aw cam to Wālker wark,
Aw had ne coat nor ne pit sark,

But now aw've getten twe or three,
Wālker's pit's deun weel for me.
Byker Hill and Wālker Shore,
Colliery lads for evermore,
There's ney place like Wālker."

Tyneside songs, which are generally written in the vernacular, are a great treat to anyone who understands Northumbrian. There is an excellent collection, published originally by Mr. Davidson of Alnwick about the year 1840, and re-published by Mr. Allan of Newcastle in 1889. It is called *The Tyneside Songster.* A very fine illustrated edition bears the date 1891.

Lower down the river, and quite near its mouth, is North Shields, an old-fashioned enough town, living, moving, and having its being by means of shipping. Tyneside sailors are all proud of this stirring place, and Thompson, the song writer, puts the following patriotic lines into the lips of one of them:—

"A Cockney chep showed me the Thames druvy fyace,
Whilk he said was the pride of the nation;
And thowt at their shipping aw'd myek a haze-gaze;
But aw whopt ma foot on his noration.
Wi' huz, mun, three hundred ships sail iv a tide,
We think nowse on't, aw'll myek accydavy,
Ye're a gowk if ye didn't know that the lads of Tyneside,
Are the Jacks that myek famish wor navy."

Below North Shields, and only a short distance from it, is Tynemouth. The town stands on a bold rocky bluff, and looks out on the German Ocean. A monument to the brave Collingwood commands the attention of all as they approach the town, and is in every way a fitting memorial, at a fitting spot, of one of Northumberland's bravest and most distinguished sons. A native of Newcastle, and sent to sea as a midshipman at the age of eleven, he mounted the ladder step by step till he assumed the chief command at Trafalgar after Nelson had received his death wound, and completed the triumph of the day. He was created a peer of the realm because of his courage, and died at sea in 1810. Admiral Collingwood was a thorough seaman, and never allowed his courage to outrun his judgment. Alike firm and mild in command, his sailors called him their father, while his private virtues and generosity endeared him to all who came in contact with him.

The ruins of the Priory, which was burned down by the Danes, are a commanding feature, and are beautiful in decay. As for Tynemouth besides, it is a safe haven for ships since the rocks were removed from the sea-way, and the

massive pier was run out far into the sea. It is everywhere redolent of the ocean, a favourite seaside resort, and commands a noble stretch of sands, which are well-nigh as crowded during the season as those of Margate or Eastbourne. On the Tynemouth Marine Promenade, as men of years look upon the recreations of youth, they may recall to remembrance how they too disported themselves when the world was young: the children build castles in the sand—it is too soon almost for them to build castles in the air—and with that unwearied exercise of limb and lung which makes the sturdy Briton, they were happy as the day is long.

NORTHUMBERLAND: ITS PEOPLE.

CHAPTER III.

The Fisher Folk—Rivers stocked with Salmon—Sally the Mugger, a Scene—Salmon Poaching and Smuggling—Hinds and Shepherds—A Presbyterian Communion Forty Years Ago—Precentors—Funerals—Education—Keelmen and Pitmen—Visit to a Coal Mine—Northumbrian Sports—The Northumbrian Shibboleth, the Burr—Eminent Natives—Knights of Industry, &c.—*L'Envoi*—Appendix.

ALL the rivers run into the sea, and the long Northumberland seaboard, extending from Berwick to Tynemouth, is peopled by a hardy and daring race—the fisher-folk. Of these people it may be said, as of Israel of old, that they dwell alone. With the inland population they are on no terms of alliance whatever, save those of sale or barter. No rural swain need ever hope to woo and win a sea-nymph as she rises from the wave. Frys and Armstrongs marry with Frys and Armstrongs, and in process of time all sorts of roundabout phrases have to be used to distinguish one Fry from another, and one blue-eyed, yellow-haired Armstrong, from his first cousin.

A Northumbrian fishing village is just about as much a confused world's end of a place as can be imagined. As for order, there is none, and the inequalities of the ground in front of the cottages are such that one can only suppose they are all of design, being intended to suit those who go to sea, and whose life on the ocean wave is one of alternating upheaval and depression. No one who has gone through such a village can ever forget it. All kinds of ancient odours, pig-styes, gutters, and small garden plots are there. When it is washing day "in the fleet," the flannel duds of generations wave in the breeze, together with other articles of a more modern and attractive description. The village seems to be a maze of nets. When the boats are off, the only persons about, are white-capped old wives, and barefooted women, and boys and girls—the boys and girls always up to some sort of mischief—and when the boats are in, groups of weather-beaten and furrowed fishermen lounge about, smoking, and either discussing fishing affairs in an almost inaudible tone, or gazing out far to sea through a spy-glass which they steady on a wall, or giving a stranger the impression that they are "thinking, ye kna."

The low-browed cottages are pantiled and white-washed, and between them, and the glowing colours of sea and foreshore, rocky strata and emerald banks, there is that singular interblending of effect which makes the sea shore and the fishing village so dear to the artist's eye and easel. The interiors of the cottages are, as a rule, homely, and present scenes such as a Dutch artist of the seventeenth century would have revelled in. The box-bed, the dresser laden with china and crockery, the plain deal table, the "crackets" or three-legged stools placed before the blazing hearth, the long saddle lounge, the eight-day clock, the highly coloured German chromo-lithographs, half-a-dozen chairs, and some well-thumbed books, these, together with a few pairs of sea boots, and two or three jerseys and coloured pocket-handkerchiefs hanging on the line above the fireplace, constitute the furnishing of a fisherman's cottage. And here they wed, and bear children, and die. Here they have their happy days, and the oft-recurring dark ones. Yes, we think we are right to mention dark days in the fishing village. These simple-living, yet astute people, know as much about anxiety, and long waiting, and dool, as most.

When the fishing fleet is off, and the north-east gale comes away in all its fury, when everything turns one universal grey-blue tint, and sea and sky are commingled as if the hour for the crack of doom had come, woe betide these tearful women, and sobbing children, and palsied old folks, who often have only too sure a presentiment, that sons, and husbands, and fathers have sunk, down, down, many fathoms down beneath the North Sea foam.

What a contrast between this day of wrath and the calm summer's eve, when the fishermen's boats set off for the fishing. This is one of the prettiest of sights. For some time, most likely, they have to use the oars, till, rounding the headland, they catch the breeze, and then quickly unfurling the sail they race right merrily to the fishing ground. After the nets are shot, the boats lie by them for the night. Few sounds are heard—save the lapping of the wavelets against the sides of the boat—for our fisher folks are ponderously silent now. But, see, the first streaks of day-break pour down from the east, and in a moment all is commotion! The fishermen stride about rapidly, ropes are pulled, oars are plied, a chorus of nautical monotones fills the air, the

nets are being hauled in, and the wealth of the sea covers the deck of the boat often knee deep. During the herring-fishing season, the silver sheen of these beautiful fish, as they are caught by the gills in the meshes of the net, and as they litter the deck, is beyond all comparison, lovely. The nets hauled in, it is now, who shall get back first, and when the little pier-head is rounded, and the boat made fast, preparations are hurried forward for the wholesale vend and general land-sale of this "harvest of the sea." Now is the time for the women to come to the front, and it is well known how strong, and agile, and untiring they are. Of many of them it may be said, beasts of burthen they; but they take to the toil with a brave heart and a single-eyed purpose, and all the world over, this converts toil and drudgery into luxury and ease.

In the previous chapter, we remarked that the Northumbrian rivers and burns are excellent trouting streams. Nor are salmon a-wanting. We do not say that that noble fish is now as plentiful as it was in the olden time, when the Newcastle apprentices had it entered on their indentures that they were not to be expected to eat salmon more than twice a week; but still in

Tyne, and Rede, and Coquet, and *par excellence* in the Tweed, salmon abound.

In our times the river-watchers keep down autumn and winter poaching pretty successfully no doubt, although, perhaps, after all, the less that is said about that the better; but forty and fifty years ago it was thought nothing of, and still there was plenty for everyone. We have not thought it necessary to make ourselves acquainted with the letter of the law as it then existed concerning the legality or the illegality of salmon poaching; but we remember well enough, when we were in a somewhat earlier stage of existence than we are now, that every one in Redesdale, and Tynedale, and Coquetdale, gentle and simple, thought it no sin to secure a good store of kippered salmon for winter consumption. That these good-hearted, hospitable dalesmen, were sinners above all other men in England, because they got a salmon or two out of season, is not to be supposed, although we rather fear the Northumbrian's record law-ward is not of the best. History testifies that there is no evidence that the written law ever reached Northumberland during the Saxon rule, and since then Northumbrians have never objected to be a law unto

themselves in subsidiary matters. No doubt in Saxon times, and in times much later—

> "The good old rule
> Sufficed them, the simple plan
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

But be this as it may, the Muggers used to hawk cartloads of salmon about in the late autumn, and they mostly brought them from the Coquet. Adepts say that the Coquet salmon, instead of being the *Salmo salar*, or the true salmon, is only the *Salmo eriox*, or the bull trout; hence, perhaps, these midnight raidings were the less reprehensible.

In connexion with the poaching and the vend of salmon, I have a vivid recollection of a striking incident. One afternoon in the late autumn, about tea-time, when all was dark without, and the candles were lighted, we children were in the parlour. Suddenly we heard the kitchen door opened with much noise, and heavy feet making their way in. The news soon spread that Sally the Mugger was there with salmon, and in a very short time the parlour was emptied, and the kitchen filled with every one about the manse, except the minister, my father, who upon this occasion remained an

unknown quantity. Sally—Sarah Anderson was her baptismal name—was never more *en evidence* than she was on that occasion so far as I recollect. She was a mighty woman, and of herculean build. She could have felled an ox like Milo the Cretan with the fist at the end of her huge forearm, and she generally managed to keep her consort "Wully," under her thumb. As for figure, she had none. She was square up and down as a Dutchman, and the waist of her gown was generally somewhere immediately beneath her armpits.* Her black, or tartan dress was ample in its folds. She was generally bare-necked, if she could be said to have a neck, and a black velvet bonnet hanging far down behind, and exposing the frowsiest head of hair imaginable, completed her attire, except that she had a pair of heavy laced-up boots as strong as man ever wore. Sally's attire always impressed me profoundly; but, after all, this was only a faint reflexion of the impression produced by her face. The superficies of this organ was vast, and it generally wore an inflamed hue, due,

* It will interest my fair readers to know that since this description of Sally's gown was written, I have been informed that the short waist such as she wore is now the latest fashion.

without a doubt, to the potent effects produced by distilled waters. A resolute will, and a fixed determination, was stamped upon Sally's face without any possibility of mistake. She had only to open her lips, when, if not numbers, yet words not to be numbered, flew. One of her eyes, large, and round, and fully orbed as that of the Minotaur, looked direct at the person addressed, and shot out a meaning which brooked no contradiction, while the other, "with a fine frenzy rolling," was located, not parallel, as is common, but at right angles to it. With these overpowering organs of vision, Sally, always, everywhere, and before everyone, held the field. On the occasion to which I allude, she was in her grandest and most magnificent mood, and, truth to tell, we were all more or less afraid of her. Dragging a huge salmon after her, she flung it down on the kitchen table, threw her lordly head back, placed her arms akimbo on her hips, and with a whiskied breath that would kill at half a league, exclaimed, in the tones of a Stentor, to my dear little mother, who stood like a mole hill beneath this towering mountain, "There's a salmon for you, mistress, hinny. A finer never cam out o' Coquet. It's only threepence a pund. Ye'll take't." Before

time was given for any reply, Sally whipped out a big gully, brandished it aloft, as if she had been butcher-in-chief to an army in the field, and in far less time than it takes to describe, opened up the *Salmo eriox*, and prepared it for the kippering. Days speak, it is true, but Sally and Wully, and young Sally and young Wully, and many of those who were actors in this and other well-remembered scenes, have now gone to that lone and silent land where the weary are at rest.*

The one illicit suggests another, and to salmon poaching succeeds smuggling. "Gan' to Boulmer for gin," used to be a Northumbrian proverb. Boulmer was a noted place for running Hollands ashore, and bands of daring men, with strings of pack-horses, when they received signals that a Dutch lugger was off the coast, ran all risks, and often defied "the gauger." Until the duty on spirituous liquors was equalised between Scotland and England, the Carter Fell used often to be a debatable ground between the exciseman and the smuggler. All manner of expedients were had recourse to, to transfer the usquebaugh from the one country to the other. The Scotch Andrew

* See Appendix.

Fairservices, who happened to reside in Northumberland, thought it no sin to drown the memories of "the sad and sorrowful union" in the potent contraband; while the English were fain to form a still closer alliance with their ancient Caledonian foes in the matter of social cheer than the hard-riding officers of the Inland Revenue were willing to allow. It is told of one borderer on the English side—and his ingenuity was surely deserving of a better fate—that when that dreaded postman, that *pallida mors*, who knocks at every man's door sooner or later, knocked at his, it occurred to him to have the coffin made at Jedburgh, twelve miles into Scotland over the Carter Fell. In due time the coffin was finished, and having been put into a hearse, was brought with all becoming decorum across the frontier. It so happened however, that the eagle-eyed exciseman was on the outlook, and the inventive and wily Northumbrian came to grief, for when the officer demanded permission to look into the hearse, he found the coffin well stocked with "grey hens," of another plumage than those which, with the black cocks, abound in these regions. The carriers between Scotland and England did a good deal of smuggling, but in most cases it

was only to their sore hurt in the long run, seeing that, in addition to falling into tippling ways, all their devices for concealment were exposed eventually. The writer has known instances where his father, as a sort of general pacificator, has been employed to use his best offices to secure a reduction of the fine inflicted upon the detected, and for the time being, penitent smuggler. In most cases, however, Rhadamanthine justice was the truest clemency.

To the north and east of the county the class termed hinds mostly belongs; to the hill sides belong the shepherds. The hinds are ploughmen and general workers on the arable farms, and they are an unaccountably migratory class. In defiance of every law of social and domestic economy, it is said that at least one-third of them change their service every year, not because they secure any pecuniary advantage by so doing, but simply from love of change. The hind has a free house, his coals are led, a thousand yards of potatoes are planted for him, and he receives so much money. In addition to his own labour, he is required during the outfield working season to employ a woman, young or otherwise, who receives from his master a daily wage which runs considerably below the

market price. This worker is known by the name of "Bondager," not to signify that she is held in slavery, but that her service is included in the *bond* between the hind and his employer. With such a custom prevailing, it is easy to understand how it is to the hind's interest to be very much a family man, and employ his own children. These sons of the soil are a hard-working intelligent class, and they are as strong as Hercules.

The shepherds are the aristocrats of labour in the highlands of Northumberland. Lithe and stalwart in their youth, when age comes upon them, their advice is deferred to on all hands, and in their reverend and hoary age they are, as a rule, the pride of the district where they reside, and in innumerable instances are elders in the Presbyterian Church. What the writer owed to his shepherd elders as a young minister it would be difficult for him to say. The men to whom he refers were prevailing in prayer; they were deeply read in the old Marrow Theology of Boston of Ettrick, Flavel, John Owen, Ralph Erskine, Bunyan, and Doddridge, and as all of them had the Shorter Catechism at their finger-ends, they were always ready to give a reason for the hope that was in

them. Trained from their youth up to hill life, the habits of the Cheviot sheep, and the best way of shepherding them, come to these noble men as by instinct. No matter how biting the blast may be, with their legs well-stockinged above the trousers, the shepherd's plaid, either with the neuk or without it, wrapped round them as only a shepherd can wrap it, and with a stout stick in their hand, they are ready to sally out when duty demands, and many a shepherd of the Cheviots has been found after the tempest was past, smothered in the snow drift, in not a few instances, close to his own door. To assist them in their work, they employ the services of collie dogs, so much affected now by ladies and in town life—it is surely a mistake to take the sagacious collie off the bent and heather and puzzle his wits with a do-nothing town life, a sort of thing that no dog or fellow can understand—and it is amazing how easily by a single wave of the hand, or by the distinctive note of command, they will in a very short time secure the end their masters aim at. Many of the shepherds travel several miles to church on Sunday. During the short days in winter they must look through their hirsel when returning, and consequently the dogs accompany

them. As long as the service lasts they lie quietly in the aisle of the church, or at their master's feet, but no sooner is it over than they shew themselves all anxiety to set out home again.

In the west and north of Northumberland, church-going used to be a most important matter, and, except in the lambing and spaening time, the shepherds were always present, mingling heartily with the farmers and groups of villagers in the service of God. Six, seven, eight, nine, yes, and even ten miles, was thought not too great a distance to travel on horseback or on foot, and as a rule, those farthest from the church were the first to put in an appearance. Many of them would meet half an hour before service began in front of the church. Of course they talked over the current affairs of farm, and hill, and district, and what harm was there in that, we ask? It was the only chance most of them would have to meet before Sunday came round again. But of all days, a Communion Sunday was *the* occasion. This used to be preceded by the exercises of a Fast Day on the Thursday, which again were succeeded by a preparatory service on the Saturday, and when the following morning dawned, it was soon discovered by all that the

Great Day of the Feast had come. From an early hour, the roads were covered with bands of intending worshippers. Where the roads were good, the farmers drove in their conveyances, while their servant men and women came—for that day—in a long hay cart. The shepherds always walked, unless they were growing old, in which case they rode to church on their hardy ponies. Where the wide moors had to be crossed, the farmer would ride on his brood mare, while his wife sat behind him on the pillion. It was indeed a sight to gladden every heart to watch these devout men and women pressing forward in all directions to the holy and common meeting place between God and man. The summer Communion as might be expected, was always the best attended. Every one wore the best of his apparel. The older female members invariably carried their Bibles in their hands, wrapped round with a handkerchief as white as driven snow, and as they generally brought along with them a posy of southernwood, mint, and a red or a white rose, the church on that day, and for many days after, was as fragant as a herbarium.

The morning service over—and it lasted between three and four hours—during the short

interval that elapsed before the work of the afternoon began, the manse, and the inn, and every house around, provided generous hospitality for all comers. Monday, again, saw a Thanksgiving Service rendered. At its close the ministers and elders used to dine together at the manse, and thus of old they kept the feast, and held high festival, till after a lapse of six months another Communion season came round. More exigent times have now greatly shortened these holy feasts; but they were seasons of refreshing, and helped to shake the torch of life, and keep the lamp of devotion alive.

At a Communion the minister was invariably assisted by one, and occasionally by several of his neighbours, who often came from a considerable distance, and who in return, were repaid at their own communion seasons for the good offices they had rendered. It may be said without fear of contradiction, that the communions of the olden time served the same purpose that the great festivals of the year rendered to the twelve tribes of Israel. They quickened the spiritual life of the people, and what between anticipation and retrospect, they helped a God-fearing people to walk in the light of the

Divine countenance. "The Word preached" was highly prized. Though the services, owing to their great length, would prove insupportable to the present generation, the people never seemed to tire. Great value was set by ministers who were supposed to excel in a particular exercise. The services of preparation, participation, thanksgiving and revision, had their stated place and importance. The minister of the congregation was expected to preach the sermon on the Sunday morning prior to the Holy Communion, and this was known by the name of the Action Sermon. A venerable and experienced brother was always acceptable when addressing the communicants after the sacred emblems had been handed round, and he who on the Sunday afternoon or evening could stimulate to better and fuller life and service was always sure to have an overflowing audience. Monday's service was one of thanksgiving, and as it generally ended with a review of all that had been done during the season, abundant opportunity was given to a facile speaker to gather up the fragments that remained, so that nothing might be lost. I have a lively remembrance of these ministers who used to assist my father at the Otterburn

Communion. They were godly and venerable men, and in entertaining them, it may be said that angels were entertained unawares. Some of them so preached that it might almost be said they chanted their sermons, and when the fervid unction came upon them the effect they produced was simply overpowering. Several had all the grace of the courtier about them; others, again, were quaint and full of oddities. They abounded in anecdote, and were not devoid of wit and humour. The names of the Revs. Dr. Nicol, Jedburgh; Robert Cranston, Morebattle; John Black, Newcastleton; John Boyd, Hexham; John Young, Bellingham; James Muir and John Parker, Sunderland; David Browning, Newcastle; David Donaldson, Alnwick; Walter Bell and James Robertson, North Middleton, are among the most precious treasures of our memory.

It was at these Communion seasons that the kindness of the congregation to the family at the manse was very conspicuously shown. In a thinly-peopled district, where little ready money was in circulation, the minister's stipend, as might be expected, was never large; but more or less throughout the year contributions in kind formed a very acceptable augmentation

fund. In autumn, when the "mart," that is the young ox or heifer, was killed and salted for the winter consumption at the farm house, a joint was certain to find its way to the manse, and throughout the year there were kind and generous souls who never came that way without leaving farm produce of some sort or other. But when the Communion came round the contributions were multiplied four-fold. The abundant produce of the dairy and the farmyard was certain to arrive on the Thursday and Saturday. During the interval of service on the Sunday, many of the men accepted the hospitality of the inn, while the female members of the principal families went into the manse, and with a generosity, the most delicate conceivable, they took care that they should not partake of refreshment at the manse table without having first largely contributed to load it well. Nor were the humbler members of the congregation forgotten at the repast provided in the kitchen.

At Communion seasons the book boards in the pews where the Communicants sat were covered with a "decent white cloth," as well as the Communion table, and as the Precentor's duties were supposed to be too arduous for any

one man, an elder who could sing, or some other singing-man, was associated with him in the desk immediately below the pulpit, to the great edification of the general congregation, no doubt, and certainly to the awe and wonder of the juvenile portion of the audience.

The Precentors in the olden time were sometimes characters. We recollect two of them well. The first was a knight of the needle, and as nimble as his needle. He could sing like a mavis, was a politician of the deepest dye, and in every conversation-circle Willie's voice, facility of utterance, and fund of general information, ruled the roost. Unfortunately he had contracted an inveterate liking for strong waters, and when under their influence, not only did he let loose such a Bedlamite tongue as frequently brought down severe castigation upon himself; but, as might be expected, he came under the discipline of the Session. On these occasions, which frequently occurred, Willie sat on the stool of repentance with the deepest humility, and vowed many times deep that the offence never should occur again. Alas, however, the flesh was weak, and at last after prolonged endurance, and well-nigh inexhaustible patience, his last suspension passed into

deprivation of office, and Willie ever after carried a diminished head. It is only right to mention that his faults were condoned by the Session to the extent we have already mentioned, on account of the circumstance, that no one could lead the congregation like himself. Poor fellow, he ultimately became stone-blind, and, except about his own door, where he could grope his way with the assistance of his stick, he was led about like a child. To the last day of his life however, his intellect was as keen as ever it had been, and when a chance visitor gave him a dram, his tongue was as rasping as in former times when it often led him into seas of trouble.

In these times the tailor went from house to house to make the clothes, and we boys looked upon it as a day of high jinks whenever we saw Willie seated on the kitchen table, with all the professional paraphernalia of lapboard, goose, yard measure, beeswax, and thread about him. On these occasions we were in clover, for the best of the house was invariably provided for the tailor, and besides, Willie could always keep the house in a roar when the minister was in his study. There was one difficulty, however, which was often hard to overcome, and that was to get

Willie to the manse, for he had a rare faculty for keeping the promise to the ear, but breaking it to the hope. Whenever he got upon "the spree," it took him two or three weeks to get sobered down, and, at these seasons our impatience grew beyond all bounds, for did it not seem to us that what should have been our new suits were spoiling in the very web? Nor was it until we saw him seated on the kitchen table that our anxieties were removed.

The other Precentor was a man of quite a different type. Willie's form was always attenuated after the Shakesperean type, Ned was a man of herculean build. In every way his was a marked individuality. His beetling eyebrows formed a penthouse, beneath which a troop of fairies could easily have danced a minuet on a moonlight night, and, truth to tell, it is most likely they often did, for Ned had the reputation of having been a great poacher in his younger days, and many a bonny black cock had found its way into his spacious pockets under the unerring aim of his shooting iron. Growing years, however, brought with them gravity and wisdom, and although always lazy —the former poaching propensities probably engendered this vice—he became a respectable,

sober-living man, and ultimately, Ned, as everyone called him, except the minister, who always addressed him as "Edward," was installed in the Precentor's desk. He filled it well nigh to overflowing, and when on Communion occasions another was associated with him, the squeeze was manifestly very great.

Ned was a *basso profundo*, and sang with great birr. The act of leading the service of song was evidently a considerable effort, if one might judge from the frequency with which he wiped his spacious face with his red and white pocket handkerchief. And then when the text was given out, and the sermon once begun, he generally covered his bare head with the said pocket handkerchief, and went off sound asleep, secure from the minister's eye, beneath his canopy of fringe. Willie was a tailor; but Ned was a cobbler, and many an hour have we spent in his shop, listening to the stirring tones of "Johnny Cope," delivered with a re-echoing force enough to raise the dead, and to his wonderful stories about men and things in Rede water. He had a large family, and was always in impecunious circumstances. Owing to this it generally happened that very little of his salary, which consisted of two half-yearly

collections, remained to be drawn when pay day came round. Ned was a frequent visitant at the manse. When the shades of night fell—unless he had sent his little hard-working wife as a deputy during the day—he used to walk into the kitchen with a big plaid wrapped about him, and when our mother had been brought in—for he always transacted his dealings with her—the sentence was sure to come sooner or later:—"Just another half-croon, mistress, if ye can?" The pittance being forthcoming, Ned treated us all to a few songs, rendered in his very best style, and then the poor fellow—we should have called him good-natured had he not had the reputation of being a domestic tyrant—went again into the darkness, and crossed the fields to his humble cottage.

When the minister had to assist a brother at a distance, it was common to announce that there would be no service on the following Sunday, and for us, there was left the option of going to the Presbyterian Church at Bird-hope-Craig, five miles away, or to the Parish Church at Elsdon, three miles distant. For ourselves, we preferred to go to Elsdon, not so much on account of the distance being shorter than to Bird-hope-Craig, but because the Elsdon Church

Choir offered great attractions. The big fiddle, and the violin, and the clarionet, were all employed in the service of song, the vocal music was good and led by enthusiasts, and we had never heard anything like it before. And then, there was the warm-hearted and eccentric rector, the Rev. Percy Gilpin—always the friend of the manse and every one in it—to listen to, and wonder at when we saw him attired in his surplice, an ecclesiastical robe we never saw at any other time, and so unlike the Geneva gown our father wore. It always filled us with astonishment that Mr. Gilpin left the reading desk at one portion of the service wearing his surplice, and returned to preach in his black gown. What this change of garments meant we never could make out. Mr. Gilpin was a great walker; as he hurried along he used to twirl his walking stick around his fingers, and styling one of his legs "Percy," and the other "Gilpin," he used to keep on saying:—"Come along Percy, Gilpin will beat you. Come along Gilpin, Percy will beat you."

Next to spiritual life is that of the understanding, and the Northumbrian's love of learning is proverbial. During the last half of this century it has been the rarest thing to meet

with man or woman who could not write and read and cypher well—thorough masters of the three Rs—and in spite of almost insurmountable disadvantages, pitboys and ploughmen, shepherds and farmers' sons, have won for themselves the patent of culture by plodding away at the night-school through the long winter months. After finishing their day's work, we have known these lads come many miles to attend a minister's class for the study of Latin, geography, and grammar, and to-day, the bulk of them hold positions of honour, and some indeed of eminence, not in one but in many lands. In a past generation the travelling schoolmaster was in great request. He was very often lame in limb and broken in life, but bright in intelligence, and after staying at a farmer's house for three months or so, he would move on to another a few miles distant. In this way, the children in remote districts received their education, and in three points they excelled, in penmanship, arithmetic, and all branches of mathematics. Northumbrian youths excel in these departments to this day.

Every county has its local customs, and the long-continued Northumbrian method of conducting a funeral is well-nigh extinct. The

caller—the Dutch "Aanspreker"—went his rounds inviting guests to the funeral on a certain day, and the cortege was invariably three or four hours late in starting for the churchyard. If we take Elsdon as an instance—a wide parish, twenty miles in length by ten in breadth—the order was somewhat as follows, say in the case of a much respected farmer:—A long procession, mostly on horseback, though some would be on foot, left the house of mourning as soon as the baked funeral meats were consumed. Following the hearse, each man wearing round his hat a long pendant scarf of crape, they kept that position till within half a mile of Elsdon, when, clapping spurs to the flanks of their steeds, they galloped into the village, so as to stable their horses in the several inns, and be at the churchyard gate in time to meet the coffin. And a moving sight it was to see these ruddy-faced, stalwart dalesmen, reverently go through the solemn service, and with awe-filled faces commit the body of a friend and neighbour to the tomb. It was the custom to remain at the grave till it was filled in and sodded, which being done, the chief mourner usually said in a loud voice:—"Gentlemen, I thank you for your presence on this occasion," after which all left the Churchyard.

The funeral over, the common thing was to adjourn to one or more of the inns, where each man laid down a shilling, and the value of the lump sum being returned in potable refreshment, every one drank to his liking. At a soldier's funeral the band plays *The Dead March* on the way to the grave, and *The Girl I Left Behind Me* on the return, and after a funeral at Elsdon, the solemn incoming was often attended with a somewhat hilarious home-going. The potent refreshment gradually drove dull care away. When the steeds were mounted, the gentle amble soon passed into the trot, and with an incongruity which was ludicrous, however painful it might be to witness, the trot very often passed into a gallop, in which the horseman pricked forward, his crape scarf flying behind him, and making the pace as if he and his neighbours were hastening to the wedding. But in this brief life which is our portion, transitions are often rapid, and so there is no room to be censorious.

Many of the Northumbrian churches are very old, and most of them are now in an excellent state of repair. Occasionally an ancient peel is built into the church. The people hold the churchyards in reverential

esteem, and in not a few instances the remains of deceased persons are brought from a long distance that they may lie side by side with the ashes of their forefathers. It is unnecessary to remark that the usual eccentricities to be met with in tombstone inscriptions are not wanting, and that the halting feet of the lapidary-poet are not unknown. Close by the door of Elsdon Church, and in such a position that it must be seen by everyone who enters, the following rhyming apostrophe occurs:—

> "Weep not for me my Wife and Children dear,
> I am not dead, but sleepeth here;
> My debt is paid, my grave you see,
> Prepare yourselves to follow me."

In contrast to the above there is the honourable estate of matrimony. Needless to say the pleasing ceremony of marriage is not less important in Northumberland than elsewhere, and we have witnessed weddings in the Parish Church at Elsdon which certainly could not be surpassed in splendour by any corresponding function at St. George's, Hanover Square. It would not perhaps be correct to say that the festivities are on so large a scale as they were two hundred years ago, nevertheless there is still much feasting and hilarity.

It may be interesting to quote an extract from *The Gentleman's Magazine*, which describes a Northumbrian marriage in 1750. It is as follows:—

> "Married in June, 1750, Mr. William Donkin, a considerable farmer, of Great Tossan (near Rothbury), in the County of Northumberland, to Miss Eleanor Shotton, an agreeable young gentlewoman of the same place. The entertainment on this occasion was very grand, there being provided no less than 120 quarters of lamb, 44 quarters of veal, 20 quarters of mutton, a great quantity of beef, 12 hams, with a suitable number of chickens, &c., which was concluded with 8 half-anchors of brandy, made into punch, 12 dozen of cider, a great many gallons of wine, and 90 bushels of malt, made into beer. The company consisted of 550 ladies and gentlemen, who were diverted with the music of 25 fiddlers and pipers, and the whole was concluded with the utmost order and unanimity."

Surely, there could have been nothing to equal this out of the Scandinavian Valhalla, while the least imaginative reader will think that the most wonderful part of the entertainment consisted in this, that "the whole was concluded with the utmost order and unanimity."

Between 1765 and 1812, Elsdon had for its rector the Abbé Dutens—the rich living is in the

gift of the Duke of Northumberland. Unfortunately for Elsdon, the Abbé was at the same time Chaplain to the British Embassy at Turin, and consequently his northern flock but seldom looked upon his face. Perhaps that mattered the less, as his broken English was well nigh unintelligible to them, but anyhow, he found that the congregation was always small. Full of a quiet and ready wit, the Abbé determined to put himself on as good relations as possible with his parishioners, and going round his principal farmers he invited them to dine at Elsdon Castle on a certain day. A sumptuous feast was provided, and not one guest was absent. Then was the Abbé's chance. Addressing them, he said:—"You say you no understand vat I say ven I do preach, but you comprehend clear enough ven I invite you for to dine." The wit and spell did their work, and from that day the Abbé had a better congregation.

It is sometimes alleged that the Northumbrian spirit is not the best, nor the temper the sweetest in the world. Perhaps not, only they that live in glass houses do well not to throw stones.* People say of Northumbrians, that as a rule they are suspicious; that they

* See Appendix.

keep up grudges to the end of the chapter; that they dearly love to have a bit law plea on hand once and again; are utterly opposed to any change or improvement at first, but if they are given time to think it over, follow as meekly as a lamb; that they are plodding, but non-assertive, and are lacking in that *perfervidum ingenium* which is so marked a feature in their Scottish neighbours. Burns sang:—

> "O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
> To see oursels as others see us!"

In the above description of the North-umbrian temper, we hold up a mirror fashioned by other hands than our own, into which North-umbrians need not be afraid to look, and from which they will no doubt try to profit as best they may.

The Northumberland pitman, is a far-famed toiler, and only less so is his coadjutor on the Tyne, the keelman, who to a greater extent formerly than now, transported the coals from the drop at the river side to the colliers lying down the river. The keelman is perhaps the most muscular workman in all Northumberland, and his activity, his frank and manly independence are well rehearsed as follows in the well-known local song "The Keel Row."

THE KEEL ROW.

Whe's like my Johnny,
Sae leish, sae blithe, sae bonny?
He's foremost 'mang the mony
Keel lads o' coaly Tyne.
He'll set or row so tightly,
Or in the dance so sprightly,
He'll cut and shuffle slightly,
'Tis true—were he not mine.

Chorus—Weel may the Keel row, &c.

He's ne mair learning
Than tells his weekly earning,
Yet reet frae wrang discerning,
Tho' brave, ne bruiser, he.
Tho' he no worth a plack is,
His awn coat on his back is,
An' nane can say that black is
The white o' Johnny's e'e.

Chorus—Weel may the Keel row, &c.

The pitmen, as might be expected, are a class by themselves, and they are men of whom Northumberland may well be proud. In former times—which, be it remembered, were rougher and ruder than the present—they may have acquired a somewhat sinister reputation from the violent, or enthusiastic way in which they engaged in their sports, and from their cock and dog fighting propensities, but such things now no

longer exist. The pitman, as a rule, is a quiet-living, religious, and godly man, who enters with the greatest heartiness into all the exercises of his communion, which is generally one of the many Methodist bodies, and *par excellence* the Primitive. The terrible colliery accident at Hartley, near Bedlington, in January, 1862, when so many pitmen died a lingering death after their "jowling" or knocking had been heard for some days by the relieving parties who could not get near them, seeing the shaft had been blocked up by the half of the broken beam, is not yet forgotten by Northumbrians. Nor is the other touching fact, that when the workings were reached, and the long lines of dead bodies discovered, it was found that the doomed men, anticipating what their fate must be, had chalked on many parts of the woodwork of the pit, passages from the Word of God alike solemn and full of comfort. Those who have reached middle age will remember how our Queen, who herself had become a widow on the fourteenth of the preceding month addressed words of most kindly sympathy to the widows of those who lost their lives in the disaster, whereupon Mr. Spurgeon, in his own eloquent way, described

Her Majesty as "The Empress of Sorrow," comforting the mourning.

Two hundred and four men and boys lost their lives in the Hartley calamity, and a subscription which was set on foot realised a large sum for the relief of the widows and orphans. Edward Corvan, a Tyneside poet, alike comic and sentimental, but mostly pursuing the comic vein, wrote a piece called "The Queen has sent a Letter; or, The Hartley Calamity," which went home to every heart in Northumberland at the time. We extract a couple of verses from the song, and to this hour they set all the heart's chords in motion:—

"Oh! bless the Queen of England, who sympathy doth show,
Towards our stricken widows amid their grief and woe;
Old England never had her like, nor never will again,
Then bless good Queen Victoria, ye loyal-hearted men,
She sent a letter stating—"I share your sorrows here,"
To soothe the aching hearts of all and dry the widow's tear.
Oh! gather round, ye generous band, whose bounty caused a smile
To 'lume the face of dark despair throughout old England's isle,

Ye have ta'en the gloom from sorrow where rays of love will fall,
On the widow and the fatherless, who prays "God bless you all!"
For the Queen has sent a letter, tho' she mourns a husband dear,
To soothe the aching hearts of all and dry the widow's tear."

The descent of a Northumbrian coalpit may not be a frequent experience to a landsman, but the adventure is worthy of being made by all who can muster courage to go down. Doffing a portion of his ordinary attire—be it clerical or civilian—and assuming the pitman's flannels and cap, with a stick in one hand, a lantern in the other, and pioneered by a viewer or overman, he is ready for the descent. Once into the cage, the levers are applied, and the downward motion begins. That is swift, silent, and thrilling, and in some way or other, as the novice descends, he fancies he is being drawn up to the pit head, and *vice versâ*. Upon reaching the bottom he gets into one of the empty hauling waggons, which, in a train, are let down by a stout wire rope to the working face of the coal, and as he gets in he is repeatedly admonished to stoop well down, lest his head come into collision with the roof, in

which case, without a doubt, it would be bad for his head, on the same principle that George Stephenson declared before a Committee of the House of Commons, that it would be bad for the "coo" if it came into collision with his locomotive. No sooner do these empty waggons begin to go down the decline, than the daring investigator enters upon a new and entirely stiffening experience. The jolting is enough to dislocate every limb in his *corpus vile*; with ever-accelerated speed, the roar in the cavity of the mine rivals that of the tornado; as he rushes past the trap doors, the gnome-like guardians, in the shape of boys, stare out into the darkness with penetrating gaze, and by the time he arrives at the end of his journey he feels perfectly limp in limb, and absolutely subdued in spirit. According to the width of the seam, he finds that the half-naked hewers at the "face," are either working in a stooping attitude, or are standing erect. The sharp picks strike the mineral treasure swift as lightning flash, showers of nuts and dross fall thickly around, and anon, large pieces of coal tumble down; these are shovelled into the corves, and thus the work proceeds until the shift is over. That it is both hard and exhausting is very

evident, and as further proof of this fact, it may be mentioned that, so far as meat is concerned, the pitman eats the best and fattest joints, that he may keep himself up to the mark. In the recesses of the mine the heat is very great. The men stream with perspiration, and the visitor, although only present as a spectator, does the same. A visit to the stables where the ponies—mostly of the Shetland breed—are stalled is full of interest. These animals are perfectly at home, they are as sagacious as their owners, and know quite well how to avoid danger. They appear to suffer nothing in health from their confinement, and are on such good terms with their drivers, that ponies and boys are often up to astonishing tricks. The ponies in many instances are sent up to grass occasionally; but in others they have been known to be kept down the pit for a long term of years, and that without the slightest detriment. The doors to the side-workings are carefully bratticed and guarded, everything is kept in perfect order, and any metal work is as bright down below as it is in the engine-room. The economy of the mine is not less perfect than that of any well-ordered establishment above ground, and after the visitor has seen what he can, and learned not a

little, all that remains for him to do is to pay his footing ten or a dozen times over, exchange his pit suit for his own clothes, use so much soap when getting a good scrubbing that one would say the national revenue must be materially increased thereby, and go away with a lively sense of the importance to the country of so large and industrious a body of toiling men.

Accustomed to the darkness of the mine during so many hours, it is not to be wondered that the pitman should like to have a bright and comfortable house well filled with large and substantial furniture. It would do anyone good to visit a pitman's house in the afternoon, when the shift is over, and everything is polished up till it shines again. His thoughtful wife has a roaring fire on the hearth for the bread winners of the family—for the sons generally follow their father's craft—and gives them a *singing hinny*, the far-famed Northumbrian girdle cake, to their tea. Nor is "Geordie" averse to bright colours as to his attire. When we were boys the pitmen's plush and velvet waistcoats, with ever so many rows of buttons, were to us, never-failing objects of admiration. Of course the women affect colour also, and it is of one of them that the following story is told:—Going

into a shop in Newcastle to purchase a shawl, the shopman inquired what colour his customer might prefer, and got the following for his answer:—"Nyen o' your gāādy colours for me, hinny, gie me bonny rēēd an' yallow."*

The Newcastle Races, and especially the race for the Northumberland Plate—the "Pitman's Derby" as it is called—used to be the miner's annual saturnalia, but the Temperance Festival, which within recent years has been instituted with such gratifying success on the Town Moor, has in a great measure toned down the excesses once so prevalent. In connexion with the mention of the "Northumberland Plate" which is always run for on the Wednesday in race week, and is a much more important event than that for the "Newcastle Cup," which is run for on the Friday, it will not be out of place to mention that Northumbrians dearly love a bit of sport. Yorkshiremen are supposed to rank first in their relish for running horses, and Northumbrians will always be a good second. Throughout the length and breadth of the county Beeswing* and Lanercost, Dr. Syntax and X.Y.Z., have an enduring fame, and among old men, the blood grows hot again, and the

* See Appendix.

eyes sparkle, as they recount the triumphs they have won on the turf. Nor will it be counted a crime to mention that next to a race horse, if even that, the Northumbrian eyes with tender regard a "Bedlington terrier," and still more the swift and shapely, and keen-eyed greyhound. The Waterloo Cup—the blue ribbon of the leash—has often gone to Northumberland, while the names of Mr. James Hedley and Tom Bootiman, as Judge and Slipper, are famous throughout the English-speaking world.

Among the favourite sports in Northumberland, there is no pastime that is more enjoyed by the people in general than quoiting. The county never has led conspicuously in the cricket field, and although football has always been a popular recreation, still it has never been carried to that degree of excess which is not uncommon in some places, for example, in Yorkshire, where at one time six members of the Leeds Parish Church Football Club were laid up in the Infirmary together, owing to wounds they had received on the field of battle. Quoiting, a quieter, and less destructive game, abounds over the whole of Northumberland. Every farm house has its set, every village has its pitch, every colliery has its

ground, and there is nothing in which a true-born Northumbrian takes greater pleasure than a friendly main between two villages. When the hush of evening falls upon the hamlet during the summer months, youths and men of all ages are certain to be found gathered about the favourite haunt for a game at quoits. The ring of the metal discs can be heard through the still air from afar; the longer the game continues the greater becomes the excitement; all the fatigues of the day are forgotten under its spell; shouts of applause greet the deft-handed player who oftenest rings the hob; as the shadows deepen, pieces of white paper are placed near the pins to indicate the goal, and we have witnessed enthusiastic doctors and ministers, blacksmiths and joiners, continue the game by candle light.

Any account of Northumberland would be incomplete, if no reference were made to its lingual peculiarity, the *Burr*. This is the Northumbrian shibboleth. "Then said they unto him say now *R*; and he said *Arr*; for he could not frame to pronounce it right." Now this aspirated, or rather much exasperated R is the Northumbrian Burr. In Somersetshire the S becomes Z, "Yez Zur." In Cockneydom, and

more or less through England, the H and the O are most shockingly badly treated. Away down among the Wessex Foggers, the pronouns are all mixed up in inextricable confusion. The Cumbrians have as much difficulty with the *th* as any foreigner, weather, feather, and heather, becoming wedder, fedder, and hedder. And in Northumberland the Burr caps all. Long live the guttural! "Glororum." "Round and round the rugged rock, the ragged rascal ran." Said John Scott, Lord High Chancellor Eldon—a Newcastle man:—"We have His Majesty's commands to pro-rrogue the Parliament, and the Parliament is pro-rrogued accordingly," an Act of Prorogation which is said to have been as remarkable for its sententious brevity, as for the high Northumbrian dialect in which it was performed. When a Scotch servant girl went to a situation in Newcastle, and on visiting her friends, was asked how she got on with the language, "O weel eneuch," she replied, "I just swallow the Rs, an' gie them a bit chow i' the middle." During an election petition which was tried in the Moot Hall, at Newcastle, some time ago, it was reported in the London press that two of Her Majesty's Judges,

together with the barristers engaged in the case, had great difficulty in making out the replies that were given by the witnesses, while the Court was often convulsed with laughter on account of the intricacies of the Northumberland dialect. And well they might. Here we have a specimen:—

Barrister: "Now will you tell us how long you have lived there?"

Witness—a Northumberland farmer—"From time immemorial, sor."

Education and travel, and absence from Northumberland for a time, in some instances enable a man to get rid of this famous Burr, which is an enduring reminder of the Danish invasion in the ninth century, and of the Northumbrian's general intermixture with the Scandinavian races, but this is not invariably the case. It was not so with Lord Eldon as we have seen, and when Mr. Joseph Cowen—than whom a more cultured man there could not be—had a seat in the House of Commons, his speeches were invariably delivered in the broadest of Northumbrian Doric. Mr. Cowen's voice is no longer heard at Westminster; but in Mr. Thomas Burt, the Pitman M.P. for Morpeth, and Under Secretary to the Board of Trade under

a former Liberal administration, Westminster possesses a fine specimen of the thoroughbred Northumbrian, and one who is never ashamed of allowing his shibboleth to be heard.

To Northumberland, as might be expected, many eminent names belong. For two years John Knox preached in Newcastle; Bernard Gilpin, the apostle of the north, evangelised the county; and Willemoteswick, near Hexham, was the birth-place of Nicholas Ridley, the Reformer, who was burned at the stake, opposite Balliol College, Oxford, on the 16th October, 1555. It was to Bishop Ridley that his fellow sufferer, stout Hugh Latimer, the Bishop of Worcester, exclaimed in noble and never to be forgotten words, when the faggots were being kindled:—"Be of good comfort Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." This light never has been put out, and we trust it never shall. It is interesting to remember that there is a link between Northumberland and Cumberland in connexion with Bishop Ridley. Northumberland has the high honour of claiming him as a native, but Cumberland can also claim him as a descendant

of one of her families. Mr. Ridley of Willemoteswick wooed and won Mary Curwen, daughter of the Squire of Workington Hall. In due time she became the mother of children, one of whom was the father of Bishop Ridley. Master Trebonius, Luther's schoolmaster, used to doff his hat whenever he entered the school-room, giving this as his reason:—"Among these boys are burgomasters, chancellors, doctors, and magistrates." In imagination, we can, even after the lapse of four centuries, see the daughter of the Curwens cross the threshold of her father's house to become a Northumbrian bride, and the ancestress of the noble bishop who was faithful even unto death, and who as he stood at the stake, thanked God that He had called him to confess His name even unto death. Nor will it be amiss for Northumbrians of to-day to doff their hats to the memory of sweet Mary Curwen of Workington Hall. Ralph Erskine, a cadet of the noble Scottish family of that name, one of the founders of the Secession Church of Scotland, and author of the "Gospel Sonnets," was a Northumbrian, having been born at Monilaws.

In our own time Northumberland has produced some famous preachers. Thomas Binney,

so long the brilliant minister of Weigh House Chapel, London, was a native of Newcastle. What a bulky, warm-hearted man Mr. Binney was, to be sure! When we were students in London, no visitor was ever more welcome than he. The lion-faced Joseph Parker, once a Hexham lad, made an enduring name and fame for himself in Manchester and in the City Temple, and at *Tyncholme*, his residence in Lyndhurst Gardens, Hampstead, he led a more than ordinary busy life. Newcastle is not likely soon to forget the name or the evangelical ministry of the Reverend Richard Clayton, Vicar of St. Thomas. Dr. Anderson of Morpeth, was in his day a very *decus et tutamen* to the Presbyterians, and another venerable Presbyterian worthy survived till recently, although owing to extreme old age and feebleness, he was but little known to the rising generation of Tynesiders. We refer to the Reverend George Bell. Mr. Bell was born among the Cheviots, and in the vicinity of Wooler. While yet a young man, he came to Newcastle in 1834 to his first and only charge—though he migrated from one church to another as prosperity flowed upon him—and lived in the same house in Brandling Place from the time of his ordination.

Of humble origin, but of too sterling a mould to be ashamed of that, Mr. Bell, together with his comely and noble-spirited wife, reared a large family on a very small stipend, was powerful as an organiser, plain-spoken but warm-hearted as a man, and considered that all he had was God's rather than his own, and to be used and accounted for by him as a steward.

Of great names in the Northumberland of the past there need only be mentioned a few. Among authors there are the Rev. John Horsley, author of "Britannia Romana;" John Brand, historian of Newcastle; and the Rev. John Hodgson, author of the "History of Northumberland." Horsley was the first Presbyterian minister of Morpeth, and was commonly known as "Widdrington," from some property he had in that part of the county. Hodgson—a native of Shap—was vicar of Kirkwhelpington, and Hartburn, and his county history is now so valuable that a complete copy commands a high figure. Morpeth can claim among its sons, Dr. Robert Morrison, the first English missionary to China, and author of that great classic, the Chinese-English Dictionary; and Turner the herbalist, who, equally with Morrison, was of much more than national celebrity. Robert Blakey, a philosophical and

political writer, also belonged to Morpeth, and was the first Mayor of that town after the Reform Bill of 1832.

To Newcastle belonged these great luminaries, the brothers Scott, who are now known to an enduring fame as Lords Stowell and Eldon, and Martin the Painter, whose lurid canvasses at one time filled spectators with a strange awe. Mark Akenside, author of "Pleasures of the Imagination," was born in Butcher Bank, Newcastle, in 1721. He was the son of a butcher, haughty and pedantic, and one of the few great men who have been ashamed of a humble origin.

Newcastle might well feel aggrieved, if among its famous men no mention were made of Thomas Bewick the engraver, whose tail pieces are the masterpieces of wood-carving, and of Hancock the naturalist, whose collection of birds, preserved in the Natural History Museum at Newcastle, is the most valuable in the kingdom. It seems only yesterday since John Collingwood Bruce and *John Clayton launched

* John Clayton had a schoolfellow at Harrow, the poet Byron, who had a high opinion of him, and in a letter published in Moore's life described him as "a school monster of learning, and talent, and hope," adding, "He was certainly a genius." At the examination for admission to the fifth form, Clayton was first, Robert Peel (afterwards Prime Minister) second, and Byron fourth. An interesting trio!

out for the unseen shore. They were both Newcastle men and great as archæologists. Dr. Bruce's name is inseparably associated with the Roman Wall; and John Clayton of The Chesters, himself an enthusiastic antiquarian, will live as the wealthy and generous patron of every endeavour to bring to light the storied past, and preserve it from vandalism and decay. Dr. Bruce's father established a school—Percy Street Academy—where the sons of the best Northumbrian families obtained a liberal education. The doctor himself succeeded his father as a teacher for a number of years, and father and son together taught the lads, who now as men, occupy the foremost positions in the professions and industries of the North. The eldest son of Dr. Bruce, Sir Gainsford—Mr. Justice Bruce—who has recently retired from the bench, and is a far-famed yachtsman, was held in high repute as a barrister for his knowledge of the law in all matters connected with shipping.

Nor can woman's rights be denied. Grace Darling, the very glory of her sex, was a native of Bamborough, on the iron-bound Northumbrian coast. She was born in 1815, and from her girlhood was familiar with every fitful mood

GRACE DARLING.

of the North Sea. On the 7th September, 1838, when the *Forfarshire* was wrecked among the Farne Islands, Grace, together with her father, and at her own solicitation, put off through the storm to the wreck, and by the pity of her soul, the bravery of her heart, and the strength and skill of her arm, rescued the sufferers from a watery grave, and landed them in safety at the Longstone Lighthouse. This brave deed of the Northumbrian heroine echoed and re-echoed throughout the land, and valuable testimonials of gratitude and pride were heaped upon her. She was a sweet and gentle soul, and meekly carried her unexpected and uncoveted honours. It is said that when a visitor went to see her after her famous deed, he found her reading *Boston's Fourfold State*, a work which at that time was held in high esteem, and the fact that this young woman took delight in what, without contradiction, is the queen of all the sciences—Theology—is enough to show what sort of stuff the Northumbrian peasantry of these days was made of. The humble heroine did not long survive her change of circumstances. After a year's illness she died of consumption on the 20th October, 1842, and is buried in the churchyard at Bamborough, within sound of the North

Sea waves, which chant her requiem. Of recent years it has been somewhat common to detract from Grace Darling's exploit, on the ground that the risk she ran was not so great as is generally supposed. We have yet to learn, however, that the love of chivalry has died out of the hearts of Northumbrians, or that there was anything but what was fitted to appal the heart of a young girl on that autumn morning, when the North Sea scud flew on the wings of the hurricane, when the sea hurled herself mountains high upon the strand in the very pride of elemental battle, and a shipwrecked crew was in momentary danger of being engulphed in the angry waters.

Wordsworth's lines upon the storm, the wreck, and the rescue, are worthy of the occasion, the heroine, and of himself:—

"Shout, ye waves!
Pipe a glad song of triumph, ye fierce winds!
Ye screaming sea-mews, in the concert join!
And would that some immortal voice, a voice
Fitly attuned to all that gratitude
Breathes out from flock or couch, through
pallid lips of the survivors,
Might carry to the clouds and to the stars,
Yea, to celestial choirs, Grace Darling's name!"

It is not so many years since Sir George Biddell Airey, for many years Astronomer Royal, passed away. He was born at Alnwick in the first year of the last century, and throughout his long life he did much valuable work in many departments of science. He devised a system for correcting the disturbances in iron-built ships, and down to the very close of his existence he was an enthusiastic student. In our days, when weather prophets abound, it is interesting to know that Sir George, a year or two before his death, gave it as his deliberate opinion, that with our present knowledge of meteorological science, it is impossible in this country accurately to forecast the weather for more than twenty-four hours, or at the most, forty-eight hours. Professor Airey's most noteworthy scientific experiment was that which he carried out at the Harton Pit, South Shields, in 1854. It was then that he weighed the earth by measuring the true time of the pendulum at the top and bottom of the mine. He ascertained that at a depth of 1,260 feet—the depth of the Harton Pit—the pendulum at the bottom would gain two-and-a-quarter seconds per day upon that at the top. Generally stated, Sir George's deductions showed that the density of the earth

is about six-and-a-half times that of water, and that the weight of the globe, 8,000 miles in diameter, and 24,000 miles in circumference, amounts to somewhere about the inconceivable quantity of 6,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 tons.

The transition from the grave to the gay is but a step, and we must needs refer to "Billy Purvis," the renowned Northumbrian harlequin in the beginning of the present century. Billy was born at Auchindenny, near Edinburgh, almost within a gunshot of the dwelling house of Henry Mackenzie, author of "The Man of Feeling," but was brought by his parents to Newcastle at so early an age that to all intents and purposes he was a Newcastle man, and like many another, his speech bewrayed him. He was a many-sided genius, and amused the public as a conjuror, a clown, and a performer on the Northumberland Bagpipes. For a number of years he travelled through the North of England and Scotland with a portable theatre, attending races and fairs, until his voice and form became familiar to everyone, and his performance stood first among all the attractions. "Billy" used to appear on the outside stage of his theatre attired as a clown, when no one could look at him without laughing, and his

gestures alone were enough to convulse the thronging spectators. Wherever he went he had several houses of call, and the mere fact that he was in any of them was sufficient to fill the inns to overflowing. It was at the Newcastle Races that he was in all his glory, when he would shout to the crowds of pitmen:—"Are ye cummin' in te see wor show, Geordy? Ay, it's clivor, 'tis clivor. . . . . Only a penny for trappers, an' tuppence for wappers! Ay, it's clivor, 'tis clivor.

Come into my show,
My show's a dandy;
Come into my show,
It's sweet as sugar candy."

Like most theatrical people, "Billy" had his ups and downs. For nearly sixty-six years he resided in the same house in the Close, where he brought up his family in a highly respectable manner. He died at the age of seventy, at Hartlepool, where he was performing with his Victoria Theatre in 1853, and is interred in the churchyard of St. Hilda, at a spot overlooking a wide expanse of ocean. Shortly after his death the Messrs. Sangers, circus proprietors, when visiting the town, gave a benefit for the purpose of raising funds to erect a stone over

"Billy's" grave, and a neat monument bearing the following inscription, now marks the last resting place of the brief player whose mask and buskin like himself have returned to dust:—

"Take him for all in all, we ne'er shall look upon his like again."

Here lieth William Purvis, better known as Billy Purvis, Clown and Jester of the North, who departed this life 16th December, 1853, aged 70 years.

"Where be your jibes now? Your gambols?
Not one now, quite chap fallen?"

Corvan sings the "Deeth o' Billy Purvis," in the following lines:—

"Ne mair at wor races, friend Billy, thou'll grace us,
Nor call Geordies in your fine show to admire;
For, oh! 'twas his boast, then, fine dramas an' ghosts, then,
Wi' pantomime plays full o' reed an' blue fire.
What troubles through life man, what cares an' what strife, man,
He had to amuse us—byeth aud folks an' young:
Oh! aw think wiv emoshun, an tears of devoshun,
On the day when I first lipsed his nyem wi' maw tongue!"

The Knights of Industry are the peculiar glory of Northumberland, and it is meet that we should refer to a few of those who stand out head and shoulders above their fellows.

It is enough to mention the name of George Stephenson, the much-gifted genius, and the inventor of the locomotive, which has revolutionised society as well as commerce. He was born near Ovingham, on the north bank of the Tyne. George Stephenson's son, Robert, was great as an engineer, and one of the many famous pupils who went out from his shops and office is Sir George Barclay Bruce, late President of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and brother to Dr. Bruce. He who began life as an articled clerk in the office of Mr. Walters, Solicitor, in Eldon Square, Newcastle, in time became the renowned Sir Wm. Armstrong, and then blossomed, by the grace of his Sovereign and to the universal satisfaction of all England, into Lord Armstrong, although, somehow or other, Northumbrians never can manage to get their mouth about the Peerage title, Sir William coming to them so much more readily than Lord Armstrong. As the head of an army of 12,000 artisans at Elswick, as an hydraulical engineer, an artillerist, a shipbuilder with his distinguished partner, Mr. Mitchell of Walker, as a general worker in the applied sciences, as a philanthrophist and public benefactor, as a Fellow of

the Royal Society, and one who can see as far into a Newcastle grindstone, or any kind of millstone, as most men, Lord Armstrong's name stands out as a Mont Blanc or a Matterhorn among other Alpine peaks. Otterburn, famous in olden times in war and in border raids, is now honoured in peaceful industries. Sir Joseph Hickson, son of the village blacksmith, greatly furthered the development of Canada by railways and in other ways, and because of this received the honour of knighthood. Two well-known Northumbrian names remain to be mentioned—Sir William Gray and William Milburn. Born on the banks of the Blyth, full of that intellectual grit and brave bold spirit which never says die, and which it is said, makes the brains of Aberdeenshire and Northumberland men the heaviest in the kingdom, they both made opportunity of difficulties, breasted the blows of circumstance, grappled with their evil star, and hand over hand climbed fortune's steep, till Sir William Gray became the renowned shipbuilder at West Hartlepool, and by his generosity, extinguished the debt on all the Churches in the Presbytery of Darlington; while William Milburn, who only sought relaxa-

tion from the arduous duties of his office amid the moors and burns of Northumberland and Yorkshire, was the master of one of the noblest mercantile fleets of England, and flew his flag on every sea.

NORTHUMBERLAND: OTTERBURN—THE VILLAGE.

CHAPTER IV.

The Environment of Otterburn—Historic Associations—"Mad Jock Ha'"—The Otterburn Demesne—Within Water Mark—A Smiling Village—The Squire—"The Graves of a Household"—The Passing of the Squire.

"The Otterburn's a bonnie burn,
'Tis pleasant there to be."

Ballad of Chevy Chase.

THE village was far from towns—there are not many towns in Northumberland—and sixteen miles from the Scottish border. It was a sweet nestling spot,

"Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed."

It was Otterburn: an oasis in the heart of what was no doubt a bare country, but by no means a wilderness. Except from one direction the traveller came upon it suddenly, and, as he passed along, he was softened and pleased to witness the blending of

"Fields, and woods, and sparkling streams,
Of flocks, and herds, and human habitations."

OTTERBURN.

To the south was Hareshaw, a heather-covered rolling height, and the villages of Woodburn and Redesdale: Hareshaw being the watershed between the North Tyne and the Rede, while the villages presented as great a contrast in the way of situation as could be imagined.

Away to the east, Willie Winter's gibbet, with the head of the murderer carved in wood and pendant from a horizontal beam, stood up gaunt and stark against the sky-line, and as it was seen from afar, and the tale of the crime in the Woodside was often told, there were few in the locality, whether old or young, who did not know what it was from time to time to feel their flesh creep. From the summit, where the fiercest rain and snow storms in the district were to be encountered, the visitor was fain to linger longer than he would, as he looked upon Cheviot robed in his mantle of imperial purple, the frowning peaks of Simonside—the lanthorn of Northumberland for the storm-tossed sailor—Rothbury, standing on the clear and rapid running Coquet, and on the distant and smiling plain where were yellowing corn fields and verdant pastures.

At the foot of this eastern range lay the village of Elsdon with its ancient church and

churchyard, its fortified Castle, now converted into a Rectory, and the abounding proof in its moat hills of early British occupation and legislation; while half-way between Otterburn and Elsdon, at Overacres, the traveller on a clear day might see Helvellyn, Skiddaw, and Crossfell in far-off Cumberland.

To the north, there was one succession of steep slopes after another from Cheviot downwards, with the villages of Harbottle and Holystone midway between the extreme points; while on the west, the remote boundaries of the village were the Carter Fell, the Redeswire, renowned in legendary lore, and Peden's Peak, reputed to have been of note in covenanting times.

With commanding surroundings such as these, it would be out of place not to refer, however slightly, to the traces of extinct dominion and stern conflict which were to be seen in the neighbourhood. British tribes, Romans, Scotch, and English, were all in evidence. Watling Street sped away, straight as an arrow from the bow, across the moors to Chew Green, while the Roman Stations at Habitancum (Woodburn) and Bremenium (Rochester) indicated not only the route taken by the legions, but their lengthened occupation of the district. Of this last there

was overwhelming proof. The stations were of the first class, as met with throughout the Roman world, and in addition to means of defence, were as replete with the requirements of Hygeia as could be seen anywhere during the early centuries of the Christian era. It was evident that the generals who erected them had intended that they should remain in continued occupation, and there was good reason for this. There were numerous British camps all over the district, some of them having a double ditch, as visible beneath the green sward still, as when the native tribes swarmed like bees about the legions, harrying and vexing Italians, Spaniards, and Pannonians, with one constant guerilla. The clear inference was that the tussle between Roman and Briton to the north of Hadrian's Wall, and in that district in particular, was exceedingly severe, and that there, at any rate, the natives and the invaders stood face to face, and with their best blood fertilised the soil. And then there was the battle of Chevy Chase, fought but a stone's throw from the village as it were, when Scotch and English eclipsed their old renown as they fought throughout the August moonlight night, leaving behind them a name for courage,

tenacity, and tenderness, which their remote descendants still imitate, but cannot possibly surpass.

Such was the environment of Otterburn, and in so storied a district the village itself could not but be an object of interest. What that was must now be told.

It is of comparatively small moment, that the estate of Otterburn, having passed by will in 1745 to Robert Ellison of Newcastle, was sold by his son Henry to James Storey of North Shields, who built the village. It is of much greater interest to mention an episode prior to 1745, when the land on either bank of the stream constituted one estate. The proprietors were the Halls, who occupied a mansion which was erected on the site of the old castle, to which the English troops laid siege, when Hotspur marched from Newcastle in 1388 to try conclusions with Earl Douglas. What sort of men the older branches of the Clan may have been it might be hard to say, but that their descendant, John Hall, with whom we are more immediately concerned, was "a man of daring and pertinaceous spirit" as old records testify, is easily proved. Variously known as "Jock Ha'," "Mad Jock Ha'," and "Justice Hall,"

he was a magistrate and captain of a train band in the reign of Queen Anne, and married the daughter of Alderman Hutchison of Newcastle, who was Mayor of that town when William III landed at Torbay in 1688. He was imprisoned five times, as lying under the suspicion of the Government, and finally met his doom when executed at Tyburn for high treason in July, 1716, being then in the forty-fourth year of his age. The period of this unbridled Northumbrian's execution, corresponding as it did, with the first Jacobite rebellion in 1715, supplies the key to the position. As is well known, the Roman Catholics formed a numerous party in Northumberland at that time, and being in full sympathy with the Pretender, and true to their character, as expressed by the phrase "Northumberland, hasty and hot," they rose and risked their all when the Earl of Derwentwater took the field. As a matter of course, so strenuous a man as "Mad Jock Ha'" would always be well to the front during the rebellion, but, like many a pretty man besides, it fared ill with him as a rebel on the banks of the Ribble. He was captured at Preston, taken to London, and after being confined in Newgate, in the fulness of the law's time—and but short shrift was the lot of

most prisoners in these times—was carted to Tyburn and cast off. It is more than likely that Hall would find himself, when in prison, in the company of several friends and neighbours, for Northumberland was deeply compromised in the rebellion. One of these is known to have been William Shafto of Bavington, who had an estate on the way to Newcastle, only twelve miles or so from Otterburn. Shafto is reported to have addressed Hall upon one occasion to the following effect:—

"Cousin Jack, I am thinking, my son, about what is told us, that God will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. I am of opinion it is so with us, for your grandfather and my grandfather got most of their estates as sequestrations, and now we must lose them again for being rebels."

It was bad enough for Hall and Shafto to lose their estates, but much worse was it to lose their lives, and if we may judge from the following circumstance, they cherished an unrelenting spirit to the last. When Hall was executed in company with Parson Paul, the two, treating the State Chaplain with contempt and scorn, were ministered to in their dying moments by a Roman Catholic priest.

Following upon the execution, Hall's estate at Otterburn being sequestered, was purchased by Gabriel Hall of Catcleugh—the same name, but another family—and passed by will from his son Reynold to Robert Ellison, of whom mention has been already made. Sometime subsequent to the building of the village by James Storey, the Otterburn estate was sold under a decree of the Court of Chancery, and ultimately the mansion, manor, and demesne lands passed into the hands of the Gallons—one of whom, John Gallon, as a tombstone in Elsdon Churchyard testifies, was drowned while hunting his hounds in the river Lugar, Ayrshire, in 1873, at the age of 59—while the lands on the other side of the Otter, where the village proper stands, passed to the Davidsons. Since then, time's changes have been very considerable. Mr. Thomas James purchased East Otterburn, and, after a lengthened tenure, the property only recently passed into the hands of Mr. Howard Pease. On the west of the Otter, the Misses Davidson, about thirty-five years ago, after offering their estate to the Duke of Northumberland, who was pleased to say it would gratify him to think it was offered to some one who needed it more than he did, passed it as a deed

of gift to Lord James Murray, of the Ducal family of Athol, who held office at the Court of Queen Victoria, and only recently it has been purchased by Mr. Charles William Bell of Sunderland. While this chapter is being written great alterations are taking place in these respective properties, which, it is enough to mention in a single word, seeing they do not fall within our present purview.

Following upon this historical statement, it is fitting that we should return to our narrative of the village. In one respect, while beautiful for situation, being sheltered from the sweeping blasts of winter, and the keen and searching east winds in spring, in another, it may be said that its suitability was even more than questionable. It was within water mark, and from time to time it paid the penalty. At the confluence of the river Rede, and the Otterburn, the village was at the mercy of either of these streams, and sometimes at that of both at one and the same time. When the rains came in October, or when the snows melted in spring, or when August brought the Lammas floods, it behoved the villagers to be on the *qui vive*. Gathering the flood waters from a wide area in the bleak north, the Otter, at other times little

more than a purling rill, rushed along in unbridled wrath, and as the hollow wind blasts boomed among the firs and the tree tops, and the torrent roared like another Niagara as it rushed over the retaining wall of an ornamental pond, the villagers slept with one of their eyes open. Once indeed, there was well nigh a tragedy. The retaining wall of the pond gave way, and in a few seconds the village was inundated. Anticipating danger, watch was happily kept throughout the night. Some of the old and bedridden were carried upstairs, others were removed from their houses, and next morning, when the flood line was notched on the walls, it was discovered that the waters had reached two-thirds of the distance to the ceiling on the ground floor.

When the Rede was in flood, there was hardly less danger, more particularly when the Otter was brim full at the same time, for then the banked up waters of the tributary had no outlet, save through the village. Oftentimes did the villagers look out with well-nigh speechless awe upon that turbulent sea. Draining an immense area, and already having run a straight course of sixteen miles with rapid descent, its waters swelled by those of numerous tributaries,

when the flood-gates of heaven were opened, and the storm came out of the west, the Rede rolled along as with the sweep of an avalanche. From being an attenuated stream, in a few hours every ford became impassable; wooden bridges were swept away as if they had been threads of gossamer; trees, fences, stock and farm produce were borne down on their way to the sea, and the water dykes along the haughs, which were as skilfully constructed as though they had been engineered in Holland or in Lincolnshire, were periodically destroyed. So frequently did these floods occur that an outsider would naturally have concluded that Otterburn would have become another deserted village. It was far otherwise, however. It was reckoned the capital of Redesdale. There was never a room to let, far less a house to rent, and as the Italian peasant grows his vines, and cultivates the *dolce far niente* on the slopes of Vesuvius, so did the inhabitants of Otterburn, the flood once over, resume the even tenour of their way, and hope for the best, till the hour of danger once more returned.

The village consisted of not more than twenty houses, each of them of two stories, and in about equal numbers as they faced one another

across the highway between Scotland and England. At first, indeed, there were only about a dozen houses, all of them looking to the south, and regret was often expressed that Mr. Storey, departing from his original intention, had not extended the village in a straight line. There were small plots of garden ground in the front of the houses, and these gave the villagers an opportunity to cultivate flowers or even to grow a few vegetables, while, with a beautiful sense of refinement to be met with in almost every village throughout England, there were few windows that did not contain some pots of bright coloured and fragrant flowers. The village was periodically white-washed, and as roses and fruit trees grew up the walls, when the sun shone during the summer solstice, few fairer hamlets were to be seen in Northumberland. A bridge, consisting of a couple of arches, was built across the Otter, connecting the village with East Otterburn, and it is safe to say that the parapets, on a summer's or an autumn eve, listened to as much gossip, and witnessed as many varying scenes, as traveller has ever told concerning similar spots in Italy or in Spain. On the margin of the stream there was a row of stately lime trees, and at high noon, when they

were in bloom, or during a bright and quiet afternoon, as thousands of bees, improving the shining hour, kept busily working among the blossoms, the hum they made, rising and falling in musical cadence, was soft and sweet and sonant as that of an Æolian lyre. Little wonder that the bloom in the village gardens was so good, when the flowers were thus perfectly fertilised by the bees.

In a previous part of this chapter, lengthened reference was made to several of the early proprietors of Otterburn, and before concluding it some mention of Mr. Thomas James, who purchased east Otterburn after the decease of Mr. Ellis, will be fitting.

While there were several squires in the neighbourhood, Mr. James was pre-eminently known as "The Squire," and in the fulness of years as "The old Squire." He was born in the north of England and resided in Northumberland, first at Beaufront Castle, near Hexham, and then for many years at Otterburn Tower. At school at Westminster and Harrow, he entered as a student at Oriel College, Oxford, and when there contracted an enduring love for the classics. It was in athletics, however, that he was easily first, his feats in running and jump-

OTTERBURN TOWER.

ing being nothing short of extraordinary. His leap over an iron-bound and locked turnpike gate, and again across Iffley Lock, became a legend among successive generations of undergraduates. "Tom James" would walk beneath a tape, held six feet above the ground and romp over it. He was a man of mark in any company, and throughout his life he was the soul of honour. Tall, spare, erect in figure, and with a military bearing; with a steel-blue eye, over which the bushy eyebrows fell like a cataract; with a rugged and picturesque face, not unlike some of the figures in Rembrandt's "Night Watch," planting his foot with firm step—a feature so distinctive of the true Northumbrian—when he went out with his gun, or with his shepherd's plaid across his shoulders, there was no mistaking the Squire. He was as one born to command. As an officer in the Northumberland Yeomanry Cavalry, no one knew his work better than he, and with an imperial way about him, as a magistrate, he was the terror of evil doers. Young people, at first, were somewhat afraid of him, but it was not long before they discovered the kindness of his heart, and when invited to the dining room at dessert, or permitted to go and see the Squire in the green room when that was over, they had royal times.

Upon coming into his kingdom, having purchased the Otterburn estate, he converted the former mansion into an elegant tower with gardens, lawns, and parterres, and planting plenty of timber, he had about him an environment of beauty, fertility, and great good taste. But best of all, he brought one of the most beautiful and gracious of women to adorn his home, and delight successive hosts of visitors. Mrs. James was the daughter of the Rector of Boldon, whose wife twice bore him one-and-twenty children, and, with ready wit, when asked where she got sheets for all her children and frequent visitors, replied:—

"The tablecloths my dear, the tablecloths."

What a lady bountiful the Squire's wife was could never be told: only, her heart was as large and her hand as open as her features were refined, her voice low and soft, and her face lovely beyond all telling.

As was to be expected, the Squire was a staunch Conservative and a sound Churchman. But he was no bigot. It was he who gave the site for the Presbyterian Church and Manse, and though he only entered the doors of the Parish Church himself, his wife, children, and

visitors frequently worshipped on Sunday night with their Presbyterian neighbours. The Tower people were always strict in the matter of Sabbath observance, and on Sundays dined early that the servants might be free. In the matter of Good Friday the Squire was especially particular. That was the time when the cottagers and work people on the estate commonly did up their gardens for the coming summer, and without exercising compulsion in any way, he let it be understood that if they went to church, they would get a day's pay, whereas, if they gardened, they would be at their own charges.

Eight of his children, consisting of seven stalwart sons and one daughter grew up. The daughter, who had the very spirit of her father, married happily, but most of the sons died suddenly and far from home, with all its sweet and holy influences. Tom, who was in the Navy, died in Portland Bay, while attempting to rescue a man overboard—Harry, perished in the South Seas—Dick died amid sad surroundings away in Devonshire—Colley, on the eve of life's success as an engineer, at Winnipeg—while Willie, the first born, and a noble fellow, after serving in the Crimean Campaign and

through the Indian Mutiny, as an officer in the Black Watch, fell into ill health through the rigour of these campaigns, and died only a few months ago, utterly broken down.

In view of the early deaths, and the widely scattered graves of these interesting young men, a strain of comfort may perhaps be gathered from the lines of Mrs. Hemans :—

The Graves of a Household.

"They grew in beauty side by side,
They filled one home with glee ;—
Their graves are severed far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.
The same fond mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow ;
She had each folded flower in sight,—
Where are those dreamers now ?

One 'midst the forests of the west,
By a dark stream is laid,—
The Indian knows his place of rest,
Far in the Cedar shade.
The sea, the blue lone sea, hath one,
He lies where pearls lie deep :
He was the loved of all, yet none
O'er his low bed may weep.

* * * * * *

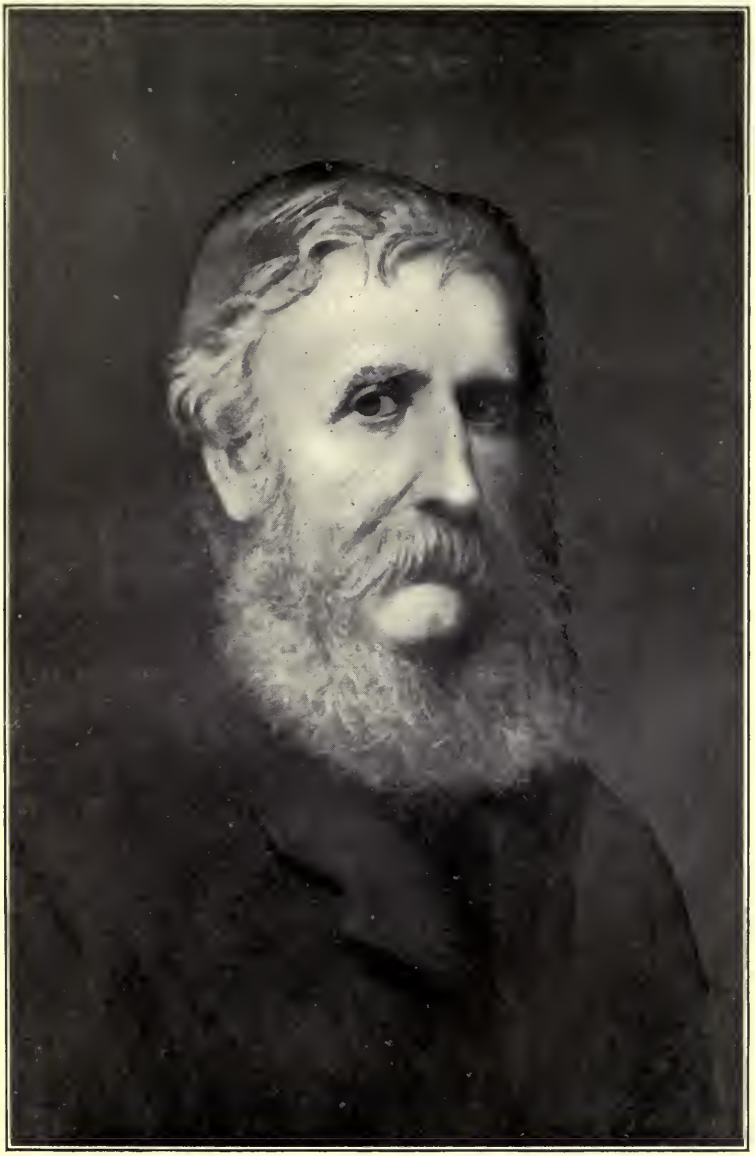
And parted thus they rest, who played
Beneath the same green tree;
Whose voices mingled as they prayed
Around one parent knee!
They that with smiles lit up the hall,
And cheered with song the hearth,—
Alas! for love, if thou wert all,
And nought beyond, oh earth!"

Family trials such as these now described, told heavily on the old Squire. His strength was weakened in the way, and when on a visit to London, he died within ten days of celebrating his golden wedding. He had always been kind to his neighbour, the minister, and a son of the Manse being in London at the time of his decease, went down to King's Cross to see the coffin transferred to the railway van, and give the last salute. It was a June night; the shadows were just falling when the express moved out of the station, and next morning the grand old man was laid to his rest, followed by members of his family and many sorrowing friends, in the pretty little churchyard of Ovingham—the birth-place of George Stephenson—overshadowed by a venerable and historical church. For well nigh twenty years his widow survived him, becoming at last little better than

a child, through fast failing memory, but continuing as beautiful and open-handed as ever. Then came "the passing of The Tower," in this instance, happily to one, who, as an antiquary, and having an intense appreciation of "the North Countree," is certain to do justice to the old place.

As these records are detailed, memory plays a busy part. Old names, old scenes, old deeds, old loves and likings, are recalled. The heart becomes very tender, and as the effigy of the old Squire stands out upon the canvas, with proper feeling, a wreath is woven in honour of one who was a fine old English gentleman. For the Squire was all that, and to no man, be he living or be he dead, do the words of one of the best of English songs better apply:—

"When winter old brought frosts and cold,
He opened house to all:
And though three score and ten his years,
He featly led the ball:
Nor was the houseless wanderer e'er driven from his hall,
For while he feasted all the Great he ne'er forgot the Small,
Like a fine old English gentleman,
One of the olden time."



THE SQUIRE.

NORTHUMBERLAND: OTTERBURN—THE VILLAGERS.

CHAPTER V.

The Community—Anty and the "Chack"—Wullie o' the Carrick Bushes—Peter Fletcher—Wullie o' the Redesford—The Shoemaker—The Blacksmith—Gillespie the Clock Cleaner—The Village Doctors—Mine Host of the Percy Arms—Simon of the Waulk Mill.

THE village community of Otterburn was true to the Saxon type, and there was to be found the shop-keeper, the joiner and the blacksmith—the presence of the one, as Mr. Freeman observes, necessarily involving that of the other—the carrier, the tailor and the shoemaker, the butcher, the dressmaker, the day labourer, the stone breaker, and mine host of the Percy Arms, for it was Northumberland, and the Ducal name was all powerful. From time to time also, some one or other was a village dweller, whose comfort and well-being became the sacred trust of all, seeing that hooded vacancy sat upon the brow. Of some of

these, or of their neighbours across the bridge, whether strenuous, eccentric, or otherwise, anon.

In such a community, as might be expected, the faculty of observation was highly cultivated. The passing stranger was an object of interest, and, with practice, it was easy to discover that every house was kept under strict surveillance by its neighbours. Occasionally, what under no circumstance could be more than an intelligent anticipation of events, was whispered, or even proclaimed from the house tops to be an actual fact. It was well-nigh comical to witness the struggle which existed in the minds of some of the time-honoured villagers, when, being in conversation, the transit of some one or other along the little street laid them under the necessity of practising something of ambi-dexterity in the use of mouth and eyes at the same time. In fact, whether from the window of the upper room, or from that on the ground floor, there was not a house where the eye had not discovered, and did not make use of the balanced angle of incidence.

It is proper to say that this faculty of curiosity among the villagers is not chronicled by way of censure, but rather because, being common to people of every clime and tongue,

it goes to prove the common kinship there was between the inhabitants of Otterburn and those of the great world lying far beyond them.

Of the villagers and their immediate neighbours there were some whose individuality was more or less marked, and Anthony Fletcher was one of these. Anthony, or as he was invariably styled, "Anty," was the village joiner, and the homely maker of hay rakes, ladders, and kitchen chairs. It was in making fences, however, that he was perhaps most at home. The building up of a farmer's cart was a momentous undertaking, and when called upon to make a coffin, so measured were his movements, and so lugubrious his expression, that the ordinary frequenters of the joiner's shop gave him plenty of elbow room.

Like other men, Anty had his varying experiences, but none of them all produced such an impression upon himself and upon his neighbours as when he found occasion to cash a cheque. When the lady at the Shooting Box paid Anty for his jobbing work before going up to town, she gave him a cheque. The sight of it produced great astonishment. The circumstance was soon in every one's mouth, and for much longer than nine days—so long was a

thing strange then—whenever neighbours foregathered, as tongues were loosened, and current events were detailed, such words as these were certain to be heard:—

"Hev' you heord the news? The Leddy's paid Anty Fletcher wuv' a chack."

This extraordinary manner of payment was often discussed over a gill on a Saturday night at the Percy Arms, or when the villagers smoked their pipes over their garden wickets, each of them staring into vacancy across the road. The like among these humble folks had never been heard before. Anty was looked upon as a sort of demi-god, and on occasions when he happened to be present in *propriâ personâ*, he, ordinarily the most reticent of mortals, invariably waxed eloquent over it.

"And what did ye do wuv' the chack, Anty?"

Thus queried Harry the Skinner, so called because he moved among the hill farmers, giving the chronicle of the times, and buying their sheep skins, which he brought down to the village on the back of an old donkey, and then sold to the carrier.

"What did ye do wuv' the chack, Anty?"

"Well, ye see," replied Anty, as he took a stride and shook his head, "Ah did'nt ken varra weel what to do wud. It was'nt a skeely thing to hev' in the hoose, so Ah got up early i' the morning, an' walked to Newcastle—the distance was thirty miles—an' went direct to Lambton's bank, an' got the six pund for't, an' then set off heam again. A'll not say that Ah wasn't tired when Ah got back, but Ah was at ma wark next mornin' as usual."

This incident of the "chack" is sufficient to show that the village was primitive enough, and its simple inhabitants far removed from the madding crowd.

Anty did not have many companions, being somewhat severe and self-contained in manner, but he had a neighbour, little more than a mile away, William Carrick, who was sternness itself, and the two always seemed to be on the warmest terms of friendship, so far as warmth could get above their Northumbrian crust of austerity. William, who was generally known as "Wullie o' the Carrick Bushes," like Anty, was a joiner, and there can be little doubt that the having a trade in common formed the tie between the two men. Differing from Ralph of the Stob Cross, who was considered the high-

class joiner in the district, Carrick, like Anty, was at his best when he made barrows and rakes. He was short-sighted, wore spectacles, had a rugged countenance, somewhat after the type of a Rubens or a Tenniers, a voluble tongue, and withal, spoke the English language with such a degree of pomposity that all who heard him were inspired with awe. He was great as a Churchman, and on Sundays and Holy Days he looked upon Dissenters—and in these times there were hardly any Nonconformists who were not Presbyterians—as sitting a long way below the salt. Upon those rare occasions when the children of the Manse went to Elsdon to hear the Rector preach, next to the melodies evoked by clarionettes, large and small violins, and the tuneful choir, there was nothing that impressed them so deeply as the responses when made by Carrick and the two Churchwardens. They were all big men, spoke with a rich bass Northumbrian gutteral, and when in sonorous notes they responded, or read verse about in the Psalter, with the Rector, the lofty roof of the old church rang again, a solemn awe stole over their spirits, and, with Jacob at Bethel, they were inclined to say, "How dreadful is this place!"

A pillar of the church, Carrick was not less, or—what was about the same thing—thought he was not less a mainstay of the State. He was an under-bailiff of the Duke of Northumberland, and occasionally had functions to perform which lost nothing in importance by the way in which they were discharged. When the Annual Court Leet at Elsdon came round, it was the Bailiff's duty to invite the Duke's tenants and the principal people to the dinner which followed. On these occasions, the pride of office shone triumphantly upon his rugged face, and his manner was to be remembered, when addressing the favoured guests, in as pragmatic a tone as any provost marshal ever assumed, he volumed out the words in stereotyped phrase:—

"His Grace, the Duke of Northumberland, presents his Compliments to you Mr. Hall, and it would be a pleasure to him if you will be present at the Court Leet dinner in the Bird-in-Hand Inn, at Elsdon, next Thursday afternoon, at two o'clock."

Needless to say, every one invited—and in time the Presbyterian Minister was included among others as one of the Ducal guests—made it his duty to be present. As a festive occasion it surpassed everything in these

regions, and no *Nox Ambrosiana* of Professor Wilson could compare with the general jollification which followed. The climax was reached when the toasts were given, and the Ducal piper paced the floor, rendering the favourite melodies of Northumberland on the Northumbrian pipes. At these times, his responsibilities over, and himself mellowed and softened by the Duke's hospitality, the under-bailiff was wont in some measure to unbend, and often when expatiating upon the merits of a much esteemed neighbour, who always humoured the old man—at these times he "lo'ed him like a verra brither"—he would say in one grand climacteric:—

"Ephraim Thornton of the Dunns and me, is more like tow than one."

Of characters there were plenty. Peter Fletcher—that was Anty's father—was a joiner also, only people used to say that while Peter made a great show of working, he never did anything, leaving the burthen and heat of the day to his two sons. Peter always wore a red night cap—pendant down the side of his face like that of a Neapolitan or a Sicilian fisherman—a cut-away blue coat, and knee breeches, and as he never wore braces, he contracted the

habit of constantly hitching them up, for all the world like a Jack-tar ashore on the Hard at Portsmouth. It could not be but that so picturesque a figure as Peter should be a man of striking idiosyncrasy. And he was all that, for he was the far-famed story teller of the country side. Whether he inherited the gift from some of the old Border Rhapsodists, or whether it was the efflorescence of his striking individuality, it would be hard to say, but the stories he told with the appearance of an earnest faith, which some listened to with open-mouthed wonder, and others with ill-concealed marks of incredulity, rivalled anything to be met with outside the pages of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, or the even more astounding narratives of Baron Munchausen.

Great though Peter was in the matter of dress, it cannot be said that he was without a rival, and this was "Wullie o' the Redesford." Though not residing in the village, Wullie paid frequent visits to it, attracted, as was believed, by the striking splendours of Peter's habiliments, and to tell the truth, the glories of Peter's costume paled before that of his rival. Wullie's get-up consisted of a low-crowned, broad-brimmed white beaver, strong corded

trousers, a brown coat with brass buttons, a parti-coloured silk Barcelona, twisted around his neck with something of Bohemian negligence, and a bright blue velvet waistcoat, with two rows of pearl buttons down each side. He was a farmer and horsebreaker, and, attired as described, when he held a long brass-hafted whip in his hand, his good-natured face shining like the sun in his splendour, he was a distinctly commanding presence. With fearless intrepidity, he encountered and mastered the wildest colts in the country side, and although most of his bones had been broken—some of them repeatedly—and his skull wore a deep incision which had been made by the iron-clad hoof of a savager, as it lashed out, his spirit was unbroken, and through a long series of years he bore a charmed existence.

Wullie was a Presbyterian, and though it would be hardly correct to say that his attendance upon ordinances was as regular as it might have been, still he had a way with him of disarming severe, if deserved criticism. Upon one occasion, when seriously admonished by the Minister, the answer he made was just what was to be expected, and it greatly pleased the neighbourhood. It was as follows:--

"Ah admit it āāl sir, Ah admit it āāl; but if Ah divn't come to hear you, Ah never gan to hear onybody else."

When he did go to Church, he preferred to be a doorkeeper, which here means that he liked better to sit in one of the back pews, than near the pulpit, among the elders and the grave greyheads of the congregation. He was, in the main, fairly attentive in his devotions, and in listening to the word as it was sounded forth, only, it was a pleasure to him from time to time—for the King does not always wear his crown, as Pascal says—quietly to draw the attention of the more volatile part of the congregation sitting near him, to his pearlies and his blue waistcoat. At these seasons, it is to be feared that a good deal of the sermon was lost upon the young people and upon himself.

The father of a large family, Wullie always saw to it that his children attended the Church and Sunday School. It was a fine sight to see these children come early on a Sunday morning, and mingle with the others. They had great big blue eyes, silken hair as white as flax, and looked as though lost in wonderland. They were just Wullie all over, with a dash of their mother, who had a genteel and tender strain

about her, and however wild they might be at home, they never occasioned any trouble when away from it.

As Wullie's children came into the world, and in due time had to be baptised, their father was always reluctant to pay a visit to the minister's study for the purpose of acquainting him with the service he stood in need of. Something of a wholesome awe stole over him on these occasions, and he kept at a safe distance, as though apprehensive that if once closeted, he would be made the recipient of some excellent though not always welcome counsels. The minister understood him however, for he was a rare diplomatist in dealing with men and women. Accordingly, some Sunday morning, as he read the pulpit notices, Wullie being in the Church that day, he would make the following intimation:—

"I shall visit the families in the neighbourhood of Redesford on Tuesday afternoon, and at four o'clock will baptise in the house of Mr. William Aitchison."

Wullie listened to the intimation with a countenance which was sobered for the time being; a smile passed over the congregation,

which knew his ways and those of his spiritual adviser; when the service was over, and he was once more a free man as he got out into the road, he was well rallied; the baptismal rite was duly performed, and for a few Sundays afterwards he was exceptionally faithful in his attendance.

The village shoemaker was a great politician, and went in for all the points of the people's charter. He was a man of much tenderness of spirit, of undoubted ability, and after his meridian, was an earnest and devoted Christian, and a constant attender upon the means of grace. In his earlier days he had been well known as a cockfighter and a card player, but the time came, when among the things which he forgot, being behind, as he pressed forward to those that were before, there were these, and perchance some other things also. He was an enthusiast in encouraging people to do their best, and it is still remembered in the village that when the young minister was ready to cut short his lecture upon the Great Exhibition of 1862, apologising for the time he had already taken, the sonorous notes of the shoemaker, as he shouted out "Gan' on," from the front pew in the gallery, roused the enthusiasm of the

audience to such a pitch, that not a soul stirred till the lecture was finished.

These were times when any approach to what looked like heterodoxy was sternly repelled, and when a neighbouring minister, fresh from the schools, and but lately settled, began to tell his flock that it was questionable whether the world was created in six natural days, or that another deluge than that of Deucalion had covered the surface of the whole earth, great was the outburst of indignation. The shoemaker's shop was one of the many gathering grounds for the concentration and the expression of dissatisfaction, and the old farmer up the Sills burn was cheered to the echo by the shoemaker and all assembled, when, rising to the height of sublime fervour as his soul was stirred within him, he shouted:—

"Will he make me believe that Noah's flood did not cover āāl the world? Nivvor. See'st thou man, doon to this vary day you can pick up the shells on the top of Ruberslaw."

Such a statement, however easily answered, was of course conclusive, and the heresy, together with the audacious innovator declared to be put out of court forthwith.

The village blacksmith was a man of few words, but of acute observation, and of not a little humour. He was ably assisted in his work by his sons, and at the end of the day, while the anvil of the smithy rang merrily with the ponderous blows of the fore hammer, succeeded by the more rapid strokes and the tenor notes of the little one, the crowd invariably gathered, and practical joking often went on. The blacksmith was a Presbyterian, and with his family was regular in his church attendance. He had been in the habit of going to Birdhope-craig, which was five miles further west than the village, before a church had been erected at Otterburn, and he continued his church connexion there. He brought up a family—the daughters being the village dressmakers—and one of his sons did so well for himself and for the Dominion of Canada, where he became Administrator of a great railway system, that he received the accolade of knighthood and became Sir Joseph of Montreal.

As the blacksmith grew old he became wonderfully tender-hearted, and it was pathetic to see how kind he was to the wife of his youth, and how he helped her in every way he could. They kept a cow, and

when it was at the grass, the old couple might be seen slowly walking up the road to the field at milking time, the blacksmith carrying the milk pail and having a shepherd's plaid wrapped about him, while his wife walked by his side. Once over the stile, and into the field, where the cow was always waiting their arrival, the milking process was gone through, and then the venerable pair returned even as they went, the old man carrying the pail of reamy milk, his wife taking an occasional turn.

For a long time the village had no certified medical man, the healing art being practised by Thomas Gillespie, who, while acting as the only doctor in Redesdale, was at the same time the only cleaner of clocks and watches there was in the dale. In the vernacular, Gillespie commonly went under the name of "Aād Fittie," an epithet probably applied to him by native wit, because he introspected the mechanism of men and women and time pieces together. Once upon a time he had been married, his wife discharging the duties of what in France is styled a *Sage-femme*. A term so polite as this was far beyond the tongues of the villagers, who styled her "The Howdy." Summoned one day in hot

haste to a scene of domestic cataclysm, and riding on a pillion behind the person who had galloped in search of her services, as the attempt was made to cross the Rede when in flood, she was swept off the pillion and was drowned. On her husband being fetched, he refused to believe that she was dead, and rubbed the body all over with salt, maintaining that she would soon return to consciousness. Alas, however, the vital spark had fled, and he was left disconsolate.

Gillespie was known by some as "The Infidel." Having a memory stored with tradition, and possessing extensive information in many branches of art and science, his intellectual faculties somehow had received a twist from the French Revolution and the writings of Thomas Paine. As he resided in the locality for upwards of half-a-century, and was not slow to let it be known that though no doubt there was "something abune," still he did not believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, it was hardly to be wondered that his ideas found lodgment in a certain class of mind. The infection never spread to any extent however, and before long the cult died out. The minister, who, when a student of divinity, had grappled successfully with not a few desperate infidels,

when he was at first allowed, and then made welcome to visit the wards of the prison at Glasgow, never gave Gillespie up, and worked earnestly for his conversion. At one time he gave great offence, when "Aād Fittie" was very ill and more than ordinarily blatant with his blasphemies, the neighbours looking upon him for death, by declaring that he wasn't ill enough to die. It was as he had said, however, for Gillespie recovered, and became a humble believer, like Thomas Paine himself, before arriving at the great divide, which he reached at the age of ninety.

The first regular practitioner in the village was Dr. David Dunbar, a Scotsman, who was reputed to have walked the Edinburgh hospitals. For a number of years he remained in the place, but while "Davie's" genial presence was welcomed in sick chambers upon King Soloman's principle that "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine," it was always considered that he never had any particular confidence in his powers of diagnosis or general professional skill. Apart from the mysteries of midwifery—and the people maintained that it was usual for him to allow the young life to make its appearance before showing himself—he invariably

asked the patients, or those attending upon them, what was considered best to be done, and prescribed accordingly.

To him there came in succession, two thoroughly competent surgeons, one of them a native of the village, and the other the son of a high-class surgeon and professor in the Scottish metropolis. The services of these gentlemen were sought far and wide. He, to whom reference was last made, after having reached the allotted span, died where he had spent the whole of his professional lifetime, and upon his marble tombstone, affection carved the inscription:—

"For over fifty years the much loved and trusted physician of Otterburn District."

Mine host of the Percy Arms was a man of moment, and being vintner, farmer, brewer, and yeoman, as might be expected, held a good position. He was a man of marked features, and upon one occasion, when asked by a traveller how much it had taken to paint his likeness, promptly replied:—

"Wait till it's finished and I shall tell you then."

During the earlier part of his life, the inn was much frequented, as the mail coaches changed horses, and there was an ordinary every afternoon at four o'clock for the passengers on the coach from Edinburgh. The opening of the railway sadly altered matters. The coaches were gradually withdrawn, then they ceased to run altogether, and the village, with the inn, became stagnant to a degree. The landlord—a man of honour—gradually found himself in embarrassed circumstances, and when upon the point of arranging with his creditors—having already paid his servants their wages—the rural postman—himself a decayed landed proprietor—who brought the letters twice a week, delivered one at the Percy Arms, and this upon being opened, brought the good tidings that a fortune had been left by the landlord's brother who had been a surgeon for many years in Australia. The result was that the good-hearted vintner ended his days in comfort and in peace.

But while these, and a good many besides were to be found in the village, or in its immediate vicinity, having marked and distinctive features, there was one, mention of whom it would be impossible to omit. This was

Simon of the Waulk Mill. Simon could either dye or weave, or do anything required at the fulling mill; only, he generally acted as the dyer. But whether he drove the shuttle or dyed the yarn, he was always possessed of imperturable good nature, and morning, noon, and night, was in the habit of singing Mr. Wesley's and Richard Weaver's hymns. In the sphere of religion, he was what is commonly called a Ranter, and was a local preacher of the Primitive Methodist persuasion. Simon was unwearied in his efforts to do good among all sorts and conditions of men, and was as ready with a word of advice for the Squire, if he came in his way, as for Sally the Mugger, or the wastrel butcher of Lowchester. He was a man of transparent sincerity, was full of the bowels of compassion, prayed without ceasing, and hoped, down to his latest breath, that brands would be plucked from the burning, in which burning he had the fullest belief, and told men so, for he never hid his light beneath a bushel.

No one seeing him once could by any means forget him. Physical, intellectual, and moral individuality abounded in Simon all over. He had a large bullet head, which was covered

with a thick growth of hair, vying in its golden glory with the splendours of the setting sun, and cropped as close as that of Tommy Atkins. His eyes, constantly in motion, were of a heavenly blue. A huge scar, probably received when sharpening a scythe at mowing time, disfigured his cheek, and when to these features, there was added a large and powerful frame, he looked, for all the world, like a Scandinavian Berseker.

During the summer months Simon used to take his stand upon the bridge at the village early on the Sunday morning, and in stentorian tones, and to the great indignation of some at any rate among the inhabitants, urge sleepers to flee from the wrath to come. Occasionally it happened that uncomplimentary epithets were hurled at the unwelcome prophet from the upper windows of the houses, but in spite of opposition, he continued to deliver his message, and when he had finished, his voice might be heard half-a-mile away, as he made the woods and valleys ring with the songs of his Primitive Zion. No respecter of denominations, he was ready to worship with any of them, and when paying a visit to a parish church from time to time, he has been known to upset a timid young curate,

as in the fervour of his soul he gave full-voiced expression in the great responsive supplications:

"Lord have mercy upon us."
"*Christ have mercy upon us.*"
"Lord have mercy upon us."

Of Simon the dyer it was true, as of many a prophet both before his day and since, that he was not without honour, save in his own country. At camp meetings he shone like a star of the first magnitude, and thought nothing of walking twenty or thirty miles on a Sunday to keep a preaching appointment. Through a lengthened period the worthy man continued what was to him a work of faith and labour of love. While some might come to mock when he stood in the highway and lifted up his voice as he pleaded with sinners to repent and be converted, still, as happened with Goldsmith's Vicar, more remained to pray, for it was clear as the sun at noon day that his words came from the heart and were spoken with power from on high.

NORTHUMBERLAND: OTTERBURN—THE MANSE AND THE MINISTER.

CHAPTER VI.

The Manse Garden—The Visitation of the Congregation—Andrew Golightly's Pony—The Economy of the Manse—Bella of the Manse—A Week in the Woodside—The Minister—The Congregation—The Many-sidedness of the Minister—Perplexities—The Reverend Timothy Wearing—In the Minister's Study—"Lucy's Flittin'."

WE were all fond of the Manse, and although many years have come and gone since we left it, it is as fresh in our memory, and as strong in our affection as ever. It was not much of a house, as Manses go nowadays, but it served its purpose, and from the minister down to the servant maid, there was general contentment. It was well filled with books and children and substantial furniture, and there was about it that degree of order, and sense of refinement and quiet industry, which one likes to meet with in such a place. The situation was good, and the prospect was inviting. It stood

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND MANSE, OTTERBURN.

within a short distance of the battlefield where Douglas and Percy fought their big fight at Lammastide, "when muirsmen win their hay," and it was well sheltered by rising woods and noble trees and rolling heights. Facing the sunny south, it looked upon a pleasing landscape, where was both road and river and rows of elms, and well-tilled fields and fertile pastures, while the blue mountains stretching far away, suggested to us, while we were still in the wonder stage of our existence, the infinities.

The garden lent an added charm to the Manse. It had been intended for a burial ground, and was so designated in the trust deed. On second thoughts, however, the trustees made a garden of it—which indeed, every burial ground is since the body of Jesus was laid in the garden where there was a new sepulchre—and so it came to pass that when Presbyterians and Episcopalians died, their bodies were carried by the country-side to the parish churchyard at Elsdon, three miles distant, and there the Churchman and the Dissenter, who, though they might dispute about a heifer or a sheep, never quarrelled about their religion, were laid to rest side by side till the resurrection.

Next to his congregation and family, his garden was the minister's chief delight. He was a born gardener, and gardening was his sole recreation. The first flowers of spring, when winter relaxed its grip, were there in all their pronounced and reviving hues, to gladden the eye that had grown dull through the months of torpor and death, while in their turn, the phlox and the aster, the sunflower and the dahlia showed their virgin purity and golden glory till the frost came, and the sun western'd early. Roses of every name and hue and sweet-smelling shrubs and herbs, made the precincts of the Manse fragrant, and then it was that the musical hum of the bees, as they crowded in to sip the nectar to be found in the cusp of every flower was a perfect delight. Nor was the useful neglected at the expense of the ornamental. Fruit and vegetables of many kinds were grown with rare skill, and in summer, during the long service on the Sunday morning, many a young mouth watered for a few bunches of the large and luscious red and white currants which clustered round the gothic-shaped windows of the Church, full in the eye of the congregation, for the Church and Manse were contiguous, and the garden ran along the front of both buildings.

During the earlier days of the week, the minister, as a rule, was a good deal away from home. That was his time for the visitation of his flock, a goodly custom, which he faithfully kept up all the year round, till age and infirmity began to tell upon him. Indeed, the village doctor always maintained it was owing to his unwearied diligence in pastoral visitation that the labourer's task was so soon brought to a close, for he died at the comparatively early age of sixty-two. His funeral was a memorable occasion, and when he was laid by the side of four of his children at Elsdon, the rector—a descendant of the famous Covenanter, Robert Baillie, of Jerviswood, who, after being executed at the Tolbooth, Edinburgh, had his head placed on the Netherbow and his limbs scattered throughout Scotland for the Hope of Israel—was as deeply touched as any of the weather-worn and true-hearted farmers and shepherds who filled the churchyard, for both he and they knew they would look upon his face no more.

Apart from the general visitation, there were also seasons, occurring not too often, when a particular visitation was made in different districts of the congregation. Those in the immediate locality all met in some farm house or other, and underwent a process of catechising

on the fundamental truths of Christianity. These were great occasions, and being specially announced from the pulpit, were duly prepared for the people. They served the best of purposes in the way of confirming the faith, increasing the knowledge of the Scriptures, and enforcing the necessity there was for maintaining vital Godliness. At these times, the minister was invariably accompanied by one of his elders, sometimes by two, the presence of these worthy men, selected by the people from among themselves, for the purpose of bearing spiritual rule over them, heightening the importance of the visitation, and securing that the proprieties should be duly attended to. Old and young came within the range of the visitation, and while matured and ripened Christians often gave expression to the faith that was in them, and testified to their experience of the goodness and mercy of the Lord, in a most touching and edifying way, persons of tender years and of humbler capacity were generally not behind-hand in proving their acquaintance with the more elementary truths.

It must be admitted that certain dangers were sometimes associated with these visitations. A beetle-browed theologian, with all the points of Calvinism at his fingers ends, has been known

to do his best to put the minister out of court as he broached a new and favourite theory about Melchizedek, or transfix him upon the horns of a dilemma, as he questioned him upon the possibility of there being any relationship whatever between the divine decrees and the free will of man. At these times, equal to the occasion, as well as being a man of peace and good will, the minister usually smoothed over the difficulty by quoting, as a favourite formulary, the words of Scripture:—"Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong to us, and to our children for ever."

But far beyond all other wonders occasionally witnessed when catechising the congregation, was that produced by the conduct of Reuben Shield. Reuben, who was the son of a faithful and much interested elder, one of the founders of the congregation, and a farmer, had never been considered responsible for his actions from his youth upwards. Brought up in a godly home, the members of which were regular in their church attendance, let the weather be what it might, Reuben was as regular as any of the others, walking up the aisle to the family pew, close in the wake of an unmarried sister, who

was as much attached to the church as she was to her afflicted brother. It was commonly reported of him that he was particularly attentive in the matter of his private devotions both morning and night, and in church his sister, after finding the Psalms and Paraphrases, and the chapters read, and the text, invariably handed the book to him. What glimmerings of light there may have been beneath the dark pall it would be hard to say, but the way in which he acted upon the occasion of a visitation, went, at any rate, to show that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, God perfects praise. On this particular day, when the people had mustered, Reuben took his place among others to be examined, for it was politic to humour him. When the minister came to him, his intention was to say a kind word, and then proceed to the next; but as if anticipating it would be so, with great rapidity of utterance, he repeated the first verse of the twenty-third Psalm in the metrical version:—

> "The Lord's my Shepherd. I'll not want.
> He makes me down to lie
> In pastures green: He leadeth me
> The quiet waters by."

This sudden and unexpected burst of faith from such an one as Reuben Shield, was too

much both for the minister and the people, and the entire company was forthwith dissolved in tears. All his ways and doings were for good. No doubt the piety of his father's house, and the associations connected with the church, produced an impression upon his mind; and in what must have been an hour of intense crisis, God spake through him, thus glorifying Himself. But what we know not now we shall know hereafter.

The congregation was scattered over a wide area, sixteen miles by twelve, within the watershed of the rivers Rede, Coquet and Wansbeck, and the minister had to do all his visitation on foot, for he was never a rider. It was exceedingly kind of the Curate of the Parish, as he was galloping after the fox hounds one morning, to draw rein for a moment at the foot of the Manse garden, and shout:—

"I am so sorry, my good friend, that I have not got a mount for you to-day,"

and then immediately set off after the quarry. His kindness, however, was quite thrown away. Old Andrew Golightly, of the Cleughside, who had been a shepherd all his life, and rode a short-legged black pony almost as old as himself, once upon a time persuaded the minister that it

would be far better for him to ride one way when he preached his monthly sermon in the long room of the Bacchus Arms at Elsdon. In way of carrying out his benevolent design, he left the quadruped in the hands of the Manse boys one Sunday, after morning service, till their father was ready to mount. Needless to say, they soon put Andrew's pony through its paces, as had never been done for many a year before, and had it standing at the gate in a very composed and apparently acquiescent mood when the minister appeared. On being informed of what had happened on that particular Sunday afternoon Andrew observed, in so doing giving expression to a great though perhaps a self-evident truth: —

"A body never can tell what'll happen in this weary world."

And this was what happened. Before attempting to mount, the minister took stock of Andrew's pony. He first walked round about it, keeping at a respectful distance, and then getting up to it, he saw that the bridle was properly fastened, and the girths well tightened. Little did he think that the pony was taking stock of him all the time, and knew his man. That this was so, was now to be seen. No

sooner did he climb into the saddle, with a "Woa, woa, woa, poor beastie! woa," put his foot into the stirrups, and firmly grasp the mane, than Bucephalus, thereby revealing the natural corruption that was in him, put out his fore feet, lowered his shoulders and head, and raising his hind quarters high in the air, emptied the saddle in one moment. Once and again the minister made the attempt to remount, but it was all in vain, and so, leading Andrew's pony by the bridle, the unseated horseman walked down to Elsdon, never risking his neck again in a like fashion.

The Manse itself, in its several departments, was a busy hive. The children had to be taught, and that work began early. There was the deft-handed, kind, and thrifty house mother, to make old things look as good as new, do the best she could with a small stipend—for the minister had never more than £80 during the first twenty years he was at Otterburn—receive callers, and entertain ministers, when from time to time they visited the Manse. Occasionally also, hers was the somewhat delicate task of smoothing the way for a not very pleasant interview between the minister and some one either in the neighbourhood or in the congregation, and truth

to tell, with her gentler method, she made an admirable go-between at these times. Then there was Bella, the Scotch servant girl, who put the children through their facings after a truly heroic fashion, knew all about the family, and was as leal and true to her master and mistress as Ruth was to Naomi. In her milder moods, Bella used to tell the children how she came from the Lead Hills in Lanarkshire, and had wonderful stories to recount about Tinto Tap, and the wind blowing a husband to every lass, however black she was, if she had only a pickle siller. These legends produced so deep an impression upon their mind, that to this day, they never look upon the Lead Hills or Tinto without thinking of Bella, who black though she was, and without anything beyond what she had saved out of a small and hard-earned wage, had a husband eventually blown to her out of Lanarkshire.

In these times and about six miles distant from the Manse, there was an extensive district known as the Woodside. It was inhabited by numerous farmers and shepherds—pure border people—most of whom belonged to the Presbyterian Church. It was a storied land. Every cairn had its history, and every hill side and

bog had something to tell of mosstroopers and deadly feuds. The people of the Woodside were right loyal to their minister, and attached to his family. When the autumn came round, and the muirsmen cut down the sweet-scented hay and the corn, the children of the Manse were invariably invited to spend a week in the Woodside, and to them it was a halcyon time. They were permitted to leave home on the Sunday, and it was strictly laid upon them that they must return by the following Saturday night. When the eventful day came, they left home with one or other of the farmers after morning service, generally walking and riding in turns over the moors. From day to day fresh pleasures opened up. Sometimes, with a youth of kindred spirit —long since in his grave—they shut themselves up in one of the rooms of a highly cultured farmer's house, and taking down all the books about the Border Ballads, devoured them hour after hour, ever and anon breaking off their reading to discuss the situation, and what they considered the merits or demerits of the several characters. At other times they wandered far and wide, fancy free, taking note of things and places, till they left an impression upon the eye and memory, which remains as vivid to-day as

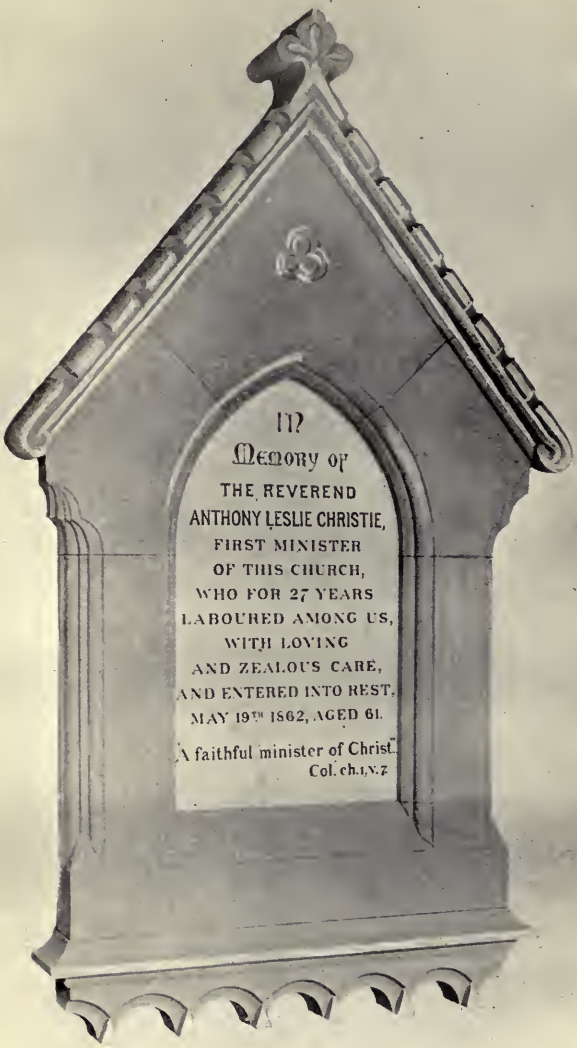
it was upwards of half-a-century ago. Nor were they likely to forget the clear and chattering Northumbrian burns where they caught the trout, or the thickly-wooded breaks, where they pulled the hazel-nuts and the sloe. Nor could it do anything but heighten the pleasure of the visit, when they assisted in tedding and trailing the hay, and after the sickle had been taken out of their hands in the corn field, because they cut their fingers, with rare intrepidity set to at once to bind the sheaves.

And then to the quiet or boisterous joys of the day, as these might be, there succeeded the never-to-be-forgotten delights of the night. In the better houses, the farmer and his wife kept to the parlour, and in these cases the children were in a state of wholesome awe, keeping up their best manners, as they had been strictly enjoined before leaving the Manse. At other farms, however, the heads of the house, with their family, and the servants, male and female, lived on friendly footing in the large kitchen, and the young visitors were never so happy as when they found themselves in the midst of the throng, facing the fire-place, in which a roaring peat fire burned. The jest, the story, and the song followed one another in quick succession. But

the joy of joys was when some grey-headed or vigorous man—for all the world resembling a Scald or a Viking—recited a screed of the "Battle of Otterburn" or of "Parcy Reed of Troughend," or "The Raid of the Redeswire"; or when, perchance, some of the melodies of Scotland were sung provoking to mirth or tenderness. Before they knew, the night was gone, and it was time for family worship. Four verses of a Psalm or Paraphrase were sung, a portion of the Holy Book was read, and reverently kneeling at the footstool of the throne of the Heavenly Grace, for the moment, everything about the evening's pleasures was forgotten, as the head of the house poured forth a simple prayer of thanksgiving and supplication, committing all present, for the night, to the care of Him, the Shepherd of Israel, who neither slumbered nor slept. Worship over, the yetlin' soon poured out its well-boiled contents, whether of new potatoes or porridge: on these, with plenty of milk, every one supped, and then to bed, to sleep a dreamless sleep. These were days indeed in which to live upon the Border.

Beyond everyone else, however, there was the minister himself. Along the Middle Marches, as a Presbyterian Minister, he was prophet,

priest, and king, close upon thirty years. In severe theological days, he was a warm-hearted evangelical preacher, and among the spurs of the Cheviots was as faithful in his pulpit work as in the visitation of his flock. To this, the affection of his people bore testimony, when, after his decease, they placed a tablet to his memory in the church, which bore the inscription, taken from one of St. Paul's epistles:—"A faithful minister of Christ." In his study Bible, which is still used by other hands, it is interesting to read some of his marginal notes, and mark the choice texts from the Psalms and Prophets, as well as from the New Testament Scriptures from which he preached. The closing days of the week were devoted to the preparation of the lecture and sermon, which were delivered without any interval, beyond the few minutes spent in singing a hymn. Saturday afternoon and evening were given to the "mandating" of his discourses, at it was called, a term which signified that they were committed to memory, and he generally paced the study floor into the Sunday morning, so as to be well prepared for his work, and thus delivered from the suspicion of serving God with that which cost him nothing.



THE MINISTER'S MEMORIAL TABLET.

On the Sunday morning, though late to retire, he was early astir, and everything led up, first to the Sabbath School, and then to the public service. It was a fine sight to look upon the congregation when the weather was good, and it was not the lambing time. The little church, with its gallery at one end, and shapely gothic windows, was generally well filled, sometimes indeed to overflowing. Dean Swift's aspiration that *men* would praise the Lord for His goodness, was uncalled for there at least, for men abounded, while the members of the other sex were exemplary in the regularity of their attendance. The congregation formed a body of well-built, stalwart, frank and open-faced people. Much home-spun cloth was worn by the men, old and young. Many of the older women wore black silk coal-scuttle bonnets, while the younger ones were attired in the best material, turned out according to the village dressmaker's latest fashion. During winter, such conceits as great coats were seldom seen, though some of the genteeler sort wore camlets of ample and flowing fold, which were fastened at the neck with large, and in many instances, singularly beautiful clasps. The shepherd's plaid was in common use, and the skill with

which the men could wrap themselves in it was wonderful to behold. Coming to church, many of them from long distances, the shepherds generally brought their dogs with them, and these sagacious animals, far from making any disturbance, lay quietly below the pews at their masters' heels till the service was over.

It was with much gravity that the minister, wearing gown and bands, walked along the aisle, and ascended the pulpit stairs, while the whole service was conducted with becoming solemnity. The congregation stood to sing, and while standing at prayer, turned their back upon the pulpit, resting the knee on the seat, and leaning over the book board. The attention given to the sermon was generous and respectful, for the people knew that the minister who had begun the congregation, and had made it what it was by diligence and kindness, was in full sympathy with them. An instance of this fellow-feeling frequently occurred during a hot Sunday in summer. Engaged, as most of the congregation were, in the open-air during the week, and having many miles to walk on the Sunday morning, it was not an uncommon thing after they had sat for a while, for the spirit of slumber to steal over them. At these times, the minister, with that

wisdom which is profitable to direct, never thought of uttering a word of reproof. On the contrary, pausing in his address for a moment or two, which was quite sufficient to awaken any sleeper, he used to say:—

"The spirit is often willing, my friends, while the flesh is weak. I observe that the heat of the day, and the long walk many of you have had this morning, have overpowered you; we shall sing two verses of a paraphrase, and that will break the spell."

Thereupon the congregation rose, after the precentor had tuned his lyre, and sang the two verses. The minister gathered up the threads of his discourse, and the congregation listened with attention till the sermon came to an end.

The people, indeed all the neighbourhood, knew the minister well. He made their wills, he reconciled their differences instead of letting them go to law with one another, he baptised their children, he comforted them in sorrow, and before the spirit duties were equalised, he did what he could to have the fines reduced, when the excisemen, commonly known as "the gaugers," caught any of them bringing untaxed whisky out of Scotland over the Carter Fell.

Besides this, he reproved them, when he discovered that at a fair or a funeral, some of them had exceeded, and although the farmer at Ravensyke, with his bead black eyes, said that he would "stop the minister's mooth wi' a pund o' butter," when warned by his neighbours that he was in for it that time as the minister knew all about his last drinking bout, both old Ravensyke and such as he, stood in wholesome awe of the man of God that was among them, because they knew that he was doing his duty, and that they were not guarding the deposit. The minister preached the word in season and out of season to farmers and shepherds, and shopkeepers and humble folk, who, perhaps, did not know much of the outside world, but could have stood an examination any day in the Bible, the Shorter Catechism, Thomas Boston's "Fourfold State," and the Puritans.

There was a time, it is true, when in spite of all the comfort he had among his people, he was in sore perplexity over their somewhat erratic behaviour. This was when New Lights and peripatetic preachers invaded the neighbourhood, telling decent men and women, as they did so, that the gospel had never been heard by them till they came to

deliver their message, and drew away some after them. This was a source of great trouble to the minister, for he could not make out what it was all about. He had not gone into the ministry as into a profession, but, because he had the conviction that he was called to preach the gospel of the Blessed God. To this end, after many struggles, he had studied at the University of St. Andrew's, had sat at the feet of revered professors in theology, and was whole-hearted in his work, after the manner of the Scottish Secession. The trouble was sharp, but happily it was of short duration. The weeping endured for the night, but joy came in the morning, for it was not long before the New Lights, moving in their proper yet peculiar orbit, removed to other spheres, while the wandering sheep returned to the old pastures and to their former shepherd.

The minister was, furthermore, not a little concerned, when plans were adopted for the erection of an Episcopal church at the west end of the village. The population being scanty, he felt certain that the Presbyterian Church would be injured. His worst fears, however, were belied. Two or three of the flotsam first slackened in their attendance, and then

ultimately withdrew, but the congregation was in no way materially lessened, or weakened in resource, while Episcopalian friends and neighbours found it much more convenient to attend a place of worship of their own persuasion, near at hand, than travel to Elsdon. Moreover, the erection of the church was the means of bringing into the district, as Perpetual Curate, one of the best of nature's gentlemen, and at the same time one of the most harmless and unassuming representatives of the Established Church.

The Reverend Timothy Wearing was the son of a much-respected Clergyman, the Vicar of Netherwitton, and as such, having been trained to familiarity with all manner of parochial work from his youth up, was the very best man that could have been appointed to organise a new place. Spotless in character, diligent in service —and there was no assumption about him—kind and affectionate in disposition, he could only win the good will of every one. For eighteen years he was the Curate of Otterburn, and then his health failing him, he died at the age of forty-five. In addition to a maiden aunt, two sisters lived with him, to all of whom he paid unremitting attention. About five years before his death he married a lady belonging to the

district, who bore him two sons and a daughter. Of these, the eldest son, a clever lad, was laid in the new churchyard by the side of his father, after being fatherless for six years. One of the sisters had already predeceased him, and the other, with the aunt, was not long in following him to the grave.

There were dark and anxious days also in the Manse—that old and early home of precious memories—as when two sons died within ten days of one another, or when the Good Shepherd folded two little daughters in His arms, carrying them to a safer fold than even the affection of earthly parents could provide. But there were bright seasons also, much too numerous to mention, when the joy was as the joy of harvest. Two of these were never to be forgotten. One was on the Sunday night, when the work of the day being over, all the members of the family gathered round the study table, Bella, as well as the rest, being there. At these times the minister was receptive rather than expressive. A few chapters of the Bible were read, verse about; the Shorter Catechism, Psalms, and hymns were repeated, and an examination was held upon the discourses which had been delivered in the earlier part of the day. It was

common also to take a general survey of the congregation, note being made of those absent, as well as of those who had been present at the services.

The other season was generally on a Friday night, when the minister was well forward with his work for the coming Sunday, and all was going well with the family and congregation. At these times the household was frequently called up to the study, and when that happened, it was a sure token that the soft south wind was blowing. In the times referred to, the laws of the Manse were somewhat Draconian, and the minister's study was a sacred and exclusive spot without any dispute. So much was this the case, that when anyone was summoned there, it was generally supposed that something had happened, the purport of which probably found its best and fullest interpretation from each one's general intelligence and self-consciousness.

Once in the study on a Friday night, after some general conversation, or it might be a tune, which the minister would play on his flute, it frequently happened that one of the children would say:—

"Father, will you sing us 'Lucy's Flittin'?'"

Unbending to the occasion—for ministers were both High Churchmen and dignified personages in these times—the minister would generally comply. It was a treat to hear the minister sing. His repertoire was by no means extensive, and consequently one could not but admire the skill and precision with which, as though he had been a Meistersinger, he adapted his long or common measure tunes to the most various-footed rhythm. Affection, with her tenacious memory, brings these scenes very vividly before the mind, while the strains of the music, echoing across the chasm of many multiplied years, sound soft and sweet as those of Paradise.

Seated in his study chair, stroking the fair hair of his youngest boy, after laying down his gold spectacles, the housemother meanwhile sitting at the opposite side of the fire, and the other children being disposed throughout the room, the minister would sing "Lucy's Flittin'," his only and his favourite song. As will be apparent to all, the song is full of pathos, describing as it does, one of those changing scenes of life which so many young women in Scotland and elsewhere are acquainted with as

from time to time they remove from one service to another:—

LUCY'S FLITTIN'.

"'Twas when the wan leaf frae the birk tree was fa'in',
And Martinmas dowie had wound up the year,
That Lucy wrapped up her wee kist and her a' in't,
And left her auld master and neebors sae dear.

"For Lucy had served in the glen a' the simmer—
She cam' there afore the flower bloomed on the pea—
An orphan was she, and they had been kind till her;
Sure that was the thing brought the tear to her e'e.

"As down the burn-side she ga'ed slow wi' her flittin',
Fare ye weel, Lucy, 'twas ilka bird sang;
She heard the craw sayin't high on the tree sittin',
And robin was chirpin't the broon leaves amang.

"Wi' the rest o' my claes I have row'd up the ribbon,
The bonnie blue ribbon that Jamie gae me,
Yestreen when he gae me't, and saw I was sabbin',
I'll never forget the wae blink o' his e'e.

"The lamb likes the gowan wi' dew when its droukit,
The hare likes the break and the braird on the lea;
But Lucy likes Jamie—she turn't and she lookit,
She thocht the dear place she wad never mair see.

* * * * *

"Ah, weel may young Jamie gang dowie and cheerless!
And weel may he weep on the banks o' the burn;
For bonnie sweet Lucy, sae gentle and peerless,
Lies cauld in the grave, and will never return!"

The song over, family worship followed, and before long silence reigned supreme in the Manse. Surely, memories such as these, twining round the heart, like the ivy round the oak, humanise and hallow life, furnishing withal a fresh incentive to run the race, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

NORTHUMBERLAND: OTTERBURN—THE SCHOOL AND THE SCHOOLMASTER.

CHAPTER VII.

Christopher Hindmarsh the Molecatcher—The Schoolmaster—The Scholars—The Mistress of Nethershields—The Barring Out—Jack Wheelans—The Northumbrian Troy—Ellen Montgomerie—Frank Thirlwall—The Schoolmaster's Vicissitudes—The Schoolmaster a Dying.

IT was the village school, and yet it was a mile distant. It was one of pure adventure, that is to say, the fees paid by the scholars were the only means of subsistance the Schoolmaster had. It was situated in the very centre of the battle field, where on a moonlight night in August, 1388, Earl Douglas and Harry Hotspur fought the famous battle of Chevy Chase. Unlike Scotland, which was only sixteen miles distant, and where John Knox—who made the Scottish people—had provided for each parish, a school and a teacher who could send the poorest scholars to the gates of the Scottish Universities if they were only "lads o' pairts," in the earlier

part of last century, Northumberland was but ill provided with instructors, and the village of which we write was no exception to a far too common rule.

As has been observed already, it was in the way of adventure that the village, or to speak more accurately, the Schoolmaster, began the school, and there is good reason to believe that for a number of years it was more by chance, than by prompt and regular payment that he got his fees. Thus, when Christopher Hindmarsh, the molecatcher, had his bill sent in about the beginning of April for six shillings and sixpence—the odd sixpence being for coals —the sum total representing what was charged for the previous quarter's tuition of Christopher Hindmarsh, junior, or young Kit, as he was invariably called, the way he dealt with it was something as follows: Putting the bill into a broken teapot on the top of the dresser, he would say:—

"It's frae the Maister. He'll hev' to wait for Kit's school brass till the end o' the year, and we'll see then how the moudy money comes in."

When the day came that the Schoolmaster felt himself in more easy circumstances, after years of arduous struggle, for he brought up a

large family, he has been heard to say that for a long time the customary dinner for himself, his wife, and children, consisted of tea and barley bread, and half a red herring apiece.

The Schoolmaster was a Scotsman, whose birthplace in Roxburghshire was also that of the poet Leyden. In his youth he had learnt the trade of a gardener at Cavers, the mansion of the ancient house of Douglas; while, besides being a handy man, he was a fair scholar so far as the primary rules, and a good deal more in mathematics, went. Solicited to come into England to try his fortune as a Schoolmaster in Northumberland, by a few persons of a very different spirit from that of Will Scott of Flotterton, who declared his children should never be educated lest they should be hanged for forgery, he consented, and began a hard and noble work, which he continued in one place and another for fifty years, and then weary by the way, and utterly worn out, he died.

The school was a large square room, and was lighted by four windows which looked to the south and faced the turnpike. It had a stone floor, white-washed walls, and a low pitched roof. A short passage led from the

school to the dwelling house, where the accommodation for a family was much too small; only, it was added to in after years.

To the school the children repaired from considerable distances. It was what is known now as a mixed school, boys and girls being taught together, and in generous rivalry it is fitting to say that they acquitted themselves well in writing and arithmetic, the Bible and the Shorter Catechism.

At the Rector's school at Elsdon, these words of Scripture were carved over the door:—

"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

At Otterburn, as much as at Elsdon, it was the ambition of the Schoolmaster to see to it that the darkness was past, and the clear light shining, while his practical way of dealing with dunces was terse enough, for it was nothing short of a free translation of the words *aut disce aut discede*, either learn or get out.

The scholars were mostly fair-haired and blue-eyed, and with well-shaped limbs they showed their Danish blood. It was interesting to note the difference there was between the children of the village, and the white-haired

boys and girls who came from the secluded farms, and lonely shepherds' houses among the moors. The village children were, as a rule, quick, fearless, daring, and full of life; the others were timid and backward before strangers, though by no means slow at learning. During the winter half-year—and summer and winter were the only seasons that were recognised—it was no unusual thing for big lads and girls, who would now be called young men and women, to attend the school for the purpose of improving their education. As many as twenty of these had been known to throng the front benches, and when that happened the Schoolmaster was in high glee, seeing that scope was given to display his native talent for teaching mensuration and land surveying, Algebra and Logarithms.

Occasionally the Rector, when riding past, would look in and say a kind word, while the Presbyterian Minister visited once a month and took a class. At these times, the noisy hive grew wonderfully quiet, and when the visitors had left, the Schoolmaster generally drew his chair up to the fireplace, and took a ten minutes' draw at the pipe, by way of obtaining some measure of relief from the tension to which his

feelings had been subjected. As for the scholars, further instruction was impracticable that afternoon, and after a decent interval, the school was dismissed three-quarters of an hour earlier than usual.

Very different was it when, as sometimes happened, a tall, buxom, well-favoured and loud-voiced farmer's wife paid the school a visit. At such a time, it was only with difficulty that the scholars retained their gravity, while, as could easily be seen, the Schoolmaster himself, entered into the humour of the hour.

"An' how are ye the day, Maister?" exclaimed the mistress of Nethershields, when, opening the door, she marched into the school, with a mingled look of Viking determination and maternal tenderness on her ample face.

"I juist rode up to the Waulk Mill wi' a bundle o' oo'," continued the irrepressible woman, who, half-an-hour before might have been seen on horseback, sitting between two mighty mountains of wool, "and when they were busy cairdin't, I thought I wad juist walk up and see how the bairns were gettin' on. I'm feared wor Andra is no' sae skeely at the buiks as he should be. He likes better to watch

the geslings than to larn onything, an' if he only has a chance to get among the yowes, there's nae flayin' him off to the school. It's varra different, Maister, wi' wor Nicholas. His learnin's never oot o' his head. We'll hev' to make a penman o' him." This making of a penman of Nicholas signified that it was intended he should become a clerk on the railway or in some merchant's office in Newcastle.

"Eh! what a fine lot o' lasses ye've getten," continued the genial soul. "I'm varra pleased to see you've so gude a school the now, Maister. I see weel enough that ye're laughing at me, bairns, but it's nae laughing matter. Them that learns young learns fair, they say, an' now's your time. Gude day to ye a', bairns, an' gude day to you Maister. I'm just goin' in to see the mistress."

Having thus delivered herself, *ex animo*, the honest woman would shake hands with the Schoolmaster, and taking up a basket she had left behind the door, containing most likely a couple of pounds of butter and a score of eggs, she went into the Schoolmaster's house to have half-an-hour's crack and a draw at the cutty.

In the times of which we write, the event of the day, so far as the school was concerned,

was the passing of the mail coaches between Edinburgh and Newcastle. These were the "Chevy Chase" and the "Blucher," the militant memories of 1388 and 1815 being thus kept to the front. It was an inspiriting sight to witness the coaches bowling along at a spanking rate over the well Macadamised road. The guards and drivers wore red coats and white hats, while the passengers sat behind four mettled steeds. It generally happened that the scholars had a quarter of an hour's recreation, when one of the coaches at any rate was due to pass. Campbell, a favourite guard, and a total abstainer, almost before the days of teetotalism, always gave warning of the approach of the coach by a vigorous tooting on his long brass horn, and as the scholars were often encouraged by the free-handed distribution of coppers to run alongside at their top speed, it is hardly to be wondered that the boys beat all others whenever there were sports in the country side.

When Christmas drew near, it was a fateful time for the Schoolmaster, for then was the "barring out." As has already been observed, a number of well grown lads were in the habit of attending the school in winter, and they were ringleaders in every sport as in every mischief.

Accordingly, it was great fun for them, and a sort of fearful joy to the younger scholars, so to circumvent the master as to bar him out until he had promised a certain number of holidays. A day or two before Christmas was generally chosen for the assertion of what was accounted the scholars' privilege. Either by wheedling, or by fraud, and at times, even by force, the Schoolmaster was got out, and no sooner had the door been fastened than bedlam broke loose and reigned for a season. After a time, negotiations for a parley were opened, and these well nigh invariably ended in the absolute capitulation of authority to the young rebels. Not a little, however, depended upon the master's humour, and if his scholars had given him more than usual trouble for some time before, it was within memory that the holiday was shortened by a day or two.

"*Dulce est desipere in loco*," it is pleasant to have a joke now and then, versed the Latin poet, and it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that at ordinary times the boys gave the Schoolmaster a good deal of trouble. Everyone knows how fathomless are the depths of a schoolboy's pocket—and Willie or his brother Ned, the village tailors, always put big pockets

into the boys' trousers. Marbles, whip-cord, knives, tops, pencils, and sundry other articles were looked upon as legitimate objects for barter, as they were passed along the form, almost beneath the teacher's eye. Needless to say, the Master's desk was generally fairly well filled with a goodly assortment of contraband. These, however, were small matters, compared with the sensation created one afternoon by Jack Wheelans, son of Anty, who had walked sixty miles to change the "chack" he had got for £6. Jack was always given to truant ways, besides other enormities. Floggings at home and at the school produced no effect upon him, for he only grew worse. Once and again the school was let loose to hunt him down, when the willing hounds, who knew his ways, and no doubt often envied him, generally ran him to cover in a plantation or a hay loft. He had kindly ways about him, had Jack, only his genius was misdirected. As a student of natural history he was without a rival. He could climb the tallest Scotch fir, and pocket the young crows. He knew where every bird's nest was to be found far and wide. Hedgehogs were his peculiar pets, and once when he found half-a-dozen mice, he tied strings to their hind legs,

and after harnessing them, drove them tandem to the speechless horror of the girls. He could snare a rabbit, or even a hare, and provide a dish of trout in no time, by guddling for them with his hands beneath the banks of the burn. There was no living creature he was afraid of, although a water rat sometimes bit his finger to the bone.

On the afternoon referred to, Jack was seated in the middle of a form at "counting time" as it was called; only, cudgelling his brains to solve the mysteries of arithmetic did him as little good as physical chastisement. Tired of his task, he put his hand in his pocket, and suddenly flung upon the desk a lively frog, *vulgo vocato*, a paddock, which at once began to leap up and down, upon being released from durance vile amid the miscellaneous articles which filled Jack's fathomless pockets. At first there was a shiver on the part of the scholars, then a shriek, and soon the entire school was thrown into commotion. This was beyond endurance, and the Master fired up. The taws hurtled through the air, and as they fell on the desk before the culprit, the words were roared out in the accents of a Stentor:—

"John Wheelans, bring these taws to me."

Seeing there was nothing left for it but to obey, Jack at once stood face to face with his preceptor, and got his punishment hot and heavy on both hands. The teacher's Scotch blood was hot—for Jack had set the heather on fire—and most boys would have winced under such a castigation as he received. Stoicism, however, was considered the correct thing in the school, and accordingly, though the colour came and went upon his face, he stood like a Red Indian at the stake, without moving a muscle. No one was surprised when Jack truanted for a week after this encounter with authority. Poor Jack! his truant ways as a boy, led to a vagrom life as a man, and what with sleeping in sheds and barns at night, irregular meals, all kinds of cuffings, and generally hard living, it was not long before he became a martyr to rheumatism, and did not prove an instance of the survival of the fittest.

Most schools have their fights, and this was no exception. The one best remembered was that between two well grown young men. Thomas John of the Fell House, was a bit of a blustering bully, while James of Peden's Law, was occasionally positive enough in his ways. To agree about anything they never could, and

nothing was left for it but to have the mastery declared on one side or the other by a bout in the ring. The school knew what it was coming to, and, as if by instinct, every artifice was had recourse to, that the Master might be hoodwinked. Accordingly, one day, when the dinner hour arrived, the entire school—with the exception of the girls, who hovered timidly in the distance—adjourned to the shady side of a plantation, a field's breadth off, and close to the time-worn monument, which was believed to indicate the spot where Earl Douglas fell in the famous battle. Once more assembled, and prepared for the conflict, it might have been supposed that the spirits of Douglas and Percy animated their modern rivals, as in rallying cries they challenged one another, threatening what each would do to his adversary. The younger among the boys shuddered as they saw the combatants strip and roll up their shirt sleeves above the elbows. Both were powerful as Highland bulls. James's flesh was pure white—white as alabaster—and the blue veins stood out on his beautiful arms like knotted cords. Thomas John's arms were big, brown, and sinewy. Both lads had huge fists and hard knuckles. James was deformed in his back and

lower limbs, but he had this for compensation, that his arms, like those of the Black Dwarf, were abnormally long. Thomas John was lithe and agile as any tiger, and could spin round on the ball of his foot like a teetotum. After a few feints they got to work, and the heavy blows fell thick. Each did all that he knew.

"Gan' in tiv him," cried Ralph Story, as Thomas John planted his fist on James's face, in dangerous proximity to his left eye.

"Weel hit lang airms," shouted Bob o' the Croft, as James smote his adversary a rousing blow on the mouth.

Thicker and thicker fell the blows. Louder and louder came the rallying cries of the supporters on either side. Yet more determined were the efforts of the combatants. The excitement grew in interest with every added moment. An eye was damaged here. A nose was incarnadined there. That strange ichor, proceeding from the human body, which fills the air when armies fight, and men, in passion, struggle for the mastery, was sensibly felt. Moments were as hours. Victory was hanging in the balance, when, amid loud cries of "the maister,

the maister," the Schoolmaster, bare-headed and breathless, was seen flying across the plains of the Northumbrian Troy. The girls, filled with fear, had run to tell him what was happening, and he, hurrying up, rushed in to part the combatants. Needless to say, the conflict came to an abrupt termination. Hector and Achilles were pretty well satisfied with what each had proved of the mettle of the other. The young men were too big for the Schoolmaster to punish physically—they had done that themselves—but they were sternly rebuked, and at once sent home. Next morning they returned to school, and although there were lowering looks enough, there was no fresh outbreak, and so much subdued were the animal spirits of all and sundry, that it was some time before the Master had trouble from this quarter, or indeed from any.

It must not be supposed that while the lads were frolicsome, and in some instances idle, there were no workers among them. Far from that, the Schoolmaster himself worked well, and many of his pupils, both boys and girls, showed marked ability, and acquired an education which, if not liberal, in the sense of being comprehensive, was at any rate thorough, and in

many cases was well applied in after life. Among the girls, none could hold the candle to Ellen Montgomerie. She had aquiline features, the sweetest brown eyes—tender as those of a gazelle—and wavy hair. Whenever she opened her ruby lips, the perfect regularity and pearl-like beauty of her teeth, indicated that she had a sound and hardy constitution. She had the air of a Duchess, the refined manners of the court, the purity of a Vestal, and withal, was so winsome and bonnie, that there was not a lad in all the school who would not have done anything for Nellie Montgomerie. Ellen's copy-book was always clean and neatly written, and in mental arithmetic and spelling she was without a rival. During the whole of her school life, she was the same quiet, gentle, clever girl, and when after a few years she left the small and always beautifully neat and clean home of her parents, to marry one of the best of the young shepherds in the dale, everyone wished her well. Her early home had abutted on Watling Street, sure index of the route followed by the Roman legionaries as they marched north. Her new home, when as a wife she kindled the first altar flame of devotion, was a sequestered cottage, high up among the heather and the bracken.

It commanded one of the finest prospects among the many fine prospects in Northumberland, and when from time to time friends called upon her, as anticipated, they found her house filled with the sunshine of content, and the wine of pure affection and spontaneous kindness. Children she bore, boys in plenty, each of them cast in the mould of the father's manly form, and with not a little of their mother's matchless grace, and then she drooped, and after a while she died, to the great sorrow of everyone. As they wrapped her in her shroud, and made the last tender and loving dispositions, before laying her to rest, when they looked in her face, they said it was as though it were the face of an angel. The shepherd buried his beloved wife at Otterburn, and to this day there is no man living, who was at school with her, but feels strangely weak for a passing moment whenever the name of Nellie Montgomerie is mentioned.

Among the boys, Frank Thirlwall was the Schoolmaster's favourite, and what does not always happen under similar circumstances, he had the good will of all the school. His writing was like copperplate, and this accomplishment endeared him greatly to his preceptor, who was famous for the Italian angularity and the

German flourishes of his caligraphy, as being fashionable then. Grammar and geography were by no means strong points either with teacher or scholar, but Frank did well in both, while as for arithmetic and all the branches of mathematics, like Julius Cæsar, he came, he saw, he conquered. He was gentle as he was diligent, and never found a place among boisterous spirits and mischief makers. Frank's father was a farmer, and as he had a numerous family, and the farm was not large enough to support them all, some of the sons and daughters went out into the world in various capacities. Frank was of this number. His superior education and blameless life soon secured him an excellent situation in a large colliery office, and there he remained for a number of years, trusted and beloved by everyone, till consumption claimed him for its own, and he returned to his native vale to die. Great changes had taken place within a few years. The family was out of the farm. The father was dead, and the widowed mother, with a couple of daughters, was living in a small thatched cottage. To that cottage, Frank, already much spent, went to linger for a little, and then pass away from all earthly troubling. An old schoolmate, and his

dearest friend, had returned to the dale a few years before as the Presbyterian Minister, and when Frank was carried home, the minister was often to be found in the sick man's chamber. Past memories cheered the patient sufferer, and hopes, which not even death could quench, grew brighter than ever, when now the night of death was at hand. Frank Thirlwall was as sweet-spirited as ever. No complaint crossed his lips, and without any ostentation, he committed his soul to the keeping of his Redeemer, like the Patriarch of old, giving commandment concerning his bones that they should be laid in the old churchyard where the dalesmen and the moorsmen had slept for centuries. Great respect was shown by all at the funeral, and before long a tombstone was erected over the grave, which bore the following inscription:—

Sacred
To the Memory of
Francis Thirlwall
of Monksbarn Hall in this Parish
and Buddlesfield Lea in the County
of Durham, who died 22nd October,
1867. Aged 31 years.
Erected by his comrades and friends
at Buddlesfield Lea as a token of respect
for his many good qualities, and regret
at his early death.

For thirty years the school ebbed and flowed like similar institutions, and then a change took place. The estate on which the school stood came into the hands of another proprietor, and as he introduced methods to which the Schoolmaster could not adapt himself—an unfailing sign of coming age—the desk that had known him so long was in a short time occupied by a stranger. The country side winced at the change, but could not help itself. Fortunately, a village a few miles distant required a teacher, and by favour of the trustees the old master secured the post. This pleased, while it suited him well, seeing that in addition to his scholastic duties, he acted as assistant overseer for two adjacent parishes, one of these being that where the new school was situated. For ten years he taught a new generation within sight of the Roman Station of Habitancum, and hard by the spot where the figure of Robin of Risingham, so wantonly mutilated through an act of pure spleen, stood. Then the School Board came into existence, and the Schoolmaster was again turned to the door. Resourceful to the last, he secured empty offices, at one time connected with great iron works, which at a much earlier period had made the

night bright as the day in Redesdale, and in these, for another term of ten years, he carried on a school. But it was hard and unprofitable work. Time's iron hand was pressing heavily upon the old man, and his wife—who had so bravely borne the burthen and heat of life's long day of struggle with him—was feeble with himself. For fifty years he had taught successive generations of Northumbrians. For forty-eight years he had acted as Assistant Overseer, and on ninety-six occasions—without a single break—he had placed the parish books before the auditor. For a time he had played the role of an auctioneer with ready, if somewhat bucolic wit, getting good prices. He had served as an elder of the church for a lengthened period. He had lifted up his voice fearlessly in times of political excitement and at general elections. He had made up accounts for humble tradesmen, measured Ned's heaps of broken limestone, and those of many besides, and then he laid him down to die.

An old pupil, living at a distance, made it his business to visit him on his death bed. How spent and thin he looked as he lay upon his couch! He brightened up, however, at the memories of olden times, and then he closed his

eyes when a short and simple prayer was offered up, commending him, soul, body, and spirit, into the hands of a merciful Creator and an adorable Redeemer. This over, he put out his hand, and said:—

"I'm glad you've come. It was like you to come. I'll never see you again in this world. Good bye. Good bye."

Thereupon he turned his face to the wall, and so the former scholar and the old Schoolmaster parted, on the verge of that great bourne from which no traveller hath returned to stay, save He, the Living One, who as the Resurrection and the Life, is the first fruit of them that sleep, leaving the glorious harvest home to follow in the fulness of time. Yet a few days, and the Schoolmaster passed away, to join many of his scholars who had gone that way before him, and with them, sit and learn, and stand and serve in the school of that Great Teacher, Whose rule is love, Whose teaching is wisdom, in Whose presence is joy, and at Whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

The Schoolmaster's name was James Ferguson.

Our task is completed, and it has proved more formidable than we at first anticipated. We are sensible that there are many imperfections and omissions in this work; but, so far as we are aware, we "have nothing extenuated, nor set down aught in malice." It has been an exquisite pleasure to traverse again in thought our native county, to pass in review some moving scenes in her long history, to say something of her natural charms, to rehearse experiences, to see passing in procession the familiar forms of men and women we knew well, who have left an indelible impression upon our memory, to make mention of men—men of renown—who were and are past-masters in whatever they applied themselves to, and to challenge the Northumbrians of to-day, or any who may read these pages, to return answer, as these summon them in life and action to the better and the best:—"God helping us, where you have gone we shall follow."

APPENDIX.

Mr. RUSKIN at Sir WALTER TREVELYAN'S, WALLINGTON (p. 64).

Mr. Ruskin in Præterita—Vol. ii.—makes some interesting references to Wallington. He writes:—"I have no memory and no notion when I first saw Pauline, the Lady Trevelyan, who was to become the monitress friend in whom I wholly trusted (not that I ever took her advice), and the happiness of her own life was certainly increased by my books and me. Sir Walter, being a thorough botanist, and interested in pure science generally, did not hunt, and was benevolently useful, as a landlord should be in his county. I had no interests in county business at that time, but used to have happy agricultural and floral chats with Sir Walter, and entirely admired his unambitious, yet dignified stability of rural and celestial life there amidst the north wilds. Wallington is in the old Percy country, the broad descent of main valley leading down by Otterburn from the Cheviots. An ugly house enough it was, and somewhat bare and wild, looking down a slope of rough wide field to a burn, the Wansbeck, neither bright nor

rapid, but with a ledge or two of sandstone to drop over or lean against in pools; bits of crag in the distance, worth driving to for a sight of the sweeps of moor around them, breaths of breeze from Carter Hill. There were no children of its own in Wallington, but Lady Trevelyan's little niece, Constance Hilliard, nine years old when I first saw her there, glittered about the place in an extremely quaint and wily way, talking to me a little like her aunt. Afterwards her mother and she at their ittle rectory home at Cowley (near Hillingdon), became important among my feminine friendships, and gave me of such petting and teasing as women are good for sometimes more than enough. But the dearness of Wallington was founded as years went on more deeply in its having made known to me the best and truest friend of all my life—*best* for me, because he was of my father's race and native town; *truest*, because he knew always how to help us both, and never made any mistake in doing so—Dr. John Brown. He was staying at Wallington, when I stopped there on my way to give my Edinburgh lectures; and we walked together with little Connie on the moors. It dawned on me so gradually what manner of man he was. This, the reader capable of learning at all—there are few now who can understand a good Scotchman of the old classic breed—had better learn straightway of the record he gave of his own father's life. . . . . Nothing could tell this loss to me in his death, nor the grief to how

many greater souls than mine that had been possessed in patience through his love."

The Lady Trevelyan referred to, was Pauline, daughter of the Rev. Dr. Jermyn. John Brown was the author of "Rab and his Friends;" he had fairly reviewed on its first appearance, "Modern Painters," in the *North British Review*, and at a time when Ruskin had not many friends among the great re viewers. Hence, probably, to some extent, his warm friendship for John Brown.

Sir Walter Trevelyan, Mr. Ruskin's friend, was for a long term of years the Chairman of the United Kingdom Alliance. When he became a teetotaller it was commonly reported that he poured his wines down the gutter; but there was no foundation in fact for the story. By his will, Sir Walter left his large cellars of wines to Dr. Richardson to make such use of as he thought fit for the good of the country. Sir Walter was an extreme, but at the same time a good and kindly man, of high culture, character, and moral tone. What his joy would have been had he lived to see a Local Option Bill introduced as a government measure can easily be conjectured.

SALLY THE MUGGER (p. 82).

One of my people, Mr. James Stokoe, who was born near Capheaton, and is a typical Northumbrian both in physique and utterance, has given me the following

living picture of Sally the Mugger:—"One morning when I was coming from Milkhope to Fairneyrig I called in at Sally the Mugger's to get a rest. She lived in a little white-washed, blue-slated cottage, just outside Harbottle, before you take the fell to go to Hedgehope. I had often heard of Sally, but had never seen her before. When I entered the house she was sitting at a little round table in front of the fireplace getting her breakfast. She had before her such a plateful of bacon collops and boiled eggs as I had not seen for a long time. The eggs filled a big bowl, and the collops filled a good-sized ashet. As fast as she finished an egg she flung the shells below the bars. She had flung the shells of seven eggs away when I left the house, and she was still eating away. Sally washed down the eggs and bacon with huge draughts of tea. Nothing would serve her but that I should take my breakfast with her, but I could not stomach that. Sally was sitting at the table with a great towsy head, the hair hanging over her shoulders, and the black cutty pipe was laying on the hob, just as she had taken it out of her mouth to fall to at her breakfast. An old four-posted bed stood in one corner, and in another the horse was standing up to the belly in hay, sheeted with an old bed-quilt, and it was also getting a generous breakfast out of a large kitful of good crowdy. There was very little furniture in the house. The two or three chairs were well-nigh broken in bits. A

cupboard, built into the wall, held Sally's china and other odds and ends, while an old wag-at-the-wa' clock helped to keep her up to the time of day."

The following utterance of Sally used to be widely known throughout Northumberland. Sally on one occasion went to Dunnshouses, near Troughend, after calling at Heatherwick, near Otterburn, and addressing the mistress, she said:—"Eh! woman; what a kind, canny body yon is at Heatherwick. She sooped (swept) a' roond about me, and oot below me, an' she never as much as asked me to get up yet."

Mrs. Fellows, wife of Henry Fellows, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, and daughter of the late Thomas James, Esq., of Otterburn Tower, has written to me in the following terms about Sally, after reading the Coquet salmon incident in the columns of the *Carlisle Journal*:—"Your account of 'Sally the Mugger' took me back years upon years—to a little girl in a white frock, curly hair, socks, blue shoes, bare legs, and a flight down the back stairs to see the same 'Sally;' but I remember her years after that. I used to wish at the white frock age that I could go with her! So jolly out of doors all day—in a cart."

"NORTHUMBERLAND HASTY AND HOT" (p. 107).

As an instance of a Northumbrian's choler, Mr. William Brown, a Redewater man, vigorous in the green

old age of 92, and residing at Midcoul, Gollanfield, near Fort George, writes as follows:—

"When we lived in the vicinity of Woodburn, Mr. Forster, of Broomhill, and Mr. Robert Renwick, Woodburnhill, were on very bad terms, because their stock trespassed on their respective grounds. Over this they quarrelled and fought, and Forster got such a pommelling that he summoned Mr. Renwick to appear before a magistrate, Sir John Swinbourne, at Capheaton, nearly twenty miles distant. My father had also to attend as a witness between the parties. After Sir John had admonished Mr. Renwick, he told him to check his fighting propensities, because if he came back again, he would fine him smartly. Thereupon, Renwick asked how much the fine would likely be.

"Well," replied Sir John, "most likely it will be a five pound note."

"Well then," answered Renwick, pulling out his pocket-book, "I may just as well give it you now, for I canna' keep my hands off him."

It is needless to say that Sir John refused the offer.

Mr. Brown also contributes an incident with regard to another Northumbrian farmer, which, although differing in its nature from that just recorded, is worthy of being mentioned.

"When Mr. Thomas Thompson took the Redlees farm, if I remember aright, immediately after the tragic

death of the previous tenant, the displenishing sale, which was quite the custom then, was held. Among others, Mr. Thompson was present, attired in a very shabby suit, with an old, bare, worn plaid over his shoulder, in the corner of which a small parcel was tied with an ugly piece of cord. His whole appearance resembled a poor shepherd, rather than the very wealthy farmer he actually was. As for the bundle in the corner of the plaid, those noticing it, would probably take it for a shirt, or such like.

The conditions of the sale were six months' credit on approved security.

After the opening of the sale, lot after lot fell to Mr. Thompson's offer, whereupon, the judge of the sale stepped along and quietly asked him :—

"Who is your bondsman ?"

In a moment, Mr. Thompson, laying hold of the corner of his plaid in which the bundle was tied, held it up, saying :—

"I have him here, sir, I have him here."

The bundle in the plaid neuk consisted of bank notes.

NORTHUMBERLAND PITMEN (p. 108).

Mr. Stokoe, to whom I have already acknowledged my indebtedness for his description of Sally the Mugger's cottage and breakfast hour, has also favoured

me with a conversation about Northumberland pitmen. Mr. Stokoe said :—"When I was a young man I used to go mowing in summer from one place to another, and on one occasion I stayed with an old woman at Greenside whose husband was a pitman. She kept two cows and a cuddy, and they were very well off, for the wife sold the milk to the neighbours, and as Greenside was badly supplied with water, the old man led it with the cuddy in the summer time during his leisure hours, retailing it at sixpence a barrel. She had also a big lot of poultry, hens, pigeons, and ducks, and used to sell the produce.

There were two sons, who also were pitmen, and worked in the pit with their father.

The house was well furnished, and one warm day when I came in for my dinner I looked through into the sitting-room as the door was standing open, and saw a clocker and a lot of little birds. She had some of the birds set on the top of the centre table, and I said to her :—"What hev you all thur in here for? Here's some on them on the top o' the table."

"Wey, man," she says, "thems two or three o' the little uns that the big uns was pegging. I thought I wad set them up there, puir things, to get a bit pick."

I says, "Here's the pigeons on the top o' the drāārs tae." They were gannin' cooin' back an' forrit in front o' the mirror, continued Mr. Stokoe.

She says, "Wey, man, they dae like to see theirsels, them.

The parlour end had a grand carpet on it, and the mahogany centre table had a cover on the top on't, and the mahogany drāārs had a nice white cover a' set with fringe, and a glass case on the top to hold books. She had besides, a mahogany sofa in front of the window, and some grand pictures hangin' on the walls. It was aboot as weel furnished a room as you could set foot in. They fed well—my songs—it was as good a lodging shop as ever I had.

Referring to this time, early in the seventies, when the times were good, and the pitmen were making plenty of money, Mr. Stokoe remarked :—"I have seen the pitmen coming home frae the toon—that is the name they invariably give to Newcastle—in their double-horse carriages on Saturday nights, loaden with their roonds of beef, legs of mutton, and great big grocery parcels. As a rule, each pitman had a rabbit dog, and did not consider himself fully dressed unless it was at his heels. I have seen the little boys in these good times playing pitch-and-toss with the half-sovereigns, just the same thing as if they had been ha'pennies. In these times the men were often in a state of hilarity, but never once did I see a woman the worse of drink."

BEESWING (p. 116).

In connection with the name of Beeswing, the following is extracted from the author's "A Minister's

Easter Mondays." It is part of a description of a tricycle ride between Dumfries and Dalbeattie, April 18th, 1892.

"What's the name of this village, lassie?" we ask as we come to a row of white-washed houses on one side of the highway.

"Beeswing, sir," was her reply.

"Beeswing," we say to ourselves. "Surely this cannot be the place to find the bell of the rare vintage of Oporto. When we were boys in Northumberland every farmer's house contained the portraits of the great racehorses Beeswing and Lanercost. Can this clachan in the Stewartry have any connection with Mr. Orde of Nunnykirk's, famous brown mare? Let us enquire." And so we made for the manse. But the minister was at Dumfries, and then we went to the smithy.

"Son of Vulcan," we ask, "how do they come to call this place Beeswing?"

"I'm no sure," replied the genial giant, "but there's an auld body there, an' she'll tell you."

Hereupon an old woman came up to my tricycle, and at her I put the same question. She was afraid her memory was not good enough now to answer any questions; but I reassured her, and dismounting, led the way into her cottage, and we, that is, Vulcan, the old woman, and myself, soon had the knotty point settled.

"Now tell me the right name of this place," I asked.

"Well," she replied, "I ought to know, for my father built the first house here, and he was the blacksmith. The right name is the West Park of Loch Arthur, but an auld wife used to call it Sclate Raw."

"But what about Beeswing?" I asked.

"Oh," said she, "a man cam' here and built a public hoose, an' put a galloping horse ower the door for a sign, and ca'ad it Beeswing, an' then the Post Office cam,' an' they put Beeswing on the stamp, an' sae its Beeswing now." Shades of Mr. Ramshay's Lanercost and Mr. Orde's Beeswing, how days speak! Last Tuesday I turned up the file of the *Carlisle Journal* for July, 1840, and found the names of both horses entered for the Carlisle Races, and it is only a few weeks since I read of the death of the purchaser of the great Cumberland horse when his racing days were over.

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