

YORKSHIRE ODDITIES.

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Yorkshire Oddities

INCIDENTS

AND

STRANGE EVENTS

BY

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"OLD COUNTRY LIFE," ETC.

"There be such a company of wilful gentlemen within Yorkshire as there be not in
all England besides."—*Abbot of York to Cromwell, 1556, Rolls House MS.*

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PREFACE.

A residence of many years in Yorkshire, and an inveterate habit of collecting all kinds
of odd and out-of-the-way information concerning men and matters, furnished me,
when I left Yorkshire in 1872, with a large amount of material, collected in that county,
relating to its eccentric children.

A friend, when he heard that I was collecting such material, exclaimed, "What are you
about? Every other Yorkshireman is a character!" Such is the case. No other county

produces so much originality—and that originality, when carried to excess, is eccentricity.

I look back with the greatest pleasure to the kindness and hospitality I met with in[Pg vi] Yorkshire, where I spent some of the happiest years of my life. I venture to offer this collection of memoirs of odd people, and narrative of strange events, as a humble contribution to the annals of the greatest, not perhaps only in extent, of our English counties, and a slight return for the pleasant welcome it afforded a migratory penman from the South.

PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION.

This book was well received in Yorkshire and elsewhere when it first appeared, and as it preserved notices of strong characters, records of whom were passing away, and some taken from Chap Books already become scarce, a new edition (the 4th) is issued thoroughly revised and only very slightly curtailed.

Lew Trenchard, *12th April, 1890.*

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[Pg 1]

Yorkshire

Oddities and Incidents.

THE GHOST OF TRINITY CHURCH, YORK.

Some years ago I heard mention made of an apparition said to have been seen in Trinity Church, Micklegate, York, which at the moment excited my curiosity. But as I heard no more about it, it passed out of my mind.

In 1869 I was invited to deliver a lecture at Middlesborough, when I met a clergyman who introduced himself to me as an old acquaintance. We had not met for some years, and then he had been a boy at school. About a week after I left Middlesborough I received from him the following letter:—

I.

"Easter Sunday Evening, 1869.

"Dear Mr. Baring-Gould.

"I venture, from the slight acquaintance I am happy to have with you personally, and the deeper one I have with your tastes from external sources, to enclose for your perusal a narrative of a perfectly true event, drawn up by myself some few years ago, at the request of some[Pg 2] friends who doubted the truth of the circumstances therein related. If you have ever heard anything of it, and can help me in explaining it, I shall be grateful, as it perplexes me, as one always is teased when something which one cannot account for has been brought to one's notice.

"Mr. S—— is going in a few Sundays to preach at the very church in York where this took place, and this bringing again before my mind the spectacle I then saw, caused me to apply to my friends for the account I gave them, and I now send it to you. I could, if you are interested, supply some minor details, but better by word of mouth, if

ever we meet again. The only correction I should make is this: You will find that I relate a sequence of events, and I am not quite satisfied in my own mind that I have given the order of the incidents exactly as they occurred, and it is possible that I may have inverted them. At the time I was so startled that I was more intent on observing the figures than noting what was the succession in the scenes, if I may use the expression. Indeed, each reappearance was a surprise; and when I tried to recall each incident in the order in which it occurred, I found that though I could recall the appearance distinctly before my mind's eye, yet I could not swear to which scene preceded the other.

"This was the only occasion of my visiting the church. I confess the impression left on my nerves was not pleasant, and I do not think I should like to risk the effect of a repetition of it. Apologising for thus troubling you with my experiences,

"I remain, yours very truly,

"A. B.

"P.S.—The Incumbent, Mr. W——, has left, and another, Mr. M——, has now the living of Holy Trinity, Micklegate."

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The following account, dated 1866, was enclosed in the letter:—

"While staying in York at this time last year (1865), or perhaps a little earlier, I first heard of the apparitions or ghosts supposed to be seen in Trinity Church, Micklegate. I felt curious to see a ghost, I confess, if such a thing is to be seen without the usual concomitants of a dark night and a lone house. Accordingly I went to the church for morning service on a blazing hot Sunday morning in August last, with a girl about thirteen years old and her little brother.

"The east window of the church, I must explain, is of stained glass, rather tawdry, and of no particular design, except that the colouring is much richer in the centre than at the sides, and that at the extreme edge there is one pane of unstained glass which runs all round the window.

"The peculiarity of the apparition is, that it is seen on the window itself, rather less than half-way from the bottom (as I saw it from the gallery), and has much the same effect as that of a slide drawn through a magic lantern when seen on the exhibiting sheet. The form seen—I am told invariably—is that of a figure dressed in white walking across the window, and gives the idea of some one passing in the churchyard in a

surplice. I say a figure, for the number is generally limited to one, and I was told that only on Trinity Sunday did more than one appear, and that then there were three.

"But I can vouch for the larger number appearing on other occasions, as on the day I was there, which was one of the Sundays after Trinity, there were rarely fewer than three visible.

"The figures began to move across the window long before the commencement of the service, when in fact there was no one present but ourselves. They did so again before the service began, as well as during the 'Venite,' and[Pg 4] subsequently as many as twenty or thirty times, I should suppose, till the conclusion of the sermon.

"Of the three figures two were evidently those of women, and the third was a little child. The two women were very distinct in appearance. One was tall and very graceful, and the other middle-sized; we called the second one the nursemaid, from her evident care of the child during the absence of the mother, which relationship we attributed to the tall one, from the passionate affection she exhibited towards the child, her caressing it, and the wringing of her hands over it.

"I may add that each figure is perfectly distinct from the others, and after they had been seen once or twice are at once recognisable.

"The order of their proceedings, with slight variation, was this: The mother came alone from the north side of the window, and having gone about half-way across, stopped, turned round, and waved her arm towards the quarter whence she had come. This signal was answered by the entry of the nurse with the child. Both figures then bent over the child, and seemed to bemoan its fate; but the taller one was always the most endearing in her gestures. The mother then moved towards the other side of the window taking the child with her, leaving the nurse in the centre of the window, from which she gradually retired towards the north corner, whence she had come, waving her hand, as though making signs of farewell, as she retreated.

"After some little time she again appeared, bending forward, and evidently anticipating the return of the other two, who never failed to reappear from the south side of the window where they had disappeared.

"The same gestures of despair and distress were repeated, and then all three retired together to the north side of the window.

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"Usually they appeared during the musical portions of the service, and especially during one long eight-line hymn, when—for the only occasion without the child—the

two women rushed on (in stage phrase), and remained during the whole hymn, making the most frantic gestures of despair. Indeed, the louder the music in that hymn, the more carried away with their grief did they seem to be.

"Nothing could be more emphatic than the individuality of the several figures; the manner of each had its own peculiarity. I do not doubt that if the stained glass were removed, a much plainer view would be obtained. I think so, because the nearer the centre of the window, where the stained glass was thickest, there the less distinct were the forms. It was like catching glimpses of them through leaves. But nearer the edge of the window, where the colours were less bright, they were *perfectly* distinct; and still more so on the pane of unstained glass at the edge. There they seemed most clear, and gave one the impression of being real persons, not shadows.

"Indeed, by far the most remarkable and perplexing incident in the whole spectacle was this, that on one occasion, when the mother and child had taken their departure, the medium figure—the nurse—waved her hands, and after walking slowly to the *very edge* of the window, turned round *whilst on the pane of unstained glass*, and waved her arm towards the other two with what one would call a stage gesture, and then I most distinctly saw, and I emphatically declare I did see the arm bare nearly to the shoulder, with beautiful folds of white drapery hanging from it like a picture on a Greek vase. Nothing could be plainer than the drag of the robes on the ground after the figures as they retired at the edge of the window where the clear glass was, previous to going out. The impression produced was that one saw real persons in the churchyard; for though the[Pg 6] figures were seen on the window, yet they gave one the impression of walking past the window outside, and not moving upon the glass.

"No one in the church seemed to be in the smallest degree attracted or discomposed by all this, or, indeed, to observe it.

"I talked a great deal on the subject with Miss C——, daughter of the late Dr. C——, of York, and she told me that Mr. W——, the Incumbent of Trinity Church, would give anything to get rid of it, or discover the imposture, if imposture there be. She told me that he and his family had watched day and night without being able to find any clue to the mystery. Their house is in the churchyard and opposite the east window, and therefore very favourably placed for such an investigation. I am not inclined to think that the trees outside the church at the east end can originate the appearance by any optical illusions produced by waving branches. I could see their leaves rustling in the air, and their movement was evidently unconnected with the appearance and movement of the figures.

"A. B."

This curious communication led to my making inquiries, and I speedily heard of several persons who had seen the "ghosts" at a later date. Friends to whom I applied have sent me the following letters, written independently of one another. They naturally shrink from having their names published, but I can testify to these accounts being perfectly *bona fide*:—

II.

South Parade, York,
March 22nd, 1871.

"Dear Mr. Baring-Gould,

"I promised to send you an account of the ghost[Pg 7] at Holy Trinity, Micklegate, and I now forward you the enclosed, written by a friend on whose word you may perfectly rely.

"I heard another account a few days ago from a lady who saw it on Sunday, the 19th February last. She described the figure—for she saw only one—as being dressed in a shining white garment, and says that it crossed the east window twice, with a slightly 'skipping' step. It appeared to be outside the church, as she saw it distinctly through the stained glass.

"I have never seen it myself, though I have been several times to the church.

"There are four lights in the east window, and the glass of the two central lights is of a darker tint than that in the side ones. There are, however, narrow panes of transparent glass in each of the lights, so that a person passing across the window outside could be distinctly seen by anyone sitting in the west gallery.

"The sill of the east window is about five feet from the ground outside, and about seven feet from the pavement inside; about ten yards from the east wall separating the churchyard from a private garden.

"Yours very truly,

"R. T."

This is the enclosure alluded to by my friend "R. T." :—

III.

"Having heard from several people of the ghost at the Church of the Holy Trinity, Micklegate, York, on Sunday, at the end of September, 1869, a friend and myself made

up our minds to go and see if we also could be favoured with a sight of this wonderful apparition.

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"Well, we went up into the gallery, the only place whence they say it is to be seen. You may, perhaps, already know that the gallery faces the east window, which is filled with modern stained glass.

"I am afraid that our attention rambled somewhat from the service, for we were looking out for the ghostly visitant. However, we watched and watched, as we began to think, in vain, until at the very end of the second lesson, when, just before the beginning of the 'Jubilate Deo,' I saw a figure, I should say of a shortish woman, with something white folded over her, covering even her head and face, but still I could see what it was. The figure appeared to walk very fast across the two middle lights of the east window, from right to left (*i.e.*, from south to north), and seemed to be at some distance from the window.

"The strange thing is, that I saw it clearly through the thick painted glass.

"The whole thing happened so suddenly, and really surprised me so much, that for some time I could hardly get up from the seat or find my place at the beginning of the chant. Just as it disappeared my friend said, 'Did you see that?' To which, of course, I answered, 'Yes; did you?' that was all we saw; and a lady who was there at the same time, whom we knew, saw it also, exactly as we did, only apparently not with the same distinctness.

"Many persons have seen a great deal more. I believe that the figure is generally seen to walk across the window in the reverse way to that which my friend and I saw, and returns with a child, some say with two.

"We examined outside the window. It is a good deal above the ground, about five feet, I should think, and at the side of it is a very old gravestone, with no inscription on the headstone as far as I could make out. I believe it is currently reported that the apparition issues from that grave.

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"Some people thought that it might be a shadow caused in some peculiar manner by the trees that grew outside; but it was not, for the trees were cut down about three years ago, and the apparition is still seen, as it has been, I have been told, for a century.

"I have nothing to add, except that this is a true and unexaggerated account of what I saw."

IV.

York, *March 28th, 1874.*

"Sir,

"Owing to severe illness in my family, I was not able to reply to your note earlier. I will now try and tell you what I have seen and been told on the subject of the ghosts at Holy Trinity Church, Micklegate.

"A York lady, now dead, told me she remembered seeing it when a child, and that she once read an account of it in an old History of York: she thought the book must have been published in the seventeenth century.

"We now live in the parish of Holy Trinity, and attend the church regularly. A part of my family sit in the gallery, therefore I will tell you, in as matter-of-fact a manner as possible, what I myself have seen, and leave one of my daughters, if she likes, to give you her experiences.

"I must state also that the ghost is seen more or less distinctly as you happen to be seated in the centre or side of the gallery; as a rule, the former is the best place.

"As I have no faith in ghosts, I have been most wishful to have the matter cleared up. At present I cannot account for the appearance in any way.

"I went many times to the gallery in hopes of seeing the phenomenon, but was repeatedly disappointed. At last, one dull day, hopeless for the purpose as I thought[Pg 10]—rain was falling at the time—I was startled by seeing something.

"There are two east windows—one on the right, filled with common green glass, the organ in front of it. From the outside of this window I saw something move, and immediately a graceful figure of a girl of eighteen or twenty years crossed the outside of the stained east window with a light, free step. She was entirely covered with a fine lace veil which, as she walked and met the air, showed the outline of the head and figure; the features I could not distinguish, but could see a shade through the veil where they naturally would be.

"The veil was of a pure white, flowing back as a train as she walked. In two or three minutes the figure returned, the robe flowing back in the same way, and disappeared behind the organ window.

"The figure appeared to me to be decidedly outside the window, and at a greater distance than was possible for any one to be; in the first place, because the east window is high up, and therefore anyone walking past it, to be seen at all, must be at some little distance from it; and, secondly, because there is a dead wall within a few yards of the window.

"The pure white of the robe quite obliterated the colours in the window, but the lead work was distinct enough, and the figure appeared behind it The distinct outline of the figure is most striking.

"The apparition always returns to the organ window. I have seen this several times since the first. Owing to the dull day and the darkness of the windows, the appearance on the first occasion was the more remarkable. Two or three other figures also appear, but I never thought them as distinct as the first, and I thought the second and third might be reflections of the first. The two or three often[Pg 11] move quickly back and forwards with a dancing movement somewhat like the reflection of the sun on a wall, but taking the form of human figures. However, it was dull and raining when first I saw the apparition, so that on that occasion there could have been no reflection of sunlight.

"These appearances are sometimes not seen for weeks and months; then they appear once or twice on succeeding days or Sundays. No one can be sure of seeing them if they go to the church for that purpose. I do not believe the apparition takes place at one more favoured time than another, though some people like to think so. The present rector wished to abolish the 'ghosts,' and was advised to cut down one or two trees. This was done; all thought that the ghosts were banished. Ten months after there was a gay wedding; my daughters went into the gallery to witness the ceremony, and lo! the 'ghost or ghosts' were there also. They had not been seen for nine or ten months. That was the first occasion since the cutting down of the trees on which they reappeared.

"The Sunday-school children who sit in the gallery see the form so often as to be quite familiar with the sight, and call them 'the mother, nurse, and child.'

"The legend I have heard told of it is that a family, consisting of a father, mother, and only child, lived here once upon a time. The father died, and was buried at the east end of the church, under or near the organ window. After a while the plague broke out in York and carried off the child, and it was buried outside the city, as those who died of plague were not allowed to be laid in the churchyards for fear of communicating the infection.

"The mother died afterwards, and was laid in her husband's grave, and now, as in her lifetime, continues to visit the grave of her child and bemoan the separation. The child is brought from its grave in the plague-pit by the[Pg 12] mother and nurse, and brought to the grave of its father, and then it is taken back to where it lies outside the walls."

"L. S."

V.

The following appeared in the "Newcastle Daily Chronicle" a couple of years after the publication of my book, in 1874:—

"Sir,—On Good Friday last I went to Holy Trinity Church, York, for morning service, at 11 o'clock, and repaired with a friend to the gallery, being anxious to see a certain apparition which is said to haunt the place.

"The gallery is situated at the extreme west end of the building, and faces the east window, from which it is distant some 50 feet or so. It is said that in the aisle and body of the church nothing is ever seen. The gallery was full, but no one seemed to have come there especially for the ghost, and though many of them afterwards said they saw it, they were not in the least affected by the apparition, treating it as a matter of course, to which they were well accustomed.

"I kept my eyes fixed upon the east window for nearly the whole of the hour and a half during which the service lasted, but was not favoured with a sight of the phenomenon; although others saw it cross the window and return, and my friend, who knows it well, called my attention to the fact, at the moment, yet I could not perceive nothing. I therefore left the place as unbelieving as ever, and supposed that either I was the victim of a hoax, or that it required a great stretch of imagination to fancy that a passing shadow was the desired object. However, not liking to discredit the statements of many friends who were used to seeing it almost every Sunday, I consented on Easter Day to go to the same place and pew. The seat I occupied was not an [Pg 13]advantageous one, a large brass chandelier being between me and the lower panes of the window. In the middle of the service my eyes, which had hardly once moved from the left or north side of the window, were attracted by a bright light formed like a female robed and hooded passing from north to south with a rapid gliding motion outside the church apparently at some distance. The window is Gothic, and I fancy, from 20 to 25 feet high, by 12 to 15 feet wide at the base. The panes through which the ghost shines are about 5 feet high and about half-way between the top and bottom. There are four divisions in the window, all of stained glass, of no particular pattern, the outer on right and left being of lighter colour than the two

centre panes, and at the edge of each runs a rim of plain transparent white glass, about two inches wide, and adjoining the stone work. Through this rim, especially, could be seen what looked like a form transparent, but yet thick, (if such a term can be used) with light. It did not resemble linen, for instance, but was far brighter, and would, no doubt, have been dazzling to a near observer. The robe was long, and trailed. The figure was of course not visible when it had crossed the window and passed behind the wall. My friend whispered to me that it would return, must return, and at the end of five minutes or so, the same figure glided back from right to left, having turned round while out of sight. About half an hour later it again passed across from north to south, and having remained about ten seconds only, returned with what I believe to have been the figure of a young child, and stopped at the last pane but one, where both vanished. I did not see the child again, but a few seconds afterwards the woman reappeared, and completed the passage, behind the last pane, very rapidly. Nothing more was seen during the service, and no other opportunity presented itself to me for making observations. During each time, the chandelier prevented me [Pg 14] from obtaining a complete view but there could be no doubt as to the shape, a certain amount of indistinctness, however, being caused by the stained glass. On the reappearance for the last time, I saw the head, which was, I believe, that of the child, move up and down distinctly, as if nodding. The figure shone with dazzling brightness, and appeared to be at a considerable distance, say thirty yards or so, though at the same time as distinct as possible, considering the obstruction of coloured glass. Each time the level upon which it glided was precisely the same, and afterwards, on carrying a straight line from the spot in the gallery where I sat, through the part of the glass where the feet of the figure shone, and continuing that line (in my mind's eye, with all the objects before me, except the ghost, whose position I had taken good notice of), I found that it would traverse a thick holly tree eight or nine feet high at about four feet from the ground, and at two or three feet from the ground a low wall about four feet high, and would reach the ground itself in the middle of a gravel yard belonging to the back premises of the house, called the vicarage, at a distance of twelve or fifteen yards from the window. Any person walking between the window and the holly tree would barely be seen at all, much less be seen in the place which the apparition occupies; and any one on the further side of the tree would be almost if not quite invisible on account of the holly and other bushes and the dead wall. Any one about there at all can easily be seen from the many houses on all sides.

"If it were a shadow thrown upon the glass of the window it would, of course, be seen by those who sit in the body of the church as well as those in the gallery.

"It cannot be a reflection on the principle of Pepper's Ghost, which is produced by the figure actually being in a very strong light and appearing reflected on glass in a darkish spot. The lights both inside and outside of the church[Pg 15] at York which might be thought to produce the ghost, are precisely the reverse, and any figure required to be reproduced by reflection on the east window would have to be standing or walking in the centre of the aisle.

"For the above facts I can vouch, and I have no reason to believe that the following are either incorrect or exaggerated.

"It is said to appear very frequently on Trinity Sunday, and to bring two other figures on to the scene, another female, called the nurse, and the child. It is often seen as distinctly on a dark, rainy, or snowy day, as when the sun is shining. When I saw it the sun was not bright.

"The motion is even, not at all jerky. Sometimes it glides swiftly; at other times slowly. It cannot be a mere accidental reflection, from a door or window, for instance, for the figure faces different ways, according to the direction in which it is going; and it is not always alone, nor do the figures always act in concert.

"One of my friends, with a companion, has watched outside on the wall, where he had a full view of the whole place around, during morning service. The ghost has been seen from the inside while outside nothing was visible.

"It is said to have haunted the church for 150, 200, and some authorities say 300 years, and there are many pretty legends connected with it.

"One of the many traditions says that 300 years ago, during religious disturbances, a party of soldiers came to sack the convent attached to this church; that the abbess, a woman of great virtue and courage, stopped them, as they were entering, declaring that they should enter over her dead body only, and that, should they succeed in their sacrilegious purpose, as they afterwards did, her spirit would haunt the place until the true Church were re-established, and a convent built on the same spot. Another story relates that [Pg 16]during the plague, some two hundred years ago, a nurse and child died of the pestilence, and were necessarily buried outside the city walls, while the unfortunate mother of the child, at her death, was interred in Holy Trinity Churchyard. Here the mother waits and receives the nurse and child, weeping and wringing her hands before parting with them. The same scene is often enacted several times during the same day, and even during the same service.

"Whatever may have been the circumstances under which the ghost (if it is one, which it is hard to believe in these matter-of-fact days) commenced its peculiar promenade,

I would recommend those who have the chance to go to Holy Trinity Church, York, and see for themselves, though an audience of the apparition cannot always be assured. A ghost in broad daylight does no harm, frightens no one, and ought to interest everybody.—I am, &c.,

"H. G. F. T."

Finally the Rector of Holy Trinity, York, intervened; he wrote to the "York Herald":—

"I think the time has come when it is perhaps necessary for me to give a word of explanation in regard to this imaginary apparition. The fact is simply this: Any one seated in the gallery of the church which is at the west end, can see through the east window any person, or persons, walking in the vicarage garden. The wall at the east end of the church, below the east window, is too high to allow anyone in the body of the church to see either the garden or anyone in it. This fact explains at once the reason, how it is absolutely necessary for anyone to be in the gallery in order to see the 'ghost.' This is the real truth of the matter. What is seen is not a 'ghost;' it is not a 'reflection,' but it is a living being, or beings, walking in a garden. Of course the east window being of stained glass and of a rather peculiar pattern, a distinct form is not always visible. And I may say that[Pg 17] this simple explanation has been attested and verified over and over again both by myself and others. One argument of proof is all, I think, that I need give. The Vicarage House was at one time empty for about 12 months, during which time the 'ghost' was neither seen nor heard of, and then it was let to a person with a large family; and on the very first Sunday after the family took possession of the premises, I was told by a simple-minded youth that the ghost had returned, and five or six young ghosts with it. After what I have here stated, I need hardly say that all the sensational matter in regard to vivid lights, mother, nurse, and child, extraordinary displays on Trinity Sunday, &c., &c., is as pure an invention as ever was fabricated by a morbid imagination. And I will add that I sincerely hope that the people of York will not take the advice of one of your voluminous correspondents, and will not go to the church for the mere purpose of seeing this purely imaginative ghost. I trust that all who go will remember it is God's house, intended to be a house of prayer, and not a place for gratifying an idle curiosity."

This letter called forth a sharp animadversion from another correspondent who signed himself "Novocastrensis," to which H. G. F. T. replied:—"I have read Mr. Gould's accounts since I saw the 'ghost,' and find that though they differ considerably in the details from my description, in the essential points they agree with and corroborate it. I should like to state here distinctly that the story was not adapted for my 'own' or any other's 'purpose' from 'Yorkshire Oddities,' but is an unprejudiced, and to the best of

my belief, an unexaggerated and true account and description of what I myself saw. It is not my desire to raise a discussion, but the injustice implied in the letter is the excuse I urge for thus trespassing upon your space.—I am, &c.

"H. G. F. T.

"Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 6th May, 1876."

[Pg 18]

This provoked another letter from a fresh correspondent:—"Sir,—I was in York when the letters appeared in the *Chronicle* and the *Journal* about the ghost in Holy Trinity Church. A lady, a member of the congregation, who has frequently seen the ghost, gave me the following simple explanation. Opposite the window there is a cottage, in one of the windows of which there is a swing pane of glass. The tenant of the cottage can cause the ghost to appear and disappear at pleasure by simply opening and shutting it, thus causing reflected sunlight to fall on the church window:—I am, &c.,

"J. L.

"May 9th, 1876."

Another correspondent rushed into print:—"Sir,—though I am not one of those who can boast of having seen the York ghost, yet even to me the explanation published in today's *Journal*, in a letter signed 'J. L.,' seems utterly inadequate to explain the matter. The fact of a swing window opening and shutting might throw sunlight upon the church window, but it is perfectly clear that in such a case the reflection would not be confined perpetually to the same identical part of the window, the angles caused by the sun and the swing window being of course varied, according to the time of day. It strikes me that by those means the figures could not be reversed on their return as is always the case, according to the story. Again, the apparition is often seen in dull weather, when no sunbeam could be reflected. If the light were actually turned on to the stained glass, the congregation seated in the body of the church would be able to see it as well as those in the gallery, but they do not. I should like to see the matter explained. Yet a reason such as 'J. L.' gives for it is altogether unsatisfactory, and may be taken for what it is worth, which is not much, considering the[Pg 19] evidence against him, and the fact that his information is only second-hand.—I am, &c.,

"R. H. H.

"Newcastle-on-Tyne."

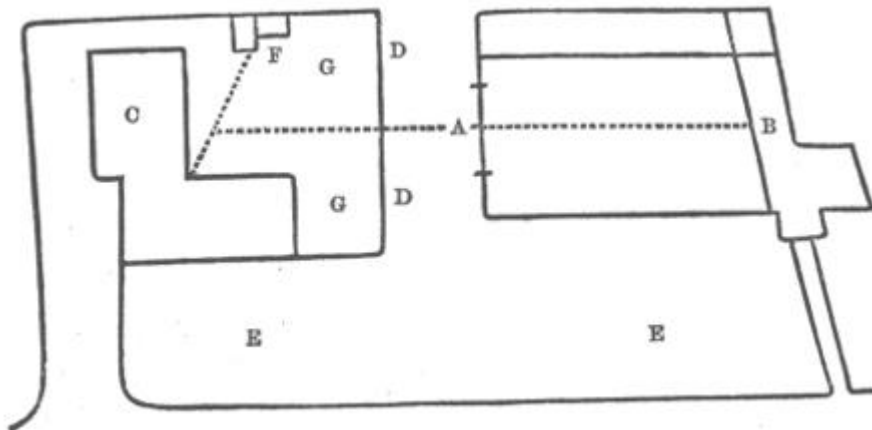
VI

"M—— Rectory, York,

"Aug. 11th, 1875.

"Dear Sir,—Having had the pleasure of reading your interesting book 'Yorkshire Oddities,' I recognised an old acquaintance in the 'Trinity Ghost.' Happening to have found out an apparent explanation of the ghost, I thought you would be interested in hearing what I know about it.

"In 1869 I went to school at Mr. Metcalfe's, the present incumbent of the church. For my first year I saw and heard nothing about the ghost. We used to sit in two pews in the body of the church under the gallery. In 1870 we changed to a pew in the front of the gallery and the one behind it. Soon after we changed our seats, some of us saw the ghost, and the next Sunday we looked for it, and most of us saw it. The attempt was made known to find out what the ghost was. In 1871 my curiosity being rather excited by the frequent appearances of the ghost, I and a boy of the name of Yewdall determined to find out what it was. The appearance of the ghost was, as one of your informants describes it, that of a figure in a surplice, and it always went across the window from left to right, and returned from right to left. The east window is a pattern window of a good deal of red and blue glass, and beyond the window there is a small strip of churchyard and then a wall. Beyond the wall is the yard of the old parsonage house. On the left hand side of this yard is the parsonage[Pg 20] which is rented to a few poor families who used to take in lodgers. On the other side are the offices.



A East window

B Gallery

C Parsonage

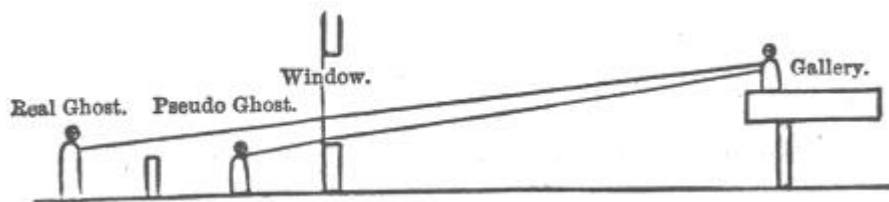
D Wall

E Churchyard

F Ashpit, &c.

G yard formerly garden

"As we used to teach at the Sunday School which was held in a large room jutting out from the parsonage towards the church, we often noticed the women and children of the house going across the yard to the ashpits; and it struck us that this might be the ghost. So we went into the church directly the doors were opened and went up into the gallery while another of us walked across the churchyard in front of the east window. Curiously enough, at the same time we saw him going across the window near the bottom, the ghost went across higher up. This goes a good way to proving my supposition, as is drawn in the following diagram.



[Pg 21]

"I have forgotten to state that the ghost was always seen best in sunny weather, but it is also to be seen in cloudy weather as well as bright sunshine. Usually one ghost appeared, but I have often seen two, and a few times as many as eight children with the two big ones. This was, I suppose, the husband and wife of one of the families surrounded by the children. In 1862 (I believe the date is correct) Mr. Saul was the Incumbent, but upon his death, on vacation of the living, the parsonage house was uninhabited. During this time I have been told that the church was delivered from the ghost, but the very first Sunday the new rector came the ghosts reappeared as before.—I remain, yours truly,

—."

The name I have not given, though the letter was signed.

[Pg 22]

PETER PRIESTLY, THE WAKEFIELD PARISH CLERK.

In the middle of last century there lived in Wakefield a certain Peter Priestly, who for many years was sexton of the parish church of All Saints. The then vicar was Michael Bacon, D.D., a tall, portly man, of a commanding presence, who wore a large bushy wig, as was the wont of many old divines of that date. He was a man of rather a warm

temperament, and was apt at times, when matters did not flow quite according to his will, to grow a little irritable, and whilst in that condition his habit was frequently to thrust his right hand in a testy, impetuous way under his wig. This habit destroyed the symmetry of that capital ornament, and made it protrude considerably on the right side; and this protrusion grew greater the longer the wig was worn.

The vicar's wigs were inherited and worn by the sexton, whose venerable and awe-inspiring appearance was much enhanced thereby. Mrs. Priestly in vain endeavoured to reduce the protuberance of hair on the right side, so as not to betray the origin of the wig. The horse-hair resumed its elasticity in spite of her efforts, and the congregation in the parish church were amused to see the stately Doctor in his reading-desk with a deformed wig, and below him the scarcely less stately clerk in a wig the counterpart of that of the Doctor. But what amused the wags not a little was to observe the fact that when the Doctor's wig was perfectly[Pg 23] symmetrical, instantly the sexton's assumed the most exaggerated inequality in the sides. The secret, of course, was that the Doctor had donned a new wig, and had given his old one to the clerk. But after a while the irascible vicar had succeeded in brushing out the tufts of his false head of hair on the right, and simultaneously the continued efforts of Mrs. Priestly had reduced the right-hand protuberance in the wig of her husband. Consequently, as one bush grew, the other shrank into itself. But there were points—like the equinoxes—when both wigs were alike.

Now it fell out that Doctor Bacon had determined to present himself with a new wig one Easter, and he had accordingly given Peter Priestly his old wig, which had arrived at its maximum of extension on the right-hand side.

Peter had heard it said that on S. Mark's Eve the spirits of all those who are to die during the year may be seen in the church. Half believing this popular superstition and half in doubt about the truth of it, and thinking, moreover, that if it might be so, he should like to know whether trade would be brisk for him during the rest of the year, he decided that anyhow he would go to the church and see what would happen; and not wishing to spend his time idly, he determined to occupy himself with lettering some grave-stones which he had not completed. The place in which he carried on this work was the base of the church tower, which was shut off from the nave by a large boarded partition, against which stood the west gallery of the church. The opening from the tower into the nave consisted of large folding-doors.

Now, according to the story, on S. Mark's Eve a train of all those who are to die before the ensuing S. Mark's Eve come into the church through one of the doors in their

winding-sheets, each carrying a corpse-candle. A ghostly[Pg 24] priest precedes the weird procession, and dolefully intones the burial service.

When Peter had finished his supper on that eventful evening, he said to his wife: "I think, lass, I'll go and do a bit o' my lettering; so gi'e me my lantern wi' a can'le in it. I happen shan't be so varry long; but I think I'll just go for a bit. Howsomever, if I should stop a middling while, ye needn't be flayed (frightened), for I want to finish them two stoanes."

It was not without some trepidation that Peter took up his place in the tower, and left the folding-doors ajar that he might look into the nave and see the awful train sweep in.

Peter was not a nervous man, or at least he did not think himself so, and he began his work, whistling a psalm tune. He was engaged on a large grave-stone on which he had already completed about half the inscription. It was standing raised upon tressels to the required height; and at this he worked diligently for a long while, with his face towards the east and the folding-doors, and every now and then he stole to the doors and peeped through into the nave. All was perfectly dark and silent. He returned to his work with lighter heart after each glance into the great dark church. He had taken the candle out of his lantern, and had put it into an old rusty candlestick, which he kept there for the purpose, in order that he might have a better light.

The church clock, with many premonitory groanings, had struck the hours of ten and eleven, and Peter still pursued his work. The eventful ghostly hour was approaching when the graves reveal their secrets. As this hour drew nigh Peter's courage began to fail. It flashed across his mind that perhaps the spectral procession would enter the church, not through the south porch, as he had at first conjectured, but through the western tower-door; in[Pg 25] which case it would be upon him, envelop him, before he knew where he was.

This caused great agitation in Peter's breast, and made him turn his head every now and then to see if anything were stirring. But all remained still; the only sound that broke the silence was the pulse of time, the old clock throbbing above in the tower, and that sound seemed to grow more monotonous and weary.

Twelve o'clock drew near, and Peter's heart began to beat quicker. "I arn't flayed," he said to himself, "but I'm varry hot; t' work ha' made me so, I reckon. There's nowt to be flayed at, for there's nowt to be seen. I'll just wait while it strikes twelve, and then I'll go home."

So on he worked, but his hand was not as steady as usual, and he made a blunder in the letter he was cutting; and this annoyed him.

"I doan't know how it is," he said; "I think I mun be getting ow'd, for my hand rather shakes, and I can't see as weel as I used." He wiped his spectacles and snuffed the candle which stood at his right hand, and drew it closer to him. At that moment the striking apparatus of the clock groaned and prepared for twelve. Peter looked round over his shoulder. The quarter began to strike, and then with a great whirr the first stroke of the ominous hour sounded—the second—the third. How slow they did strike—surely slower than usual. At each stroke he turned his head and glanced behind him. Twice he started. Surely there was a little sharp sound for a moment, like an unearthly hiss. He raised himself and looked about him. There was nothing.

He bent himself again over his work, and the clock had reached the eleventh stroke. The twelfth followed. He turned sharply round, and on the instant such a rush sounded close to his right ear—such a strange, [Pg 26]supernatural light glared suddenly through the tower—such a breath of hot air fanned his cheek—that he thought surely the ghostly train was passing. Over went the candle, and was extinguished. Down fell mallet and chisel. The old man stumbled out of the tower, rushed through the churchyard, and ran home, never looking behind him till he reached his door.

His house stood at the north-east corner of the churchyard. Opening his door, he ran through the room, and, pale and breathless, sank into his old arm-chair by the side of the fire. For a moment or two his mouth opened and gasped inarticulate words. Then, extending his trembling hand, he said to his alarmed wife, "Gi'e me my pipe, lass—gi'e me my pipe."

"Why, Peter," said his loving spouse, "whativer is t' matter wi' thee? Thou looks right flayed."

"Gi'e me my pipe, lass—gi'e me my pipe," he gasped again.

She went to the clock-case and took the pipe down from a ledge at the side of it, where it always rested when not in use, and reached down the tobacco-box from the delf-case against the wall; and bringing them to the old man, said, as she gained a closer view of him, "Why, Peter, whativer hast thou been doing? Thou'st burnt ommost half t' hair off t' right side o' thy wig!"

"What?" said Peter, with a sudden feeling of relief from his fright.

"Why, tak' thy wig off, and thou'll soon see," said the wife.

Doing as he was bid, he sat studying the precious wig. The great bunch of hair ruffled out by the vicar's hand was consumed to the roots.

Peter burst out laughing; the mystery was solved. But he made no more visits to the church at midnight on S. Mark's Eve.

[Pg 27]

Peter was remarkable for many witty sayings, but most of these have been forgotten.

He was lettering a grave-stone in the churchyard one day, when a physician came by, who, looking at the inscription, which was partly cut, said, "Why, Peter, you've spelt it wrong."

"Have I, Doctor?" said he, sharply. "Then how should it be?"

When he was told how to correct his blunder, he looked slyly into the physician's face and said, "Well, well, pass it over, Doctor—pass it over. I've covered up monny a blot o' yours."

He one day stood listening to a Methodist local preacher in the market-place. The preacher was attempting an oratorical effect, and exclaimed, "My brethren, if every field in the world was thrown into one field, what a great field that would be!" "Ah!" said Peter, loud enough to be heard, "if every jackass i' t' world was one jackass, what a big jackass that 'ud be!"

[Pg 28]

PROPHET WROE.

John Wroe was born at Bowling, in the parish of Bradford, Yorkshire, on September 19th, 1782, and was baptised in the old parish church of Bradford. He was put to school, but from want of capacity or of application he made such poor progress that when he left it he read very imperfectly, and he never acquired a facility of reading.

He was brought up to follow his father's employment, which was that of worsted manufacturer, combined with farming and the proprietorship of a coal-pit. In course of time his father gave him a share in his business, and articles of partnership were drawn up, but were never signed. John's natural incapacity for application to business probably obliged his father to place his brother Joseph in his room as partner, and John afterwards often complained of being hardly treated by his father and brothers. It

is evident, however, that this treatment he brought on himself, and that his father acted with judgment in not entrusting the conduct of business into his hands.

His grandfather is said to have declared that "the Lord would raise up a minister from among his offspring." To fulfil this prophecy Wroe placed his youngest son Thomas in a school to be educated for the ministry in the Church, but was prevented from applying to the Archbishop of York for ordination for him, as the Vicar of Bradford and a friend dissuaded him from doing so, on account of Thomas labouring from an impediment in his speech.

John's irritation against his brother Joseph brought him[Pg 29] to the verge of committing a dreadful crime. He procured a pistol and lay in wait for his brother, intending to shoot him, but his conscience reproached him, and he did not put his murderous purpose into execution.[\[1\]](#)

John and his father in course of time came to an open rupture about some wool that had been bought by the latter, and John determined to set up for himself. He applied for a farm in Tory Street, and the landlord would have accepted him, but his father intercepted the letter, and took the farm himself for three years. John, highly incensed, moved into the farm-house, and maintained his position there during all that time. His father wished to dispossess him, but not liking to summons his own son, he thought it better to suffer him to remain there.

On his way one night to Adwalton he was attacked by two men, who robbed him of eighteen pounds. The men were apprehended but not convicted, and John never recovered the money.

He took up wool-combing as a business, and engaged apprentices. One of his apprentices, Benjamin Lockwood, involved him in losses, according to his own account, and this led him to bankruptcy.

I give the next passage from his memoirs as it stands. It is vaguely worded, and I do not profess to understand it. "He was about five years an housekeeper previous to his marriage with the daughter of Benjamin Appleby, of Fasseley Mills, near Leeds."

In 1819 John Wroe was attacked by fever, and was pronounced in danger. Dr. Field, who attended him, advised Mrs. Wroe to prevail on him to settle his affairs. The thought of death so moved and alarmed Wroe that he entreated that some Methodist preacher might be brought[Pg 30] to visit and pray with him; but they refused, although his wife sent to four of them. She then asked him if she had better not send for his parish priest, or some of the clergymen of the Church; but he declined, saying it was

too late, and he begged her to read to him some chapters from the Bible; "and," said he, "I will see what I can do for myself."

He gradually recovered his bodily health, but not his ease of mind, and for some months he continued wandering about the fields with his Bible in his hand, sitting down under the hedges, and spelling out easy passages for himself; but still found no comfort.

Soon after this he fell into epileptic fits, and saw visions. In these trances he became completely rigid, his eyes remained closed—the eyelids as fast together as if they had grown to one another, and his tongue stiff in his mouth. In this condition he remained sometimes seven, twelve, twenty-four, or even thirty-six hours. After one of his fits, his eyes remained closed for six days, but he recovered the use of his tongue. The first of his trances came on in the morning of November 12th, 1819, at two o'clock, before dawn, as he was rambling in the fields. He says: "A woman came to me, and tossed me up and down in the field. I endeavoured to lay hold of her, but could not; I therefore knew it was a spirit." Could this not have been his wife, impatient at him leaving his bed and rambling about so early?

After this he was taken and put to bed. Whom by? Was it by this woman who tossed him about? In bed he remained twelve hours.

On the 19th November, six days after his shaking, he had a fit, and lost his sight and power of speech. On his returning to consciousness, he wrote on a black board, in rude letters and abject spelling, the revelations he had been[Pg 31] allowed to behold. It consisted of oxen running down a lane, tossing their horns, which frightened him to tears. "I thought that I walked about a mile among these beasts, until I returned to my former place, and there an angel met me, and he took me to a large place, where I saw a great number of books, placed on their edges, having gilt letters. There also appeared large altars, full of letters, but I could not read them. I begged that I might be enabled to read and understand what I had seen; and there appeared another, the letters of which were black print or old English, with the word Jeremiah on the top of it, and the letter L. I wrote on the wall with my fingers at the time, as I lay in bed; the people who were present observing me, concluded that I wished to write (I was dumb, for my tongue was fastened in my mouth as before); they gave me a piece of board and chalk, and I wrote Jeremiah, 50th chapter. I had never read this chapter, or heard it read, or seen it before, to my recollection; but when I came to myself, I could, without looking at it, repeat nearly every word in it."

On the 29th of November following he had another epileptic fit accompanied with visions; and on the 14th of December "I was again struck blind at about ten o'clock in

the forenoon, and remained more like a corpse than a living man for twenty-four hours, when I came to myself by degrees, but continued blind for five days. After many things, the angel said to me, 'Thou shalt be blind for six days, and on the seventh day thy father shall come to thee, and many people with him; he shall lay his right thumb on thy right eye, and his fourth finger on thy left, as a token that he remembers his former sins and wickedness; and if not, it will be a witness against him at the Day of Judgment, and thou shalt receive thy sight.' During the six days that I was blind my wife at one time was reading[Pg 32] a hymn for me; when she had read it I desired her to read it again; but before she had done so I fainted, and saw the elements separated, and there appeared before me a large open square; I saw our Saviour nailed on the cross and the tears trickling down his face, and at that time I thought he was weeping for the wicked people upon the earth. An angel then appeared holding a man by a single hair of his head, who had a very large sword in his hand, which he waved backward and forward. I then saw a pair of large scales let down to the earth, and a great bundle, which was placed in one side of it, which I thought was the sins of the people, and then saw a great number of weights placed in the other; but the bundle was so much heavier that the weights bounced out, and the scales were drawn up into heaven. Then the man that was held by the hair of his head by the angel brandished his sword six or seven times, as formerly, and disappeared. I afterwards saw Moses and Aaron, accompanied by a great number of people, attended by angels, and I heard such delightful music as it would be impossible to describe. There was darkness over the place soon after, and I lost sight of all in a moment."

He continued with his eyes shut for exactly six days, and on the seventh his father came and placed his thumb on his right eye, and his fourth finger on his left, whereupon John Wroe opened his eyes and then fainted away. As soon as he received his sight the people surrounding him asked if he really saw clearly. He found that with one eye he saw as distinctly as before, but with the other only imperfectly, and this he attributed to some one having three days before endeavoured to force the eyelids open.

Wroe tells us in his Autobiography that his father, placing his thumb and finger on his eyes in the manner indicated beforehand by the angel, filled every one with [Pg 33]astonishment; but from Joseph Wroe, his cousin, we learn that the father did this according to the express orders of John.

Samuel Muff, a spectator, says: "During the twenty-four hours that John Wroe was in his trance reports of the circumstance frequently reached my house, adding that he was likely to die. I accordingly went to see him, and he came to himself when I was in the house, but was entirely blind. On hearing my voice, he communicated many things

to me which I cannot at present recollect; but I remember his having said that he was blind, but that he would yet see. He wrote me a few lines in the course of his six days' blindness, desiring that I would come and see him at the time his eyes were opened, and which he asserted would be at the end of the six days; the letter was sent to me by one of my neighbours, who declared he saw him write it; and stone blind as he then was, it is the best piece of his writing I ever saw. I complied with his desire, and actually saw his eyes open in the manner already related. After his father had placed his thumb and finger on his eyes, he appeared to me for some time as if he were dead. He afterwards came to himself, sat up in the chair, and his eyes instantly opened. He and I were brought up within a quarter of a mile of each other, and were schoolfellows, but the master who instructed us never could teach him to spell or read, nor even to speak plainly."

Joseph Wroe, John's cousin, says: "The first time I met with John Wroe after the commencement of his visions, which was in the street in Bradford, I said, 'I have been informed that thou hast begun to preach.' He replied, 'Well, I do not know much about preaching, but I have begun talking, and people may call it what they please.' I said, in a contemptuous manner, 'I have also been informed that thou hast been visited with visions or trances; what[Pg 34] hast thou seen?' He replied, 'I have seen a great deal too much to relate here.' He appeared reserved, and would say no more. Some time after this a person came to my house, and inquired of me whether I had seen my cousin John, adding, 'People say he is blind, and has been so for three or four days.' I went to see him on the following Sunday, with many others. At his desire I led him to the door, and accompanied him to the house of a neighbour, named Abraham Holmes: it was this man who wrote his visions, and part of which was done on that occasion. We delayed there until it was dark, and I led him back to his house. When I was about to return home he laid hold of my hand, and would not suffer me to proceed until I had promised him to return next day, as he asserted that he would then receive his sight. I accordingly attended the same day; several persons did the same, and one of them said to John, 'Art thou not afraid that thou wilt never see any more?' He replied, 'No, I have not a doubt about it. I am as firm as a rock in the belief that my sight will be restored at the appointed time.' A few minutes before the time he requested that some person would lead him to a private place, where he might have an opportunity for prayer. I accordingly led him into the parlour, and withdrew; he soon after returned, and ordered a chair to be placed in the middle of the room, so that every person present might observe what was to be done. He then called his father, directing him to lay his thumb and finger on his eyes, and he did so. John said, 'You have done enough; take away your hand.' He then stretched out his legs and feet, his

head and arms fell back, and he fainted, and his countenance appeared like that of a person who was dead. He remained so for about a minute, when his eyelids began to move, and suddenly opened: he came to himself and said, 'I can see.' I inquired of him, 'How wast thou before thy sight was [Pg 35]restored?' He replied, 'I got a glance of that glorious place, and at that instant my sight returned.'"

The following night he prayed that he might be guided in the choice of a sect to which to belong. At about two in the morning he woke, and saw on the tester of his bedstead a black board, on which appeared in gilt letters, "A.A. Rabbi, Rabbi, Rabbi." He awoke his wife, and told her what he had seen. He thought at first that Rabbi was the name of a town, and that he was perhaps to go to that place and declare there what he had seen; but afterwards concluded it was a sign that he was to go and testify to the Jews. Afterwards he conceived himself to be commanded to testify in England for three years, "with his hat on his head," and at the expiration of that time to join the Jews.

Accordingly, in the same year, 1820, Wroe went to Liverpool by Huddersfield, to visit the Jews there. At Huddersfield he was well received by three Methodist preachers, who helped him on his way with money. On reaching Manchester he lodged in a house, and was asked by the person who let him his lodging whether he knew John Wroe, as he understood that he came from Bradford. Wroe having answered in the affirmative, the man continued—"What sort of a fellow is he?" John replied, "Some give him a very indifferent character; but time proves all things." He was then asked if he were John Wroe, and when he said he was, he was told that he should be heartily welcome to his lodging and victuals gratuitously as long as he stayed there.

The accomplishment of some predictions made by Wroe tended greatly to increase his fame and impress the ignorant and superstitious with belief in his supernatural mission. But it is as easy to account for the accomplishment of these prophecies as it is to vindicate the natural origin of his fits and visions. He predicted the speedy death of his wife's brother, and he sent his wife to her brother, Joseph Appleby, [Pg 36] to inform him that before long he would be dead. Appleby was at the time ill in bed: there is little doubt that the fright caused by receiving this message killed him.

In the spring of 1821 the cousin of John Wroe, who employed him as a wool-comber, refused to engage him or have any more of his badly-executed work, telling him he was more fit to be a preacher than a wool-comber. Thereupon John fell back in a fit against a bale of wool, and when he recovered called all to witness what he said—"Take notice of that young man," said he, pointing to the son of his employer, who had been foremost in his complaints and abuse; "he will never more do any work; he will

never again pay any man wages." The young man was immediately taken ill and died. In this case the lad was no doubt killed by fright.

On the 14th of August, 1822, came the final summons to Wroe to go to the Jews. As he was sitting in conversation with some dupes or believers he asserted that he heard thrice a voice which cried, "Go to my people Israel, and speak the words that I command thee." It continued speaking for about a quarter of an hour, and was succeeded by beautiful music. "He inquired of the aforementioned persons," we are told in his Autobiography, "whether they heard anything? and when they answered in the affirmative, and appeared alarmed, one of them said, 'The voice came from beneath the second bar of the fire-grate.' Wroe said, 'This voice is not come for my sake, but for yours.'" One regrets to hear this, for hitherto Wroe seems to have been acting in sincere good faith, believing in his visions; but on this occasion there is apparent deception. His neglect had lost him his livelihood, and he was obliged to prey on those deluded people who regarded him as a prophet, and to keep up the delusion had recourse to artifice.

He was now convinced of the truth of the great revelation[Pg 37] of Joanna Southcott. Already, in August, 1820, he had had an interview with George Turner, the prophet of that sect, on his visiting Bradford, on which Wroe had informed Turner that he (Wroe) was sent exclusively to the public, and that Turner was sent exclusively to the elect of the Society; and on this understanding Turner had consented to shake hands with him.

But in 1822 the Society of Joanna Southcott was in a state of expectancy, awaiting the advent of the promised Shiloh on the 14th of October in that year, and it seems to have entered into Wroe's head to take advantage of this, and announce himself to the Society as a prophet in place of Turner, who, he had the shrewdness to see, would be discredited by the failure of the appearance of the Shiloh. He was accordingly visited with trances, in which he saw Joanna "transfigured before him in the open firmament, in the day-time, with the Child in her left arm."

Accordingly, Wroe attended a meeting of the Society at Bradford on August 25th, 1822, and he announced: "You are expecting Shiloh to appear and be amongst you on a certain day; but I tell you He will not; and many of the believers will fall off, not merely one or two in a society, but whole societies will fall away. Yet I do not doubt that the visitation to George Turner is of God; and as a testimony of which, I will give in my name among you."

On the following Sunday evening he had one of his epileptic fits in the meeting, and lay as if dead. On recovering he announced that he had seen an angel, who had

commissioned him to act as prophet. But only two persons at the meeting believed in him, and the whole of the Society at Bradford never thoroughly accepted him. He then went to Almondbury, where was a meeting of the Southcottites, where also he met with indifferent success.

[Pg 38]

On Sunday evening he reappeared in Bradford, and adopted the following extraordinary expedient to impress the congregation:—Unknown to the members, he caused two men to stand, one on each side of the archway leading into the second room of the meeting-house—the house being divided into three parallel apartments, which opened into each other by an archway in each partition, thus forming a sort of narthex, nave, and chancel. Each man held a sword, and the swords were united at the points, so that the Friends, to enter, had to pass under the swords. Wroe entered last of all. Then the men pointed their swords at his breast saying, "The sword of the Lord is against thee." Wroe instantly fell on his knees, and prayed aloud that if his mission were not Divine, the swords might fall and smite him asunder.

Wroe then stood up and walked to the second archway, the men with the swords stepping backwards before him, still with their swords at his breast. Thus he stood and preached on his mission to the congregation, who were amazingly impressed at this solemn farce. When all was over, he bade those of the Bradford Society who believed in him to pass under the swords; and the great majority of the congregation did so. This naturally created a schism in the body.

Letters were written by the Committee of the Society at Bradford, by Wroe's direction, to the Societies at Ashton-under-Line, Stockport, Sheffield, and Colne, to inform them of what had taken place, and requesting them to delegate two men from each congregation to come to Bradford and examine the truth concerning the mission of Wroe. The Societies at Stockport and Sheffield declined the invitation, but in the following year nearly the whole of the body at Sheffield accepted the prophetic mission of Wroe, and some at Stockport believed.

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It was time now for Wroe to begin his mission to the Jews. He had a large following, and was provided liberally with money by his dupes, which he was not, however, suffered to touch himself.

After having visited Jews at Liverpool and London without success, on April 27th he embarked in the brig *Doris* at Liverpool for Gibraltar, in company of Robert Harling, of Thornhill, and reached there on the 20th of May. But there Harling's heart failed,

whether at the sight of the "abominable idolatries" of the people, or because his faith was shaken in Wroe, does not transpire. On the day following their landing Harling returned to England in a vessel that was ready to sail; but John, having visited and converted the local Methodist preacher, remained with him two months. This preacher, Cooke, was greatly exercised in spirit on the arrival of the Prophet; but having prayed earnestly to the Lord, as he tells us, "The Lord opened my eyes to see," and he became an enthusiastic believer.

On Saturday, the 31st, Wroe appeared in the synagogue of the Jews and delivered his testimony. The Governor of Gibraltar declined to permit him to preach in public; consequently Wroe departed, having been offered a free passage to England. Before he did so he had been turned out of the synagogue, and had invaded the Roman Catholic Churches, where he deposited his prophecies on the altar in Spanish. This is one of them:—

"I, Jesus from heaven, command thee, John Wroe, to warn the kingdom of Spain that if they return not from their wicked ways of worshipping images made with men's hands, and bowing before them, I will draw my two-edged sword against them, and it shall turn every way till I have destroyed them. But who is this that has caused them to err? They have hearkened unto their priests instead of [Pg 40] hearkening unto me. Now, I will tell you what I will do unto your priests: I will chase them as hounds chase a fox, until I utterly destroy them, and the remnant that is left shall slay your king, and they shall know that I have sent this unto them by my servant."

He began to address the Irish Roman Catholic soldiers on the Rock, but the adjutant turned him out. In the two months he was at Gibraltar he had succeeded in making many enemies. A woman threw a pitcher out of a window at his head, but fortunately missed him, and he was several times threatened with a pistol. One day that he was creating disorder in the cathedral the priests took him by the shoulders, thrust him out, and locked the doors behind him.

Wroe reached Liverpool on August 23rd, and then visited Ashton and Birmingham. On October 12th he again sailed for the Continent, and reaching Paris on the 16th, he began to preach his mission to the Jews in the Palais Royal.

From Paris he and his companion, William Lees, went to Strasburg, where they "attended the meeting of the Jews in their synagogue. These Jews, not understanding English, conducted them to the house of the Rabbi, who was not at home. His daughter could speak some English, but not sufficient to admit of her understanding the whole of what John and William wished to communicate. The Jews therefore requested to have the purport of the message given to them in writing, which was

accordingly done. They behaved very well. On the following day, Sunday, John was so ill that he was confined to the house, and sent William to the Hebrews to receive their answer to his letter. William found a man who could speak English. He said 'he had read the letter to the[Pg 41] Rabbi, who was very angry, and said he had power to imprison them for two years, but had pity on them, thinking they were deranged.'"

After visiting Vienna, they proceeded to Trieste. One would like to know what they thought of that glorious road over the Sommering Pass, and down the valleys of the Murz and the Save, by Laibach and the weird ashen-grey dolomite peaks of the Terglou and Dobratz; but no allusion to the scenery escapes these dull travellers, except that they "durst not proceed by night, through the apprehension of robbers, the road being over the mountains."

At Trieste they visited the Jews and a Roman Catholic priest, who treated them with good-natured contempt; and they went on to Venice, where they again testified to the Jews. At Verona they left a letter addressed to the Roman Catholic priests, on the altars. At Vicenza their letter to the priests was returned to them unanswered. At *table d'hôte* at the inn, where about forty gentlemen of different nations were present, "the spirit of the Lord rested on John, and he stood up and addressed them, and gave them two letters. *They appeared much astonished.*"

From Milan they made their way to Paris, distributing tracts and prophecies among the Jews and Catholics, and strewing them on the altars of the churches. Having deposited one of these prophecies, not couched in the most sanguine and complimentary terms, addressed to the French priest, upon the high altar at Amiens, they nearly got into trouble. They were arrested at Calais, and their baggage overhauled by the police, who had received orders from the Minister of the Interior to search them for papers against the Government. But the police-officer, having looked through their budget of tracts, observed, contemptuously, that "they were all on religious subjects," and let them depart.

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John then took all that remained of his tracts and denunciations of woe against the idolators, in Italian and French, and tore them into small pieces, which he scattered about the streets of Calais, saying "he was commanded to do so as a testimony against them." On the 17th December they embarked on the French mail, a sailing packet, and had a very rough passage. It blew so hard that they could not reach Dover, but stood off Deal beach, and a boat conveyed the mail and the passengers ashore. They had to pay fifteen shillings each to the watermen, exclusive of their fare in the packet. They were well drenched with salt water, but John cheered on William by

assuring him that before they reached home he would see the young woman who was to become his wife.

On reaching London, Wroe visited some of the Believers, and prepared the way for a future visit, when he would meet George Turner face to face. He assembled the Friends at Gravesend and Chatham, and prophesied before them, and William Lees at the former place saw the enchanting Cordelia Chenne, whom he afterwards married, thus fulfilling the prediction of Wroe in the billy-boat. The following year was an eventful one.

In January he received a communication "from the Spirit" that he was to spend forty days in a dark hole, and eat nothing but butter and honey, and drink milk. On the 29th he was publicly baptised in the river Aire, above Apperley Bridge, by John Brunton, of Bradford, in the presence of some thirty thousand spectators.

"Both sides of the river were lined with persons of various ages and denominations. The Spirit had given John a sign—that on his entering the water the sun should shine; for during the two preceding days the weather was extremely cold, with severe frost accompanied with snow. The Sunday forenoon on which the ceremony was to take place[Pg 43] continued very wet till noon, and when Wroe arrived at the brink of the river, the sun was still veiled. He walked down the river, intending to delay till the clouds broke; but the people, thinking that he was afraid of the cold water, roared at him, 'he dussn't go in! He's runnin' away!' They were all disposed to view the fun, and they endeavoured to stop Wroe's further progress. Some friends followed him, urging him not to disappoint the crowd, and he found that he had better put a bold face on it, and go in. The sun just then shone forth with a degree of warmth most unusual at that season of the year. The musicians and singers began to play and sing, and he descended into the water. But when preparing to do so, a cry was raised by the multitude, 'Drown him!' The same words were uttered by some young men who had placed themselves on the branches of a tree adjacent to the river. John commanded them, in the name of the Lord, to come down. One of them, named Hudson, who was formerly John's apprentice, cursed him. Immediately that part of the bank on which the tree grew gave way, and all were precipitated into the river. None of them were drowned, but some had five or six miles to travel home in their wet clothes; and Hudson, who had cursed John, died within a few days after. When John came out of the water the musicians and singers again performed."

The mob then set on Wroe with sticks, pelted him with mud, and he and his band of Believers were obliged to beat a precipitate retreat.

On April 17th, in the same year, he was *publicly circumcised*. This function was introduced and announced by the band of singers of Ashton-under-Line marching in procession through the village, playing and singing the whole way. In the evening the highly unedifying performance was performed in the meeting-house of the Friends, "in the presence of the congregation."

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On August 30th he was again baptised in the river Medlock, near Park Bridge, and on coming out of the river he stood with one foot in the water, the other on the land, raised his hands to heaven, and swore that there should be no more time—in imitation of the angel described in Revelation (x., 5, 6).

He seems now to have enjoined circumcision on all male adherents, and reports circulated that several children had died in consequence. "But," says the Autobiography, "these reports, with one exception, were entirely false." The child who died was the son of Robert Grimshaw, of Hurst Brook, near Ashton. The poor child died six days after the operation. An inquest was held by the coroner, and a verdict of manslaughter was returned against Henry Lees, the operator. He was, however, acquitted at the Assizes, as the medical evidence was not conclusive that the wound occasioned by circumcision had caused the child's death.

On the 11th September Wroe received a call to wander in the fields for fourteen days, and live on nuts, wheat, blackberries, hips, herbs, and water. But these, as may well be believed, did not satisfy his hunger. At the end of this time, which he spent in wandering to Huddersfield and Oakenshaw, he told his wife "he had a command from God that she should destroy all pictures, portraits, or likenesses of anything he had created or caused to grow, whether of iron, stone, wood, cloth, or paper, and everything of a black colour that could be found within the house." Which command she, like a dutiful but foolish wife, obeyed.

He then proceeded to Bradford, and on Sunday the 26th addressed a large congregation which crowded into the chapel to hear him. It ended in a riot. "John left the room, accompanied by Elizabeth Elsworth and Mary Brear, with whom he walked about two hundred yards,[Pg 45] when one of the females received a blow and was pushed aside. John was also forced along for some distance. However, they reached the New Inn, where there were two horses in readiness for John and his friend. Many of the people were about to enter, but were prevented by the landlord. Some persons already in the house said the two females were 'John's women,' and that he was picking poor people's pockets. The horses being got ready, the people in the house rushed out, crying to their persecuting companions, 'Now, lads, he's going!' on which

they closed the yard gate. John, however, escaped by another passage. Having succeeded in getting on the road leading to Great Horton, a cry was raised, 'Kill him! kill him!' He was then pursued by the mob, amounting to thousands, some crying out, 'That's the devil who says he's been living on hips and haws, wheat and nuts, for fourteen days!' He was surrounded, and prevented from proceeding. By being preceded by Joseph Brear, he soon after succeeded in clearing his way, and proceeding a little further. But he was stopped, the mob pulling his horse and tearing his clothes. Joseph again succeeded in clearing the way a little, but was presently knocked off his horse by a stone; when remounted, they proceeded a short distance. John then turned and said something to the people. John and his horse were then pulled down and struck; the bridle and girth were broken in pieces. He at length succeeded in getting on the causeway, and resumed his journey on foot; stones and other missiles were showered against him in all directions. Some of his companions entertained fears that he never would reach Horton with life."

The bursting of a storm of rain fortunately dispersed the mob, and the Prophet escaped. "On arriving at Moses Elsworth's nearly his whole body was black; he had also one of his eyes much discoloured, and received a cut on his[Pg 46] face from a stone." On the following day he obtained warrants against nineteen of the mob, who appeared before the magistrate, were bound over to keep the peace for twelve months, and had to pay all expenses.

Prophet Wroe now deemed it expedient to visit London. Accordingly he had a revelation in August, 1825: "Go thou to Tozer, and stand before him, and prophesy, with thy rod in thy hand, and say, 'Thus saith the Lord, the Lord thy God has showed thee many things; and for this end wast thou born. The seal thou hast received thou shalt be able to retain; but thy body shall go to the dust, and thou shalt put on incorruption at the first resurrection.... Thou shalt be a witness for Joanna, and thou shalt come with her, and at that day thou shalt be great unto the ends of the earth."

On the 28th August, John Wroe, with his faithful ally, William Lees, visited the chapel of Mr. Lindsay, a prophet of the congregation of Joanna Southcott in London. Lindsay received them cordially, and announced to his congregation that "Brother Wroe" was to have full liberty to use the chapel morning and afternoon.

Now Tozer was the right-hand man of Lindsay—his faithful witness, who wrote down the oracles that dropped from his lips. He was, in fact, to Lindsay what William Lees was to John Wroe. It was to this Tozer that Wroe bore the message given above, which was a speech wrapped up in the most flattering and complimentary language, but a snub for all that. Mr. Tozer was wont to designate himself, "The man clothed in linen,

with the writer's inkhorn," and believed himself, or endeavoured to induce others to believe, that he was the person spoken of by the Prophet Ezekiel (ix., 2); and when Mr. Lees appeared on the scene with a white surplice on and an ink-bottle at his left side it was a distinct throwing down of the gauntlet, and was[Pg 47] likely to lead to unpleasant results. Foreseeing which, Wroe wrestled in prayer before the congregation that "Satan might be rebuked within *them* walls that day." Then Wroe stood up and said with a loud voice, "Thus saith the Lord, There are in this place those whose places shall be taken by others who have mocked and despised them. None shall enter but such as are circumcised or married." Lindsay turned red, trembled, and knocked over his inkstand. Tozer got up and said, "Friends, what must be my feelings at this time? This day of the month, this day of the week, eleven years ago, I addressed 1500 people in this city, and since that time the visitation has been trodden under foot. Eleven days were spoken of by the Woman—take them to mean years—(see the book, and find it). God grant that this may be the beginning of the Gathering." The people answered "Amen." It is evident he was overawed by Wroe and Lee in his white surplice and ink-pot.

In the afternoon Wroe was again at the chapel, and again hinted that there was now a new outpouring upon himself, and that the old prophets were to yield to him. "Thus saith the Lord, Many in this place that are first shall be last." Tozer and Lindsay looked uneasy. "If you will sign for Satan's destruction, let a man be deputed to Ashton on the 17th of next month. Many dreams have been interpreted there; let the same be sent to those who profess to be visited, and see who will get an answer in truth."

Lindsay walked backward and forward, in and out of the room, whilst John Wroe spoke, but said nothing. At the conclusion of Wroe's speech, Lindsay, who was greatly agitated, said, "I have received an order from above to go and see the Living Skeleton now exhibiting in Pall Mall, at three o'clock to-morrow, and John, with others, must go[Pg 48] with me. And let so-and-so take his clarionette and play a tune before the skeleton, but for what purpose I know not."

John Wroe answered—"If the Lord hath commanded me to go, I will go; if not, I cannot go."

This Living Skeleton was Claude Ambroise Seurat, born in 1797, who was exhibited in London in 1825. His flesh had wasted completely away, and when he had attained his full height he presented the extraordinary spectacle of a skeleton covered with skin, alive and able to move and converse. A portion of Mr. Hones' description of him must be quoted here:—"He seemed another 'Lazarus come forth,' without his grave-clothes, and for a moment I was too consternated to observe more than his general

appearance. My eye then first caught the arm as the most remarkable limb; from the shoulder to the elbow it is like an ivory German flute, somewhat deepened in colour by age; it is not larger, and the skin is of that hue, and not having a trace of muscle, it is as perfect a cylinder as a writing-rule. Amazed by the wasted limbs, I was still more amazed by the extraordinary depression of the chest. Its indentation is similar to that which an over-careful mother makes in the pillowed surface of an infant's bed for its repose. Nature has here inverted her own order, and turned the convex inwards, while nobler organs, obedient to her will, maintain life by the gentle exercise of their wonted functions in a lower region. If the integument of the bowels can be called flesh, it is the only flesh on the body; for it seems to have wholly shrunk from the limbs, and where the muscles that have not wholly disappeared remain, they are also shrunk."

That this emaciated object, whose appearance in London created a sensation, should have been supposed by superstitious people, eagerly looking out for portents and[Pg 49] realisations of wild prophecies, to be sent into the world with some peculiar significance, is not to be wondered at.

Lindsay seems to have resolved to put Wroe's apostleship to the proof by a visit to the extraordinary phenomenon, then exhibiting in the Chinese Pavilion, in Pall Mall. The Living Skeleton was to have decided between them, and confounded him who was the false prophet and impostor.

But Wroe would not go through this ordeal: he slunk away, conscious, perhaps, that he was an impostor, and with superstitious fear of the Walking Skeleton. He escaped to Greenwich, where he pretended to be ill.

Lindsay, finding Wroe was not at the exhibition, pursued him to Greenwich, and an angry meeting ensued.

Next Sunday, Wroe again invaded the chapel of Lindsay, who began to prophesy against him, saying, "I say, in the name of the Lord, you shall shave!" Then John Wroe took the prophetic rod, and thrusting it towards Lindsay, thundered forth, "Dost thou come to defy Israel? The Lord rebuke thee, Satan!"

Lindsay was silent, but presently tried to create a diversion by setting Wroe and his follower Lees at variance, for he pointed to the latter and said, "Thus saith the Lord, This man shall shave, and shall prophesy against his master." "When will he shave off his beard?" asked Wroe indignantly. "When thine is plucked up by the roots," answered Lindsay. The scene was becoming undignified. The prophets seemed to be aware of it, and that it was necessary to patch the matter up; so Lindsay said, "You see

the spirits seem to differ a little; it is we who do not understand how they work and move."

By degrees Wroe succeeded in obtaining recognition as the Prophet from the majority of Joanna Southcott's congregations. The faithful men wore long beards, "the city[Pg 50] mark," as it was called, and white linen vestments at the religious meetings in their tabernacles.

George Turner had succeeded Joanna Southcott; he was succeeded by William Shaw, and then Wroe received general acknowledgment. He announced that his mission would last forty years, and that at the expiration of this period Shiloh would come.

As soon as he was acknowledged as Prophet, he had a power in his hands which he did not fail to exercise. In 1830 he announced that he had received orders from heaven that seven virgins should be delivered to him to comfort and cherish him, and three of his believers at once gave up to him their daughters. With these poor girls and some married women Wroe wandered from place to place. They were with him in Kent, in Devonshire, in Lancashire, and Yorkshire—wherever Wroe pretended that he was called. The matter became scandalous, and the confidence of several of the members of the community was shaken. The girls were questioned, and made shocking disclosures. Two of the Society, named Masterman and Walker, rose in the congregation at Ashton, on February 27th, 1831, and charged him with profligacy. Wroe could not stand against the storm; he escaped through a trap-door in the orchestra, amidst cat-calls, jeers, and howls. He remained secreted in Ashton a few days, and then left the place for ever.

The confidence of his faithful disciple Lees was somewhat dashed shortly before this by an exposure of the Prophet at Manchester. Lees had a friend at Manchester with whom he did business. Wroe used to spend much of his time in Lees' house. The Prophet announced to Lees that he was called by the Spirit on a mission, but that he had no money. Lees called a covenant meeting, and the sum of eighty pounds was raised, and placed at the disposal of the Prophet, who departed with it. Now it happened that[Pg 51] Lees' friend did business at a certain public-house in Manchester, and having noticed Wroe there, and being shortly after at Ashton, he asked Lees where the Prophet was. Lees told him that he had gone on a mission. His friend laughed, and said, "Come with me and you shall see him."

With difficulty he persuaded Lees to get into a cab with him and drive to Manchester to the public-house. The two men went in, opened the door into a back parlour, and found the Prophet sitting by the fire, in his low-crowned brown hat and long coat, between two low women, drinking hot whiskey and water with them. The landlord

informed them that Wroe had been there several days. Lees went home, burned his white robe, destroyed all his books and tracts belonging to the Society, shaved off his beard, and next Sunday was in the parish church, which he had been in the habit of attending before he fell under the influence of Wroe.

But his humiliation did not end here. His daughter gave promise of becoming a mother by Wroe. In vain did the Prophet assure him that the child that would be born was the promised Shiloh. It turned out to be a girl. Lees put Wroe out of his doors.

It was soon after this that the Prophet was met by Masterman and Walker, and the scandal of the virgins was exposed.

Lees, hearing that Wroe was coming to Ashton, exasperated at the dishonour of his daughter and the dupe that had been made of himself, stationed himself behind a chimney and fired a gun at Wroe. The ball whizzed past his hat, and fortunately did him no injury. But the rumour of these scandals and the death of a child named Wood whom he had circumcised, caused a riot at Bradford when he visited it shortly after. The mob broke into the tabernacle, tore up the benches, smashed the windows, and would have [Pg 52] maltreated Wroe if they could have caught him; but the wary Prophet made his escape in time.

One day in July he had a vocation to go on a mission. He was then living at Pudsey. His followers raised a handsome sum to defray his expenses, and he departed. After he had gone, it was observed that his wife passed a certain public-house in the neighbourhood every day. This was unusual, and it was agreed to watch her. After John Wroe had been gone fourteen days, she was followed at a distance. She went down a lane to a corn-field and made a signal, whereupon Wroe was observed to creep out of the standing corn. His wife opened her basket and produced a dish of new potatoes and a mutton-chop, and a four-ounce bottle of wine. The Prophet drew a horse-rug from out the corn, and prepared to seat himself on it and enjoy his dinner, when the spies rushed upon him, carried him in triumph into Pudsey, set him on a donkey, rode him through the town, then tied a rope round his body, threw him into a horse-pond, pulled him out, and threw him in again and again; till the women, seeing him nearly exhausted, interfered and begged that he might be spared.

When he was living at Bowling he had a trance which lasted ten or twelve days. He lay apparently insensible on a stump bedstead, and people came from far and wide to see him. At the foot of the bed was a basket in which the visitors deposited silver and copper; and all who came were expected to give a trifle. There was a fixed hour at which the cottage door was opened and closed, and when it was closed the key was turned in the lock, and no one was admitted on any excuse.

It unfortunately happened that one night Mrs. Wroe went out for some purpose or other, and left the door unfastened behind her, intending to return in a minute. A man named [Pg 53] Holt and his son lived close by. As they saw Mrs. Wroe go out, they and a neighbour who was with them thought the opportunity was not to be neglected, and opened the door of Wroe's house and peeped cautiously in. To their surprise John was sitting very comfortably in the ingle-nook, eating beef-steak, pickled cabbage, and oat-cake. [2] Next day he was laid on his bed as usual in a trance, and so he continued for three or more days. One of the visitors wished to thrust a needle under Wroe's nail, to prove if he were perfectly sensible, but his wife would not permit it.

Another of his devices for raising money was not more honest. He announced that the Lord had declared to him that every member of the Society of the house of Israel was to wear a gold ring of the value of £1 3s. 6d., which was to be procured from the Prophet, and it was to be a sign and a seal to them that they were the elect. This was in 1856, and all the members were supplied with gold rings by 1857. At this time the number of the members was thought to be about 6000, of whom 700 were in Ireland.

Unfortunately for the credit of the Prophet, towards the end of 1856 one of the members, who had not wholly lost his common-sense, thought it advisable to have his gold ring tested with nitric acid, and the startling discovery was made that the rings were not of gold at all, not worth a florin each. Wroe threw the blame on the goldsmith who had provided him with them, and ordered that no more should be issued.

About 1854 John Wroe said he had a command from the Lord to build a mansion. The treasury of the "House of Israel" was empty; so the pillars of the Church met, and on consultation agreed to let Wroe have the Flying Roll money. This was a fund to which, after the death of [Pg 54] Joanna Southcott, all sealed members paid according to their income or ability. It was a sacred fund retained by the Society for the purpose of publishing the Eternal Gospel and sending it to all parts of the world, proclaiming the millennium, the outpouring of the Spirit, and the Great Desolation. This eternal Gospel was to be published forty years after the death of Joanna. [3] The sum amounted to a large amount—over two thousand pounds.

Wroe bought a piece of land on a height near Wakefield, and on this began to build. The house, said Wroe, was to be dedicated to the Lord, and was to belong to the members of the "House of Israel" gathered out of all nations. No architect was to be employed. It was to be built as the Spirit directed.

Subscription-books were issued to all the sanctuaries. Every member's contribution was to be entered separately, and no man was to know what his neighbour gave. The poorest workman was to contribute not less than 10 per cent, of his earnings. [4] All

extra gifts were to be sent to John Wroe at Wrenthorpe, near Wakefield, and those who did not wish to pay to the local treasurers might send their subscriptions direct to the Prophet.

During 1855 and 1856 post-office orders poured in from [Pg 55] all parts, and it was said in Wakefield at the time that Wroe had more orders cashed than all the tradesmen of the town put together.

The female members of the Society were to furnish the mansion. They were not to tell their husbands how much they gave; and many put down their names for sums which they really could not pay, and had to sell goods and borrow cash to keep up their payments to the end of 1856. [\[5\]](#)

The land was bought of Mr. William Ramsden, farmer, of Wrenthorpe, and was conveyed by Mr. Haigh, solicitor, of Horbury, to John Wroe, and not to the Society. A farm of upwards of a hundred acres was bought in addition, and was conveyed to himself.

The rumour of this produced some uneasiness among the members, and twenty of them waited on the Prophet to question him about the conveyance. He spoke them fair, assured them that the mansion and land would go to the Society, and in their presence drew up a will wherein he devised the whole estate to the Society. Messrs. Snell, Currey, Gill, and Farren, leading members and pillars of the Church, witnessed it, and departed in satisfaction to their homes. A fortnight after, Wroe sent for a solicitor of Wakefield, and privately drew up a new will, cancelling the old one, and in this latter will he devised the mansion and ninety-eight acres of land to his grandson, James Wroe; and to his daughters, Susanna and Sarah, property producing about £50 per annum to each; and to his only son Joseph property of the value of £60 per annum.

The mansion was designed somewhat in the style of Melbourne Town Hall. It cost upwards of £2000, but need not have cost half as much. When Wroe saw how the money poured in, he had the north-east wing taken [Pg 56] completely down, and enlarged the building. Much of the work was done two or three times over. The glazier (Mr. Slater) had a contract to do all the glazing, and as soon as his contract was finished, Wroe contracted with Mr. Slater to take every square of glass out again, and put good plate-glass into the windows instead.

Wroe found he could not get on without an architect, and therefore employed Mr. Thorpe, of Wakefield, and worried him out of all endurance. Wroe visited Australia in 1850, 1854, 1859, and 1862. He was in America in 1840, 1848, 1853, and 1859. His wife died May 16th, 1853, aged seventy-four years, a fortnight after he left for America.

He is said to have treated her badly. On his travels he assumed different names; sometimes he called himself Johanan Asrael, sometimes Yokkow or Yockaman.

He obtained the name of "Pudding Wroe" among the urchins of Wakefield and Bradford; the origin of this was as follows:—After one of his long trances, he began to walk about, and was asked by acquaintances concerning his health and appetite, and "What could he eat or fancy?" His invariable answer was, "Nowt but pudding."

The boys used to shout after him—"Pudding Wroe," or "Nowt but pudding," and this highly incensed the Prophet. One day, after he had had this cry ringing in his ears, he came home, and, standing in the door, saw the table laid for dinner, and his wife and children ready in their places. "What is for dinner to-day?" asked Wroe.

"Nowt but pudding!" shouted the incautious children. Wroe flew into a passion, and said to his wife, "I'll tell thee what, lass, I wi'nt have yon stuff called pudding any more."

"Why, lad!" said Mrs. Wroe, "what are t' bairns to call it, then?"

[Pg 57]

"They mun call it *soft meat*," answered John.

Wroe purchased a handsome mule with a long flowing tail, and a basket carriage. The harness was of the best kind, with silver buckles, &c. One day when Wroe drove to Sandal, and left his mule and carriage outside the house where he had business, some evil-disposed persons shaved the mule's tail. Wroe raved and threatened, but could not find the guilty parties. He never went near Sandal afterwards.

The following is Wroe's receipt for curing a cold:—Put two gallons of boiling water in a large bottle, and place a funnel on the neck; put your face in the mouth of the funnel, and throw a blanket over your head; thus you inhale the steam, and are thrown into a perspiration.

Wroe would put a pillow in the oven, lay his head on it, and let the oven be heated as hot as he could bear it, to drive away a head cold.

In his last voyage to Australia, in 1862, he fell upon the deck of the ship when it was rolling, and dislocated his shoulder. The doctor set it, but it soon fell out of place again, and never was right after.

On the day of his death, which occurred at Fitzroy, in Australia, he had been out walking as usual, and seemed in his wonted health. On his return from a walk he seated himself in his chair, and suddenly fell forward on the floor, and was taken up a

corpse. He had been collecting money in Australia; and directly it was rumoured that Wroe was dead, all the members in Melbourne demanded back their money, and threatened to roughly handle Benjamin Eddow, Wroe's companion and secretary, unless he restored the subscriptions. He was obliged to surrender some of the cash, and to conceal himself. He got away the following day, and remained hidden in a blacksmith's shop till he[Pg 58] could find a ship on which to get back to England. He brought with him between six and seven hundred pounds. The Melbourne Society complained that Wroe had not kept faith with them, for he had promised them he would never die!

FOOTNOTES:

[1] This he mentions in his tract, "A Vision of an Angel," Bradford, Inkersley, 1820.

[2] My informant, who knew Wroe well, says: "J. Holt, the young man who saw this, told it me. He is now living at Bradford."

[3] Is it more than a coincidence that the Southcottites should reproduce the forms and terminology of a heresy of the fourteenth century? The Abbot Joachim was the prophet then, and his "Eternal Gospel" proclaimed precisely the same doctrines as the "Eternal Gospel" of Joanna. This heresy invaded the ranks of the Franciscans, and produced a tremendous schism, which ended in the prescription of the Fraticelli. For an account of the Abbot Joachim and the Eternal Gospel see Hahn, "Ketzer Geschichte," ii. and iii.; and Dean Milman's "Latin Christianity."

[4] The members were obliged to keep books of their earnings, and exhibit them, to prove that they paid 10 per cent. to Wroe.

[5] This information comes from some of those who were thus victimised. Some members turned total abstainers, others vegetarians, to economise money in order to pay their subscriptions.

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BISHOP-DYKE POND.[6]

On the Monday following Palm Sunday, being the 14th of April, 1690, William Barwick, a man living in Cawood, a village a few miles south of York, on the Ouse, below its junction with the Wharfe, took his wife a stroll along a pleasant lane leading to Bishop Wood, then an extensive tract of forest trees, and even now one of the wildest and most picturesque spots in the neighbourhood of Selby.

Mary Barwick was expecting her confinement at no great distance of time. William made her walk before him; they crossed the little bridge over Bishop's Dyke, and entered a close or field where was a pond. It was surrounded by thick rushes, and the willows were covered with their silken tufts, unrifled by the children for "palms" on the preceding day.

William Barwick looked round. No one was in sight. He seized his wife, threw her into the pond, and did not let go his hold till she was drowned. When he was quite satisfied that life was extinct, he drew the body out of the water, and concealed it among the rushes which lay between the water and the quickwood hedge. He then returned home.

At dusk he revisited the spot, and taking a hay-spade from a rick that stood in the field, he made a hole by the side of the pond, and there buried the poor woman in her clothes. What was the motive which actuated William Barwick does not transpire.

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Next day Barwick visited his brother-in-law at Rufforth, three miles east from York, a man named Thomas Lofthouse, who had married the sister of poor Mary Barwick, and told him that his wife Mary had gone to his uncle, Richard Harrison, in Selby, where she was likely to remain for some time.

Lofthouse gave no thought to this announcement. Whether he supposed that Barwick was in difficulties, and it was likely to prove advantageous to his wife that she should be confined in Selby instead of at home, where she could have more comforts; or whether he thought there had been a quarrel, and the announcement of Barwick intimated a separation, I do not know. At all events, the statement of Barwick caused no surprise to his brother-in-law, nor did it arouse any suspicion of foul play in his mind.

Exactly a week after that visit, on Tuesday in Easter week, about half-past twelve o'clock in the afternoon, Thomas Lofthouse, having occasion to water a quickset hedge not far from his house, brought water for the purpose in a pail. As he was going for the second pailful, he suddenly observed a woman, in shape like his sister-in-law, going before him towards the pond. He was startled, but hardly thought at the moment that he saw a ghost. The figure glided before him, and seated itself on a rising green bank right over against the pond; he walked before her as he went to the pond, and as he returned with the pail full of water he looked sideways to see if the figure were still there. He saw the face—it was that of Mary Barwick, but deadly pale; the lips bloodless, the teeth showing, and the eyes fixed on something white, which he

thought was a bag at the time, but afterwards supposed to be a baby, which she seemed to be dandling. As soon as he had emptied the pail, he went into his yard, and stood still to see if the figure were still in the same spot; but by this time it had vanished.

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Lofthouse said nothing about what he had seen till evening. He was saying family prayers that night before retiring to rest, when, in praying for their friends and relations, he came to the name of his sister-in-law. He faltered, trembled, his voice broke down, and he could scarcely conclude his devotions.

When he went to bed he told his wife everything, and the poor woman was dreadfully alarmed. She implored her husband next day to go to Selby and see Richard Harrison, at whose house Barwick had said his wife was staying. He promised to do so, and on the morning early saddled his horse and rode to Selby. His nearest road was by York, Cawood, and Wiston; but he had no mind to meet William Barwick, and he therefore took the high road from York by Escrick, Riccal, and Barlby.

On reaching Selby he soon ascertained that poor Mary Barwick had never been there. On his return he went to the Lord Mayor of York; and having obtained a warrant, got Barwick apprehended and brought before the Mayor. The wretched man then acknowledged what he had done, and his confession was written down and signed in the presence of the Lord Mayor. To this were annexed the depositions of Lofthouse, and Barwick was consigned to York Castle.

These depositions are of sufficient interest to be here given verbatim:—

"The Information of Thomas Lofthouse, of Rufforth, taken upon oath, the twenty-fourth day of April, 1690; who sayeth and deposeth,—

"That one William Barwick, who lately married this informant's wife's sister, came to this informant's house about the 14th instant, and told this informant he had carried his wife to one Richard Harrison's house in Selby,[Pg 62] who was uncle to him, and would take care of her; and this informant, hearing nothing of the said Barwick's wife, his said sister-in-law, imagined he had done her some mischief, did yesterday go to the said Harrison's house in Selby, where he said he had carried her to; and the said Harrison told this informant he knew nothing of the said Barwick or his wife; and this informant doth verily believe the said Barwick to have murdered her.

"Thomas Lofthouse.

"Jurat die et anno super dicto coram me.

"S. Dawson, Mayor."

"The examination of the said William Barwick, taken the day and year abovesaid, who sayeth and confeseth,—

"That he, this examinant, on Monday was seventh night, about two o'clock in the afternoon, this examinant was walking in a close betwixt Cawood and Wiston; and he farther sayeth that he threw his said wife into the pond, where she was drowned; and the day following, towards evening, got a hay-spade at a hay-stake in the said close, and made a grave beside the said pond, and buried her.

"William Barwick.

"Exam. capt. die et anno super dict. coram me.

"S. Dawson, Mayor."

"The examination of William Barwick, taken the twenty-fifth day of April, 1690, who sayeth and confeseth,—

"That he carried his wife over a certain wain-bridge, called Bishop-Dyke Bridge, betwixt Cawood and Sherborne, and within a lane about one hundred yards from the said bridge, and on the left hand of the said bridge, he and his wife went over a stile, on the left-hand side of a certain[Pg 63] gate entering into a certain close, on the left hand of the said lane; and in a pond in the said close, adjoining to a quickwood hedge, did drown his wife, and upon the bank of the said pond did bury her; and further, that he was within sight of Cawood Castle, on the left hand; and that there was but one hedge betwixt the said close where he drowned his said wife and the Bishop-slates belonging to the said castle.

"William Barwick.

"Exam. capt. die et anno super dict. coram me.

"S. Dawson, Mayor."

William Barwick was tried and convicted before Sir John Powell, Knight, at the Summer Assizes held in York on the 18th of September, 1690.

"On Tuesday, September the seventeenth, 1690, at York Assizes, Thomas Lofthouse, of Rufforth, within three miles of York city, sayeth,—

"That on Easter Tuesday last, about half an hour after twelve of the clock in the daytime, he was watering quickwood, and as he was going for the second pail there appeared, walking before him, an apparition in the shape of a woman. Soon after, she

sat down over against the pond, on a green hill; he walked by her as he went to the pond, and as he came with the pail of water from the pond, looking sideways to see if she sat in the same place, which he saw she did; and had on her lap something like a white bag, a-dandling of it (as he thought), which he did not observe before. After he had emptied his pail of water, he stood in his yard to see if he could see her again, but could not. He says her apparel was brown cloathes, waistcoat and petticoat, a white hood, such as his wife's sister usually wore, and her face looked extream pale, her teeth in sight,[Pg 64] no gums appearing, her visage being like his wife's sister, and wife to William Barwick.

(Signed) "Thomas Lofthouse."

When Barwick ascended the gallows to be hung, he told the hangman that he hoped the rope was strong enough, as if it should break with his weight he would fall to the ground and become a cripple for life. His apprehensions, however, were soon quieted, for the hangman assured him he might venture upon it with perfect confidence.

After he was dead the body was hung in chains by the pond where the murder had been committed.

FOOTNOTE:

[6] J. Aubery, in his "Miscellanies upon Various Subjects," 1696, gives the particulars of this curious story.

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SNOWDEN DUNHILL, THE CONVICT.

The following life of a thief and housebreaker, written by himself, is curious and sad. [7] The talent it exhibits, and the real feeling which peeps out here and there, show that the man, had he been better brought up, and subjected in early youth to religious influences, might have become something very superior to the ordinary agricultural labourer. The man cannot have been difficient in his secular education. His style is singularly good for one in his class, but of moral education he had none. The only religion he knew of was that of his wife, Sally Dunhill, a fanatic, who combined hysterical piety with gross dishonesty:—

"I was born at a small village on the Wolds in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The earliest circumstance of which I have any remembrance is that of following bare-headed and on foot, a waggon containing furniture belonging to a farmer who was removing to the

village of Spaldington, near Howden. Of my parents I have but an indistinct remembrance, for I never returned to them, but continued to reside in the village of my adoption, and principally in the house of the family I had accompanied.

"Spaldington is a secluded and purely agricultural village. My earliest recollections are connected with the old hall at that place, a fine building, erected in the time of Queen[Pg 66] Elizabeth. This house, with its peaked roof ornamented with large round stones, its moats, its rookery, and the reputation of being haunted by a fairy, is yet strongly impressed upon my memory. But the old seat of the De la Hayes, the Vescis, and the Vavasours totters to its fall.

"I well remember the tradition which prevailed in the village, that one of the De Vescis was a competitor for the crown of Scotland, he having married a daughter of the King of that country. The burthen of an old song, which is supposed to relate to some eventful battle in which De Vesci bore a conspicuous part, still clings to my memory, and now, with a world between me and the spot, I often catch myself humming the chorus—

"And the drums they did beat, and the trumpets did sound,
And the cannons did roar fit to tear up the ground;
For its oh! brave, gallant, and brave,
For the honour of England's crown."

Snowden Dunhill's youth was spent much as that of other rural bumpkins; he wrestled, played football, and was passionately fond of cock-fighting.

One day, when only six years old, he saved the life of a little companion with whom he was playing by the side of the moat round the Old Hall at Spaldington. The child fell into the water, sank, and rose for the last time, when little Snowden, with great pluck, jumped in after his playmate, and caught him by the dress. The two children struggled in the water, and the drowning boy nearly dragged little Snowden under. But Snowden maintained his hold, and succeeded in dragging his comrade to the bank.

At fourteen or fifteen Snowden Dunhill, being a strong lad, was taken into a small farmhouse to work for his food and clothes.

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His master died shortly after, but his widow carried on the farm. She was very poor, the farm was small, and the widow took her meals with the farm servants in the kitchen.

Dunhill was given no pocket-money, and, as he kept fighting-cocks and liked occasionally to go to the public-house to have a game of balls, he was driven to obtain money by theft.

"During this time I practised a variety of petty thefts without being suspected. I took apples, eggs, or anything I could lay my hands on, and the corn which ought to have been given to the horses found its way to my game cocks, of which I had several. These acts, which are generally practised by farmers' servants, were confirmed into a habit before I had begun to think them wrong. The education of this class is so utterly neglected, and their morals so little attended to, that I have long been satisfied that the honesty of the rural districts is very much inferior to that of the towns.

"My next step in life—the most important one to all—was marriage, and mine assuredly deepened the darkest shades of my character. It was not a connection of the heart, but one almost of fear, for the woman to whom I paid my addresses was the being who ruled me from the first moment of our acquaintance. Had it been my fortune to have met with an honest and industrious woman, my destiny might have been different. But if, as the proverb says, 'Marriages are made in heaven,' it does not become me to complain.

"We lived a short time in the village of Spaldington, but one farmer missed his corn, the wife of another her poultry, a third her apples, and a fourth her bees; when the bees were missed I fancy they thought nothing could escape us. They were easily moved and carried into our cottage, but the buzzing, the stinging, and the bother of the business,[Pg 68] determined me never again to attempt a similar undertaking. The proverb of running your head into a swarm of bees has ever since appeared to me the most forcible in the English language.

"We were then put into a house in the lanes of Spaldington, in the road between Howden and Market-Weighton, apart from any other residence, and in the very best situation that could have been chosen if the farmers had wished us to continue our system of plunder. I had never been accustomed to work, and I had now very little wish to learn. The new connexions which I speedily formed put me in the way of obtaining a better though more precarious subsistence.

"I continued to live in the cottage above alluded to, and my family increasing rapidly, rendered it necessary to extend my operations. The farmers in the neighbourhood were at first the greatest sufferers, and there was scarcely a barn or granary within several miles which I had not the means of entering when I chose. Either from discarded servants, or from labourers who were daily about the farm-houses, I got all the information I wanted.

"At this time I was master of two good horses, and I had a numerous connexion among servants and labourers. But what I found most useful was a secret understanding with two or three millers, by whose means I got rid of all the corn which I stole. Millers are generally reputed to be great rogues, but in their dealings with me I found them quite the contrary. The most dishonest persons with whom I had dealings were the attorneys, and they stripped me of the fruits of my toil with most surprising expedition and facility. This, however, will be seen in the sequel.

"About this time I was concerned in a robbery at Bubwith, by which I obtained a considerable sum of money. After our arrangements were made, a comrade entered the[Pg 69] house through a back window, by taking an iron bar out of the frame, the wood being quite rotten from age and damp. In scrambling in he kicked from the shelf a large earthenware vessel, and immediately after he himself tumbled head foremost into the pantry, a depth of six or seven feet. The uproar occasioned by his fall caused us to take to our heels and make to our horses, which were at no great distance, in a large field behind the house. We laid down and listened for a considerable time, and hearing nothing, we approached the house again by degrees, and eventually got up to the very window. A low whistle from me was instantly answered, which at once told us all went well. We found the back door open for us, and our comrade, no way alarmed, busy rummaging some drawers, and putting into a sack everything he took a fancy to.

"As I had formerly lived in the service of a near relation of the old lady to whom the house belonged (I had forgotten to say it was a widow lady's house we took the liberty with), I found no difficulty in laying my hands upon the tinder-box, candles, and everything else. It was an exceedingly stormy night, or I think we must have been heard, for we carried a chest of drawers out of the house and actually beat them to pieces, not being able to open them. I knew that she had a considerable sum of money, and I hoped we had found it, but it turned out to be a box of farthings; and I was afterwards exceedingly provoked on learning that we had missed three hundred guineas in gold which the old lady had in her lodging room. I also learned that she had a presentiment that she would be robbed, and made an observation to that effect the day before—one of those curious anticipating feelings for which I know not how to account, but which have in several instances happened to myself when coming events, as it were, cast their shadows before.

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"But to return to our adventure. After helping ourselves to such things as we thought of most value, and such as could be most easily conveyed away on our horses, and drinking the good old lady's health in some excellent homemade wine, we mounted

our horses, with four sacks filled with many things of value. We took a route so as to avoid the toll-bars and public roads, and reached my house just as the sun was beginning to chase away the darkness which had proved so propitious to us. Having instantly buried all the things, my companions departed, and all was soon ready for the reception of any of those enemies of my profession, the constables, should they pay us a visit. However, none came, and though I was generally supposed to be the person who did the deed, no steps were taken to make it out against me. This is one of the very few exploits of the kind I was ever engaged in, and as to highway robberies, I never dreamed of committing one.

"I had now accumulated a considerable sum of money, which I lent out on note to several farmers in the neighbourhood, most of whom, from fear or other considerations, were glad to be on good terms with me. Such occurrences as the following frequently happened:—'Well, Snowden, how do you do?' would Farmer —— say, meeting me in the street towards dusk on a market-day. 'Are you going home to-night?' 'Aye, my lad,' was my general reply. 'I wanted to see you,' retorted the farmer; 'I have just received fifty pounds for some oats; I wish you would take care of it for me, and I will ask you for it again some day when I meet you.' I took charge of the money, and was ever most punctual in returning it. I could not help laughing, however, at the odd mixture of feelings that must have dictated such a choice of a banker. I dare say some of these very farmers have since met with bankers not quite so punctual in their payments as I was in mine.

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"I was once busily employed in coursing a hare when I was pounced upon by a Mr. ——. He came suddenly upon me, with so many violent denunciations that I was for a time really in a fright. However, I eventually recovered my recollection, and had the good sense to leave him without giving way to any abusive language in reply. I secretly, however, resolved to have my revenge, and that in a way at once in accordance with my profession and my own interest. I ordered two or three of the persons I could place the most reliance in to be ready to accompany me with their horses to Foggathorpe, the village in which I think the gentleman resided. I had long had a key of his granary, in which I knew he had recently stored a quantity of wheat of the finest quality, and for which the soil of that village is much famed.

"We had already been up to the granary once with our horses, having taken them loaded away, and secreted several sacks of wheat in a wood a little from the turnpike road, and about three miles from the house. We had filled our sacks a second time, and got them upon the horses, having previously placed everything in the granary as

we found it, or as nearly so as we could. I had just thrown my legs over my horse, then standing near the steps of the granary, I being the last of the party, when I heard the gentleman's voice, which I at once knew, for neither his early habit of rising nor the tone of his voice were unknown to me. It was quite dark, and I proceeded with great care on the way towards the high road till I reached a gate about seventy or eighty yards from his house. By some mismanagement on my part, I had no sooner passed through the gate than I fell back into its place with considerable noise. I again heard his voice, but I made the best of my way with my load, and I felt no little relief when I found myself in the Market-Weigh-ton turnpike road. Though I had no very [Pg 72] great opinion of the gentleman's courage, I felt quite sure he would have used every endeavour to make out the charge against me had his suspicions of what had taken place been once roused. As to his following me alone at that moment I had not the most distant fear, for I knew well the care he always took of himself. However, the whole affair passed over. I never heard that he missed what we took away, and the reason probably was, that he at that very time had a large stock of wheat on hand for the purpose of speculation, as I afterwards learned. I remember this wheat was of such singularly good quality that I sold it for the great sum of one guinea and ninepence the bushel, a price I scarcely ever remember to have equalled.

"The next thing that occurs to me worthy of remark, and which I had good cause to remember, nearly terminated fatally for myself. I expected a good booty from the information I had previously received. This was an attack upon the property of two bachelors who resided in the same house, in a village about a mile and a half from Howden. The house was very near the river Ouse, and we had prepared a boat to carry the gains of the night down the river as far as Swinefleet, this being considered, for many reasons, the readiest mode of moving it from the premises, and I had some friends in that place in whom I placed the greatest confidence. Between one and two o'clock we arrived at the house, and were preparing all things in readiness for the business in hand. I was crossing from the bank of the river over a garden, and so on to the back of the premises. In my way I came to a piece of dead fence, over which I was passing, and which gave a crackling sound under my tread. At that moment I heard a dog bark, and instantly after a shot was fired from the upper part of the eastern end of the house. I had my face at the time rather turned away from the place whence the shot proceeded, and [Pg 73] I received the whole of the contents in my back and shoulders. I instantly fell; and I well remember that I thought all was over with me, as I lay for some time with my head in the ditch and my feet upon the dead thorns over which I had just passed, and to which I attributed my mishap; for the night was so dark I could not be seen, and the shot must have been directed by the noise I made in

getting over the fence. As I lay there I could distinctly hear a whispering from a small door in the end of the house, and I greatly feared lest the inmates should sally forth and take me in my defenceless state. With my head laid upon the ground, the sensation produced upon me by the striking of two o'clock by the church of Howden, I well remember. All was now calm, quiet, and dark; and I actually felt the earth vibrate under my ear as the hollow bell threw over the land its sullen sound. I have understood, since I came here, that the savages in America always resort to this mode of listening for the approach of a friend or an enemy. But to return to myself again.

"I at length contrived with great difficulty to get upon my feet; and, with still greater exertion and much loss of blood, I reached the boat, where I found my men in great consternation and alarm. One of them pushed the boat adrift, and the tide soon carried it away with the waters. They then supported me at a slow pace to Howden, where I arrived almost in a state of insensibility, from the combined effects of pain and loss of blood. By my desire they took me to the house of a medical man of my acquaintance, and knocked at his door. He soon came down, and without asking a single question, stripped me; and during the night he extracted no fewer than thirty-eight large shot corns from my back and shoulders.

"I cannot even now recall the agony I suffered without a shudder; and my general health and strength never [Pg 74]recovered from the shock I received. I remained secluded for a considerable time, but thanks to the attentive care of my wife, and my own sober habits, for I never was an habitual drunkard, I speedily was able to get out again. In all my night excursions after this adventure I employed the greatest circumspection.

"My inward disposition was accurately betokened by my countenance and outward appearance. I was tall and large-limbed, but neither clumsily nor powerfully made, I speak now of forty years of age; for sufferings, mental and bodily, have entirely changed my face and figure. My hair was light, my eyes a bluish grey, my countenance round and somewhat florid. In my looks I always fancied that I resembled two men of no little celebrity—I mean Sir Walter Scott and William Cobbett, who certainly bear a considerable resemblance to each other. But this may be my vanity, for the best of us are not free from it.

"In my manners I was boisterous, and in tone familiar with all, and overbearing with most. However, my general appearance promised anything but cruelty and dishonesty; and, thank God, no one can charge me with the former, whatever may be said of the latter.

"I must, however, plead guilty to one or two acts of apparent cruelty, towards my horses, but which rather rose from the necessity of self-preservation than from any other cause. It has often happened to me, for the purpose of reaching a given place by a certain hour of the night, to be compelled to strain my horse to the full extent of his speed. I knew so well the general opinion entertained towards me, that I felt I must find the greatest difficulty in clearing myself from anything like a reasonable suspicion of crime.

"I distinctly remember once having upon me a considerable sum of money, and I was riding at full speed upon a narrow strip of green sward by the road side, which was[Pg 75] nearly covered by the extended branches of the trees. The moon was shining beautifully through them, and in contemplating her I felt a soothing calmness spread over my soul, which I cannot well account for or explain the cause of. My musings were suddenly cut short by a deep-drawn sigh from my horse, then a slight shudder, and the next moment he was dead under me. I cried like a child. I raised his head, but all in vain, no trace of life remained.

"By the moon's rays, which at that instant shot through an opening in a dark Scots fir immediately over his head, I saw the film of death rapidly spread over his eyes, and felt his limbs stiffen under my grasp. I had to travel several miles on foot, pretty well loaded, and through a very lonely and suspicious-looking part of the country. However, I reached the house of one of my friends towards morning, to his no small astonishment, he thinking me fifty miles distant in a different direction.

"My horse was soon recognised; and had any robbery been perpetrated within a reasonable distance of the place where he fell, of course it must have been done by me. The common question of the whole neighbourhood was, 'What had I been doing?' However, this never transpired. I ever afterwards tied a piece of raw beef round the bit of my bridle when about to make hard use of my horse, and I always thought that it afforded him considerable help. I need not observe that this was done in imitation of poor Dick Turpin, whose history is infinitely better known than mine can ever pretend to be.

"On the night of the 25th of October, 1812, I felt a presentiment that something sinister was about to happen to me. Few men have passed through life, particularly those of an excitable temperament, who have not felt some boding of this kind. I was seated in my chair by the fire, taking my accustomed pipe—an indulgence I never omitted[Pg 76] the last thing at night—when this sudden impression came over me. My wife observed that something was the matter, and questioned me on the subject. However, as I knew she would only laugh at me, I did not tell her the cause.

"In the middle of the forenoon, whilst I was listening to my daughter Rose, who was my favourite, she suddenly looked up and said, in a hurried tone, 'Father, there are several men coming to the house.' It instantly occurred to me that something had happened during the past night, and that my forebodings would not prove vain. However, as my whole family knew that I had not stirred out during the night, I had little fear; and this circumstance even led me to suppose that it might be some mistake.

"By this time the party had arrived at the door of the cottage, and one of them gave me to understand that he had a justice's search-warrant, and that I was their prisoner. I submitted at once to be taken into custody, and I was immediately secured. Some of the party then began to rummage every drawer and corner of the house, amidst the very voluble abuse of my wife. They, however, found nothing they came to search for, which, as I soon learned, was some wheat stolen during the last night from a neighbouring farmer.

"On this information I felt considerable relief, conscious of my innocence; but my wife became perfectly outrageous when the constable refused to take her word that I had never stirred over my threshold since six o'clock of the preceding evening. She, poor woman, swore she would take the law of them threatened writs, indictments, justices, and I know not what; and I verily believed she would have inflicted summary vengeance on the head of the constable with the poker, so furious had she become, from a consciousness that the accusation was without foundation.

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"However, in spite of all her threats and rage, I was speedily conveyed before the justice who granted the warrant, and on the oath of a person, who swore that he was going along a road near my house and towards the farm-house in question, about two o'clock in the morning, that he saw a horse and two men returning from it, and that he was quite sure I was one of them, my commitment was made out for the House of Correction at Beverley.

"All this took so short a time that I scarcely attempted to defend myself; and indeed I scarcely even know now how I could effectually have done so. For I could only bring the members of my own family to prove that I had not been out of my cottage, and of course they would not have been believed against the positive evidence of the witness who swore to my person, though he was, according to his own statement, fifty yards distant from me—in addition to this, at two o'clock in the morning."

The prosecutor of Snowden Dunhill was Mr. Barnard Clarkson, of Holme, at that time a partner in the Howden Bank.

The consciousness that her husband was ignorant of the robbery imputed to him caused Sally Dunhill to regard him as a martyr. Her Ranting enthusiasm was excited, and she wrote a long letter to the prosecutor, denouncing him, in Biblical terms, as one who "compassed about" the righteous man "with words of hatred, and fought against him without a cause"; and announced to him that she had given herself up to prayer against him (Clarkson), and invoked the malediction of heaven upon his head—"Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generations following let their name be blotted out." And she concluded this strange epistle with the words of the Psalmist: "Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine enemies be clothed with[Pg 78] shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude, for he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul."

Snowden Dunhill continues in his Autobiography:—

"I now, for the first time, became an inmate of a prison, an event I had always held in the greatest horror. As it was well known that I had plenty of money, I had very soon the proffered and apparently disinterested assistance of an attorney. My situation was maturely considered, and it was soon determined that a writ of habeas corpus should be put in, for the purpose of taking my trial at the approaching Assizes at York, in preference to Beverley.

"I was in consequence taken up to London in custody, after the writ was obtained, and my trial was appointed to take place at York, principally on this ground, as urged by counsel, that my character was so notorious in the East Riding of Yorkshire that no unprejudiced jury could there be impannelled. The reader may be sure that all this was done at no slight expense; but perhaps he will not believe me when I assure him that by the time my counsel had received his fee for the approaching defence I had scarcely a shilling left in the world.

"The March Assizes of 1813 at length arrived, when I gave myself up to the gaoler of the Castle, and I was soon placed in the dock. My eyes were cast on the ground, and I for a time felt stupefied. However, I at last raised them to the objects before me, and the first that caught them was the judge himself, then the counsel, and then the immense crowd of spectators who had assembled to hear my trial. I soon was calm enough to discover in the gallery the faces of many persons I knew, and I endeavoured to put on a forced courage by nodding familiarly at them, and by[Pg 79] appearing to be utterly careless of what was going forward.

"The indictment was read over to me, and I was called upon to hold up my hand and plead guilty or not guilty; though I uttered the latter with a loud voice, it was with a full conviction that my doom was sealed. I felt—and I suppose all persons similarly circumstanced feel the same—that not only the assembled people, but that the whole world had combined to destroy me.

"The facts above narrated were stated shortly to the jury. The witness swore to my person, and accounted for his being there at that hour, naturally enough, by stating that he had been to visit his sweetheart. The farmer swore to having missed the corn on the night in question. Though my counsel tried to confound the first witness by fierce looks and bullying questions, and by dwelling upon the impossibility of his being able to swear to a person at the distance of fifty yards and at two in the morning, yet he stuck to his oath immovably. I was asked what I wished to say, and all that I could state was that I was innocent; that I was in bed at the time, and that all the family knew this to be the fact. My wife was anxious to speak for me, but my counsel insisted upon her holding her tongue, which she at last consented to do on his assuring her that she would do my case more harm than good. The jury without the slightest hesitation found me guilty, and the judge at once sentenced me to seven years' transportation.

"I was immediately conveyed back to my cell, and a few days afterwards I was forwarded to the hulks. In this miserable banishment I passed six years, embittered by the most dreadful account of my family, every member of it, even in the remotest degree, having transgressed the laws of his country, and was then undergoing for his offences the punishment awarded to him. Could hope under any form [Pg 80] have presented herself to me, I felt that I might yet be a reclaimed man, but I could not catch the most distant glimpse of her. My years passed on in the midst of misery the most distressing, till they at last came to an end. I obtained my discharge or pardon a short time before the expiration of my full term, for I had been guilty of no violence, or insolence, or excess, since my arrival.

"I left this abode of vice and misery without a friend on the face of the earth, and unconscious where to find even a momentary place of refuge. There are many unfortunate individuals who, had they a house or employment to fly to after having undergone their periods of punishment, would be glad to betake themselves to habits of honesty and industry. But, unluckily for them, they are turned out without a refuge to resort to, and necessity, and not inclination, drives them to the commission of fresh crimes.

"As to myself, I returned to Spaldington, but the change which my worldly prospects and circumstances had undergone was in the extreme overwhelming. Some of these misfortunes I well knew, but to others I was an entire stranger, and I cannot at this day lay blame to anyone but myself for them. My evil example pointed out the way of lawless depredation to my children, in characters so legible that they could not fail to read and study them.

"The farmers of the village had thought it right to clear my cottage of every one connected with me in name, relationship, or blood.

"I felt at a great loss where to fix, or to what object to turn myself for a livelihood and bare subsistence. As to my children and connections, they were scattered in every direction, and for the most part undergoing the punishment due to their crimes.

"My daughter, my favourite daughter, Rose, had been committed, and sentenced to confinement in York Castle.[Pg 81] During her imprisonment she was delivered of a bastard-child; what its fate may be, heaven alone can tell! She was visited in the Castle by a gentleman from Howden, for the purpose of proffering her some assistance in her necessitous situation. This I have understood she indignantly refused. Holding up her new-born babe to his gaze, she said, 'See! he has hands to help himself, and if ever there was a true-born rogue, here he is!' Thus, like Hannibal towards Rome, was this poor child devoted from its earliest infancy to war against all the settled institutions of society.

"After her release from York the reader will readily imagine from this anecdote of her, that she would speedily fall into another scrape. This soon happened. She was committed to Wakefield House of Correction, again tried and found guilty, and I have never since heard of her. She had cohabited with two different men, both of whom passed as her husband. Their names were M'Dowel and Connor, and they both have been transported.

"My daughter, Sarah Dunhill, after having been confined in York Castle, was tried at the East Riding Sessions at Beverley, and imprisoned one year. She was subsequently tried at the Borough Sessions at Beverley for picking the pocket of a gentleman named Scholfield, and stealing from him a considerable sum of money.

"During her trial she made a moving appeal to the barristers present, stating that she had always found them her best friends; that their ingenuity had often assisted her in the hour of need, and she yet reposed faith in their kindness, and proudly left her honesty and honour in their keeping. The Recorder, startled into momentary confusion at the nature of this appeal, speedily recovered his dignity, and inflicted on her the

doom of the law. She was at this time residing at Hull, and had come over to Beverley fair that morning for the purpose of depredation. For this [Pg 82] offence she was transported for seven years. She had three husbands, named James Stanhope, William Rhodes, and James Crossland, all of whom were severally transported, one after the other.

"My son, William Dunhill, was transported at the York Assizes for the term of fourteen years. He, poor fellow, died immediately on his arrival in New South Wales. He was the most promising of my family, and with different examples before him, and good advice, would probably have proved an ornament to society.

"Robert Taylor, son of my wife by a former husband, and who lived under the same roof with us for several years, was also transported.

"I think I omitted to state that my wife at the time I married her was a widow, and her name was Taylor. Her husband was shot in attempting to commit a robbery shortly before I married her, a circumstance which was not known to me, and which she never mentioned.

"As to my wife, she was also transported, after having contrived innumerable depredations, and been the cause of those fatal events which befel herself, myself, and the rest of the family.

"A robbery committed at Howden was readily traced home to the inmates of our house; suspicion fell at once upon them, and the furniture, watches, coins, and many other stolen articles were found on my premises. But as this and many other things happened during my absence, and as I never again saw several members of my family, I am the less particular in narrating them, from my great anxiety that nothing should appear in this history of myself for which I cannot vouch the truth."

Snowden returned to Spaldington, found his family dispersed, his cottage occupied by other tenants, and no one in the village disposed to receive him with open arms. [Pg 83] The farmers naturally viewed his return with alarm, and he found none in the neighbourhood disposed to give him work, had he cared to take it. But steady work was distasteful to him. Had he sought it in other parts of Yorkshire he might readily have found it. Instead of this he loafed about, sulky and angry with society. By degrees he formed new connections, in Hull and Lincolnshire, and resumed his former dishonest practices in concert with them.

"I had heard much of the easy lives led by the convicts in New South Wales; and, moreover, some members of my family were already there, and I felt impelled to make an endeavour to join them.

"I had not long to wait for the gratification of this wish, for I was soon traced to the commission of a paltry crime. I was apprehended, tried, and convicted; my character did the rest, and readily procured for me that banishment from England on which I had set my heart. My trial took place at a district Quarter sessions in the north of Lincolnshire, in the gaol of which I was only detained a few days when, with several others, I was transmitted, pinioned and loaded with irons, to London, there to await a ship to convey me to Botany Bay.

"It was a cold, bleak morning when I was put upon the coach in the court-yard of the prison, before daylight, with the rain and sleet falling in abundance. The coach remained half-an-hour or more in the yard of the prison till all was in readiness, when the gates were thrown open and we commenced our inauspicious journey. I cannot at all describe the feelings of loneliness and of heartrending distress which came over me at this moment, in which I felt that I was rushing from certain misery to something that might be even still worse, and yet in my despair I felt a clinging to existence. I have never met with—nay, I have never heard[Pg 84] of—a bad man who could look death unflinchingly in the face. On ascending the first rise of the ground in our journey towards London a breeze from the north suddenly sprung up, which scattered the loaded clouds, and the sun burst forth in all its glory. There appeared before me, as if a veil had been taken off the earth by magic power, a wide-spread picture. The Humber, glorying in its Scythian name, rolling to the ocean its mass of waters; and in the distance the winding Trent and Ouse, stealing onward like two wily serpents; and I could just discover the broad expanse where they became united.

"The beautiful Lincolnshire hills on my left, and the still more beautiful hills, dales, and woods of my own native Yorkshire to the north, lent their charms to form a landscape I never saw equalled, and in casting my last lingering gaze upon it I felt that the inanimate beauties of creation must now to me for ever be a blank. I strained my eyes to catch as much of it as I could, feeling the prospect, as it were, a part of myself, and necessary to my very existence, for there it had commenced, and little at one time did I think at how great a distance I was doomed to end it.

"Arrived at Botany Bay, I was soon disposed of, and commenced in good earnest the life of a slave. Hard-worked, half-starved, ill-fed, and worse clothed, such is the fate of the hapless convict."

Whilst in confinement, Snowden Dunhill wrote his Autobiography, and much wished to send it to his native village that it might be printed there for circulation. But it was some time before an opportunity presented itself.

One October day, 1830, as he was wheeling earth and stones near the pier of Sydney, in the harbour of Port Jackson, he rested for a moment to look at the beautiful bay before him, and compare it with one of the lake-like[Pg 85] reaches of the Humber, when he was roused from his musings by a tap on the shoulder, and the salutation of "Well, Snowden, how are you?"

He touched his cap, and looked up. Before him stood a sailor, who grasped his hand and shook it warmly. The sailor was the little boy whose life he had saved in the moat of Spaldington Old Hall so many years before.

The sailor gave him some money, and told him he was about to return to Hull. Dunhill at once produced his little Autobiography, and entreated him to take it back to Yorkshire, and get it printed there. The sailor readily promised to do this, and to his fulfilment of the promise we owe the existence of the curious little memoir presented to the reader.

In August, 1833, Snowden Dunhill was seen by another Howden man, who was at Hobart Town, Van Dieman's Land. His account of Dunhill is that he was "a tall, stout man, bent and stooping with suffering and privation more than from natural infirmity, but with the step and assurance of his old self."

The Howden man would not have known Dunhill had not the convict heard his name mentioned, and introduced himself to him: "Ye're one of ——'s sons i' Howden?" in the broadest East Riding Yorkshire. Then, when the stranger answered that he was, Dunhill's eyes filled with tears, and he began to sob.

"In external appearance he was not very much altered. The boisterous and overbearing manners of former years yet remained, unsoftened and unrepressed by the sufferings he had undergone. An habitual stoop had bent down his person, and somewhat taken away from the portly and blustering gait of early life. The small, grey, quick, and piercing eye still retained its cunning and prying character. His dress was much the same as he wore in England."

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Dunhill had received his ticket of freedom at Sydney two or three years before this, and had then removed to Van Dieman's Land, where his wife and daughter were settled.

There is a strange irony in facts. Sally Dunhill, who had been unable to rear one of her own children in morality and honesty, so impressed on the people of Hobart Town that she was a saintly woman by her vociferous prayers and familiarity with Holy Scripture,

that she was employed in teaching at a day-school, and was entrusted with the education of children in those paths she had never trodden herself. The residue of her time was spent in making penny pies, which Snowden hawked about the town.

Snowden Dunhill gradually sank into habitual drunkenness, and was suspected of reverting to his old tricks of petty larceny. When he died is not known.

FOOTNOTE:

[\[7\]](#) "The Life of Snowden Dunhill, written by Himself." Howden, 1833.

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JAMES NAYLOR, THE QUAKER. [\[8\]](#)

James Naylor was born at East Ardsley, near Wakefield, in 1616. He was the son of a small farmer, whose house was near the old church. He received a passable education in reading, writing, and arithmetic. In 1628, when he was aged twenty-two, he married, and settled in Wakefield parish. He was a diligent reader of the Scriptures, and zealous as an Independent. He spent about three years at Wakefield, and then joined the Parliamentary army as a private in 1641. He rose to become quartermaster of his regiment under Major-General Lambert, but in 1649, on account of ill-health, he was obliged to leave the army and return to Wakefield. The pulpits of the Established Church were now in the hands of Independent ministers, and that of Horbury, near Wakefield, was occupied by the [\[Pg 88\]](#) "godly and painful Master Marshall," under whom James Naylor sat and groaned with unction.

But Naylor relaxed his religious exercises on visits to a Mrs. Roper at Horbury, a lady whose husband had been for some time absent. When this lady became a mother by James Naylor, the Rev. Mr. Marshall thought it necessary to expose him, and Naylor, indignant with his Independent minister, joined the sect of the Quakers, then founded by George Fox. In 1652 he went on a religious visitation to the West, and in 1655 he visited London, in which city a meeting of Quakers had been established by the ministry of Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, two men of Westmoreland.

Naylor prophesied in the meeting with so great applause that several women began to exalt him above Burrough and Howgill, and disturbed the latter when they attempted to speak. The two ministers reproved the women, and they in dudgeon complained to Naylor, and he encouraged them in their opposition to Burrough and Howgill. Two of these women, Martha Symonds and Hannah Stranger, became his most devoted adherents, and followed him in all his wanderings.

In 1656 he revisited the West, prophesied in Cornwall, and on passing through Exeter was arrested under the sweeping charge of vagrancy, and committed to gaol. There he was visited by many devout females, amongst others by one Dorcas Erbury, who fell into a swoon, and was revived by Naylor, who cried over her, "Tabitha, I say unto thee, arise!" She awoke, and the faithful believed that Naylor had restored her from death to life.

He was released at length by order of Council and then he travelled to Bristol at the head of six believers. On reaching Bedminster, a village a mile from Old Bristol, though now a suburb of the town, Naylor and his party[Pg 89] formed in procession, intending to produce a scene in the streets of Bristol.

One of his disciples, a young man with bare head, led the horse by the bridle upon which Naylor was mounted; two men followed in single file on horseback, each with his wife on a pillion behind him; and one woman walked on the causeway. As they went forward the six shouted, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth!" till they came to the almshouse in the suburbs of Bristol, "when one of the women alighted, and she, with the other of her own sex, lovingly marched on each side of Naylor's horse." The road was deep in mud and rain was falling, but neither mud nor rain damped the ardour of the enthusiasts. On reaching Redcliffe Gate, Timothy Wedlock, a Devonshire man of the company, bareheaded, and Martha Symonds holding the bridle on one side and Hannah Stranger holding it on the other, advanced, chanting their hymn of praise.

Naylor wore a broad-brimmed hat and a long sad-coloured mantle. He was of a moderate height, ruddy complexion, had a slightly arched nose, large brown eyes, was a remarkably handsome man, and was thought by many to resemble the traditional type of face attributed to our Lord. Martha Symonds was the wife of Thomas Symonds, bookbinder of London; and Hannah Stranger was the wife of John Stranger, combmaker in London. The two other women accompanying Naylor were Dorcas Erbury, whom he had raised from the dead, and her mother.

In this way the solemn procession advanced to the High Cross at Bristol, and after that to the White Hart, Broad Street, where lodged two Quakers, Dennis Hollister and Henry Row.

The magistrates at once apprehended the party, and committed them to prison.

The following is the examination of the prisoners, somewhat condensed:—

[Pg 90]

Examination of James Naylor.

Being asked his name, he replied, "The men of this world call me James Naylor."

Q. "Art not thou the man that rid on horseback into Bristol, a woman leading thy horse, and others saying before thee, 'Holy, holy, holy, Hosannah to the Son of David'?"

A. "I did ride into a town, but what its name was I know not; and by the Spirit a woman was commanded to hold my horse's bridle, and some there were that cast down clothes and sang praises to the Lord, such songs as the Lord put into their hearts; and it is like it might be the song, 'Holy, holy, holy,' &c."

Q. "Whether or no didst thou reprove these women?"

A. "Nay; but I bade them take heed that they say nothing but what they were moved to by the Lord."

Q. "Dost thou own this letter which Hannah Stranger sent unto thee?"

A. "Yes, I do own that letter."

Q. "Art thou (according to that letter) the fairest of ten thousand?"

A. "As to the visible, I deny any such attribute to be due unto me; but if as to that which the Father hath begotten in me, I shall own it."

Two letters were then produced and read; we need only give one:—

"James Naylor,

"Oh! thou fairest of ten thousand, thou only begotten Son of God, how my heart panteth after thee! O stay me with flaggons and comfort me with wine. My beloved, thou art like a roe or young hart upon the mountains of spices, where thy beloved spouse hath long been calling thee to come[Pg 91] away, but hath been but lately heard of thee. Now it lies something upon me that thou mindest to see her, for the spirit and power of God is with her, and there is given to her much of excellent and innocent wisdom arisen and arising in her, which will make all the honest-hearted to praise the Lord alone, and no more set up self. And therefore let not my lord and master have any jealousy against her, for she is highly beloved of the Lord, and that shall all see who come to know the Lord. And now He doth bless them that bless His, and curse them that curse His; for this hath the Lord showed me, that her portion is exceedingly large in the Lord, and as her sorrow hath been much, so shall her joy be much more; which rejoiceth my heart to see her walk so valiantly and so faithfully in the work of the Lord, in this time of so great trials as hath been upon her especially.

"And I am,
"Hannah Stranger.

"The Postscript.

"Remember my dear love to thy master. Thy name is no more James, but Jesus.

"John Stranger."

"Remember my love to these friends with thee. The 17th day of 8th month,
superscribed to the hands of James Naylor."

Q. "Art thou the only Son of God?"

A. "I am the son of God; but I have many brethren."

Q. "Have any called thee by the name of Jesus?"

A. "Not as unto the visible, but as Jesus, the Christ that is in me."

Q. "Dost thou own the name of the King of Israel?"

A. "Not as a creature; but if they gave it to Christ within, I own it, and have a kingdom,
but not of this world;[Pg 92] my kingdom is of another world, of which thou wotest
not."

Q. "Whether or no art thou the prophet of the Most High?"

A. "Thou hast said I am a prophet."

Q. "By whom were you sent?"

A. "By Him who hath sent the Spirit of His Son in me to try, not as to carnal matters,
but belonging to the kingdom of God, by the indwelling of the Father and the Son, to
judge all spirits, to be guided by none."

Q. "Is not the written Word of God the guide?"

A. "The written Word declares of it, and what is not according to that is not true."

Q. "Who is thy mother? or whether or no is she a virgin?"

A. "Nay, according to the natural birth."

Q. "Who is thy mother according to thy spiritual birth?"

A. "No carnal creature."

Q. "Who, then?"

He returned no answer.

Q. "Art thou the everlasting Son of God?"

A. "When God is manifest in the flesh there is the everlasting Son; and I do witness God in the flesh. I am the Son of God, and the Son of God is but one."

Q. "Art thou the everlasting Son of God, the King of Righteousness?"

A. "I am; and the everlasting righteousness is wrought in me; if ye were acquainted with the Father ye would also be acquainted with me."

Q. "Do any kiss thy feet?"

A. "It might be they did, but I minded them not."

Q. "How dost thou provide for a livelihood?"

A. "As do the lilies, without care, being maintained of my Father."

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Q. "What business hast thou at Bristol, or that way?"

A. "I was guided and directed by my Father."

Q. "Where were you born?"

A. "At Arderslow, in Yorkshire."

Q. "Where lives thy wife?"

A. "She whom thou callest my wife lives in Wakefield."

Q. "Why dost thou not live with her?"

A. "I did till I was called to the army."

Q. "Under whose command didst thou serve in the army?"

A. "First under him they call Lord Fairfax."

Q. "Who then?"

A. "Afterwards with that man called Colonel Lambert. And then I went into Scotland, where I was quartermaster, and returned sick to my earthly habitation."

Q. "What wentest thou for to Exeter?"

A. "I went to Launceston to see the Brethren."

Q. "What estate hast thou?"

A. "Take no care for that."

Q. "Wherefore camest thou in such an unusual posture as two women leading thy horse; others saying, 'Holy, holy, holy!' &c., with another before thee bareheaded, knee-deep in the highway mud, when thou mightest have gone on the causey; and at such a time that, it raining, thy companions received the rain at their necks, and vented it at their hose and breeches?"

A. "It tended to my Father's praise and glory; and I ought not to slight anything which the Spirit of the Lord moves."

Q. "Wherefore didst thou call Marthy Symonds 'Mother,' as George Fox affirms?"

A. "George Fox is a liar and a firebrand of hell; for neither I, nor any with me, called her so."

Q. "Thou hast a wife at this time?"

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A. "A woman I have, who by the world is called my wife, and some children I have, which according to the flesh are mine."

Martha Symonds' Examination.

"She contendeth she knew James Naylor formerly, for he is now no more James Naylor, but refined to a more excellent substance; and so she saith she came with him from Eccles to Bristol."

Q. "What made thee lead his horse into Bristol, and cry, 'Holy, holy, holy!' and to spread thy garment before him?"

A. "I was forced thereto by the power of the Lord."

Q. "Whether didst thou kneel before him?"

A. "I was forced thereto by the power of love."

Q. "Dost thou own him to be the Prince of Peace?"

A. "He is a perfect man; and he that is a perfect man is the Prince of Peace."

Q. "Hast thou a husband?"

A. "I have a man which thou callest my husband."

Q. "What made thee leave him, and to follow James Naylor?"

A. "It is our life to praise the Lord, and the Lord my strength is manifest in James Naylor."

Q. "Oughtest thou to worship James Naylor upon thy knees?"

A. "Yea, I ought so to do."

Hannah Stranger, Thomas Stranger, and Timothy Wedlock were next examined. It is not necessary to reproduce their interrogations; they much resemble what has been given above.

Dorcas Erbury was next called. She was widow of William Erbury, once a minister.

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Q. "Where dost thou live?"

A. "With Margaret Thomas."

Q. "Wherefore dost thou sing, 'Holy, holy, holy'?"

A. "I did not at that time; but those that sang did it discharging of their duty."

Q. "Dost thou own him to be the Holy One of Israel?"

A. "I do, and with my blood will seal it."

Q. "And dost thou own him for the Son of God?"

A. "He is the only begotten son of God."

Q. "Wherefore didst thou pull off his stockings, and lay thy clothes beneath his feet?"

A. "He is worthy of it, for he is the Holy One of Israel."

Q. "Christ raised those that had been dead; so did not he?"

A. "He raised me."

Q. "In what manner?"

A. "He laid his hand on my head after I had been dead two days, and said, 'Dorcas, arise!' and I arose, and live, as thou seest."

Q. "Where did he this?"

A. "At the gaol in Exeter."

Q. "What witness hast thou for this?"

A. "My mother, who was present."

Q. "His power being so much, wherefore opened he not the prison doors and escaped?"

A. "The doors shall open when the Lord's wish is done."

The Bristol magistrates sent Naylor and his deluded followers to London, to be examined before Parliament.

On the 31st October it was ordered that a Committee should be appointed to consider the information given touching "the misdemeanour and blasphemies of James[Pg 96] Naylor and others at Bristol and elsewhere, and to report thereon."

The Committee met next day, and on December 2nd it was resolved that the report of the Committee should be brought in and read on the following Friday, December 5th. On that day it was read by the reporter,—it consisted of thirteen sheets of paper—and the debate on the report began on the 6th, when James Naylor was called to the bar of the House. He came with his hat on, but it was removed by the Serjeant. The report was read to him, and he was demanded whether each particular was true, and he acknowledged that it was so.

The debate was adjourned to Monday, the 8th, and it occupied Parliament till the 20th December. The House resolved "that James Naylor was guilty of horrid blasphemy, and that he was a grand impostor and seducer of the people," and his sentence was, "that he should be set on the pillory, with his head in the pillory, in the Palace Yard, Westminster, during the space of two hours, on Thursday next, and be whipped by the hangman through the streets from Westminster to the Old Exchange, London; and there, likewise, he should be set on the pillory, with his head in the pillory, for the space of two hours, between the hours of eleven and one, on Saturday next, in each place wearing a paper containing an inscription of his crimes; and that at the Old Exchange his tongue should be bored through with a hot iron, and that he should be there also stigmatised in the forehead with the letter B; and that he should afterwards be sent to Bristol, to be conveyed into and through the city on horseback, with his face backwards, and there also should be whipped the next market-day after he came thither; and that thence he should be committed to prison in Bridewell, London, and there be restrained from the society of all people, and there to labour hard till he should be released[Pg 97] by Parliament; and during that time he should be debarred the use of pen, ink, and paper, and should have no relief but what he earned by his daily labour."

The women were ordered to be kept in confinement. The severity of this atrocious sentence deserves notice. The Independents, who had suffered under Laud and the Star Chamber, now that they were in power, had no idea of tolerating the Quakers, who read their Bibles differently from themselves. Cromwell was especially prejudiced against them, and it is probable that the Protector had something to do with the severity of the sentence on Naylor.

One Robert Rich, a merchant of London, wrote to the Parliament, on December 15, a petition in favour of Naylor: "If I may have liberty of those that sit in Parliament, I do here attend at this door, and am now ready out of the Scriptures of truth to show that not anything that James Naylor hath said or done is blasphemy, &c."

Sentence was pronounced by the Speaker, Sir Thomas Widdrington. Naylor on hearing it said, "I pray God He may not lay it to your charge." On December 20th, 1656, Naylor suffered a part of his sentence, standing two hours in the pillory, and receiving at the cart's tail three hundred and ten stripes. "The executioner gave him three hundred and ten stripes," says Sewell, "and would have given him one more, as he confessed to the Sheriff, but his foot slipping, the stroke fell upon his own hand, which hurt him much. Naylor was hurt with the horses treading on his feet, whereon the prints of the nails were seen. His wounds were washed by R. Travers, who certified, 'there was not the space of a man's nail free from stripes and blood, from his shoulders near to his waist; his right arm sorely striped; his hands much hurt by the cords that they bled and were swelled: the blood and wounds of his back[Pg 98] did very little appear at first sight, by reason of abundance of dirt that covered them, till it was washed off.'"

Another petition in his favour was presented, signed by about a hundred persons, to Parliament, requesting the remission of the rest of his sentence, and as this was refused, appeal was made to Cromwell the Protector, with like want of success.

Five Independent ministers visited Naylor in prison, and vainly urged him to recant.

Rich besieged the doors of Parliament on December 27th, from eight o'clock till eleven, imploring a respite, but all in vain. Naylor was then brought out to undergo the rest of his sentence; he was again pilloried, his tongue bored through, and his forehead branded. Rich held the hand of the unhappy man whilst his tongue was pierced, and the red-hot iron applied to his brow, and he licked the wounds to allay the pain. Thousands who witnessed the execution of the sentence exhibited their respect by removing their caps. There was no reviling, and nothing thrown at Naylor, but all stood silent and sympathetic.

James Naylor was then sent to Bristol, and whipped from the middle of St. Thomas' Street to the middle of Broad Street, and taken back to his prison in Bridewell. There he wrote his recantation, in epistles addressed to the Quakers. In one of these he says: "Dear brethren, my heart is broken this day for the offence which I have occasioned to God's truth and people, and especially to you, who in dear love followed me, seeking me in faithfulness to God, which I rejected, being bound wherein I could not come forth, till God's hand brought me, to whose love I now confess. And I beseech you forgive wherein I evil requited your love in that day. God knows my sorrow for it, since I see it, that ever I should offend that of God in any, or reject his counsel; and I greatly fear[Pg 99] further to offend or do amiss, whereby the innocent truth or people of God should suffer, or that I should disobey therein."

He was confined about two years, and was then set at liberty. He thereupon went to Bristol, where in a public meeting he made confession of his offence and fall so movingly as to draw tears from most of those present; and he was then restored to the community of the Quakers, from which he had been excluded by George Fox at Exeter for his presumption and pride.

Charges of the most gross immorality have been brought against James Naylor, whether truly or falsely who can now decide? It is possible that the language of the women who followed him, in speaking of him, their letters to him, one of which has been quoted, may have given rise to these reports. Naylor, however, never would admit that there had been anything unseemly in his behaviour towards the women who followed him from London into Cornwall, and from Cornwall to Bristol; and Sewell, who knew Hannah Stranger, repudiates the charge as utterly false. But it is curious to notice how that religious fanaticism and sensuality so frequently run together. It was so in that outburst of mysticism in the Middle Ages—the heresy of the Fraticelli; it was so with at least one branch of the Hussites in Bohemia; and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the great convulsion of the Reformation had set minds naturally predisposed to religious excitement in a ferment, this was most conspicuous, as in the ferocious licentiousness of John Bockelson, the Anabaptist King of Sion, or the more cautious profligacy, under a cloak of religion, of Ludwig Hetzer and David Joris.

James Naylor quitted London finally in 1660, intending to return to Wakefield; but was found by a countryman one evening in a field near Holm and King's Rippon, in[Pg 100] Huntingdonshire, having been robbed and left bound. He was taken to Holm, and his clothes were changed. To those who kindly cared for him he said, "You have refreshed my body; the Lord refresh your souls."

He shortly after died there of the rough handling he had received from the highwaymen who had plundered him, and was buried in a Quaker's cemetery belonging to Thomas Parnel, a physician.

Two hours before he died he uttered the touching and eloquent speech:—"There is a spirit which I feel that delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exultation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it; for its ground and spring are the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness; its life is everlasting love, unfeigned, and takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind. In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it or can own its life. It is conceived in sorrow, and brought forth without any to pity it; nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings; for with the world's joy it is murdered. I found it alone, being forsaken; I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth; who through death obtained their resurrection, and eternal, holy life."

A more beautiful and true description of the Christian spirit was never uttered. It is a passage meriting a place beside the famous definition of charity by S. Paul. The man who used such words was no hypocrite when he used them. If he had erred greatly, he had also repented; if he had fallen, he had risen after his fall. One is glad to turn away[Pg 101] the eye from the blemishes of the unfortunate Quaker's career to the spot of pure light that rests on his death-bed.

His writings were collected and published in an octavo volume in 1716. They are very unequal. Some passages of great beauty, almost comparable to that given above, may be found, but there is also much that is as involved in style and confused in thought as the specimen quoted earlier from his recantation.

FOOTNOTE:

[8] Authorities:—"The Grand Imposter Examined; or, the Life, Trial, and Examination of James Naylor, London, 1656," reprinted in the Harleian Misc., vi., 424. Johannis Lussenii "Hist. u. Schrifft-mässige Erörterung der vor wenig Zeit in Engelland entstandenen secte der Quäcker," in "Quäcker Grueuel," published by authority of the magistrates of Hamburg, 1702. "The Recantation of James Naylor," in "Somers' Tracts," vi., 22, pub. 1659. "Naylor's Writings Collected," 8vo, 1716. Sewell's "Hist. of the Quakers," 1714. Sewell was personally acquainted with Hannah Stranger, one of

Naylor's followers. "The Journals of the House of Commons," vi., p. 448-59. Blome's "Fanatick History." J. Whiting's "Account."

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"OLD THREE LAPS."

At Laycock, two miles west of Keighley, at a farm called "The Worlds," lived a close-fisted yeoman named Sharp, at the end of last century and the beginning of this. He carried on a small weaving business in addition to his farm, and amassed a considerable sum of money. The story goes that on one occasion old Sharp brought a piece of cloth to the Keighley tailor and told him to make a coat for him out of it. The tailor on measuring the farmer pronounced the cloth to be insufficient to allow of tails to the coat, and asked what he was to do under the circumstances. "Tho' mun make it three laps,"—*i.e.*, *any way*. The expression stuck to him, and till the day of his death the name of "Three Laps" adhered to him, when it passed to his still more eccentric son.

This son, William Sharp, for a while followed the trade of a weaver, but was more inclined to range the moors with his gun than stick to his loom; and the evenings generally found him in the bar of the "Devonshire Inn" at Keighley, the landlord of which was a Mr. Morgan. Young Three Laps was fond of chaffing his boon companions. On one occasion he encountered a commercial traveller in the timber trade, and began his banter by asking him the price of a pair of mahogany "laithe" (barn) doors. The traveller, prompted by Mr. Morgan, drew him out, and booked his order.

After some weeks the invoice of mahogany barn-doors, price upwards of £30, was forwarded to William Sharp. [Pg 103] Young Three Laps was beside his wits with dismay, and had recourse to Mr. Morgan, and through his intervention the imaginary mahogany barn-doors were not sent.

The barmaid of the "Devonshire" was a comely, respectable young woman, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer named Smith. William Sharp fell desperately in love with the girl, proposed, and was accepted. The day for the wedding was fixed, and the young man went to Keighley Church at the appointed hour to be married. But the bride was not there. At the last moment a difficulty had arisen about the settlements. Mr. Smith could not induce Old Three Laps to bestow on his son sufficient money to support him in a married condition, and the two old men had quarrelled and torn up the settlements.

The blow was more than the mind of William Sharp could bear. He returned to "The Worlds" sulkily, went to bed, and never rose from it again. For forty-nine years he kept to his bed, and refused to speak to anyone. He was just thirty years old when he thus isolated himself from society and active life, and he died in his bed at the age of seventy-nine, on March 3rd, 1856.

The room he occupied measured nine feet long and was about the same breadth. The floor was covered with stone flags, and was generally damp. In one corner was a fire-place which could be used only when the wind blew from one or two points of the compass; the window was permanently fastened, and where some of the squares had been broken, was carefully patched with wood. At the time of his death, this window had not been opened for thirty-eight years. The sole furniture comprised an antique clock, minus weight and pendulum, the hands and face covered with a network of cobwebs; a small round table of dark oak, and a plain unvarnished four-post bedstead, entirely[Pg 104] without hangings. In this dreary cell, whose only inlet for fresh air during thirty-eight years was the door occasionally left open, did this strange being immure himself. He obstinately refused to speak to anyone, and if spoken to even by his attendants would not answer. All trace of intelligence gradually faded away; the only faculties which remained in active exercise were those he shared with the beasts.

His father by his will made provision for the temporal wants of his eccentric son, and so secured him a constant attendant. He ate his meals regularly when brought to him, and latterly in a very singular manner, for in process of time his legs became contracted and drawn towards his body, and when about to eat his food he used to roll himself over and take his meals in a kneeling posture. He was generally cleanly in his habits. During the whole period of his self-imposed confinement he never had any serious illness, the only case of indisposition those connected with him could remember being a slight loss of appetite, caused apparently by indigestion, for two or three days—and this, notwithstanding that he ate on an average as much as any farm labourer. He certainly, physically speaking, did credit to his food, for though arrived at the age of seventy-nine years, his flesh was firm, fair and unwrinkled, save with fat, and he weighed about 240 lbs. He showed great repugnance to being seen, and whenever a stranger entered his den he immediately buried his head in the bed-clothes. About a week before his death his appetite began to fail; his limbs became partially benumbed, so that he could not roll himself over to take his food in his accustomed posture.

From this attack he seemed to rally, and no apprehensions were entertained that the attack would prove fatal, till the evening before his death.

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However, during the night he rapidly became worse, and expired at four a.m. on Monday, March 3rd, 1856.

Shortly before he expired he was heard to exclaim—"Poor Bill! poor Bill! poor Bill Sharp!"—the most connected sentence he had been known to utter for forty nine years.

He was buried in Keighley Churchyard on the 7th of March, amidst crowds who had come from all parts of the neighbourhood to witness the scene. The coffin excited considerable attention from its extraordinary shape, as his body could not be straightened, the muscles of the knees and thighs being contracted. It was an oak chest, two feet four inches in depth. The weight was so great that it required eight men with strong ropes to lower it into the grave. It was thought to weigh with its contents 480 lbs.

A gentleman who visited Old Three Laps before his death has given the following account of what he saw:—

"If you chance to go a-skating 'to the Tarn,' and want a fine bracing walk, keep on the Sutton road about a mile, and you will come to an avenue of larch, not in a very thriving state, but sufficient to indicate that some one had an idea of the picturesque who planted the trees, although the house at the top of the avenue has not a very attractive appearance. You have now reached 'World's End,' and save here and there a solitary farm, with its cold stone buildings and treeless fields, there are few signs of life between you and the wide and boundless moors of Yorkshire and Lancashire. On the opposite hill, right up in the clouds, is 'Tewett Hall,' the residence of a Bradford Town Councillor. He alone, in this part, seems to follow Three Laps' ancestors' plan of planting, and in a few years we may expect to see a fine belt of timber on the verge of the horizon, a sight that will cheer the heart of some future Dr. Syntax when in search of the picturesque.[Pg 106] At this place Three Laps 'took his bed,' and in a little parlour, with a northern light, the sill of which is level with the field, the floor cold and damp, and meanly furnished, it was my privilege to see Three Laps some twenty-five years ago. To gain admission we had some difficulty; but with the assistance of the farmer and a tin of tobacco to the nurse, who was an inveterate smoker, we were shown into his bedroom. As soon as he heard strangers, he pulled the bed-clothes over his head, which the nurse with considerable force removed, and uncovered his body, which was devoid of every vestige of body-linen. A more startling and sickening sight I never saw. Nebuchadnezzar rushed into my mind. Three Laps covered his face with his hands, his fingers being like birds' claws, while, with his legs drawn under his

body, he had the appearance of a huge beast. He had white hair, and a very handsome head, well set on a strong chest. His body and all about him was scrupulously clean, and his condition healthy, as his nurse proudly pointed out, digging her fist furiously into his ribs. He gave no signs of joy or pain, but lay like a mass of inanimate matter. It struck me at the time that his limbs were stiff; but a neighbour of his, who after his dinner stole a peep into his bedroom window, told me that he found him playing with his plate in the manner of a Chinese juggler, and with considerable ability. On my informant tapping the window, he vanished under the bed-clothes.

"Such was the life of the strange man who for love of a woman never left this obscure room for nearly half a century."

The case of Old Three Laps is not unique.

In the early part of this century there lived in the neighbourhood of Caen, in Normandy, a Juge de Paix, M. Halloin, a great lover of tranquillity and ease; so much so,[Pg 107] indeed, that, as bed is the article of furniture most adapted to repose, he rarely quitted it, but made his bed-chamber a hall of audience, in which he exercised his functions of magistrate, pronouncing sentence with his head resting on a pillow, and his body languidly extended on the softest of feather beds. However, his services were dispensed with, and he devoted the remaining six years of his life to still greater ease. Feeling his end approach, M. Halloin determined on remaining constant to his principle, and showing to the world to what an extent he carried his passion for bed. Consequently, his last will contained a clause expressing his desire to be buried at night, in his bed, comfortably tucked in, with pillows and coverlets, as he had died.

As no opposition was raised against the execution of this clause, a huge pit was sunk, and the defunct was lowered into his last resting-place without any alteration having been made in the position in which death had overtaken him. Boards were laid over the bed, that the falling earth might not disturb this imperturbable quietist.

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CHRISTOPHER PIVETT.

Christopher Pivett died at York, in 1796, at the advanced age of ninety-three years. He was by trade a carver and gilder, but in early life had served in the army, and been present in several battles—Fontenoy, Dettingen, and the siege of Carlisle.

After he settled at York, his house was accidentally burnt down; and he then formed the singular resolution never again to sleep in a bed, lest he should be burned to death

whilst asleep, or not have sufficient time to remove his property, should an accident again occur. This resolution he strictly adhered to for the remaining forty years of his life.

His practice was to repose upon the floor, or on two chairs, or sitting in a chair, but always dressed.

During the whole period he dwelt alone he was his own cook, and seldom suffered anyone to enter the house. He would not tell anyone where he had been born or to whom he was related, and there can be little doubt that the name of Pivett was an assumed one. Among other singularities, he kept a human skull in his house, and strictly ordered that it should be buried with him.

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DAVID TURTON, MUSICIAN AT HORBURY.

David Turton was born in Horbury, near Wakefield, A.D. 1768, and died August 18th, 1846.

He was by trade a weaver of flannel, and his loom, which was in the upper room of the cottage in which he lived, might be heard by passers-by going diligently from early morn to dewy eve. In this way he supplied his few earthly wants, for he was a man of a very simple and unobtrusive character; and he did not change either his dress or his habits with the growing luxury of the times.

In matter of diet he was frugal, and he always stuck to the old oat-cake and oatmeal porridge he had been accustomed to from childhood. "Avver bread and avver me-al porritch" was what he called them, for he spoke the broadest Yorkshire. Alas! the delightful oat-cake, thin, crisp, is now a thing of the past in Horbury. There was an old woman made it, the last of a glorious race of avver bre-ad makers in Horbury, some years ago. But she has gone the way of all flesh; and the base descendants of the oat-cake crunchers, the little men of to-day, sustain their miserable lives on bakers' wheat bread.

David did not, as is the custom with Northerners now, speak two languages—English and Yorkshire, according to the company in which they find themselves; but on all occasions, and for all purposes, he adhered to that peculiarly racy and piquant tongue, both in pronunciation and phraseology, which was so well known to those who dwelt in [Pg 110] the West Riding of Yorkshire half a century ago, and which still more or less prevails in that locality. Half a century ago every village had its own

peculiarity of intonation, its own specialities in words. A Horbury man could be distinguished from a man of Dewsbury, and a Thornhill man from one of Batley. The railways have blended, fused these peculiar dialects into one, and taken off the old peculiar edge of provincialism, so that now it is only to be found in its most pronounced and perfect development among the aged.

The figure of David Turton was spare, his legs long and lean as clothes-line props. He wore drab breeches and white stockings, a long waistcoat of rather coarse black cloth, with a long coat of the same material, much the pattern of that now affected by our bishops.

His features were small and sharp, his eye especially bright and full of life; and having lost nearly all his teeth at a comparatively early age, his pointed chin and nose inclined much towards each other.

Music was his great delight, and in that he spent all his spare time and money. He was a good singer, and could handle the violoncello creditably. All Handel's oratorios, besides many other works of the classical composers, he knew off by heart, and he was for a long time the chief musical oracle in the neighbourhood in which he lived. He even aspired to be a composer, and published a volume of chants and psalm tunes. Some of the former, but few of the latter, have survived. His chants have found their way into various collections of Anglican chants along with those of Dr Turton, Bishop of Ely, also a musician and composer of chants. But they have ceased to sound in his own parish church, where they have been displaced by Gregorians. Not one of his hymn tunes has found its way into the most popular collection of the day—"Hymns Ancient and Modern"—which is the more to be regretted, as [Pg 111] Turton's tunes were often original, which is much more than can be said for a good many of the new tunes inserted in that collection.

A considerable number of choristers in cathedral and parish church choirs owed all their musical skill to the careful training of old David Turton.

His efficiency in music, together with the simple goodness of his character, made him a favourite among musical people in all grades of society, and there was seldom a gathering in the neighbourhood where any good class of music was performed in which his well-known figure was not to be seen.

On one occasion he went to Hatfield Hall, then the residence of Francis Maude, Esq., who was a great lover of music, and a friend and patron of old David.

His own account of his *débût* on that occasion is sufficiently characteristic to be given:—

"I went t' other day," said he, "to a gre-at meusic do at ou'd Mr. Maude's at 'Atfield 'All. Nah! when I gat theare, a smart looking chap o' a waiter telled me I was to goa into t' parlour; soa I follows efter him doun a long passage till we commed to a big oppen place like, and then he oppens a doo-ar, and says to me, 'Cum in!' soa I walks in, and theare I seed t' place were right full o' quality (gentlefolks), and Mr. Maude comes to me and says, 'Now, David, haw are ye?' 'Middlin,' says I, 'thenk ye!' Soa then there comes a smart chap wi' a tray full of cups o' tea, and he says to me, 'Will ye hev sum?' 'Thenk ye,' says I, 'I'm none particular.' 'Why, then, help yer sen,' says he. Soa I taks a cup i' my hand; and then says he, 'Weant ye hev sum sugar and cre-am?' 'Aye, for sure,' says I; soa I sugars and creams it, and then there comes another chap wi' a tray full of bre-ad and butter, and cakes like, and says he, 'Will ye hev sum?' 'I don't mind if I do,' says I.[Pg 112] 'Well, then,' says he, 'tak sum wi' thy fingers.' Soa I holds t' cup and t' sawcer i' one hand, and taks a piece of spice cake i' t' other. 'Now, then,' thinks I, 'how am I ever to sup my te-a? I can't team (pour) it out into t' sawcer, for boath my hands is fast.' But all at once I sees a plan o' doin' it. I thowt I could hold t' cake i' my mouth while I teamed (poured) t' te-a into t' sawcer, and then claps th' cup on a chair while I supped my tea. But, bless ye, t' cake war so varry short (crumbling) that it brake off i' my mouth, and tum'led onto t' floor, and I were in a bonny tak-ing. Howsomever, I clapt t' cup and t' sawcer onto t' chair, and kneeled me down on t' floor, and sammed (picked) it all up as weel as I could; and then I sups up my tea as sharp as I could, and gave t' cup and t' sawcer to t' chap who cumed round again wi' his tray. 'Will ye hev some more?' says he. 'Noa,' says I, 'noa more, thenk ye.' For I thowt to mysen I had made maugrums (antics) enough, and all t' quality 'at war theare mun ha' thowt me a hawkard owd chap. Weel! when tea were finish'd we gat to th' music, and then, I promise ye, I war all reet, an' a rare do we had on it."

David was returning through a pasture one day in which was a furious bull, who seeing old David with his red bag, made at him. The musician did not fly; that would not comport with his dignity, and his bass viol that he carried in the bag might be injured by a precipitate retreat over the hedge. The bull bellowed, and came on with lowered horns.

"Steady!" soliloquised the musician; "I reckon that was double B nat'ral."

Again the bull bellowed.

"I am pretty sure it were B," said David again, "but I'll mak' sure;" and opening his bag, he extracted the bass viol, set it down, and drawing his bow across the vibrating string,[Pg 113] produced a sound as full of volume and of the same pitch as the tone of the infuriated beast.

"I thowt I were reet," said David, with a grim smile.

At the sound of the bass viol the bull stood still, raised his head, and glowered at the extraordinary object before him. David, having his viol out, thought it a pity to bag it again without a tune, and began the violoncello part in one of Handel's choruses. It was too much for the bull; he was out-bellowed, and turned tail.

When David was getting a little advanced in years he was coming home on a dark night from a musical gathering, and tumbling over a large stone which happened to be lying on the road, he fell down with great force and dislocated his hip.

This was a sore trial to him in many ways. In the first place, it quite prevented his going on with his customary means of obtaining his living, and, besides that, it deprived him of the pleasure of going about among his musical friends.

For a long, weary time he was quite confined to his bed, and time hung heavy on his hands, for he had no other resources except his loom and his music. His constant companion in bed was his violoncello, and as he could not for a long time sit up sufficiently to enable him to use the bow, he spent a great part of the day in playing over pizzicato the music which he loved so well.

After some time he got about a little on crutches, and ultimately was able to go by the help of a stick. His little savings had now dwindled away, and poverty began to look him in the face. But at this crisis his musical friends came forward, and gave with great success for his benefit the oratorio of the "Messiah" in the town of Wakefield, and by this means raised for him the liberal sum of £70, of which they begged his acceptance.

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He was afraid to have so large a sum in his own charge, and he therefore requested that it might be placed in the hands of the Vicar of Horbury, so that he might draw from time to time just as much as he needed. This was accordingly done, and by his careful expenditure of it, it sufficed to make him quite comfortable during the rest of his life, and to erect the simple memorial-stone which now stands over his grave in Horbury churchyard.

He had a married sister living in London who had often invited him to pay her a visit, and when he had recovered from his accident sufficiently to go about pretty well by the aid of a stick, and having now plenty of time at his disposal, on account of his being lame and unable to work at his loom, he determined to embark on the railway to London.

His sister lived in Kensington, and his own account, of his visit, and of what he saw in the great city, was highly amusing:—

"I went up," said he, "on a Setterday, and o' t' Sunday-morn, while we was getting our breakfast, th' sister's husband says to me across t' table, 'I reckon ye'll goa wi' us to chapel this forenoin,' for ye see they was chapel-folks. 'We'll see,' says I, 'after a bit.' But I knew varry weel mysen what I were boun' to do, though I didn't say so to them.

"Soa I just watches my opportunity, an' when they was all gone out of the room, I nips out, as sharp as a lark, and goas to t' end o' t' entry. For t' sister's house war not to t' street, but up a bit on a entry like; and away I goas till I sees a homnibus, and I calls out to t' fellow, 'I say, are ye for Sant Paul's?' 'Aye,' says he.

"Why then,' says I, 'ye're t' chap for me!' Soa he oppens t' door, an' I jumps in.

"'How much is it?' says I. 'Nobbut sixpence,' says he. Soa I rode all t' way thro' (from Kensington to[Pg 115] Sant Paul's—and ye know it's a rare way—all for sixpence.

"Eh! and bless ye! we just hed a sarvice! Think nobbut o' me goin to their ou'd chapel, wi' nowt but a bit on a poor snufflin' hymn or two, an' some squealin' bairns and women to sing 'em, and a ram'lin, rantin' sarmon iver so long, when I had t' opportunity o' going to Sant Paul's to hear thinks done as they sud be done. Nay, nay!—I warn't sich a fooil as that nauther. I warn't born i' Yorkshire to know no better nor that, I'll uphou'd ye.

"Howsomever, when I gat back hoame, they was into me weel for giving 'em t' slip, an' turnin' my back, as they said, on t' blessed Gospel invitin' of me. But I let 'em say what they'd a mind to. When a beer barrel begins to fiz out o' t' bung hoil, tha' mun let it fiz a bit, thof't mak a mucky slop, or it'll bust t' barrel. I said nowt; I just set and thowt o' what I'd heard, and I played it ower again on my in'ards.

"T' next day I thowt I sud like to goa and hear t' band of t' Orse Guards. Now t' sister 'usband had a neph' at was one on 'em; soa I went wi' him. And after they'd played iver so mony things—eh! an' bless ye, they just did play 'em—he says to t' leader o' t' band—'Yon ow'd chap'—meaning' me—'knows a bit about meusic.' Soa t' fellow says to me, 'Is there owt partickler ye'd like?' 'Nay,' says I, owt 'at ye've got'll be reight for me.'

"'Nay,' says he, 'owt' at ye've a mind to ax for.' Soa I picks two or three things 'at justs comes to my mind like. And, bless ye! they play 'em like owt at all, and then I menshuned another or two, an' they were never fast wi' owt till it was time for 'em to lap up. Soa they says, 'we mun goa now, but ye mun come agean another day!' 'I sall,'

says I, 'ye may depend.' And I went reg'lar every day as long as I war i' London; and rared pleased they war wi' me an' all, and so ye mind war I wi' them.

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"That, and Sant Paul's, an' Westminster Habbey, war t' main o' what I seed and heeard all t' time I war i' London."

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JOHN BARTENDALE, THE PIPER.

In the reign of King Charles I. a strolling musician, a poor piper, named John Bartendale, was brought, in 1634, before the Assizes, and was convicted of felony.

He received sentence, and on March 27th was hung on the gallows, outside Micklegate Bar, York. There were no houses there at that time—it was open country. After he had remained swinging for three-quarters of an hour, and was to all appearance dead, he was cut down, and buried near the place of execution. The officers of justice had accomplished their work carelessly in both particulars, as it afterwards transpired, for he had been neither properly hung nor properly buried.

Earth has a peculiarly invigorating and restorative effect, as has been recently discovered; and patients suffering from debility are by some medical men now-a-days placed in earth baths with the most salutary effects. In the case of gangrened wounds a little earth has been found efficacious in promoting healthy action of the skin. John Bartendale was now to experience the advantages of an earth-bath.

That same day, in the afternoon, a gentleman, one of the Vavasours of Hazlewood, was riding by, when he observed the earth moving in a certain place. He ordered his servant to alight; he himself descended from his horse; and together they threw off the mould, and discovered the [Pg 118] unfortunate piper alive. He opened his eyes, sat up, and asked where he was, and how he came there. Mr. Vavasour and his servant helped him out of his grave, and seated him on the side. The man was sent for water and other restoratives, and before long the news had spread about down Micklegate that the poor piper was come to life again. A swarm of wondering and sympathising people poured out to congratulate John the Piper on his resurrection, and to offer their assistance. A conveyance was obtained, and as soon as Bartendale was in a sufficient condition to be moved, he was placed in it, covered with Mr. Vavasour's cloak,—for he had been stripped by the executioner before he was laid in the earth—and was removed again to York Castle.

It was rather hard that the poor fellow, after he had obtained his release, should have been returned to his prison; but there was no help for it. The resurrection of the piper was no secret; otherwise Mr. Vavasour would doubtless have removed him privately to a place of security till he was recovered, and then have sent him into another part of the country.

At the following Assizes, Bartendale was brought up again. It was a nice point at law whether the man could be sentenced to execution again after the Sheriff had signed his affidavit that the man had been hung till he was dead. Mr. Vavasour was naturally reluctant to supply the one link in the chain of evidence which established the identity of the prisoner with the piper who had been hung and buried for felony; he made earnest intercession that the poor fellow might be reprieved, popular sympathy was on his side, the judge was disposed to mercy, and Bartendale was accorded a full and free pardon, the judge remarking that the case was one in which the Almighty seemed to have interfered in mercy to frustrate the ends of [Pg 119] human justice, and that therefore he was not disposed to reverse the decree of Providence according to the piper a prolongation of his days on earth.

Drunken Barnaby in his "Book of Travels" alludes to Bartendale, when he stops at York:

"Here a piper apprehended,
Was found guilty and suspended;
Being led to t' fatal gallows,
Boys did cry, 'Where is thy bellows?
Ever must thou cease thy tuning,'
Answered he, 'For all your cunning,
You may fail in your prediction.'
Which did happen without fiction;
For cut down, and quick interred,
Earth rejected what was buried;
Half alive or dead he rises,
Got a pardon next Assizes,
And in York continued blowing—

Yet a sense of goodness showing."

After his wonderful deliverance the poor fellow turned hostler, and lived very honestly afterwards.

When asked to describe his sensations on being hung, he said that when he was turned off, flashes of fire seemed to dart before his eyes, and were succeeded by darkness and a state of insensibility.

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BLIND JACK OF KNARESBOROUGH. [\[9\]](#)

Blind Jack Metcalf is certainly one of the most remarkable characters that Yorkshire has produced. Afflicted with loss of sight, the indomitable energy of his true north-country character enabled him to carry on a successful business where many a south countryman would have failed.

He was born at Knaresborough on the 15th August, 1717, and was the son of a labourer. At the age of six he was seized with small-pox, and on his recovery it was found that he had become totally blind. Children speedily accommodate themselves to circumstances. Jack in six months was able to find his way from his father's cottage along the street of Knaresborough and back home without a guide, and in the course of three years could go to any part of the little town alone, could find the shops, and execute errands for his father or mother. He began also to associate with other boys in bird-nesting expeditions, and would climb the trees and throw down the nests to his companions. By accompanying the boys in their rambles he learned his way about the neighbourhood, and was in a short time perfectly acquainted with all the lanes, woods, and fields within a radius of two or three miles. As his father kept horses, he learned to ride, and in time became an able horseman. He was taught the fiddle, as it was thought that the only means open to him for obtaining a subsistence was [Pg 121] that of strolling musician. But Jack Metcalf had more natural taste for the cry of a hound or a harrier than for the squeak of his fiddle.

A gentleman at Knaresborough, of the name of Woodburn, was owner of a pack of hounds. This gentleman encouraged young Metcalf by taking him to hunt with him, and Blind Jack kept five hounds of his own. Mr. Woodburn's hounds being seldom kennelled, Metcalf used to take several of them out secretly along with his own at night when the hares were out feeding in the fields; but one of them having destroyed

a couple of lambs, he got into trouble, and was obliged to discontinue his midnight excursions.

When about fourteen years old, his activity of limb led him to imagine that he could undertake anything without danger, and with certainty of success. The following adventure, however, somewhat modified his opinion:—

A large plum-tree in the neighbourhood of Knaresborough having attracted the attention of Metcalf's companions, they with one consent repaired to the place on a Sunday morning. In these cases Metcalf was always appointed to ascend for the purpose of shaking the trees. Accordingly, he was sent to his post; but his comrades being suddenly alarmed by the appearance of the owner of the tree, ran away, leaving Blind Jack up the tree. He, taking the alarm, dropped, and fell headlong into a gravel-pit belonging to Sir Henry Slingsby, cut his face, and lay for some time stunned in the pit.

Shortly after this, he and some other boys, one night between eleven and twelve o'clock, assembled in the church porch at Knaresborough—that being the usual place of meeting. They determined to rob an orchard. Having accomplished this feat with success, they returned to the church-porch to divide their booty. Now it happened that the door of Knaresborough church was opened by means[Pg 122] of a ring, which turned the latch. One of the party took hold of it, and by way of bravado gave a loud rap, calling out, "A tankard of ale here!" A voice from within answered aloud, "You are at the wrong house!" The boys were so scared that for a moment or two none spoke or moved. At length Metcalf said, "Did not you hear something speak in the church?" Upon this, without answering, they all ran until they got out of the churchyard. They then held a consultation, all equally wondering at the voice, and equally unable to account satisfactorily for it.

Like true Yorkshire boys, they were not, however, to be scared away without knowing what had frightened them; and they stealthily returned to the porch. But no sooner had they reached it, than the ring turned, and the door began to open. This was too much even for their nerves, and they fled in all directions like wind. Only on reaching the outside of the churchyard wall did they venture to breathe freely and look back, and then, lo! the whole of the interior of the church was alight—

". . . Glimmering thro' the groaning trees,

Kirk Alloway seem'd in a bleeze."

Uninspired, like Tam o' Shanter, with draughts of John Barleycorn, they did not venture nearer, but dispersed to their homes. The cause of this panic was as follows:—The

remains of an old lady in the neighbourhood had been kept from interment until the arrival of her relations, who lived at a great distance. Immediately on their arrival the sexton was called up to dig the grave in the church, and had lighted a great number of candles.

About the year 1731, when Metcalf was fourteen years old, he began to learn swimming in the river Nidd, and soon became so expert, that he surpassed all his [Pg 123]companions. About this time two men were drowned in the eddies of the Nidd. Metcalf was sent to dive for the bodies, and after four attempts succeeded in bringing up one of the corpses. The other body could not be found.

There are frequent floods in the river Nidd, and in the deep places there are eddies, which draw to the bottom any substance, however light, that comes within their sphere of action. Large pieces of timber were often carried down by the floods; these on coming over the deep places spun round, and then sank. Upon these occasions Metcalf would dive for them, and with the greatest ease fix ropes to the wood, which was then drawn up by persons stationed on the banks.

In the year 1732, one John Barker kept an inn at the west end of the High Bridge, Knaresborough. This man was a manufacturer of linen cloth, and used to bleach his own yarn. At one time, having brought two packs of yarn to the river to wash, a sudden flood, occasioned by a heavy rain in the neighbourhood, swept them away, and carried them through the arches of the bridge, which stands on a rock. A little below was a sheet of still water, supposed to be twenty-one feet in depth; as soon as the yarn got to this it sank, except a little which caught the edge of the rock in going down. Metcalf being intimate with Barker, and calling at his house a few days after the accident, found him lamenting his loss. Metcalf told him that he hoped to recover the yarn, but Barker smiled at the supposed absurdity of the proposal; finding, however, that his friend was resolved on trial, he consented. Metcalf then ordered some long cart-ropes to be procured, and fixing a hook at one end, the other being held by some persons on the High Bridge, he descended, and hooking as much of the yarn as he could at one time, gave orders for drawing up. In this way the whole was recovered with little damage.

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At Bilton, two miles from Knaresborough, was a rookery, where boys had made many attempts to take the young birds; but the owner wishing to preserve them, they were prevented. Metcalf determined to make a trial, sent one of his comrades in the day-time to reconnoitre the position of the nests, and having received his information, they set out in the dead of night and brought away seven dozen and a half, excepting the

heads, which they left under the trees. The owner of the rooks finding the heads, offered a reward of two guineas for the discovery of the offenders; but the secret was kept until long afterwards.

A person at Knaresborough having occasion to go to Borough Bridge, which is about seven miles distant, and having left something behind, sent his son for it. Metcalf being about the same age as this boy, chose to accompany him. When they got to the place the boy missed the key, which he had lost from his pocket by the way, and being afraid to return, he consulted Metcalf how they should proceed. Metcalf was for entering the house at all events, and not being able to procure a ladder, got a pole, which reached to the thatch, and having borrowed a rope and a stick, he climbed up the pole, and then ascending by the roof to the chimney, he placed the stick across, and fastening the rope to it, attempted to descend, but finding the flue too narrow, he threw off his clothes, and laying them on the ridge of the house, made a second attempt, and got down by the assistance of the rope; he then opened the door for his companion. While they were in the house there was a heavy thunder-shower, to which Metcalf's clothes were exposed. He attempted to get up again to fetch them, but the pole by which he had ascended was now so wet that he could not climb by it; he was therefore obliged to wait till it dried, when he succeeded in recovering his clothes.

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In the year 1732, Metcalf was invited to Harrogate to succeed as fiddler an old man of the name of Morrison, who had played there for seventy years. The old man died in the 102nd year of his age, and played in the year he died. Metcalf was well received by the nobility and gentry, who employed no other fiddler, except a boy, whom he hired as an assistant.

Metcalf now bought a horse, and often ran him for small plates. He kept game-cocks, as he was devotedly fond of cock-fighting. He often hunted, and sometimes went coursing. In the evenings he played at the assemblies.

About this time there was a long room built at the Green Dragon at Harrogate. More music being then wanted, he engaged one Midgeley (one of the Leeds waits) and his son as assistants. Midgeley, senior, being a good performer, was taken into partnership gratis, but the son and Metcalf's former assistant paid five pounds each as premium.

In the year 1735, Francis Barlow, Esq., of Middlethorpe, near York, who kept a pack of hounds, was at Harrogate, and, liking Metcalf, invited him to spend the winter at Middlethorpe, and bring his horse with him. The invitation was gladly accepted, and

he went out with Mr. Barlow's hounds twice a week. Having completed a visit of six months at Middlethorpe, he had learnt to walk and ride very readily through most of the streets of York, and as he was riding past the George Inn, in Coney Street, Standish, the landlord, stopped him, calling out, "What haste?" Metcalf told him he was for Knaresborough that night; the landlord replied that there was a gentleman in the house who wanted a guide to Harrogate; adding, "I know you can do that as well as anyone."—"So I can," said he, "but you must not let him know that I am blind, for perhaps he will be afraid to trust me."—"I shall manage that," replied Standish. So going in, he informed the gentleman that he [Pg 126] had procured a safe guide. Pleased at this, the gentleman requested Metcalf to come in and take a glass. This, for an obvious reason, the landlord objected to, on the part of Metcalf, but recommended some wine at the door. Metcalf started as soon as the wine was drunk, taking the lead, naturally enough. As they were turning Ousegate corner, a voice shouted out, "Squire Barlow's Blind Huntsman!" But the gentleman had no suspicion that the cry had any reference to his guide. They rode briskly up Micklegate, through the Bar, turned the corner at Holgate, and through Poppleton Field, on to Hessay Moor, and so proceeded forward, going over Skip Bridge. At this time the turnpike was not made between York and Harrogate.

On the north-west of Kirk-Hammerton Moor the road to Knaresborough joined the main road which leads to Borough Bridge by a sudden turn to the left; but Metcalf cleared that without any difficulty. When they came to Allerton-Mauleverer, the stranger asked whose large house that was on the right, and was immediately informed by Metcalf. A little farther on, the road is crossed by the one from Wetherby to Borough Bridge, and proceeds along by the high brick wall of Allerton Park. There was a road leading out of the park opposite to the gate upon the Knaresborough road, which Metcalf was afraid of missing, but the wind being from the east, and he perceiving a blast coming through the park gate, readily turned his horse to the opposite gate, which leads to Knaresborough. Reaching out his hand to open it, and feeling the heel, as it is called, he believed the gate had been changed in the hanging part, as he had not been there for seven months; and backing his horse, exclaimed, "Confound thee! thou always goes to the gate's heel, instead of the head!" The gentleman observed to him that his horse seemed awkward, and that his own mare was good at coming up to a gate; [Pg 127] whereupon Metcalf permitted him to perform this office. Darkness, which had now come on, being no obstruction to him, he briskly led the way, resolved that his companion should not again see his face till they got to Harrogate. As they were going through Knaresborough the gentleman

proposed a glass of wine, which Metcalf refused, alleging that the horses were hot, and that as they were near their journey's end, it was not worth their while to stop.

Forward they went, and presently some one cried out, "That's Blind Jack!" This, however, was contradicted by another person, who could not clearly distinguish him; and by this means the stranger was kept in the dark as effectually as his guide. They then proceeded over the High Bridge and up Forest Lane, and entered the forest about a mile from Knaresborough. They had now to pass along a narrow causeway which reached about one-third of the way to Harrogate, the forest at that time not being inclosed, and no turnpike being made. Metcalf still kept the lead.

When they had gone a little way upon the forest the gentleman saw a light. He asked what place it was. There were some rocks called Hookston Craggs, and near to these the ground was low and swampy in some places, close by which runs the Leeds road. About this part will-o'-the-wisp used to be commonly seen. Metcalf took it for granted that his companion had seen one of these lights, but for good reasons declined asking him whereabouts the light was; and to divert his attention, asked him, "Do you not see two lights—one to the right, the other to the left?"—"No," replied the gentleman, "I see but one—to the right."—"Well, then, sir," said Metcalf, "that is Harrogate." There were then many tracks, but Metcalf made choice of that nearest the fence. By the side of this path, which is very near Harrogate, some larches were planted, and stepping-stones laid for the convenience[Pg 128] of foot-passengers. Metcalf got upon this stony path, and the gentleman's horse following, got one of his hind feet jammed between two of the stones. When his horse was freed, he asked, "Is there no other road?"—"Yes," replied Metcalf, "there is another, but it's a mile about"; knowing there was a dirty cart-way, but thinking the stony road preferable to the deep slough of the other, he preferred this rugged path.

On reaching their journey's end, they stopped at the house called the Marquis of Granby, but found that the hostler was gone to bed. Metcalf being very well acquainted with the place, led both the horses into the stable and the hostler soon after appearing, he delivered them into his care, and went into the house to inquire after his fellow-traveller, whom he found comfortably seated over a tankard of negus, in which he pledged his guide. Metcalf took the tankard the first time very nicely, but when attempting to take it the second time, he reached out his hand wide of the mark; however, he soon found it, and drank, and going out again, left the landlord with his companion. "I think, landlord," said the gentleman, "my guide must have drunk a great deal of spirits since we came here."—"Why, my good sir, what makes you think so?"—"Well, I judge so from the appearance of his eyes."—"Eyes! bless you, sir," rejoined the landlord, "do you not know that he is blind?"—"What do you mean?"—"I mean, sir,

that he cannot see!"—"Blind! Are you in earnest?"—"Yes, sir; as blind as a stone!"—"Come, come, landlord," said the gentleman, "this is too much. Call him in." Metcalf entered. "My friend, are you really blind?"—"Yes, sir; I lost my sight when six years old."—"Had I known that, I would not have ventured with you for a hundred pounds."—"And I, sir," said Metcalf, "would not have lost my way for a thousand." Metcalf [Pg 129] was rewarded by a present of two guineas, besides a plentiful entertainment the next day at the cost of this gentleman.

In 1736, when the Harrogate season commenced, Metcalf resumed his musical occupation, and was well received at all the inns, where he was always given free quarters for himself and horse.

The Green Dragon at that place was kept by a Mr. Body, who had two nephews with him; and when the hunting season drew near its close, these, with some other young men, expressed a desire for a day's sport; and knowing that Mr. Woodburn, the master of the Knaresborough pack of hounds, had often lent them to Metcalf, they asked Blind Jack to procure for them the pleasure of a run. Metcalf had no doubt but that Mr. Woodburn would grant him this favour, and went, flushed with hope, to Mr. Woodburn, requesting him to lend the pack the next day. This, however, was a favour out of his power to grant, as Mr. Woodburn politely informed him, as he had engaged to meet Mr. Trappes with the hounds next morning upon Scotton Moor, for the purpose of entering some young foxhounds. Chagrined at this, Metcalf debated with himself whether the disappointment should fall to the lot of Mr. Woodburn's friends or his own, and resolved that it should not be to the latter. He arose the next morning before daybreak, and crossed the High Bridge. He took with him an excellent hound of his own, and nipping him by the ears, made him give mouth loudly, himself hallooing at the same time. This device had so good an effect that in a few minutes he had nine couples about him, as the hounds were kept by various people about the shambles, &c., and were suffered to lie unkennelled. Mounting his horse, away he rode with the dogs to Harrogate, where he met his friends ready mounted and in high spirits. Some of them proposed going to Bilton wood, near Knaresborough, but this was [Pg 130] opposed by Metcalf, who preferred the moor; in fact, he was apprehensive of being followed by Mr. Woodburn, and wished accordingly to be at some distance from Knaresborough.

Following his advice, they drew the moor at the distance of five miles, where they started a hare, killed her after a fine chase, and immediately put up another. Just at this moment up came Mr. Woodburn, foaming with anger, swearing terribly, and threatening to send Metcalf to the House of Correction.

He swung his whip round his head, intending to horse-whip the rogue, but Metcalf heard the whistle of the lash in the air, and escaped the stroke by making his horse start aside.

Mr. Woodburn then endeavoured to call off his hounds, but Metcalf, knowing the fleetness of his own horse, ventured within speaking, but not within whipping distance of him, and begged that he would permit the dogs to finish the chase, alleging that it would spoil them to take them off, and that he was sure they would (as they actually did) kill in a very short time. Metcalf soon found that Mr. Woodburn's anger had begun to abate; and going nearer to him, he pleaded in excuse, a misunderstanding. The apology was accepted, for Mr. Woodburn, though hot of temper, was very good-natured; and so the affair ended.

Blind Jack became also very skilful at bowls, but he always bargained that he should count three to his adversary's one; and he bribed the jacks to give him hints as to the direction he was to throw, by the inflexion of their voices, lowering their tones in speaking to one another if he flung too much to the right, raising them if he threw too wide on the left.

But what is far more singular is, that he was able to distinguish cards by their feel, and that by simply passing his[Pg 131] fingers over their surface. By this means he was able to play whist and other games, and beat those opposed to him; by this means realising a little money.

These achievements were far from exhausting his ambition. He aspired to the acquaintance of jockeys, and frequented the York races, where he betted, and was able to make books with men of rank and position, who took an interest in Jack on account of his affliction and the energy of his character.

He commonly rode to the race-ground amongst the crowd, and kept in memory both the winning and losing horses.

Being much in the habit of visiting York in the winter time, a whim would often take him to call for his horse at bed-time, and set out for Knaresborough, regardless of the badness of the roads and weather, and of all remonstrance from his friends.

About the year 1738, Metcalf having increased his stud, and being aware of the docility of that noble animal the horse, he so tutored his own that whenever he called them by their respective names they would immediately answer him by neighing. This was chiefly accomplished by some discipline at the time of feeding. He could, however, without the help of those responses, select his own horse out of any number.

Having matched one of his horses to run three miles for a wager of some note, and the parties agreeing to ride each his own, they set up posts at certain distances in the forest, marking a course of one mile; having, of course, three miles to go. Great odds were laid against Metcalf, upon the supposition of his inability to keep the course. But Blind Jack was quite equal to the occasion. He procured four dinner-bells, and placed a bell-man at each post. Each man rang in turn, and Metcalf was thus able to run[Pg 132] from one post to the next, and know where to turn his horse. By this means he was able to win the race.

A gentleman who was present, named Skelton, then came up, and proposed to Metcalf a small wager, that he could not gallop a horse of his 50 yards, and stop him within 200. This horse was notorious as a runaway, and had baffled the efforts of the best and strongest riders to hold him. Metcalf agreed to the wager on condition that he might choose his ground; but Skelton bargained that there should be neither hedge nor wall on the course, lest his horse should be injured. Metcalf agreed; the stakes were deposited; and knowing that there was a large bog near the old Spa at Harrogate, he mounted at about a distance of 150 yards from it. Having observed the wind, and placed a person who was to sing a song to guide him by the sound, he set off at a full gallop towards the bog, and soon fixed the horse saddle-deep in the mire. He then floundered through the dirt as well as he was able, till he gained a firm footing, when he demanded his wager, which was allotted him by general suffrage. It was with the greatest difficulty, however, that the horse could be extricated. That Metcalf was so well acquainted with the spot was owing to his having about three weeks before relieved a stranger who had got fast in it in the night, and whose cries attracted him.

It was now no unusual thing with him to buy horses with a view to selling them. Happening to meet with a man who had been huntsman to Sir John Kaye, and who had a horse to sell, Metcalf inquired the price of the horse, and asked to try it. Having trotted the horse a mile or two, he returned, and told the owner that the eyes of his nag would soon fail. The man, however, stood firm to his demand of 25 guineas for the horse, alleging that he was beautifully moulded, only six years old, and his action good. Metcalf[Pg 133] then followed the man into the stable, and desired him to lay his hand upon the eyes of the horse, and feel their unusual heat; asking, at the same time, how he could, in conscience, demand so great a price for a horse that was going blind. The treaty ended with Metcalf purchasing the horse, bridle, and saddle for £14.

A few days after, as he was riding on his new purchase, he ran against a sign-post upon the common, near a toyshop, and nearly threw it down. Not discouraged by this, he set off for Ripon to play at an assembly; and passing by a place at Harrogate called the World's-End, he overtook a man going the Ripon road: with him Metcalf laid a

wager of sixpenny-worth of liquor that he would get first to an ale-house at some distance. The ground being rough, Metcalf's horse soon fell, and lay for a while on the thigh of his master, when, making an effort to rise, he cut Metcalf's face with one of his fore-shoes. The Rev. Mr. Richardson, coming up at this moment and expressing his concern for the accident, Metcalf told him that nothing had hurt him but the cowardice of his horse, who had "struck him whilst he was down." His instrument, however, suffered so materially, that he was obliged to borrow one to perform on for the night at Ripon, to which place he got without further accident. The assembly over, he set off to return to Harrogate, and arrived there about three in the morning.

He now thought it was time to dispose of his fine horse, whose eyes began to discharge much. After applying the usual remedies of alum blown into the eyes, rowelling in different parts, &c., he found the beast in marketable condition; and knowing that there would soon be a great show of horses without Micklegate Bar at York, he resolved to take the chance of that mart; and setting out the night before put up at the Swan, in Micklegate. The next morning, when [Pg 134] the show began, Metcalf's nag attracted the notice of one Carter, a very extensive dealer, who, asking the price, was told twenty-two guineas. Carter then inquired if he was sound, and received for answer, "I have never known him LAME; but I will trot him on this pavement, and if there be any ailment of that sort it will soon appear with my weight." The dealer bade him sixteen guineas, and a little after seventeen; which Metcalf, for well-known reasons, was glad to receive.

In the year 1738 Metcalf attained the age of twenty-one years and the height of six feet one inch and a half, and was remarkably robust withal.

About this time Dr. Chambers of Ripon had a well-made horse with which he used to hunt, but finding that he had become a great stumbler, he exchanged him with a dealer, who took him to Harrogate, and meeting with Metcalf told him he had an excellent hunter to sell at a low price. Metcalf desired to try how the horse leaped, and the owner agreeing, he mounted him, and found that he could, when saddled, leap over any wall or fence the height of himself. The bargain was soon struck, and this happening at the Queen's Head Hotel, several gentlemen who were witnesses of the horse's performance invited Metcalf to accompany them two days after to Belmond Wood, where a pack of hounds were to throw off. These hounds were the joint property of Francis Trappes, Esq., and his brother, of Nidd, near Ripley. A pack superior to this was not to be found in the kingdom.

The wished-for day arriving, Metcalf attended the gentlemen, and the hounds were not long in finding. The fox took away to Plumpton Rocks, but finding all secure there,

he made for Stockeld Wood, and found matters in the same state as at Plumpton—he had then run about six miles: he came back and crossed the river Nidd near the[Pg 135] old abbey, and went on the east side of Knaresborough to a place called Coney-Garths (where there were earths), near Scriven. Metcalf's horse carried him nobly, pulling hard, and he required proportionate resistance. The wind being high, Metcalf lost his hat, but would not stop to recover it; and coming to Thistle Hill, near Knaresborough, he resolved to cross the river at the Abbey Mill, having often before gone on foot over the dam-stones. When he got to the dam he attended to the noise of the fall as a guide, and ranging his horse in a line with the stones dashed forward for some part of the way; but the stones being slippery with a kind of moss, the horse stumbled, but recovered this and a second blunder; the third time, however, floundering completely, away went horse and rider into the dam. Metcalf had presence of mind to disengage his feet from the stirrups during the descent, but both the horse and himself were immersed over head in water. He then quitted his seat and made for the opposite side, the horse following him. Having secured his nag, he laid himself down on his back and held up his heels to let the water run out of his boots, which done, he quickly remounted and went up a narrow lane which leads to the road betwixt Knaresborough and Wetherby; then through some lanes on the north-east side of Knaresborough, and crossing the Borough Bridge Road, he got to the Coney-Garths, where he found that the whipper-in only had arrived before him.

Here the fox had earthed, as was expected; and the other horsemen (who had gone over the Low Bridge and through the town) after some time came up. They were much surprised at finding Metcalf there, and attributed the soaked condition of himself and horse to profuse sweating; nor were they undeceived till they reached Scriven.

Soon after this, Blind Jack was at Scarborough. As he[Pg 136] was walking one day on the sands with a friend, he resolved to take a swim in the sea, his companion agreeing to shout out when he should think he had gone far enough outward; but the other not making a sufficient allowance for the noise of the sea, suffered him to go out of hearing before he shouted, and Metcalf continued swimming until he got out of sight of his friend, who now expected to see him no more. At length Metcalf began to think he must have got out of hearing of his friend, and becoming rather tired he turned on his back to rest himself, his ears being covered with water; but after he had sufficiently rested he turned himself again, and removing the hair of his head from his ears, began to listen, when he thought he heard the breakers beating against the pier which defends the Spa; finding by the noise that he was at a great distance, he increased his efforts, and providentially taking a right direction, he landed in safety, to the immense relief of his friend.

Having an aunt at Whitby, near the Alum Works, he went there, left his horse, and got on board an alum ship bound for London. He arrived at the metropolis, stayed there only a few weeks, played on the violin, and did very well; but meeting so many acquaintances, did not think himself safe. After some time, meeting with a vessel, he returned back again to Whitby; and having a numerous acquaintance at Newcastle, formed at Harrogate, he went thither, and was kindly received by many persons. Amongst the rest was one Councillor Grey, who invited Metcalf to dine with him every day during the time he should stay, which was about a month. One day he said to Metcalf, "You and I are near a size," and brought down a suit of clothes, saying, "I think these will fit you, and are at your service if you please to accept them; they have scarcely been worn; go into the next room and try them[Pg 137] on." Metcalf then left Newcastle and went to Sunderland, where he stayed a short time among the sailors; then proceeded to Whitby to his aunt's, with whom he had left his horse, as she was in tolerable circumstances; after that he determined to go to Knaresborough, and set off in the forenoon, intending to call at Mr. Varley's, as he had been there for six months shortly before. He had company over the moor to Pickering, as he had never been that road. At Pickering his company left him.

He then went to Malton, which was six miles, though he had never been that road before, but had been at Malton; he got safe there, and continued along the York road. A little from Malton his horse began to tire at a place called Crombeck, where there is a ford dangerous in times of flood. It happened to be a very rainy time, and his horse being weak, he took hold of the bridle-rein to lead him through, not being afraid of the water himself, but fearful of drowning his horse. Having got safe through, he pursued his journey, but his horse being weak, he was under the necessity of leading him part of the road, and walking sometimes up to the boot-tops in dirt.

He soon came to a common called Stockton Moor, about four or five miles from York, where was neither turnpike nor paved causeway at that time, and he had got out of the track and was in great difficulty; but fortunately he heard a cock crow in Stockton, and by turning in the direction whence he heard the call of chanticleer, he got into Stockton. From this place there was a paved causeway all the way to York, upon which he went, now feeling himself safe. He then came down Goodram Gate, crossed Peter Gate, down the Shambles, and through Pavement, over Ouse Bridge, turned into Skelder Gate, and through the Postern, it being in the dead of night, but he wanted no guide, as he knew the places so well; then coming to[Pg 138] Middlethorpe, the gates were fast: they were made of wood, with iron spikes at the top, which made it difficult to climb over; but necessity being the mother of invention, he called forth her aid. Metcalf took the bridle from off his horse's head, doubled the rein, and throwing it over

one of the spikes of the gate, by that means and the help of a corner of the wall that joined the gate, he got up and climbed over; but when he was at the top his situation was perilous, for if his foot had slipped he would have fallen on the spikes and been impaled. He then opened the gates, and led his horse through, and greatly surprised some women by his appearance, who happened to be up washing. When daylight appeared, the family received him very kindly. He stayed about three weeks, and then returned to Knaresborough, where he met with a north countryman who played on the bagpipes and frequented the houses of many gentlemen in town. He had been in London several times, and he advised Metcalf to take a trip with him, which he did.

By this man Metcalf found out several gentlefolks who were in the habit of visiting Harrogate during the season, and amongst others Colonel Liddell, who resided in King Street, Covent Garden, and who gave him a general invitation to his house. The colonel was member of Parliament for Berwick-upon-Tweed, and lived at Ravensworth Castle, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and on his return from London to the North, which generally took place in the month of May, he was accustomed to spend three weeks at Harrogate.

When the winter was over, Metcalf thought he must take a walk out of London. Accordingly he set out through Kensington, Hammersmith, Colnbrook, Maidenhead, and Reading, in Berkshire; and returned by Windsor and Hampton Court to London in the beginning of May. In his absence, Colonel Liddell had sent to his lodgings to let [Pg 139] him know that he was going to Harrogate, and that if agreeable to him he might go down either behind his coach or on the top. Metcalf on his return waited upon the colonel and thanked him, but declined his kind offer, observing that he could with great ease walk as far in a day as he would choose to travel in his coach. The next day at noon the colonel and his suite, consisting of sixteen servants on horseback, set off, Metcalf starting about an hour before them. They were to go by the way of Bugden, and he proceeded as far as Barnet. A little way from Barnet the Bugden and St. Alban's roads part, and he had taken the latter; however, he arrived at Welling, the place where they were to sleep, a little before the colonel, who was surprised at his performance. Metcalf set off again next morning before his friends, and coming to Biggleswade, found the road was crossed with water, there being no bridge at that time. He made a circuitous cast, but found no other way except a footpath, which he was doubtful whether to trust. A person coming up, asked, "What road are you for?" He answered, "For Bugden." "You have had some liquor this morning, I suppose?" said the stranger. "Yes," replied Metcalf, although he had tasted none that day. The stranger then bid him follow, and he would direct him into the highway. Soon after, they came to some sluices with planks laid across, and Metcalf followed by the sound of his

guide's feet; then to a gate on one side of the turnpike, which being locked he was told to climb over. Metcalf was struck with the kind attention of his conductor, and taking twopence from his pocket, said, "Here, good fellow, take that, and get thee a pint of beer;" but the other declined it, saying he was welcome. Metcalf, however, pressing the reward upon him, was asked, "Can you see very well?" "Not remarkably well," he replied. "My friend," said the stranger, "I do not mean to tithe thee—I am rector of this[Pg 140] parish; and so God bless you, and I wish you a good journey." Metcalf set forward with the parson's benediction, and stopped every night with the colonel. On coming to Wetherby, he arrived at the inn before him, as usual, and told the landlord of his approach, who asked him by what means he had become acquainted with that, and was informed by him how he had preceded the colonel the whole week, this being Saturday, and they had left town on Monday noon. The colonel arriving, ordered Metcalf into his room, and proposed halting till Monday, but Metcalf replied, "With your leave, sir, I shall go to Harrogate to-night, and meet you there on Monday." So he set off for Knaresborough that night, and met the colonel at Harrogate on Monday, as he had said.

Metcalf became now in great request as a performer at Ripon assembly, which was resorted to by many families of distinction, such as Sir Walter Blacket of Newby; Sir John Wray, Sir R. Graham, Squire Rhodes, Squire Aislaby of Studley, and many others. When he played alone, it was usual with him after the assembly to set off for Harrogate or Knaresborough; but when he had an assistant he remained all night at Ripon to keep him company, his partner being afraid to ride in the dark.

Finding himself worth £15 (a larger sum than he ever had before), and a main of cocks having been made in the neighbourhood, he became a party, and lost two-thirds of his whole fortune. The remaining £5 he laid out on a horse which was to run at York a few days later; and had the good fortune to win the last wager.

Metcalf still followed cock-fighting, cards, and racing, but continued to play at the assemblies; but his profession interfered with his sports, and he cast about in his mind how to obtain an independence. Now it fell out that about this time a Miss Benson, daughter of the host of the Royal[Pg 141] Oak, was about to be married to a young man whom Metcalf was convinced she did not like. It was a match made up by the parents, and there was no affection in it—at least on her side. Blind Jack had some reason to think that the fair lady was not insensible to him, and he hastened to Harrogate, and hung about the Royal Oak till he had an opportunity of speaking to the damsel, who was to be married the very next day. Metcalf used his most urgent persuasion with the girl to elope with him that night, and obtained from her a tardy

consent. It was arranged that she should put a lighted candle in the window when ready to run away, and Metcalf engaged a friend to look out for the candle for him.

This having been settled, the lady went into the house, and in a short time was followed by Metcalf, who was warmly received by the supposed bridegroom and company.

The tankard went briskly round with "Success to the intended couple!" in which toast, it may be readily believed, Metcalf joined most cordially.

Having stayed till it was near dark, he thought it time for putting business into proper train. Going then to the public-house known by the name of the World's End, he inquired for the hostler, whom he knew to be a steady fellow; and after obtaining from this man a promise either to serve him in an affair of moment in which he was engaged, or keep the secret, he related the particulars of his assignation and the intended elopement, to forward which he desired him to let him have his master's mare, which he knew would carry two. This agreed on, he requested the further service of meeting him at Ross's Library at ten o'clock. A whistle was to be given by the first who got there, as a signal. They met pretty punctually, and Metcalf asked if he saw a star, meaning the lighted candle. After half-an-hour's delay the signal-light[Pg 142] appeared. They then approached the house, and left the horses at a little distance, not choosing to venture into the court-yard, which was paved. On the door being opened by the lady, he asked her if she was ready, and she replied in the affirmative. He advised her, however, to pack up a dress or two, as she probably might not see her mother again for some time. She had about twenty gowns at that time, and a new pillion and cloth. Metcalf asked her for it. "Oh, dear," said she, "it is in the other house; but we must have it." She then went to the window and called up her sister, who let her in. The pillion and cloth were in the room where the intended bridegroom slept, and on his seeing her enter, she said, "I will take this and brush it, that it may be ready in the morning."—"That's well thought on, my dear," said he. She then went down, and all three hastened to the horses. Metcalf mounted her behind his friend, then got upon his own horse, and away they went. At that time it was not a matter of so much difficulty to get married as it is at present, and they had only the trouble of riding twelve miles, and a fee to pay, without any calling of banns requiring a delay of three weeks.

Metcalf left his bride at a friend's house within five miles of Harrogate, and came to the Queen's Head to perform the usual service of playing his violin during the breakfast half-hour. In the meantime Mrs. Benson and her other daughter began to prepare for breakfast, and observing that Dolly lay very long in bed, her mother desired

that she might be called; but her usual bed-fellow declaring that she had not slept with her, she was ordered to seek her in some of the other rooms. This was done, but in vain. They then took it for granted that she had gone out early to take a morning ride with Mr. Dickenson (the intended bridegroom), but he could give no account of [Pg 143] her. All her friends now began to be seriously alarmed, and a person from the Oak came and informed Metcalf of all that had happened there that morning.

Metcalf listened seriously to the news, and then composedly said, "You need not be alarmed. I MARRIED HER since you saw me last night!"

He then sent a message through the brother of his Dolly to the father and mother, to the effect that he asked their pardon. He acknowledged that he was far below them in circumstances, but his affection for their daughter was sincere, and he promised that he would make them the best amends in his power by affectionate treatment of his wife.

It is hardly to be supposed that they were mollified by this assurance.

Metcalf took a small house at Knaresborough. It was a matter of wonder that Miss Benson should have preferred a blind man to Dickenson, she being as handsome a woman as any in the country. A lady having asked her why she had refused so many good offers for Blind Jack, she answered, "Because I could not be happy without him." And being more particularly questioned, she replied, "His actions are so singular, and his spirit so manly and enterprising, that I could not help liking him."

Metcalf continued going to Harrogate as usual, and one day determined to pay a visit to his mother-in-law. He mounted his horse, and riding up to the kitchen-door called for a pint of wine. There were then only women in the house, who were afraid to serve him, and they all ran upstairs in a fright. He then rode into the kitchen, through the house, and out at the hall-door, no one molesting him.

He afterwards went to demand his wife's clothes, but was refused; on a second application, however, he succeeded. [Pg 144] His wife having brought him a boy, and some respectable people being the sponsors, they employed their good offices to heal the breach between the families, and were fortunately successful. On the birth of a daughter (the second child) Mrs. Benson herself was godmother, and presented Metcalf with twenty guineas.

He continued to play at Harrogate in the season; and set up a four-wheel chaise and a one-horse chair for public accommodation, there having been nothing of the kind there before. He kept these vehicles two summers, when the innkeepers, beginning to run their own, he gave them up, as he also did racing and hunting; but still wanting

employment, he bought horses, and went to the coast for fish, which he took to Leeds and Manchester; and so indefatigable was he that he would frequently walk for two nights and a day with little or no rest; for as a family was coming on he was as eager for business as he had been for diversion, keeping up his spirits, and blessed with good health.

Going from Knaresborough to Leeds in a snowstorm, and crossing a brook, the ice gave way under one of his horses, and he was under the necessity of unloading to get him out; but the horse as soon as free ran back to Knaresborough, leaving him with two panniers of fish and three other loaded horses in the midst of a snowstorm at night. After much difficulty, however, he divided the weight amongst the others, and pursuing his journey, arrived at Leeds by break of day.

Once passing through Halifax, he stopped at an inn called the Broad Stone. The landlord's son, and some others who frequented Harrogate, seeing Metcalf come in, and having often heard of his exploits, signified a wish to play at cards with him; he agreed, and accordingly they sent for a pack, but before playing he asked to feel them over. The[Pg 145] man of the house being his friend, he could depend upon his honour in preventing deception. They began to play, and Metcalf beat four of them in turn, playing only for liquor. Not satisfied with this, some of the company proposed playing for money, and when engaged at shilling whist, Metcalf won 15s. The losing party then proposed to play double or quit, but Metcalf declined playing for more than half-a-guinea points; till at last, yielding to much importunity, he got engaged for guineas, and, favoured by fortune, won ten, and a shilling for liquor each game, which completely cleared the loser of his cash, who took up the cards and went out, but shortly returned with eight guineas more. Metcalf's friend examined the cards to see if they were not marked, and finding all fair, they went on again, until those eight pieces followed the other ten. They then drank freely at Metcalf's cost, he being now in circumstances to treat. About ten o'clock at night he took his leave, saying he must be at Knaresborough in the morning, having sent his horses before. On his way he crossed the river Wharfe, about a mile below Poole; the water being high, his horse swam, and he got safe home. Thus ended his pursuits as a fishmonger, the profit being small and his fatigue very considerable.

From the period of his discontinuing the business of fishmonger Metcalf continued to attend Harrogate as a player on the violin, in the long room, until the commencement of the rebellion in 1745.

The alarm which took place was great; and loyalty to the House of Hanover, and preparations against the Jacobites, were general in the county of York.

Amongst the many instances which mark this, none were more striking than the conduct of William Thornton of Thornville, near Knaresborough, for he determined to raise a company of soldiers at his own expense, and went to [Pg 146] Knaresborough about the 1st of October, 1745, where he sent for our blind hero to his inn, and asked him if he knew of any brave fellows who were likely to make spirited soldiers. Jack having satisfied his patron on this head, he was appointed assistant to a sergeant already procured, with orders to begin recruiting the next day.

Such was their success that in two days only they enlisted 140 men at 5s. each, their allowance being 1s. per day; out of whom the captain drafted sixty-four, the number of privates he wanted. Soon after, he brought them to Thornville, where he ordered every other day a fat ox to be killed for their entertainment, and gave them beer seven years old, expressing great pleasure at its being reserved for so good a purpose.

He now began to sound the company as to their attachment to the cause and to himself. "My lads!" said he, "you are going to form a part of a ring-fence to the finest estate in the world! The king's army is on its march northward, and I have confidence that all of you are willing to join them." They replied, enthusiastic for the whole ox a day and the seven-year-old beer, "We will follow you to the world's end!"

All matters being adjusted, the company was drawn up, and amongst them Blind Jack cut no small figure, being near six feet two inches high, and, like his companions, dressed in blue and buff, with a large gold-laced hat. Jack played a march, and off the company moved for Boroughbridge to join General Wade's army, which was there.

On reaching Newcastle, by order of General Wade they were united with Pulteney's regiment, which having suffered much in some late actions, was thought unduly weak. Captain Thornton gave orders for tents for his men and a marquee for himself. He pitched them on Newcastle [Pg 147] Moor, and served out a pair of blankets to each tent. On the first night of their encampment the snow fell six inches.

After stopping there for about a week, the General received intelligence of the motions of the Jacobite army, and gave orders to march by break of day for Hexham in three columns, wishing to intercept it upon the west road, as their route seemed to be for England that way. The tents were instantly struck, but the Swiss troops in the van not being willing to move at so early an hour, it was half-past ten before they left the ground, and the snow by that time was extremely deep. The troops were often three or four hours in marching a mile, the pioneers having to cut through some of the drifts, level some of the obstructions, and fill up several ditches, to make a passage for the artillery and baggage.

About ten at night they arrived at Ovington, the place marked out for them, with straw to rest on; but the ground was frozen so hard that but few of the tent-pins would enter in, and in those few tents which were pitched the men lay upon one another, greatly fatigued with their march, it having been fifteen hours from the time of their striking their tents till their arrival at this place, although the distance was only seven miles.

The next day they reached Hexham, where they halted. On Monday night about ten o'clock the army was put in motion by a false alarm. After stopping there about three days, General Wade returned to Newcastle to catch the post-road leading to Yorkshire, and immediately began his march for Yorkshire by way of Pierse Bridge, Catterick, and Boroughbridge; and continuing his route southward, encamped his men on Clifford Moor, where they halted a few days, and then moved to ground between Ferrybridge and Knottingley. The Scottish army had now penetrated[Pg 148] southward as far as Derby; but the General having heard that they had received a check from the Duke of Cumberland, sent General Oglethorpe with 1000 horse towards Manchester, either to harass the enemy in their retreat, or to join the Duke's forces; and retired himself with the remainder, by Wakefield-Outwood and Leeds, to Newcastle.

In the meantime the Duke came up with the army of Prince Charles Edward at Clifton, on the borders of Westmoreland. Lord George Murray occupied the town, and the Highlanders were fortified behind hedges and a ditch.

The Duke coming upon the open moor after sunset, gave orders for 300 dragoons to dismount and advance to the brink of the ditch; the rebels then fired upon them from behind the hedges; they returned the fire, and fell a few paces back. The Highlanders mistaking this for flight, rushed over the ditch, but meeting a warmer reception than they expected, were glad to retreat, and continued their route to Penrith, and from thence to Carlisle, where they left part of their army.

His Royal Highness thought it advisable to reduce this place; and on its surrender he returned to London. General Wade continued his march for the North, dismissing all the foreigners from his army; and General Hawley, on coming from London to take the command, was joined by some regiments which had been withdrawn from Flanders. They marched to Edinburgh, and from thence to Falkirk, and pitched their tents on the north-east side of the town on the 16th of January; the Highland army being at Torwood, about midway between Falkirk and Stirling, and about three miles from the English camp, they could easily see each other's camp light. The English army lay all night on their arms in expectation of being attacked, but the van and picket-guards came in on the morning of the 17th, having observed no motions in the[Pg 149] hostile

camp which showed any signs of an attack, although they were as near as safety would permit. Soon after, the enemy were observed to move some of their flags from Torwood towards Stirling, which made the English suppose that they were retreating; but this motion was a feint to deceive them. However, upon this the soldiers were ordered to pile their arms and take some refreshment; and although Lord Kilmarnock was in the army of Prince Charles Edward, General Hawley went to breakfast with Lady Kilmarnock at Callander House. The enemy in the meantime stole a march down a valley northward, unperceived; but just before the army discovered them, they were seen by a person, who ran into the camp exclaiming, "Gentlemen! what are you about? The Highlanders will be upon you!" On which some of the officers said, "Seize that rascal; he is spreading a false alarm!"—"Will you believe your own eyes?" said the man; and at that moment the line of Highlanders was seen fringing the high ground on Falkirk Moor.

It is unnecessary here to relate the details of the engagement of Falkirk, so graphically described by Sir Walter Scott in "Waverley," resulting in a momentary gleam of hope to the adherents of Prince Charles Edward, and in as brief a discouragement to the English. Captain Thornton lost twenty of his men, together with his lieutenant and ensign, who were taken prisoners. The captain was in a house when the English were surprised, and hearing the bagpipes at the door, he ran up-stairs and hid in a room behind the door. One of the Highlanders ran in, looked round, but not seeing him, called out, "None of the rascals are here."

The woman of the house having seen the captain go up-stairs, went to him soon after, and opening a closet door, entreated him to enter, which he did; she then brought a dresser and placed dishes, &c., upon it, which[Pg 150] prevented all appearance of a door in that place; and fortunately there was no bed in the room. About ten minutes after he had been fixed in his new quarters a great number of people, consisting chiefly of Highland officers, amongst whom was Secretary Murray, took possession of the apartment, which being large, they proposed making use of for business during their stay.

In the meantime Metcalf had escaped the Highlanders. Knowing that two of his master's horses had been left at a widow's house a short distance from the town, he made his way to the place with intent to secure them. This woman had in the morning expressed great seeming loyalty to King George; but when Metcalf returned in the evening, the wind had changed: she now extolled Prince Charles, and said, "The defeat of George's folk was a just judgment."

Metcalf went into the stable and found the horses, saddled them, and was leading out the first, when he was surrounded by a few stragglers of the Highland army. "We must have that beast," said they; but Metcalf refusing to give him up, they said one to another, "Shoot him!" On hearing two of them cock their pieces, he asked, "What do you want with him?"—They answered that they wanted him for the Prince.—"If so, you must have him," replied he. They took him, and immediately went off. Metcalf then brought out the other, but as he was about to mount, the captain's coachman (whose name was Snowden), joined him, and Metcalf inquiring of him the fate of his master, was answered that he had not seen him for some time. This induced Metcalf to think that the worst had befallen him. They then thought it advisable to attempt falling in with the rear of the army, but before they had proceeded many yards their horse sank up to the saddle-girths in a bog; however, being[Pg 151] strong, and plunging out, they mounted again, and soon joined the army as they had wished; when, on making diligent inquiry after their captain, they were told that he was left behind. Snowden thereupon returned as far as he could with safety, but without gaining any intelligence, and Metcalf walked on with the army.

They arrived at Linlithgow, where they halted, and the next day marched to Edinburgh. There the mob and the lower orders of people were very free in their expressions, and some of the higher also spoke out warmly in favour of Prince Charles, making no secret of their wishes and hopes that "the King should have his own again."

The next morning as many of Captain Thornton's men as had escaped being taken prisoners (about forty-eight in number) assembled; and none of them knowing what had become of the Captain, they supposed him to have shared the fate of many other brave men who had fallen in the action. There was therefore no more ox and beer to sustain their loyalty. The disappearance also of two other officers and twenty of their men greatly dispirited them, and to this was added the suspension of their regular pay. This induced some of them to apply to Metcalf for a supply in order to carry them home; but this he refused, in part, no doubt, because he had not the means of paying them.

The headquarters of the army were now at Edinburgh, the staff being located in Holyrood Palace. The superior officers sent for Metcalf, thinking it singular that a person deprived of sight should have entered the army. One of the officers belonging to the dragoons who retreated from Falkirk, speaking ironically of Thornton's men, asked Jack how he got off the field of battle. Metcalf answered, "I found it very easy to follow by the sound of the dragoon horses, they made such a clatter over the stones." This[Pg 152] reply turned the laugh against the officer, who coloured with anger and shame. Colonel Cockayne then asked how he durst venture into the service, blind as

he was. To which he replied "that had he possessed a pair of good eyes, he would never have come there to have risked the loss of them by gunpowder." Then making his obeisance, he withdrew.

He now determined upon a journey to Falkirk in search of his captain; but this being attended with difficulty, he applied to a Knaresborough man who lived at Edinburgh, and was of the party of Prince Charles Edward, telling him that he wished to be a musician to the gallant young Prince, as he found it was all over with the English. The man informed him that they had a spy, an Irishman, going to the Prince, and that he might travel with him. This he agreed to do, and they started together; but on coming up to the English out-sentries they were stopped. Metcalf inquired for the captain, and informed him of the real cause of his journey. By him he was kindly advised to lay aside his dangerous project; but as he still persisted, he was allowed to proceed with the spy, and arrived at Linlithgow, where they stayed all night. They met with several women who had been plundering, and were then on their return to Edinburgh; and the spy instructed them how to avoid the English sentries. Metcalf was very careful to examine the clothes they had got, making it appear he wanted to purchase some, thinking that by chance he might meet with some of his captain's, and so ascertain if he were dead. One of the women sent a token by Metcalf to her husband, who was Lord George Murray's cook. This woman's guide was a horse-dealer, who soon became acquainted with Metcalf, having frequented the fairs in Yorkshire, and at this time by some means had got introduced to the heads of both armies, and[Pg 153] obtained a pass and orders from each to press horses. This man's fate was remarkable; for going into Stirling, where the English army lay, he found that orders were given to let no strangers pass without an examination. He said that he had a protection from General Huske. Being ordered to produce it, he had the misfortune to take that out of his pocket which he had got from the Pretender; and when informed of his mistake instantly produced the other. But too late! for he was tied up by the neck to a lamp-post and hung.

A short time before Metcalf and the spy had got clear away from Linlithgow, some of the vanguard of the rebels came in and called for whiskey; and it was supposed that they dropped there a silver-mounted pistol, which on their setting out the spy picked up and offered to Metcalf. He refused it, saying he thought it not advisable to have fire-arms about him, as he expected to be searched. So they pursued their journey, and presently fell in with the rebel out-guard, several of whom accosted Metcalf, and as all seemed well, they were allowed to pass, and arrived at Falkirk, where Metcalf inquired for Lord George Murray's cook to deliver his present, and was afterwards introduced to and conversed with Lord George Murray, Secretary Murray, and other gentlemen.

Lord George Murray gave him part of a glass of wine, an article at that time of great rarity, for, as the rebels had been there three times, and the English twice, they had almost swept the cupboard clean of crumbs.

Whilst conversing with them he was very cautious, knowing that his life was in danger if the real purpose of his journey became known.

He then made his way towards the market-place, where a number of Highlanders were assembled. This was on Wednesday, the 22nd; but it happened that his master had[Pg 154] left the place that morning about four hours before his arrival.

We must now return to Captain Thornton, whom we left on Friday in the closet, in close neighbourhood to the Highland chiefs, who every day transacted business in the room. The quartermasters of the Jacobite army having taken the house, and given the woman to whom it belonged a small apartment at the back, it made Captain Thornton's position very critical; but every night she took care to carry him such provisions as she could convey through a crevice at the bottom of the door, and this she did for fear of alarming those who slept in the adjoining rooms. The closet was only a yard and a half square, and the captain's clothes being wet when he entered, made his situation the more uncomfortable, as he had got a severe cold, and sometimes could not forbear coughing even when the rebels were in the room. Once in particular, hearing a cough, they said one to another, "What is that?" But one of them answered that it was somebody in another room, not in the least suspecting that one of their enemies lay hid so near.

On Monday night the woman of the house went to the door to carry provisions as usual, when the captain said to her, "I am determined to come out, let the consequence be what it may; for I will not die like a dog in this hole." But she begged that he would bear this confinement until the next night, and she would adopt some plan to effect his escape. She accordingly consulted an old carpenter who was true to the Hanoverian cause, and he came the following night when the room was vacant, removed the dresser, and liberated the captain. They proceeded down-stairs in the dark to the woman's apartment, where she made tea whilst the carpenter and captain concerted their plan of operation. They dressed him in a plaid and brogues, and put on him a black wig. The captain had only ten[Pg 155] guineas about him (having left his cash with his lieutenant, Mr. Crofts), eight of which he gave to the woman who had so faithfully preserved him, and two to the carpenter; who, to secrete them, put them into his mouth along with his tobacco, fearful of a search by the Highlanders, who would have suspected him had they found more than a shilling.

Everything being ready, they set out, the captain, with a bag of tools, following his supposed master. On coming into the crowd, the old carpenter looked about and was rather dismayed, for although in disguise, the captain did not look like a common workman. This made the old man dread discovery, so he called out to him: "Come along, ye filthy loon; ye have had half a bannock and a mutchkin of drink in your wame: we shall be o'er late for our day's wark." Whether this artifice served him or not is uncertain; but they got safe through the throng, and leaving the high road, pursued their journey across the country. Having come to a rising ground, the captain took a view of Falkirk Moor, and said, "Yonder's the place where such a sad piece of work was made last Friday." The old man at the same time looking the other way saw about 300 Highlanders, who had been on plunder, coming down a lane which led from Callander House (Lord Kilmarnock's seat) into the main road; and being desirous of passing the end of this lane before they came up, in order to avoid them, said, "We shall have a worse piece of wark of it than we had on Friday if ye do not hasten your pace," and begged the captain to come forward, which he did; but walking briskly up a hill, he suddenly stopped, and said, "I am very sick." However they gained their point, and passed the Highlanders; for had they come up with them, the captain's speech or appearance might have led to suspicion, and he would have been shot or led back to Falkirk as a prisoner. On going two miles farther, they[Pg 156] arrived at a house belonging to a friend of the carpenter's, and which had been plundered. There the old man got an egg, but not being able to find a pan to boil it in, he roasted it in peat ashes, and gave it to the captain to put in his wame or stomach. Proceeding a few miles farther, they arrived at another house, where they procured a horse for the captain. He arrived at the English outposts, and making himself known, was permitted to pass, and reached Edinburgh in safety.

To return to Metcalf, whom we left at Falkirk, and whose dress was a plaid waistcoat laced with gold, which he had borrowed of a friend at Edinburgh, together with a blue regimental coat faced with buff. Jack told the Highlanders, in answer to their inquiries, that he had been fiddling for the English officers, and that they had given him that coat, which had belonged to a man who was killed; and also that his intention was to serve in the same capacity with Prince Charles. But a person coming up who had seen Jack at Harrogate, said, "That fellow ought to be taken up, for there is something more than common in his proceedings;" on which Metcalf was taken to the guard-room and searched for letters, but none were found, he having only a pack of cards in his pocket, which they split, to see if they contained any writing in the folds. Finding nothing, he was put into a loft in the roof of the building, along with a dragoon and

some other prisoners, and there for three days they were suffered to remain in confinement, exposed to severe cold.