

Metcalf and his fellow-prisoners were brought out at the end of this time, and tried by a court-martial. Metcalf was acquitted, and had permission given to go to the Prince; but as he asked to borrow a clean shirt they inquired where his own was. He said at Linlithgow, but that he durst not go there on account of George's fellows.[Pg 157] They then informed him he might safely go there along with the Irish spy. He knew that his companion had letters for the Highlanders' friends at Edinburgh, but had no intention to pass the English sentries. Metcalf therefore amused him with assurances that he had £10 at Edinburgh, for which he should have no occasion if he joined the Prince, and that he would give his friend a share of it. The spy on hearing this became very desirous of his company to Edinburgh, wishing to finger the money, and proposed going across the country; but Metcalf said he could pass the English sentries by saying he was going to Captain Thornton. They then proceeded, and after going two miles they met an officer who was reconnoitring, and he knowing Metcalf, told him that his master was arrived safely at Edinburgh. On leaving the officer the spy accosted him with, "So, then, you ARE going to him." "No!" said Jack, "nor to any such fellows." They then passed the sentry, as Metcalf proposed, and arrived at Edinburgh, where they parted, but promised to meet the next evening at nine o'clock. Jack went directly to his captain, who rejoiced at so unexpected a meeting. Metcalf told him that he had given him a great deal of trouble, adding that he thought people might come home from market without being fetched. The captain smiled and said, "What is to be done, for I have neither money nor clothes, having left all behind at Falkirk; but I have bills upon the road to the amount of £300?" This proved fortunate; for had they been a few days sooner, these also might have been lost. The reason of the delay was that all letters directed to Scotland were at this time sent to London to be examined at the General Post-Office. Metcalf told the captain that he could get him some money, but this the other thought impossible. However, he went to a friend and obtained £30. Tailors were immediately set to work, and next morning the captain was enabled to visit his brother officers at Holyrood.

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The army remained quartered at Edinburgh, while part of the rebels were in Falkirk, and another part at Stirling, where they raised several batteries, and besieged Stirling Castle.

The Duke of Cumberland arrived at Edinburgh on the 30th of January, 1746; and two days afterwards marched at the head of the army towards Falkirk, Prince Charles' army leaving it a little time before. Captain Thornton visited the Duke often, and his Royal Highness took particular notice of Metcalf, speaking to him several times on the march. On the arrival of the army at Linlithgow, intelligence was received that the

rebels were marching towards them to give them battle; upon which the army was drawn up in order, and the Duke rode through the lines, and addressed the men as follows:—"If there be any who think themselves in a bad cause, or are afraid to engage the enemy, thinking they may fight against any of their relations, let them now turn out, receive pardon, and go about their business without any further question." On the conclusion of this speech, the whole army gave three hearty cheers. But the intelligence proving false, they proceeded to Falkirk, and continued their journey to Stirling, Perth, Montrose, Brechin, and Aberdeen, where they halted. The army of the Prince was encamped at Strathbogie.

At Aberdeen the Duke gave a ball to the ladies, and personally solicited Captain Thornton for his fiddler, there being at that time no music in the army except Colonel Howard's (the Old Buffs), which was wind music, and the performers, who were Germans, were unaccustomed to country dances. As the Prince's army was only twenty miles distant, no invitations were sent until five o'clock, though the ball was to begin at six. Twenty-five couples danced for eight hours, and his Royal Highness made one[Pg 159] of the party, and several times as he passed Metcalf, who stood on a chair to play, shouted, "Thornton, play up!" But Jack needed no exhortation, for he was well practised and better inclined.

Next morning the Duke sent him two guineas; but as he was not permitted to take money, he informed his captain, who said, as it was the Duke's money, he might take it, but observed that he should give his Royal Highness's servants a treat (he had only three servants with him—viz., his gentleman, cook, and groom). So the next night two of them paid Metcalf a visit, and a merry party they made, the captain ordering them plenty of refreshments.

In a little time they proceeded on their march, and engaged the gallant army of the Prince on Culloden Moor. The battle ended in the total rout of the army of the young "Pretender," and the somewhat severe treatment of his soldiers by the "Butcher" Duke.

The English prisoners were all liberated. Three of Captain Thornton's men had died in prison; the rest returned home.

The rebellion having been completely suppressed and peace restored, Captain Thornton returned home, accompanied by Metcalf, who had the happiness to find his faithful partner and children in good health.

Blind Jack being now at liberty to choose his occupation, attended Harrogate as usual; but having in the course of his Scotch expedition kept his eyes open (if we may use such an expression of a blind man), he had become acquainted with various

articles manufactured in that country, and judging that some of them might find a market in England, he repaired in the spring to Scotland, and supplied himself with various articles in cotton and worsted, especially Aberdeen stockings. For all these articles he found a ready sale at the houses of gentlemen in the county of York; [Pg 160] and being personally known to most of the families, was everywhere kindly received. He was never at a loss to know among one thousand articles what each had cost him, as he had a method of marking them which enabled him to distinguish them by the feel. It was also customary with him to buy horses for sale in Scotland, bringing back galloways in return. He was an admirable judge of horses by running his hands over them.

He also engaged pretty deeply in contraband trade, the profits of which at that time were so considerable as to make it worth while running the risk. Once, having received a pressing letter from Newcastle-upon-Tyne requiring his speedy attendance, he set out on horseback from Knaresborough at three in the morning, and got into Newcastle the same evening about six o'clock, a distance of nearly seventy-four miles, and did not feel fatigued.

Having received some packages, he employed a few soldiers to convey them to a carrier, judging that men of their description were least liable to suspicion. After sending off his goods, he stayed two nights with some relations, and then set out for home. He had with him about a hundred-weight of tea, cased over with tow, and tightly corded up; this he put into a wallet, which he laid across the saddle.

Coming to Chester-le-Street (about half-way between Newcastle and Durham), he met at the inn an exciseman, who knew him as soon as he had dismounted, and asked him what he had got there. Metcalf answered, "It is some tow and line for my aunt, who lives a few miles distant. I wish she was far enough, for giving me the trouble to fetch it." The officer said to him, "Bring it in"; he replied, "I am only here for a few minutes; it may as well remain on the horsing-stone." By this seeming [Pg 161] indifference about his packet he removed suspicion from the mind of the exciseman, who assisted in replacing it across the saddle.

Once having disposed of a string of horses, he bought with the produce a quantity of rum, brandy, and tea, to the amount of £200, put them on board a vessel for Leith, and travelled overland on foot to meet the vessel at that port. He had about thirty miles to walk, and carried near five stone weight of goods, which he did not choose to put on shipboard. At Leith he had the mortification to wait six weeks without receiving any tidings of the vessel, which many supposed to have been lost, there having been a storm in the interval. The distress of mind resulting from this induced him to say, "If

she is lost I wish I had been in her, for she had all my property on board." Soon after, however, the ship got into Leith harbour. He then went on board, and set sail for Newcastle; but another storm arising, the mate was washed overboard, the main-sail carried away, and the ship driven near the coast of Norway. Despair now became general, the prospect of going to the bottom seemed almost certain. Metcalf had now no wish to go to the bottom with his property, and vowed he would give all his fortune to touch dry earth again. But the wind changing, hope began to return, and the captain put about for the Scotch coast, intending to make Aberbrothock. A signal of distress was put up, but the sea ran so high that no boat could venture out with a pilot. He then stood in for the harbour, but struck against the pier end, owing to the unmanageable state of the vessel from the loss of her main-sail; she narrowly escaped being bulged, but having got to the back of the pier, was towed round into the harbour with nearly five feet of water in her hold.

As the vessel stood in need of repairs, Metcalf put his goods on board another, and went in her to Newcastle.[Pg 162] There he met with an acquaintance, and thinking the fellow trustworthy, over his cups informed him that he had got 400 gallons of gin and brandy for which he had a permit, and about thirty gallons for which he had none, and which he wanted to land. In a quarter of an hour he found that the man whom he had taken for a friend had gone down the quayside and given information of what he knew, and all the goods were seized and brought on shore. Metcalf imagined that none were seizable but the small part for which he had not obtained a permit; but was soon undeceived, the whole being liable to seizure as not agreeing with the specified quantity.

He then repaired to the Custom-house and applied to Mr. Sunderland, the collector. This gentleman knew Metcalf, whom he had seen at Harrogate; he received him very kindly, but informed him that it was not in his power to serve him, the captors being the Excise people, and not of his department. He, however, suggested that some good might result from an application to Alderman Pelreth, with whom Metcalf was acquainted, and who was intimate with the collector of the Excise. The alderman gave him a letter to the collector, representing that the bearer had bought 400 gallons of spirits at the Custom-house at Aberdeen, and that the extra quantity was for the purpose of treating the sailors and other friends, as well as for sea-stock for himself. At first the collector told him that nothing could be done for him until he should write up to the Board, and receive an answer; but Metcalf remonstrating on the inconvenience of the delay, and the other reconsidering the letter, he agreed to come down to the quay at four o'clock in the afternoon, which he accordingly did, and released everything without any expense.

A short time after, the regiment called "The Queen's Bays" were raised; they were quartered at Knaresborough[Pg 163] and the adjacent towns; but after a short stay they were ordered to the North. The country people seemed unwilling to supply carriages for the baggage, the King's allowance being but ninepence a mile per ton: that of the county, one shilling in the West Riding, and fifteenpence in the North Riding. Metcalf having two waggons, was desirous to try this new business; and to make sure of the job, got the soldiers to press his two carriages, which were accordingly loaded, and he attended them to Durham himself. Previous to loading, however, the country people, who knew the advantage of carrying for the army, and who had kept back in hopes of an advance in the price, came forward with their waggons in opposition to Metcalf; but they were now too late—Metcalf had secured the job.

On arriving at Durham, he met Bland's dragoons on their march from the North to York; they loaded his waggons again for Northallerton, and would willingly have engaged them to York; but this he was obliged to decline, having promised to bring twenty-three wool-packs to Knaresborough. He was just six days in performing this journey; and cleared, with eight horses and the one he rode, as much as £20.

Some horses belonging to the Queen's Bays, stationed at Durham, were to be sold, and Metcalf, hearing of the sale, set off from Knaresborough only the day before, and arrived there in time. Amongst the horses to be sold was a grey one, belonging to one of the drums. The man who had the charge of him not having been sufficiently careful in trimming him, had burnt him severely, which caused a swelling. Had his careless conduct been known to his superiors he would have been punished for it; upon that account the matter was hushed up. Metcalf, however, having been apprised of the circumstances from a farrier whom he had got to know, determined to purchase him, judging that the horse would be sold cheap. He was not mistaken.[Pg 164] He bought him for very little, and realised a good profit out of him shortly afterwards.

In the year 1754 Metcalf commenced a new business. He set up a stage-coach between York and Knaresborough, and conducted it himself, twice a week in the summer season, and once in the winter; and this business, together with the occasional conveyance of army baggage, employed him until his first contract for making roads, which suiting him better, he disposed of his draught and interest in the road.

An Act of Parliament having been obtained to make a turnpike from Harrogate to Boroughbridge, a person of the name of Ostler, of Farnham, two miles from Knaresborough, was appointed surveyor. Metcalf being in company with him, agreed

to make about three miles of it, between Minskip and Ferrensby. The materials were to be procured from one gravel-pit for the whole length. He therefore provided deal boards and erected a temporary house at the pit, took twelve horses to the place, fixed racks and mangers, and hired a house for his men at Minskip, distant about three-quarters of a mile. He often walked from Knaresborough in the morning, with four or five stone-weight of meat on his shoulders, and joined his men by six o'clock. By his attention and diligence he completed the work much sooner than was expected, to the entire satisfaction of the surveyor and trustees.

During his leisure hours he studied measurement in a way of his own, and when certain of the girth and length of any piece of timber, he was able to reduce its true contents to feet and inches, and would bring the dimensions of any building into yards and feet.

About the time that this road was finished the building of a bridge was advertised to be contracted for at Boroughbridge, and a number of gentlemen met there for that [Pg 165] purpose at the Crown Inn. Metcalf, amongst others, went also. The masons varied considerably in their estimates. Ostler, the surveyor of the roads, was appointed to survey the bridge, and Metcalf told him that he wished to undertake it, though he had never done anything of the kind before.

On this the surveyor acquainted the gentlemen with what Metcalf proposed; when he was sent for and asked what he knew about a bridge. He told them that he could readily describe it, if they would take the trouble of writing down his plan, which was as follows:—"The span of the arch 18 feet, being a semicircle, makes 27; the arch-stones must be a foot deep, which, if multiplied by 27, will be 486; and the basis will be 72 feet more. For the arch, it will require good backing; for which purpose there are proper stones in the old Roman wall at Aldborough, which may be brought, if you please to give directions to that effect." The gentlemen were surprised at his readiness, and agreed with him for building the bridge. The persons who had given in their estimates were much offended; and as the stone was to be procured from Renten, a sale quarry belonging to one of the masons who was there, he was unwilling to sell any to Metcalf; upon which he went to Farnham, and found good stones which the lime-burners had left (being too strong for their purpose), got them dressed at the place for a trifle, conveyed them to Boroughbridge, and having men to take them off the carts, set them, and completed the arch in one day.

Soon after, there was a mile and a half of turnpike road to be made between Knaresborough Bridge and Harrogate, for which Metcalf also agreed. Going one day over a place covered with grass, he told his men that he thought it different from the

ground adjoining, and would have them try for stone or gravel, which they immediately did, and found an old causeway, supposed to have been made in[Pg 166] the time of the Romans, which afforded many materials for the new road. Between the forest lane-head and Knaresborough Bridge there was a bog in a low piece of ground. The surveyor thought it impossible to make a road over it, but Metcalf assured him he could accomplish it. The other then told him that if so he should be paid as if he had carried the road round the bog. Jack set about it, cast the road up, and covered it with whin and ling, and made it as good as any part he had undertaken. He received for his contract about £400. He afterwards contracted for making five miles of road between Harrogate and Harewood Bridge, and received for it £1200. For a mile and a half through part of Chapeltown to Leeds, and for lengthening the arch of Sheepscar Bridge, he received £400.

The following are some of his other contracts:—Four miles of the road between Skipton and Colne, and two miles on the Burnley Road. Two miles of the road through Broughton to Marton, and two miles more through Addingham and over part of Romalds Moor, for all which he received £1350. Four miles between Mill Bridge and Halifax, and five miles between Wakefield and Chickingley Beck, near Dewsbury; and received for the same £1200. Three miles and a half between Hag Bridge and Pontefract, and one mile and a half on the Doncaster Road, from Crafton, through Foldby. For the road from Wakefield to Pontefract, Doncaster, and Halifax, he received £6400. From Blackmoor foot to Marsden, and from thence to Standish foot; also from Lupset Gate through Horbury; and also three miles from Standish to Thurton Clough; from Sir John Kaye's seat to Huddersfield; and thence to Longroyd Bridge toll-bar, in the course of which were several bridges, the whole distance about twenty-one miles, for which he received £4500.

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In the building of bridges, where the foundations were bad, he laid on a sufficient thickness of ling (where it could be got), otherwise straw; he next laid planks five inches thick, with square mortices cut through, and driving in a number of piles, made the foundations secure. He then laid springs for the arches upon the planks, which caused all to settle regularly. And though he built many arches of different sizes, none ever fell. He also undertook to build houses, amongst which was one belonging to Mr. Marmaduke Hebden, near Huddersfield, nine yards wide, twenty-three long, and twenty-one feet from the foundation to the square of the building, with twenty chimneys.

Metcalf having now made up his mind to follow building and road-making, finding it remunerative, contracted for and executed at various times a great many roads.

About the year 1781 Metcalf, hearing how beneficial the cotton business was to all that were engaged in it, resolved to have a share in that also; he accordingly purchased the necessary machinery, but the scheme failed, as a time came when no yarn could be sold without loss; therefore he gave up that business. In 1789 he contracted for making several pieces of road in Lancashire, between Bury and Heslington, and another part from Heslington to Accrington; and also a branch from that to Blackburn, the work of two summers, for which he received £3500. In 1791 he returned into Yorkshire, and began to speculate in buying and selling hay, measuring the stacks with his arms, and having learnt the height, he could soon tell the number of square yards contained in the whole.

Having gone to York in the first days of 1795, he set out on January 9th to walk to Green-Hammerton, on his way to Thornville Royal, and accomplished the distance, which was ten miles, in three hours and a half. He slept that [Pg 168] night at Thornville Royal, and next day walked to Knaresborough, January 10th, the birthday of Sir Thomas Slingsby's eldest son, which was kept with great rejoicings.

Thence he went to Spofforth, where he resided with his daughter, after the death of his wife in 1778. There he died on the 27th April, 1810, in the full possession of his faculties, aged ninety-three. He was buried in Spofforth churchyard.

At the time of his death his descendants were four children, twenty grandchildren, and ninety great and great-great grandchildren.

FOOTNOTE:

[9] Chiefly from a Chapbook Life, written apparently shortly after his death. Published by Johnson, of Leeds.

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"PEG PENNYWORTH."

Margaret Wharton, an unmarried lady of great wealth and ancient family, was one of the Yorkshire oddities of last century.

She belonged to the family of the Whartons of Skelton Castle, in Cleveland, and possessed a fortune of £200,000, of which, with rare liberality, she made her nephew a present of £100,000. Her charities were liberal, but always private, and if she heard

that a recipient of her bounty had disclosed the good deed, that person never received another penny from her.

She was a short, stout lady, dressed fashionably, had an aristocratic air, and liked to be respected as rich and of good family.

For some time she resided at York, and visited Scarborough in the season, where she was well known on account of her eccentricities. She used to send for "a pennyworth of strawberries" or "a pennyworth of cream" at a time, and pay down her penny, as she had an aversion to tradesmen's bills. From this she obtained the name of "Peg Pennyworth," which stuck to her through life. An incident occurred at Scarborough in which she displayed her dislike to public charities. She was solicited by some gentlemen to give a subscription to a charity on behalf of which they were making a collection. Peg pulled out her purse with an ominous frown, and turned out its [Pg 170]contents into her palm. This was in or about 1774, when light guineas were in disgrace. She deliberately selected from among the coins the lightest guinea she could find, and handed it to the gentlemen.

The celebrated Foote is said to have drawn her character in a farce. When informed of this she exclaimed, with a smile, "I will see it acted, as I live." She did, and expressed her satisfaction that the character in the play did her justice.

She frequently catered for herself, making her own purchases, and taking them home in her carriage. Once, having purchased some eels, she put them in her pocket, entered her coach, and called on a lady friend and invited her to come out with her for an airing.

The warmth of Peg's pocket revived the seemingly dead eels, and they began to wriggle out to enjoy a little fresh air. The lady who was sitting beside Peg, happening to look down, saw what she thought was a serpent writhing into her lap, and several hideous heads breaking out of the side of Mistress Margaret Wharton. She uttered an awful shriek, bounded to her feet, pulled the checkstring, and cried, "Madam! madam! you are swarming with adders! Coachman, stop! Let me out! let me out!"

Mistress Wharton coolly looked at the eels, now escaping rapidly from her pocket, gathered them up, and shoved them into her reticule, saying, "I protest, madam, it is only my eels come to life. Sit you down again, and don't be frightened."

One day at Scarborough she had ordered a large meat-pie to be baked for dinner. It was a very large one—to serve for herself, some visitors, and all the servants. When it was made she ordered the footman to take it to the bakehouse, but he declined, saying that it was not his place, neither did it comport with his dignity, to be seen[Pg

171] in Scarborough stalking through the streets in plush and tags, bearing a huge meat-pie.

Mistress Margaret then ordered the coachman to take it, but he declined.

"Bring out the carriage, then!" said Peg Pennyworth. The horses were harnessed; the coachman put on his powdered wig and mounted the box; the footman took his place behind; and Mistress Margaret Wharton, bearing the meat-pie, sat in state in the carriage. "Drive to the bakehouse."

So the coachman whipped his horses, and the meat-pie was carried thus to the baker's. An hour or two later the carriage was ordered out again, the coachman remounted the box, the footman took his stand behind, and the lady drove to the bakehouse to fetch her pie, which she carried back thus to her house. "Now," said she to the coachman, "you have kept your place, which is to drive; and you," turning to the footman, "have kept yours, which is to wait; and now we shall all have some of the pie."

Mistress Wharton had a visiting acquaintance with a lady, a clergyman's wife, in York. On the death of her husband, the widow retired with her four daughters to Thirsk, and she invited Peg Pennyworth to visit her.

To her dismay, one day up drove Mistress Wharton in her carriage, with coachman, footman, and lady's maid. The widow, whose means were not very ample, endured having all these people quartered on her for a month, but at the expiration of that time she was obliged to hint to the nephew of her guest that "the pressure on her means was rather greater than she could bear."

"Let my aunt have her way," said Mr. Wharton. "I will pay you two hundred a year during her life, and one hundred during your own, should you survive her."

Mistress Margaret Wharton never left the house of the[Pg 172] widow, but died there after some years, in the one hundred and third year of her age, in 1791. The annuity was regularly paid to the widow lady to the day of her death.

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PETER BARKER, THE BLIND JOINER OF HAMPSWAITE.

Peter Barker was born on July 10th, 1808. At the age of four he was deprived of sight by an inflammation of the eyes, and ever afterwards he was—

"dark, amid the blaze of noon,

Irrevocably dark; total eclipse,

Without all hope of day."

The loss of his sight caused Peter from an early age to cultivate music, and he became a skilful performer on the violin; and as he grew up to manhood he frequented the village feasts, dances, and merry-makings all round the country, as a performer on that instrument. This led him into habits of intemperance. But he had a strong will, a tender conscience, and seeing that he was sinking in his own respect and in that of others, he determined to abandon his musical profession.

But he must earn his livelihood; and he determined to become a joiner. He fell to work to make a chair, succeeded in the first attempt, and for the rest of his life followed carpentering as his profession. He handled his tools with all the dexterity of a practised workman; his shop was always in order, the tools in their proper position in the rack, or in his hands. The only peculiarity about his instruments was in the foot-rule he used for making his measurements, the lines on which were marked by small[Pg 174] pins, of different numbers, to indicate the different feet on the rule. The idea of having his rule thus marked was suggested by a lady who interested herself in his welfare. She wrote to a manufacturer of carpenters' rules in London, to inquire if such a thing could be had as a rule with raised lines and figures; the answer was that no such rules were made. Failing to procure an article of this kind, she suggested the making of the measurements on it with pins; and this was carried into effect.

The articles made by this blind workman were firm and substantial, the joints even and close, and the polish smooth. It is said that a cabinet-maker at Leeds, having heard reports of the blind joiner's skill, procured a chair he had made, and showed it to the workmen in his shop, asking them their opinion of the chair. After examining it, they said that they thought there was nothing particular about the chair, only it was a thoroughly well-made, serviceable one. "So it is," said the master; "but—will you believe it?—the man who made it never saw it: he was blind from a child." Their indifference was at once turned into amazement.

The writer of a memoir of Peter Barker[\[10\]](#) says:—

"We have frequently seen him at work, and were it not from the more frequent handling of the articles operated on, and the nearness of his fingers to the edge of the chisel or saw, there was nothing apparently to distinguish his manner from that of an ordinary workman. In 1868 we found him at work in the church, repairing the seats, and watched him for some time before he was conscious of the presence of any one.

He showed us what he had done—lowered the fronts of both the pulpit and reading-desk, the one twenty inches, the other a foot: brought forward a pew some three feet, and refronted it with panels of old carved[Pg 175] oak, which he asserted was very difficult to work over again; showed us a piece of carving which he, in conjunction with the churchwarden, had only discovered the day before, and which was upwards of 200 years old; led the way into the belfry, giving a word of advice to be careful in ascending the old rickety stairs; showed the clock, which he had under his care to keep clean and in going order. At this point, while seated on a bench, he gave us a narrative of his first acquaintance with the clock, which we give in his own words as nearly as we can remember:—[\[11\]](#) "You see, our clock is yan o' these and fashion'd handmade 'uns, not made exact and true by machinery as they are now, but ivvery wheel cut an' filed by hand. Aud Snow, a notified clock-makker 'at lived up aboon abit here, had the managing of her a lang time, at so much a year. He used to come just at t' time when his year was up, give t' aud clock a fether full o' oil, tak his brass, and there was no mair on him till t' next year. At last she gat as she wadn't gang at all; she wad naither turn pointers nor strike. T' foaks i' t' toon were sadly dissatisfied; they neither knew when to get up nor gang to bed, as they had done afore, when t' clock was all reet. T' church-maister sent for t' clock-maker, and he come an' come ageean, an' fizzled an' faff'd aboot her, but nivver did her a farthing's worth o' good. At last he was forced to give her up as a bad job; she was fairly worn out, an' she wad nivver be no better till she was mended with a new un; and that's aboon twenty year sin, an' t' aud clock's here yet. Then Johnny Gill, another clever fellow, took her under hands, and she lick'd him as fairly as she'd deean aud Snow. I was i' t' church by mysel one day, I hardly know what aboot, when it com' into my heead 'at I would try my hand at her; I[Pg 176] nivver had deean nowt o' t' sort; but if ye nivver try, ye nivver can dea (do) nowt. So t' first thing I did was to give her a reet good feelin' all ower her; an' then, heving settled all her parts fairly i' my mind, I fell to work and took her to pieces, bit by bit, got all t' works out of her, and cleaned her all ower reet soundly, particularly t' pivots, and then gav 'em all a sup o' nice oil; then I put her together ageean; efter a few trials I got her all reet, got her started—she strake an' kept time like a good un. Efter I finish'd I com' doon, an' into th' church garth, and wha did I meet there but Mr. Shann, our vicar at that time, and just as I was meeting him t' clock strake ageean. 'What's that, Peter?' he says. I says, 'It's t' clock, sir!' He says ageean, 'What does this mean, Peter?' I says, 'It meeans t' time o' day when t' clock strikes.' He began o' laughing, and said, 'You're a queer fellow, Peter. I mean who made the clock strike?' 'Oh,' I says, 'I've deean that mysel, sir. I've been at her a goodish bit to-day, an' I think I've gotten her put all reet at last.' 'Well done, Peter, you're a clever fellow,' he says. 'But you sha'n't do all this for nothing. I shall let the churchwardens know what you have done. You must

have some reward.' 'Varry weel, sir,' I says, and so we parted. And he was as good as his word. When t' churchmaisters met, he tell'd 'em all about it, and they allowed me four shillings for my job; and I was to have ten shillings a year for keeping her ganning ivvery year efter."

In the month of July, 1865, the clock did not strike correctly. As Peter told the tale himself:—"I was i' t' shop when I heard her at it, two or three times. I stood it as lang as I could; at last I banged down my teeals (tools), and says to mysel', 'I'll mak thee either strake reet, or I'll mak thee as that thou'll nivver strike ageean.' Away I went, spent an hour over her, gat her reet, and she's kept reet ever sin'."

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His biographer says:—"Once on a visit to Peter's cottage, we found a window had been recently inserted, according to his statement, to make the fireside more lightsome—Peter having been mason, joiner, and glazier himself. In short, he appeared to be able to do any kind of work that he had the desire or the will to do. He was an expert in the art of netting—fabricating articles in that line from the common cabbage net to the curtains which adorn the windows of the stately drawing-room. As a vocalist he sang bass in the church on Sundays. He was also one of the bell-ringers; and during the winter months the curfew bell is rung at Hampswaite at eight o'clock every evening. When it was Peter's turn to ring he took a lighted lanthorn with him—not for the purpose of seeing others, but that others might see him.

"He always fattened a pig in the winter season, and had a method of measurement of his own for ascertaining how much weight the pig had gained every week; and to such measurement and calculation the pig was weekly subjected until he attained the proper bulk and weight. Peter generally bought his pig himself, and for that purpose attended the market at Knaresborough, where the bargain was cause of much amusement to the onlookers. When the pig was pointed out which was thought likely, the seller had to seize the same, and hold it still as possible, until Peter had felt it over and ascertained its *points*, and passed his judgment on its feeding qualities."

Peter learned to read with his fingers in 1853, and was given a New Testament with embossed letters.

He was very fond of children, and would play tunes to them on his fiddle at his shop door of a summer evening, whilst they danced and sang. He had made this fiddle himself, as well as the case in which he kept it.

So delicate was Peter's touch that he was able to tell the [Pg 178] hour on a watch by opening the case and running his fingers lightly over the face.

Peter in his youth had a romantic courtship, and married a wife. She presented him with a son, born in 1846; and died on June 3rd, 1862. The boy, who was his father's constant companion and delight, died the following year, on Jan. 19th, 1863, leaving the poor blind joiner's house completely desolate.

After a few weeks' illness, Peter died in his cottage, near the churchyard gate, on February 18th, 1873, at the age of sixty-five.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[10\]](#) Published by T. Thorpe, Pately Bridge, 1873.

[\[11\]](#) The strong provincial dialect is somewhat modified in this, or it would be unintelligible except to Yorkshire readers.

[Pg 179]

THE WHITE HOUSE.

On the road between Raskelfe and Easingwold stood in 1623, and stands still, a lonely inn called "The White House."

The wide, brown, heathery moor called Pill-Moor then extended to the roots of the Hambledon hills; on a slight rising ground above the marshes stood here and there a farm or cottage; and here and there a portion of the soil had been enclosed. To this day a large portion of the moor remains untilled, and is a favourite resort of botanists, who find there several varieties of gentian and orchis, rare elsewhere. Originally it stretched from Borough Bridge to the Hambledons, intersected by the streams flowing into the Ouse, patched here and there with pools of water.

In the White House lived a man called Ralph Raynard, and his sister. Ralph paid his addresses to a fine-looking young woman, dark-eyed, dark-haired, who lived at Thornton Bridge, at the Red House, where the road from Brafferton or Tollerton crossed the Ouse to Topcliffe and Ripon. The old house, lonely, surrounded by trees, with traces of a moat or pond, in spring full of yellow flags, stands to this day, almost deserted. The girl was poor, and a good match was of the first advantage to her; she was at the time in service at the Red House, and thither Ralph came to visit her.

But, for some cause unknown, they quarrelled, an estrangement ensued, and Ralph came no more across Thornton Bridge.

At the same time a yeoman named Fletcher, living at [Pg 180] Moor House, in the parish of Raskelfe, had cast his eyes on the comely young woman, and he took advantage of the rupture between the lovers to step in and offer his hand to the damsel. He was at once accepted, in a fit of resentment against Ralph Raynard, and the marriage rapidly followed; so that she soon found herself the wife of a man whom she did not love, and some miles nearer the White House, where lived Ralph, whom she did love, than when she had resided at Thornton Bridge.

The resentment she had felt died away; an explanation followed when too late. There was a scene—despair on both sides, and resentment entertained by both Ralph Raynard and Mrs. Fletcher against the unfortunate yeoman who stood between them and perfect union and happiness.

On market-day, when Mrs. Fletcher ambled on her nag into Easingwold, she invariably halted at the White House, when the hostler, one Mark Dunn, a beetle-browed, uncouth fellow from Huby, received and held her horse as she dismounted and entered the inn. Ralph, the host, was always there, and received Mrs. Fletcher with an affection which dissatisfied his sister, a woman of sense, who saw that this cherishing of an old passion could lead to no good. When Mark Dunn disappeared for hours at a time, she shrewdly suspected that he was sent on messages to Raskelfe.

More than once she interfered and rebuked Ralph, her brother, warning him of the dangerous consequences of thus encouraging the attachment of a woman now bound to another man by the most sacred ties. With an oath he bade her mind her own business, and not interfere with him.

Fletcher could not but be aware that his wife did not love him; whispers reached him that she met her old sweetheart when he was from home; that her nag was seen [Pg 181] standing an unreasonable time outside the door of the White House. He caught Mark Dunn one evening prowling in his orchard, and he fell on him with a stick. The ungainly fellow howled with pain, and swore revenge.

Fletcher became gloomy, neglected his affairs, and began to fall into difficulties. He had been sincerely, passionately attached to the dark-eyed, handsome girl he had brought to his home. He had done his utmost to render her happy, and now she was making his home miserable, destroying the former serenity of his spirits.

He was obliged to go one day on business to Easingwold. He would not return till late. His wife knew it. Something troubled his mind. A presentiment of evil which he could not shake off hung over him, and he wrote on a sheet of paper—

"If I should be missing, or suddenly wanted be,

Mark Ralph Raynard, Mark Dunn, and mark my wife for me,"

directed it to his sister, and on reaching Easingwold, posted it.

No sooner was he gone than Mrs. Fletcher mounted her horse and rode to the White House. She asked to see Raynard, and he walked by her side some way back to Raskelfe. There they parted; and Raynard was next observed in close conversation with his hostler, Mark Dunn.

It was May-Day. In the sweet spring evening Fletcher was returning on foot from Easingwold, when he came to Daunay Bridge, where at that time a road branched off from the highway from the North to York, and traversing the Lund, led to Raskelfe. As he crossed the bridge he stood still for a moment, and looked up at the stars, just appearing. Next moment Raynard and Dunn were upon him; they had sprung from behind the bridge, and he was flung over it into the water. The stream is narrow and not[Pg 182] deep, so that, once recovered from the shock, he could have easily crawled out. But the murderers leaped into the water after him. Mrs. Fletcher, with a long sack over her shoulder, ran out from the shadow of a bush where she had been concealed, and they held the farmer under water, the two men grasping his throat, his wife retaining his feet in the sack, into which she thrust them, till his struggles ceased, and he was, or was supposed to be, dead.

The body was then thrust into the sack which Mrs. Fletcher had brought for the purpose, and the three guilty ones assisted in carrying or dragging the body along the road towards the White House. They were alarmed once; the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard, and they concealed themselves by the road-side. The horseman passed, they emerged from their place of hiding, and continued their course.

As they drew near to the inn a streak of light from the inn-door showed that it was open. They heard voices. The horseman had called for something to drink, and it was brought to him without his dismounting. Then Miss Raynard was heard calling, "Ralph! Ralph!" She wondered, perhaps, at his long absence, or wanted him for some purpose in the house.

No answer was returned. Raynard, Dunn, and Mrs. Fletcher lifted the body over the low hedge into Raynard's croft or garden, and buried it in a place where the ground had been disturbed that day by his having stubbed up an old root. They carefully covered the body with earth, and Raynard sowed mustard-seed over the place.

It was thought prudent that Mrs. Fletcher and Raynard should not meet after this.

People wondered what had become of Fletcher; but knowing that he was somewhat embarrassed in his circumstances, they readily accepted the statement of his wife[Pg 183]—that he had gone out of the way to avoid having a writ served on him.

Thus matters stood till the 7th July, when Ralph Raynard rode to Topcliffe fair. It was a bright sunny day. He passed the Moor House, but did not stay there; crossed Thornton Bridge, went before the Red House, where he had so often visited and spent such happy hours with the woman who was now his accomplice in crime, along by Cundall to Topcliffe.

He dismounted at the inn there—the Angel, an old-fashioned house near the dilapidated market-cross. He led his horse out of the yard into the stable. The sun glared without; within it was dark. As he was removing the bridle from his horse, suddenly he saw standing before him the spirit of Fletcher, pale, with a phosphoric light playing about him, pointing to him, and saying, "O Ralph, Ralph! repent. Vengeance is at hand!" In an agony of horror he fled out of the stable. In the daylight without he recovered composure, and endeavoured to believe that he had been a victim to delusion. He thought he must buy some present for the woman, love for whom had led him to the commission of murder. He went to one of the stalls to buy some trinket—a chain of imitation coral beads. "How does it look on the neck?" he asked, extending it to the keeper of the stall. Then he looked up and saw a ghastly figure opposite—the dead man with the coral round his neck, knotted under his ear, and his head on one side, the eyes wide open, with a blaze in the eyes, and heard him say: "How like you a red streak round the neck such as this? I will put one round the throat of my wife; and you shall wear one too!"

Sick and faint, he hastened back to the inn, and called for beer. Towards evening he rode home. He saw as he came towards the Carr, where there is a dense clump of[Pg 184] trees, a figure looking at him. It was deliberately getting out of a sack, and shaking and wringing water out of its clothes. With a scream of terror Raynard plunged his spurs into the horse's flanks, and galloped past Cundall, home. As he crossed Thornton Bridge he closed his eyes, but when he opened them again he saw the well-known figure of the dead man walking before him so fast that his horse could not catch him up. The ghost trailed the sack after it, and left a luminous track on the road. When it reached a point at a little distance from the White House—the very spot where Raynard, Mrs. Fletcher, and Mark Dunn had turned aside with the body—the spectre strode across the heather, leaped the low hedge, and melted, apparently, into the ground, where now a rich, green crop of mustard was growing.

"You're back earlier than I thought," said the sister of Ralph Raynard. "I reckon thou'st not been stopping this time at Moor House?"

Raynard said nothing, except "I'm ill."

"Ah," said his sister, "I've gotten thee a nice bit o' supper ready, with a beautiful dish o' salad."

And she laid the cloth, and placed upon it a plate of fresh-cut *mustard*!

Raynard's face grew rigid and white.

"What is the matter?" asked his sister.

Opposite him, on the settle, sat the dead man, pointing to the salad.

Ralph sprang up, drew his sister away, and told her all.

She, poor woman, horror-struck, ran off at once to Sir William Sheffield, a justice of peace, residing at Raskelfe Park. The three guilty parties were apprehended and taken to York, where, on July 28th, 1623, all three were hung.

When they had been cut down, the bodies were removed[Pg 185] and conveyed in a waggon to the White House, the hangman seated by the driver in front. There is a little rise not far from the inn, commanding the spot where the murder was committed, and the green mustard-bed where the body of Fletcher had been hidden, but which had been removed and buried in Raskelfe churchyard. On this hill a gibbet had been erected, and there the three bodies were hung, with their faces towards the dismal flat and the gurgling stream where the murdered man had been drowned. There they hung, blown about by the autumn storms, screeched over by the ravens and magpies, baked by the summer sun, their bare scalps capped with cakes of snow in the cold winter, till they dropped upon the ground, and then the bones were buried and the gallows cut down.

About eighty years ago the plough was drawn over Gallows Hill, when a quantity of bones were unearthed by the share. They were the bones of Raynard, Dunn, and Mrs. Fletcher. The hill to this day bears its ill-omened name, and people mutter about Raskelfe the doggerel lines—

"A wooden church, a wooden steeple,

Rascally church, and rascally[\[12\]](#) people."

FOOTNOTE:

[\[12\]](#) Raskelfe is commonly called Rascall.

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JEMMY HIRST;AN ODDITY.[\[13\]](#)

Jemmy was born at Rawcliffe, in the West Riding, on October 12th, 1738. His father was a respectable substantial farmer, without great brilliancy of parts, but with the usual Yorkshire shrewdness.

The boy soon began to exhibit originality; mischievousness was mistaken by a fond mother for genius, and he was destined for the Church. He was sent accordingly to a boarding-school, to a clergyman, at the age of eight, to acquire the rudiments of the necessary education.

But at school Jemmy's genius took an altogether perverse turn. He was always first in the playground and last in class; a leader in mischief, a laggard in study. Finding his master's spectacles on the desk one day, Jemmy unscrewed them, and removed the glasses. When the Principal came in, he gravely took up the spectacles and put them on. Finding them dim, he removed them. When he was seen demurely to wipe where the glasses had been, and then, with his fingers through the rims, to hold them up to his eyes to see what was the matter, the whole school burst out laughing. The pedagogue demanded the name of the culprit. Jemmy had not the honesty or courage to proclaim himself the author of the trick, and the whole school was whipped accordingly. On the morning of the 1st[\[Pg 187\]](#) April, early, a big boy in his dormitory sent Jemmy to the master, expecting that he would knock at his bedroom door, wake him, and get a thrashing for his pains. Jemmy turned out of bed and went outside the door, waited a minute, and then came into the dormitory again. "Ah! Tom, thou'rt in for it. Thou mun go at once to Lovell for having made an April fool of him and me." The boy, believing this, went to the master's door, knocked him up, and got well thrashed for his pains. "You will know in future what is meant by the biter being bit," said Jemmy, when the boy returned, crying. "There's an old fable about the viper biting the file and breaking his teeth. Perhaps you can understand the moral of it now."

The Principal kept an old sow. Jemmy used to get on her back, tie a piece of twine—"band" a Yorkshire boy would call it—to the ring in her snout, run a nail through the heel of his boot to act as spur, and gallop the old sow round the yard. This was often performed with impunity, but not always. The master saw him from his window one morning as he was shaving, and rushed down with a horse-whip in his hand. Jemmy

was careering joyously round and round the yard when a crack of the lash across his back dislodged him. He was fed next day on bread and water as a punishment.

One night Jemmy and some of his schoolmates got out of the house with intent to rob an orchard. But one of the day scholars had overheard the boarders planning the raid, and he informed the farmer whose orchard it was purposed to rob, and he was on the look-out for the young rogues. When they arrived he suffered one of them—it was Jemmy—to climb an apple-tree without molestation, but then he rushed forth from his hiding-place and laid about him with a carter's whip with hearty good-will. The boys fled in all directions, except Jemmy, who escaped further up the tree, [Pg 188] and there remained, unable, like a squirrel, to leap from bough to bough, and so escape. The farmer went under the tree and shouted to him, "Come down, you young rascal! I'll strap thee!"

"Nay," answered Jemmy, "dost see any green in my eye? It's like I should come down to get a whipping, isn't it?" And he began leisurely to eat some of the apples, and pelt the farmer with others. The man, highly irate, began to climb the tree after him. Jemmy remained composedly eating till the farmer was within reach of him, and then he drew a cornet of pepper from his pocket and dusted it into the eyes of his pursuer. The man, half-blinded, desisted from his attempts to catch the boy, in his efforts to clear his eyes, and Jemmy slipped past him down the tree and escaped. Next day the farmer came to the school to complain, and Jemmy received thirty strokes on his back with the birch. "Ah!" said Jemmy, "thou'st made my back tingle, and I'll make thine smart." So he got a darning-needle, and stuck it in the master's hair-bottomed chair in such a way that when anyone sat down the needle would protrude through the cushion, but would recede on the person's rising again.

At school hour the master came in, and seated himself in his chair with his usual gravity. But suddenly up he bounded like a rocket; then turned and examined the cushion, very red in the face. The cushion seemed all right when he felt it with his hand, so he sat himself down on it again, but this time much more leisurely. No sooner, however, was his weight on it than up came the needle again, and with it up bounded the master.

"Please, sir," said Jemmy, affecting simplicity, "was there a thorn in the seat? If so, thou'd better run two or three times round t' school yard; I did so yesterday to work t' birch buds out o' my flesh."

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Jemmy had one day tied two cats together by their hind legs and thrown them over a rail, when the master, who had been watching him from an upper window, made his appearance on the scene, horsewhip in hand, and belaboured Jemmy severely. But little Hirst always retaliated in some way. The master used to walk up and down in the evening in the yard behind the school. He wore a foxy wig. Jemmy one evening went into the study where Mr. Lovell kept his fishing tackle, for he was fond of angling. The window was open; Jemmy cast the hook, as for a fish, and caught the little fox-coloured wig. Then leaving the rod in the window, and the head of hair dangling above the master's reach, he ran down into the school. The Principal was therefore obliged to go upstairs with bald head to his study to recover his wig. This final act of insubordination was too much for Mr. Lovell—it touched him in his tenderest point; and he wrote to Mr. Hirst to request him to remove the unmanageable boy from his school.

He was fourteen years old when his father took him away, and was little advanced in his learning. Every prospect of his going into the Church was abandoned, but what trade or profession he was qualified for was as yet undecided. His father wanted to put him to school again, but Jemmy so steadily and doggedly persisted in his refusal to go to another, that his indulgent father ceased to press it. The boy showed no inclination for farming, and no persuasion of his father could induce him to take a farming implement in his hands to work with. His chief pleasure consisted in teaching pigs and calves to jump.

Mr. Hirst had a friend at Rawcliffe, a tanner, and this friend persuaded Mr. Hirst to bind Jemmy apprentice to him; and as the boy showed no disinclination to the trade, he was bound to the tanner for seven years.

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The tanner had a daughter called Mary, a year younger than Jemmy, and a tender friendship grew up between the young people: Jemmy was softened and civilised by the gentle influence of the girl; he took willingly to the trade, became settled, lost his mischievous propensities, and promised to turn out a respectable member of society. An incident occurred three years after he had entered the tanner's house which tended to cement this attachment closer. Mary went one Saturday to spend the day with an aunt living at Barnsley. Jemmy ferried her over the river in a boat belonging to the tanner, and promised to fetch her in the evening. Accordingly, towards nightfall, he crossed the river, and made his boat fast to a stake, and then walked to Barnsley to meet the young girl. Mary met him with her usual smile, and tripped by his side to the boat, but in stepping into it her foot slipped, and she was swept down by the current.

Jemmy instantly leaped overboard, swam after her, overtook her before she sank, and supporting her with one arm, succeeded in bringing her ashore, where several persons who had witnessed the accident were assembled to assist and receive her.

Mary's parents showed Jemmy much gratitude for his courageous conduct in saving her life, and the girl clung to him with intense affection; whilst Jemmy, who seemed to think he had acquired some right over her by his having saved her life, was never happy unless he was by her side. They were always together. She would steal in to do her needlework in the place where he was engaged in his trade, and when work was over they were together walking in the lanes and fields.

But in the midst of this happiness a stroke fell on them which for ever altered the tenor of Jemmy's life. Mary fell ill with small-pox. The lad watched by her bedside night and day, giving her medicine, making up her pillow,[Pg 191] tending her with agonised heart, utterly forgetful of himself, fearing no risk of infection, heedless of taking his natural rest. The whole time of her illness he never slept, and could scarcely be induced to leave her side for his meals.

On the fifth day she died. The blow was more than Jemmy could bear, and he was prostrated with brain-fever.

That the poor boy had naturally very deep feelings is evident from his having, some few years before, been laid up with fever when his mother died. Hearing of her death whilst he was at school, he became ill and was removed home, where it was some time before he got over the shock. Mary had taken the place in his vacant heart formerly occupied by his mother, and with years the strength of his feelings had increased. Consequently the loss of Mary affected him even more than that of his mother.

In his brain fever he raved incessantly of the poor dead girl, and for several weeks his life was despaired of. By degrees he slowly recovered; but for some time it was feared that his reason was gone. At the end of six or seven months he was able to take a little exercise without attendance; but, as will be seen, he never wholly recovered the blow, and his conduct thenceforth was so eccentric that there can be no doubt his brain was affected.

He left the tanner's, abandoned the trade, and returned to his father's house, where he idled, preying on his fancies—one day in mad, exuberant spirits, the next overwhelmed with despondency.

When aged five-and-twenty he took a fancy to a fine bull-calf belonging to his father, which he called "Jupiter," and he began to train it to perform various tricks, and to

break it to bear the saddle. Jupiter bore the bridle[Pg 192] patiently enough, but plunged and tossed his horns when the saddle was placed on his back. Jemmy next ventured to mount his back. The young bull stood for a minute or two, as his father said, "right down stagnated," and then began to plunge and kick. Jemmy held fast, and Jupiter, finding he could not thus dislodge his rider, set off, tearing across the paddock towards a thick quickset hedge at the bottom. But instead of leaping it, as Jemmy expected, the bull ran against the fence, and precipitated his rider over the hedge into the ditch on the further side. Jemmy was unhurt, except for a few scratches and some rents in his garments, and patches of mud, and picking himself up, raced after Jupiter, nothing daunted, caught him, and remounting him, mastered the beast. After this he rode Jupiter daily, to the great amusement of people generally, especially when he trotted into Snaith on market-days on the back of the now docile bull.

On the death of his father he was left about £1000. The farm he gave up, having no taste for agriculture, and he took a house on the bank of the river, not far from his old master's the tanner. The house had a few acres of land attached to it, which he cultivated. The old housekeeper, who had known him since a child, followed him to his new home; and in his stable was a stall for Jupiter.

He began to speculate in corn, flax, and potatoes, and having considerable natural shrewdness underlying his eccentric manners, he managed to realise enough to support himself comfortably. He invested £4000 in consols, and had £2000 lying at interest in a neighbouring bank. He rode out with Lord Beaumont's foxhounds, always on Jupiter, who was trained to jump as well as to run. When he was seen coming up on the bull, Lord Beaumont would turn to those with him at the meet and[Pg 193] say, "Well, gentlemen, if we are not destined to find game to-day, we may be sure of sport."

His dress was as extraordinary as his mount, for he wore a broad-brimmed hat of lambskin, fully nine feet in circumference; his waistcoat was like Joseph's coat of many colours, made of patchwork; his breeches were of listings of various colours, plaited together by his housekeeper; and he wore yellow boots.

Though Jupiter could keep up with the foxhunters for a few miles, his powers of endurance were not so great as those of a horse, and he began to lag. Lord Beaumont would pass Jemmy, and say, "Come, Mr. Hirst, you will not be in at the death."

"No; but I shall at the dinner," was Jemmy's dry reply. Lord Beaumont always took the hint and invited him to Carlton House to the hunting dinner.

His Lordship had a nephew visiting him on one occasion, a London exquisite, who thought he could amuse himself at Jemmy's expense. One day at the meet this young

man said to Captain Bolton, "Let us quiz the old fellow."—"By all means," answered the captain; "but take care that you do not get the worst of it."

When Jemmy came up, the young dandy, bowing to him on his saddle, said, "I wish you a good morning, Joseph."

"My name isn't Joseph," answered Jemmy.

"Oh, I beg pardon. I mistook you by your coat and waistcoat for that patriarch."

"Young man," said Jemmy, with perfect composure, "'t win't do to judge by appearances. As I wor a-coming up, says I to mysen, 'You're a gentleman.' When I gotten a bit closer, says I, 'Nay, he's a dandy.' And now that I heard thee voice, I knows thou'rt nowt but a jackass."

Jemmy was out with the hounds one day, along with Lord Wharncliffe and Lord Beaumont and several of the[Pg 194] gentry of the neighbourhood. It was agreed amongst them, unknown to Jemmy, that he should be let into a scrape, if possible. Accordingly, after the start, Lord Wharncliffe kept near him, and led him into a field surrounded by a low, thick hedge—low enough for Jupiter to clear without any trouble. On the other side of the hedge in one place there was a drinking-pond for the cattle, five or six feet deep, and full of water at the time. Lord Wharncliffe kept close by Jemmy, and edged towards where the pond was; and then, putting spurs to his horse, he leaped the fence, and Jemmy did the same to Jupiter, and clearing the hedge in gallant style, came splashing into the water, and rolled off Jupiter.

Lord Wharncliffe, when he saw Jemmy fairly in the middle of the pond, turned back, and alighted, in order to assist him out of the water. He found him half blinded with mud and dirt, trying to scramble out, his clothes completely saturated. Jemmy managed to get out without assistance, but it was some time before their united efforts could extricate Jupiter.

Lord Beaumont offered Jemmy a change of clothes if he would go to his house, but he would not hear of the proposal, declaring he would see the day's sport over first; and so they rode on together towards the rest of the party, who were halted near Rawcliffe Wood. The fox had been caught after a short run, and the huntsmen were already beating after another.

Jemmy was greeted with a general titter. Captain Bolton laughed out, and said, "Why, Jemmy, you've been fishing, not hunting. What have you caught?"

Jemmy looked hard at him—he was in no good humour after his plunge—and said, "I reckon there's a flat fish I know of that I'll catch some day."

"Why, Jemmy," said Lord Wharncliffe, laughing, "I saw you catch a flounder."

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"Ha! ha!" said the captain, "that's good! You've taken the shine out of your smart clothes to-day, Jemmy."

"A little water will give it back to them," answered Hirst, sulkily.

"Jemmy," asked Captain Bolton, "did you think you were drowning in the wash-tub? Did you say your prayers in it?"

"No," answered Jemmy, angrily, "I didn't; but what I was doing then was wishing I'd got a contemptible puppy named Bolton in the pond with me, that I might kick his breech."

Jemmy soon saw that he had been the victim of a planned trick, and he determined to have his revenge. "I know very well that Lord Wharncliffe led me o' purpose into t' pond—I could see't by his manner; but I'll be even wi' him."

He did not carry his purpose into execution at once, lest he should arouse suspicion, but about a month afterwards, when in company with Lord Wharncliffe, he adroitly let drop that he had seen a number of snipe on Rawcliffe moor. This moor, now enclosed, was then a wide, open common, full of marshy places, and with here and there bogs covered with a little green moss, deep holes full of peat water, not to be discerned except by those who were well acquainted with them and the treacherousness of their bright green covering. Lord Wharncliffe, Captain Bolton, and some others, made up a party to shoot on the common the following day, and met Jemmy, who undertook to show them where the snipe most congregated.

They had a good day's sport, and when it fell dusk were returning home, Jemmy beside Lord Wharncliffe, whom he engaged in conversation, and Captain Bolton, with his gun over his shoulder, immediately behind, joining in the conversation at intervals. Jemmy led the way direct to one[Pg 196] of these bog-holes, and on reaching the patch of moss adroitly slipped on one side, and let Lord Wharncliffe and Captain Bolton walk straight into it. The moss at once yielded, and both sank to their breasts, and only kept their heads above water by spreading out their arms on the moss. In this condition they were perfectly helpless. To struggle was to endanger their lives, for if the web of moss were torn, they must infallibly sink beneath it.

Jemmy looked at them from the firm ground with a malicious grin.

"Ha, ha! captain," said he, laughing; "art thou saying thy prayers in yond wash-tub?"

"Go to the devil!" roared Captain Bolton.

"Nay," answered Jemmy, "thou'rt going to him as fast as thou can, unless I pull thee out."

He held out his gun to Lord Wharncliffe, and assisted him from the hole. "There, my lord, now you have tit for tat."

"Well, Mr. Hirst, I shall take care how I play with edged tools again. But I think it is too bad of you to punish Captain Bolton as well as me."

"Why, my lord, he seemed to enjoy the horse-pond so much that I thowt I'd let him taste the bog-pit. I've no doubt it gives him a deal o' pleasure."

"You old scarecrow!" said the captain, angrily. "I've a great mind to shoot you."

As he was helping Captain Bolton out with his gun he said drily, "Sure it's a rare funny sight to see a queer sole angling for a flat fish."

The immersed man little enjoyed the jokes at his expense, and he swore at Jemmy. "Ah!" said that oddity, "I don't think thou'rt a fish worth catching. Shall I fling him in again, my lord? He's nowt but what folks would call a little common-place."

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Jemmy's old housekeeper died, and he supplied her place by a strange creature, nearly as great an oddity as himself, called Sarah, who for many years had kept house for a rag-and-bone dealer at Howden, but who at his death had returned to Rawcliffe, her native place, and was living with her brother there when Jemmy engaged her.

Having made money by his speculations in corn and potatoes, he resolved to retire from business. He invested £4000 in the funds and £2000 in the bank, and lived on the interest. He was now forty-five years old.

An inactive life, however, did not suit him, so he turned his mind to mechanics, and made several curious contrivances, some useful. He constructed a windmill to thrash corn, but for this purpose it did not answer, though it served for cutting up straw and chopping turnips.

His next contrivance was a carriage, the body of which was made of wickerwork. It cost him a year's constant application to finish it, and when completed it was calculated to cause a sensation. It was a huge palanquin, with a top like an exaggerated Chinaman's hat, supported on four iron rods, which were screwed into the shafts, the shafts running the whole length of the carriage, and resting on springs connected with the axle of the wheels. The sides and back of the carriage were made of wickerwork matting. The axle-case was faced with a clock dial with numbers, and

hands connected with a piece of ingenious mechanism, afterwards perfected and patented by another person, which told the distance the carriage had gone by measuring the number of rotations made by the wheels.

Jemmy used for his hunting-suit a lambskin hat, a rabbit-skin jacket, a waistcoat made of the skins of drakes' necks with the feathers on, a pair of list breeches, yellow, blue, black, and red, stockings of red and white worsted, and yellow boots. His best room was furnished as curiously[Pg 198] as his person. Instead of pictures, the walls were hung round with bits of old iron and coils of rope; in one place an old frying-pan, in another a rusty sword, a piece of a chair, or a jug.

One evening, after a day's sport, he invited the party to join him for a social evening, and the offer was eagerly accepted, as every one was curious to see the interior of his house. He gave them a very fair entertainment, and amused them all the evening with his jokes. Immediately over Lord Wharncliffe's head was suspended a pair of horse's blinkers.

"Do you wear these?" asked a Mr. Sadler who was present.

"No, sir, I do not; I keep them for donkeys of a peculiar make, who stand on their hind legs and ask impertinent questions."

"What do you mean?" asked the young man, reddening. "Is that intended as a personal remark?"

"Draw your own inferences," answered Jemmy, knocking the ashes out of his pipe.

The young man was so offended that he demanded satisfaction for the insult. The company tried hard to pacify him, but in vain. Jemmy then whispered in Lord Wharncliffe's ear, and the latter immediately rose from the table, and said, "Now, gentlemen, Mr. Hirst is quite willing to give Mr. Sadler that satisfaction he desires. He has requested my services as second. I have granted his wish. As soon as Mr. Sadler can arrange with any gentleman to act as his second, I shall be happy to arrange preliminaries with him."

Mr. Sadler having chosen a second, the belligerents were desired to leave the room for a few moments until arrangements had been made for the duel.

As they left the room Lord Wharncliffe whispered in the[Pg 199] ear of one of the party, "Follow Mr. Sadler into the other room, and take a bottle of wine with you; get him to drink as much as possible, and we will manage to make the affair end in fun."

The gentleman did as desired. Then Lord Wharncliffe and Jemmy, slipping in by another door, proceeded to dress up a dummy that was in a closet hard by in Jemmy's clothes.

Mr. Sadler was then told that all was ready, and he returned into the room rather the worse for the liquor he had drunk.

The pistol was put into his hand, and he was stationed opposite the dummy, which with outstretched arm pointed a pistol at him. The signal was given, and Mr. Sadler fired; then Jemmy, who was secreted in a closet hard by, pulled a string, and the dummy fell with a heavy thud upon the floor.

Mr. Sadler, who thought he had killed his antagonist, was sobered instantly, and was filled with remorse and fear. He rushed to the dead man and then towards the door, then back to the corpse to see if life were quite extinct. Then only, to his great relief, he found that the supposed dead man was made of wood. The company burst into a roar of laughter, and when he had sufficiently recovered from his bewilderment he joined heartily in the mirth raised at his own expense. Jemmy, emerging from his place of concealment, apologised for the offence he had given, and both shook hands. The carouse was renewed with fresh vigour, and the sun had risen an hour before the party broke up, and its members unsteadily wended their way homewards.

Jemmy had bought a litter of pigs, and entertained the idea of teaching them to act as setters in his shooting expeditions, and therefore spent a considerable time every day in training them. There were only two that he could[Pg 200] make anything of. But he never could induce them to desist from grunting. It was impossible to make them control their emotions sufficiently to keep quiet, and this inveterate habit of course spoiled them as setters.

When the litter was about six months old, one of the little pigs discovered his potato garden, and that by putting its snout under the lowest bar of the gate it could lift the gate so that the latch was disengaged from the catch, and the gate swung open; by this means the pig was able to get to the roots. Hirst saw the pig do this several times, and he determined to stop the little game. He therefore ground the blade of a scythe, and fixed it, with the sharp edge downwards, to the lower bar.

Shortly after, Jemmy saw the pig go to the gate, but in lifting it off the hasp the scythe-blade cut the end of the Snout off. Jemmy burst out laughing, and called his old housekeeper to see the fun; but old Sarah was more compassionate than her master, and begged him to kill the pig and put it out of its pain.

The carriage did not altogether satisfy Jemmy; he therefore enlarged it to double its former size. He made it so that, when necessary, he could have a bed in it; and then he bought four Andalusian mules to draw it, and with them he drove to Pontefract and Doncaster races, which he attended every year, and created no small sensation along the roads and on the course. Bear and bull baiting were favourite pastimes with him, as was also cock-fighting. He kept two bulls and a bear for this purpose. He used to call the bear Nicholas. It was a large savage animal, and was always kept muzzled at home.

One morning, after it had been baited and had destroyed four dogs, he took it something to eat, but it would not touch the meat. "Ah! thou'rt sulky; then I mun gi'e thee a taste o' t' whip." So saying, he struck the bear[Pg 201] over the muzzle with a hunting-whip he carried in his hand.

He had no sooner done so than the bear sprang upon him, seized him, and began to hug him. Jemmy roared for help, and a favourite dog rushed to his assistance and seized Bruin by the ear. The bear let go Jemmy to defend itself against the dog, and Jemmy, who had the breath nearly squeezed out of him, managed to crawl beyond the reach of the beast. The dog seeing his master safe, laid himself down by him, facing the bear, to guard him from further attacks. Sarah found her master half-an-hour after on the ground, unable to rise, and in great pain. She raised him, assisted him to the house, and put him to bed. He was confined for three weeks by the injuries he had received.

A few weeks after his recovery he attended Pontefract races in his carriage, drawn by four splendid mules, and no one on the course could keep up with him when he put the mules to their speed. Sir John Ramsden was in a carriage drawn by two fine bays, of which he was not a little proud, and he challenged Jemmy to a trial of speed round the course. Off they started, Sir John taking the lead for a short time, but Jemmy's mules, with their light carriage, soon overtook Sir John's bays, and came in a hundred yards before them. It was the most popular race run that year on the Pontefract course.

He also constructed for himself a pair of wings, and by an ingenious contrivance was able to spread the feathers. But his attempt to fly from the mast-top of a boat in the Humber failed. He fell into the water, and was drawn out covered with mud, amidst the laughter of a crowd which had assembled to witness his flight.

Jemmy's eccentricities had reached the ears of King George III., and he expressed a desire to see him. Lord[Pg 202] Beaumont promised to do his best to persuade Hirst to

come to town, but at the same time he told the King that if Jemmy took it into his head to decline the invitation, no power on earth could move him.

Accordingly, Lord Beaumont wrote to Jemmy, stating his Majesty's wish to see him, and urging him to come as soon as possible. At the end of the week Lord Beaumont received the following reply:—

"My Lord,—I have received thy letter stating his Majesty's wish to see me. What does his Majesty wish to see me for? I'm nothing related to him, and I owe him nothing that I know of; so I can't conceive what he wants with me. I suspect thou hast been telling him what queer clothes I wear, and such like. Well, thou may tell his Majesty that I am very busy just now training an otter to fish; but I'll contrive to come in the course of a month or so, as I should like to see London."

Lord Beaumont showed Jemmy's letter to George III., who laughed when he read it, and said, "He seems to think more of seeing London than of the honour of introduction to royalty."

Jemmy spent a month in getting ready for his journey to London; he had an entirely new suit made—a new lambskin hat of the old dimensions, an otter-skin coat lined with red flannel and turned up with scarlet cloth, a waistcoat of the skins of drakes' necks, list breeches, red and white striped stockings, and shoes with large silver buckles on them. His carriage was repainted in the most lively colours; and when all was ready he adjured Sarah to look well after his favourites during his absence, and then drove off at a slashing pace, drawn by his four Andalusians.

He created a sensation in every town and village he[Pg 203] passed through. People turned out of their shops and houses to see him.

He put up at Doncaster at the King's Head Inn. The hostler there exhibited Jemmy's carriage and mules at a penny charge for admission, and realised something handsome thereby. The landlord also reaped a good harvest, for the inn was crowded as long as Jemmy stayed there.

Jemmy reached London in three days. Lord Beaumont's butler had been sent some time before to Tottenham, with orders to wait there till Mr. Hirst made his appearance and then to conduct him to his Lordship's town residence.

On Jemmy arriving at Tottenham, the butler informed him of his lordship's orders, and then rode off before him to show the way. The news spread through London, and the streets were crowded, so that the carriage could hardly make its way through the numbers of people whom the report of the arrival of an eccentric Yorkshireman on a

visit to the King had drawn together. Jemmy, who was immensely conceited, was greatly delighted with this ovation. On reaching Lord Beaumont's house he was welcomed by his Lordship with great cordiality; and after lunch was driven out in Lord Beaumont's carriage to see the sights of London. The King was informed of Jemmy's arrival, and his Majesty expressed his wish that Jemmy should be presented to him on the morrow. Lord Beaumont vainly endeavoured to press on the strange fellow the obligations of the Court ceremonial. "D—— your forms and ceremonies!" said he, impatiently. "If the King don't like my ways, he must let it alone. I did not seek his acquaintance—he must take me as I am. I am a plain Yorkshireman, and if the King asks me a question in a plain manner, I shall answer him in a plain way, so that he or anybody else may understand. I can do no more."

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Lord Beaumont saw it was in vain to press him further in the matter, and therefore left him to follow his own course.

On the following morning, Jemmy set out in his wickerwork carriage, in all the glory of drakes' necks, lambs' wool, and otter skins turned up with scarlet, to visit the King. But if the streets were crowded the day before, on this occasion they were crammed, for the news had spread that Jemmy was going in state to Court.

Lord Beaumont and a couple of Horse Guards accompanied the carriage, and with difficulty made a passage for Jemmy; and all along the streets the windows were filled with heads.

When Jemmy alighted he was conducted by Lord Beaumont into an ante-chamber, to await the King's pleasure. The Duke of Devonshire was also waiting there for an audience with His Majesty, and on seeing this extraordinary fellow enter, he burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter, and exclaimed, "'Pon my honour! what a scarecrow. Why, Beaumont, where did you pick up that ridiculous object? Why have you brought such a merry-andrew here?" Jemmy listened patiently for a moment only to the Duke's exclamations and laughter, and then seizing a tumbler of water that stood on the sideboard, he dashed it in the Duke's face, exclaiming that the poor man was in hysterics: he ran to the Duke, loosed his cravat, pulled his nose, and shook him, pretending that he was using his best endeavours to bring him round from his fit.

At that moment a messenger came to announce that his Majesty wished to see Lord Beaumont and Mr. Hirst; so Jemmy was ushered into the royal presence. But instead of kneeling and kissing the hand that was extended to him in silence, he caught it and gave it a hearty shake, saying,[Pg 205] "Eh! I'm glad to see thee such a plain owd chap.

If thou ever comes to Rawcliffe, step in and give me a visit. I can give thee some rare good wine, or a sup of brandy and water at ony time."

The court was convulsed with laughter, and King George III. could hardly contain himself. However, he did not laugh out openly, but with courtesy maintained his gravity, and asked Jemmy how he liked London. "I like it weel enow," answered the oddity; "but I hadn't ony idea afore yesterday and to-day there were sae mony fools in it."

"Indeed!" said the King; "you pay us a very poor compliment, Mr. Hirst. I did not know that we were so badly off for wisdom in London. Perhaps that is an article in such demand in Yorkshire that there is none to spare for cockneys."

"Why, I'll thee how it were," said Jemmy. "When I come into t' town yesterday, and to thy house to-day, the streets were full o' crowds of folks gathered as thick as owt to see me, just a cause I happ'd to be dressed different frae other folk; and as I were waiting out yonder i' t' fore-chamber, there were one o' thy sarvants burst out laughing at me; but I reckon I spoiled his ruffled shirt for him and punished his impertinence."

The King asked an explanation of Lord Beaumont, and when he had heard what Jemmy had done to the Duke of Devonshire, the King laughed heartily.

"Did you think to find London streets paved with gold?" asked the King.

"Mebbe I did," answered Jemmy; "but I've found out I was mista'en. It's nowt but a mucky place, after all."

"A Yorkshire bite," said his Majesty.

"Aye," answered Jemmy, "but I'm no a bite for thee."

After some further conversation the King and his[Pg 206] attendants descended to look at Jemmy's carriage, and he showed the clock for marking the distance he travelled; the King was interested with this, and praised it as an ingenious contrivance. Jemmy then showed him the place he had made for the reception of his wine when he travelled, but which was then empty. His Majesty immediately ordered it to be filled with bottles from the royal cellar.

As Jemmy was taking leave of the King he heard a young nobleman say to another, "What an old fool that is to wear such a hat; it is three times as large as is necessary."

Jemmy turned sharply upon him and said: "I'll tell thee what, young chap, folks don't always have things aboot 'em that's necessary, or his Majesty could dispense varry weel wi' thee."

Lord Beaumont gave an entertainment at which Jemmy was present, and danced with a niece of his host. He danced very well, and was very popular; all the evening he was surrounded by a knot of young ladies and gentlemen who did their best to draw him out. But it was dangerous game, for those who attempted to play jokes on him generally got the worst of it. A young man present asked Jemmy to procure him a suit of clothes like his own, as he wanted them to attend a masquerade in. Jemmy asked in what character he wished to appear.

"Oh, as a clown, of course," was the answer.

"Nay, then," said Jemmy, "thou'st nowt to do but go just as thou art; nobbudy'll mistake thee for owt else."

"You have got your answer," said Lord Beaumont's niece, laughing; "I hope you are satisfied with it."

During his stay in London, Jemmy visited the Court of Chancery, and whilst Lord Beaumont was talking to a friend, a barrister in wig and gown passing by stopped, and staring at Jemmy, said, "Holloa, my man, what lunatic asylum have you escaped from, eh?"

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"Bless me!" exclaimed Jemmy, catching Lord Beaumont's arm; "sithere, yonder's an owd woman i' her nightdress that's tummled out o' bed into an ink-pot, and is crawling aboot. Let's get a mop and clean her."

After spending a week in the metropolis, he returned home much delighted with his visit, which furnished him with topics of conversation for a long time.

Sarah, his old housekeeper, falling ill, and being unable to work, Jemmy engaged the services of a young woman from Snaith to wait upon him, and she so accommodated herself to Jemmy's whims, that she soon became a great favourite with him. He would not, however, allow followers about the house; and as Mary had a sweetheart, the meetings between them had to be carried on surreptitiously.

However, one day whilst Jemmy was hunting, his bull tripped in jumping a fence, and fell, with Jemmy's leg under him, which was broken with compound fracture.

This invalided him for some while. He had a block-tackle fixed to a hook in the ceiling of the room, and a sling made for his leg to rest in, fastened to the lower end, and whenever he wished to alter the position of his leg, he hoisted it up or let it down with the tackle.

During his illness the restraint of his observant eye was off Mary, and the sweetheart had opportunities of visiting her. One night, when Jemmy was somewhat recovered, he was sitting in the corner of his garden enjoying a pipe of tobacco, when he saw a man jump over the wall into the garden and make his way to the kitchen window, then rap with his fingers against the glass. Mary came out to him, and they spent some time in conversation together, and when they parted he promised to return and see her the following night.

Jemmy heard every word that had been said, and he sat chuckling to himself, and muttered, "So thou'lt come again[Pg 208] to-morrow night, wilt thou? I'll learn thee to come poaching on my preserves."

Next morning, very early, Jemmy rose and dug a hole, four or five feet deep and six or seven feet long, just under that part of the garden wall where the sweetheart had clambered over the night before, and covered it all over with thin laths and brown paper, and then sprinkled mould over it, so that it had all the appearance of solid earth. A small stream of water ran through his garden into the river. Jemmy cut a small grip from it to the hole he had dug, and filled the hole with water; then choked the grip up and went into his house, laughing to himself at what would probably happen that night.

Stationing himself at nightfall in the garden where he could not be seen, he had not long to wait before he saw a head rising above the wall, then the body of a man, and in another moment the expectant lover had cleared the wall, and dropped on the covering of the pitfall. The laths and brown paper yielded to his weight, and he plunged up to his neck in water. The unfortunate young man screamed with fright, and Jemmy and Mary rushed to the spot.

"Holloa, my man! what's the matter? What art a' doing i' yond water-pit? Hast a' come to steal my apples and pears?"

Then turning to Mary, he asked if she knew him. The poor girl hesitated, but at last confessed that the young man was her sweetheart. "Well, then," said Jemmy, "help him out and get him into t' house, and let us change his clothes, for I reckon he's all over muck."

The young man was brought in dripping like a water-rat.

"Now, then," said Jemmy, "thou mun have a dry suit. Which wilt a' have—a pair o' my list breeches and rabbit-skin coat, or my old housekeeper's petticoats and gown?"

The young man ungallantly chose the former, thinking if [Pg 209] he must be made ridiculous before the eyes of Mary, he would be less so in male than female attire. Jemmy gave him a glass of hot brandy-and-water, kept him talking by the kitchen fire till his clothes were dried, and then dismissed him with permission to come to the house openly, and visit Mary as often as he liked. The young fellow became in time a great favourite with the old man, and when he married Mary, Jemmy gave him £50 to start life with.

Jemmy took it into his head to make himself a coffin, for he said he was getting old, and did not know how soon he might require one, and therefore it was best to be ready. It took him a month to construct it. It had folding-doors instead of a lid, and two panes of glass in each door; and he fitted the inside with shelves for a cupboard, saying that he might as well turn it to some use whilst he was alive, and then fixed it upright in the corner of his sitting-room. Twelve months after, he had a second coffin made on the same model, but better, and with some improvements, by a joiner at Snaith, which cost him £12. "He always wished people to believe that he made it himself; but this was not the case, for the person that made it declared to us that Jemmy enjoined him not to divulge who had made it during his lifetime." [14] Inside the coffin he placed a handle connected with a bell outside, so that, as he said, if he wanted anything when in his grave—shaving-water, sherry, or his boots—he would ring the bell for his servant to bring them to him.

He bought a sloop, which he called "The Bull," and made a voyage in her once as far as Boston; but he was so sick during the passage that he could never after be [Pg 210] persuaded to set foot on her again. "Nay, nay," said he, "a yard of dry land is worth a mile of water."

Otter-hunting on the marshes between Rawcliffe and Goole was one of his favourite pastimes. He kept a small pack of otter-hounds for the purpose.

One day, when out with three dogs, near where Tunbridge House now stands, the dogs started an otter and gave him chase. He made for a drain, and there being plenty of water in it, he dived several times. The dogs followed him in the water, and Jemmy ran along the edge waiting for him. When the otter came out close to him, Jemmy struck at him, but missed his aim and fell, owing to the mud being slippery. The otter immediately seized him by the leg, and succeeded in dragging him into the water before the hounds could come to his assistance. A favourite dog, named Sancho, dived, and seizing the otter by the throat, forced it to release Jemmy's leg, and he reached the bank greatly shaken and exhausted. He fortunately wore that day a thick pair of leather boots, which prevented the teeth of the otter from cutting his flesh. The

other dogs had dived to the assistance of Sancho, and they brought the otter to the bank, where Jemmy clubbed it. It was the largest otter that he had ever caught, and he had the skin tanned. He kept it for two or three years, and then made a present of it to a hair-dresser who used to attend and shave him.

As he was returning one night about eight o'clock from Howden, where he had been to the bank to draw some money, he was attacked by a couple of footpads, who probably knew where he had been. One seized the bridle of his bull, and the other took hold of Jemmy's arm and demanded his money. Jemmy suddenly drew a pistol from his pocket and fired it—according to his own account—full in the man's face, then struck spurs into the bull and [Pg 211] galloped home. After getting assistance, he returned to the place where he had been stopped, but could find no trace of the persons who had attempted to rob him.

With the assistance of the captain of his sloop, Jemmy rigged some sails to his carriage, and after a few trials of the new contrivance in the lanes about Rawcliffe, he set off one day to Pontefract with all sail set. Having a fair wind he went at a dashing speed. When he reached the town every one turned out to see the wonderful ship that sailed on dry land.

But when Jemmy reached the first cross-street a puff of wind caught him sideways, upset the carriage, and flung Jemmy through the window of a draper's shop, smashing several panes.

The crowd that followed speedily righted the carriage and extricated Jemmy, who paid for the damage he had done, and led the way to the nearest tavern, where he treated the whole crowd with ale. This bounty naturally elicited great enthusiasm, which exhibited itself in prolonged cheers, to Jemmy's great delight, for he was one of the most conceited of men.

The authorities having intimated to him that he would not be allowed to sail back through the streets, the crowd yoked themselves to the carriage, and drew him triumphantly out of the town, and would have dragged him half way to Rawcliffe had not a favourable wind sprung up, when Jemmy spread his sails again, and was blown out of sight of the crowd with expedition. He reached home without any further mishap.

A friend writes to me:—"I remember Jemmy Hirst well coming to Doncaster races in his wretched turn-out, and with a bag of nuts, which he always brought with him for a scramble. He was not a very reputable individual, and must have been, I fancy, half-witted. He was wont to [Pg 212] issue flash notes on the 'Bank of Rawcliffe,' meaning

the river bank, for five farthings; and as these bore a great resemblance to the notes issued by a banking firm in Doncaster, he was able to deceive many people with them."

Among other accomplishments, Jemmy played the fiddle tolerably well. In winter he would collect all the boys and girls of Rawcliffe at his house in the evenings, once a week at least, when he would play the fiddle for them to dance to. At nine o'clock punctually he rang a bell and dismissed them. He never would allow them to remain a minute longer. They were sent away with buns, simnel-cake, or apples.

On another evening of the week he would have all the old women to tea, but he would allow no men in to have tea with him on these occasions. They were invited to come in later, and then dancing and singing began, which continued till nine, when he would dismiss them with a glass of rum or gin each.

On the evenings that he wished the children to come he blew a horn thrice at his door, and six blasts of the horn assembled the old people.

In his old age, Jemmy was frequently laid up with gout, when he amused himself with the composition of doggerel verses, mostly about himself. They were contemptible productions, but his vanity made him suppose that he was a poet. He got these rhymes printed, and sold them for a penny to his numerous visitors, and as sometimes on a Sunday he had three or four hundred people to see him, he realised a good sum—enough to keep him for the week—from this source.

But besides selling his verses, Jemmy used to make money by showing his coffin to visitors. He would induce them to enter the largest one, which was contrived to close upon any one inside, and hold him fast as a prisoner till released [Pg 213] from the outside. No one once within was suffered to escape without payment—men were charged a penny, women one of their garters. In this way Jemmy accumulated hundreds of garters, which he tied to his chair. They were of all sorts, from a piece of silk down to a bit of whip-cord. He used to say that he could always tell a woman's character by her garter.

His old housekeeper, Sarah, after a tedious illness, died, and then Jemmy would not suffer any one to attend him except the wife of the captain of his sloop, "The Bull," who used to live in the house with him when her husband was at sea. All his pets were sold off, except a fox which he called Charley, that was chained in the back-yard; and his pointer pigs were converted into bacon and eaten.

During the last few years of his life Jemmy was confined a great deal within doors, and the neighbouring gentry used very often to visit him for the sake of old times; but he

never would tolerate a visit from a clergyman. He had no religion whatever, and very little morality either. No one ever saw him inside a church or chapel, or got him to enter on religious conversation.

He was visited one day when he was visibly declining by Lord and Lady Wharncliffe; and the latter, on his swearing at the twinges of his gout, gently reproved him, pained to see how utterly indifferent he seemed to the future. "Mr. Hirst," said her Ladyship, "you should not swear; you really ought to make some preparation for death."

"Haven't I, my lady?" asked Jemmy. "I've had my coffin made these ten years."

It was in vain that Lady Wharncliffe endeavoured to get him into a serious turn; he turned off all her remarks with a bantering reply.

Jemmy was subject to temporary fits of insanity, in one of which he stripped himself stark naked and ran all round [Pg 214] Rawcliffe. Fortunately it was night, so that there were not many people abroad; but he nearly frightened one young fellow out of his wits as he came bounding upon him in the moonlight, round a corner. The cries of this man brought people to his assistance, and they ran after Jemmy and caught him as he was stepping into a boat with the purpose of ferrying himself across the river, his mind in this disordered condition returning to the event of his youth, when he rowed across to meet his poor Mary. They brought him, not without trouble, to his house, and put him to bed. What made it the more remarkable was, that he had been confined to his bed all day with gout, and could scarcely move a limb.

Jemmy died on October 29th, 1829, at the age of ninety-one. By his will he left £12 to be given to twelve old maids for carrying him to his grave, £5 for a bagpiper from Aberdeen to play before him alternately with a fiddler to whom he also bequeathed £5, as he was borne to the churchyard.

The executors had some trouble in carrying out his wishes. The rector of Rawcliffe protested against the music being played on the occasion; but eventually a compromise was effected, and the piper was alone allowed to head the funeral to church, playing sacred music. Sacred music on a Scottish bagpipe!

Long before the funeral started for the church hundreds of spectators had collected in front of the house. Everything being in readiness, the procession moved off—the neighbouring gentry and farmers on horseback, followed by the piper; next came the coffin, carried by six of the old maids and two men, the other six of the old maids bearing the pall. The piper played a psalm tune; but as soon as ever the funeral was over, the fiddler met the piper at the church gates, and they struck up the tune of

"Owre[Pg 215] the hills and far awa'," followed by the crowd to Jemmy's late residence, where they received their money and were dismissed.

FOOTNOTES:

[13] "The Life and Adventures of J. Hirst." Hepworth, Knottingly (n.d.) Another Life published at Pontefract.

[14] "Life and Adventures of James Hirst," Knottingley: Hepworth (n.d.)

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THE TRAGEDY OF BENINGBROUGH HALL.

In 1670, Beningbrough Hall, a fine Elizabethan red-brick mansion, stood in a park near the junction of the Ouse and Nidd. The old house has been pulled down, and replaced by an edifice neat and commodious, as the guide-books would say, and we need say no more.

In 1670 Beningbrough Hall belonged to a Roman Catholic family of the name of Earle. Mr. Earle, the proprietor, was in somewhat embarrassed circumstances, and was mixed up with some of the plots then rife. He was much away from the Hall—generally in London; but the house was full of servants, under the control of a steward, Philip Laurie, and a housekeeper, named Marian—a comely woman, just passing into middle age.

One day, when Laurie was absent, two gentlemen arrived at the Hall, cloaked, with their hats drawn over their eyes, and were admitted by Marian. One of these was Mr. Earle himself, anxious to escape recognition. Who the other was did not transpire. After some conversation with the housekeeper, Marian summoned the servants into the hall, and ordered them immediately to collect and pack the plate and pictures—everything that was of value and readily movable. Mr. Earle did not show himself—he remained in the housekeeper's room; but his companion appeared, and announced that he and Marian were acting under the authority of Mr. Earle, and he read them a letter from that gentleman requiring the removal of his valuable property as the housekeeper should direct.

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The servants were much surprised; but as it was known that their master was in difficulties, and as some suspicion seems to have entered their heads that he was engaged in a plot, their wonder died away; they diligently discharged their duty, and

everything that was required was speedily collected and stowed away in leather bags or wooden boxes in the hall. The housekeeper then dismissed the servants, and she and the stranger conveyed the articles packed up into her room.

Where were they next to be conveyed to, so as to be readily removed? Mr. Earle expected a warrant for his arrest on the charge of high treason, and the confiscation of all his property. He was therefore desirous to remove all he could in time to escape to France.

To avoid observation, it was advisable that his valuables should be secreted somewhere near, but not in the house. Marian then, with some hesitation, told the master that an attachment subsisted between her and the gamekeeper, a man named Martin Giles; that she could rely on his not divulging the secret, and trust him with the custody of the plate, &c., till it suited the convenience of Mr. Earle to take them away. She was accordingly despatched to the gamekeeper's cottage, and he was brought to the Hall, and as much of the secret confided to him as could not well be retained. He promised most frankly to do what was desired of him, and as he was a Roman Catholic, Mr. Earle felt satisfied that he could trust him not to betray a master who professed the same faith.

When Philip Laurie returned he found to his surprise that the house had been stripped of everything precious. He was extremely incensed, and in an angry interview with Marian charged her with having told tales of him to her master, and so of having lost him the confidence of Mr. Earle. She did not deny that she mistrusted his honesty,[Pg 218] unhappily recalled a circumstance he thought she knew nothing of, and took occasion to give him "a bit of her mind"; but she protested that she had not spoken on the subject to her master.

Philip Laurie asked where the property was removed to. She refused to tell him. He swore he would know. He did not trust her story. The house had been plundered; the opportunity had been taken when he was absent, and Marian was privy to a robbery.

After violent words on both sides they parted. As he left the room the steward turned, fixing his eyes, blazing with deadly hate, upon the housekeeper, and muttered a few inarticulate words.

It was not long before Laurie suspected or discovered where the valuables were secreted.

Chance had thrown in his way a labourer of bad character named William Vasey, a poacher and a reputed thief. Laurie walked through the park to the cottage of this

miscreant, and it was resolved between them that the housekeeper should be murdered, and then that the lodge of the gamekeeper should be robbed.

In the evening Marian was taking her accustomed walk along a beech avenue beside the Ouse. It was evening, and the red evening sky was reflected in the water, which looked like a streak of blood. The rooks were cawing and wheeling about the tree-tops, settling for the night.

A white owl that lived in the ivy that covered the north side of the house floated, ghostlike, through the gathering darkness. Marian in her white cap walked quietly in the avenue. She was a Roman Catholic, and was reciting her beads. Laurie knew that she was accustomed every evening to retire into this walk to say her rosary.

At one point a beech-tree had been blown over, and had left a gap to the west, through which the faint reflection of [Pg 219] the evening sky fell, leaving the shadows beyond it in deeper gloom. For some unaccountable reason, as Marian came to this gap, instead of passing it and continuing her walk, she stood still, and then turned. A second time she walked the avenue and came to this gap. A mysterious repugnance to advance caused her to hesitate and halt.

Thinking that this was an unreasonable feeling, she walked on a couple of steps, and then stood still, turned round, and looked at the spot where the sun had gone down.

At that moment Vasey sprang from behind a tree, and thrust Marian over the brink. With a shriek she sank.

Next morning the body was found, a part of the rosary clenched in her hand, and the other portion was discovered caught in the stump of the broken beech. Prints of a man's boots in the mud showed that Marian had not died by accidentally falling into the water.

Suspicion of the guilt of the murder fell upon Martin Giles, the gamekeeper. Laurie was in the Hall the whole time, and therefore no one supposed him implicated in the commission of the crime. The gamekeeper had behaved mysteriously for the last day or two. He had avoided his usual friends; he had been seen privately conversing with the housekeeper. Only Marian and he knew that their master had been in the house; his presence had been concealed from the other servants, who only saw his companion. The removal of the valuables to the house of Giles had been accomplished by the two gentlemen with the assistance of the gamekeeper alone. After the valuables had been taken away, the two gentlemen in disguise had ridden off.

The servants, who had noticed that there was some mystery to which Giles and Marian were privy, thought that the keeper had killed the poor woman out of dread lest[Pg 220] she should prove an untrustworthy depositary of the secret, whatever it was. It was known also that the lovers had been accustomed to meet in the beech avenue, the place where the murder had been committed.

Whilst the tide of popular indignation ran strong against the unfortunate gamekeeper, Laurie and Vasey resolved on committing the robbery—before also Mr. Earle and his companion had found means to remove the property entrusted to his custody.

At midnight Vasey and the steward went to the gamekeeper's cottage. Laurie was to remain outside, and the other ruffian to enter and rob the house. They thought that Martin Giles was sure to be asleep; but they were mistaken. The man had been sincerely attached to poor Marian, and lay tossing in bed, wondering who could have murdered her, and vainly racking his brain to discover some clue which could guide him to a solution of the mystery. As he thus lay, he thought he heard a slight sound down-stairs. But the wind was blowing, and the trees roaring in the blast; the little diamond panes in the latticed windows clattered, and the keeper thought nothing of it.

Presently, however, he heard the latch of his door gently raised, and in the darkness he just distinguished the figure of a man entering the room. He immediately jumped out of bed, but was felled to the ground. As he struggled to rise he was again struck down, and for the moment was stunned. But he recovered consciousness almost immediately. He had fallen upon a sheep net, which lay in a heap on the floor. He quietly gathered up the net in his hands, sprang to his feet, and flinging the net over the murderer, entangled his arms so that he could not extricate himself.

He wrenched the bludgeon out of his hand, and struck him over the head with it, so that he measured his length, insensible, on the floor.

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Had Martin only known that this ruffian had been the murderer of her who had been dearer to him than anyone else in the world, there is no doubt but the blow would have fallen heavier, and would have spared the hangman his trouble.

Giles then threw open his window and fired off his gun, to alarm the inmates of the Hall.

In a few minutes the servants made their appearance, amongst them Philip Laurie, with a ghastly face. A sign passed between him and Vasey, and he recovered some of

his composure. The captured ruffian had assured him he would not betray his accomplice.

Vasey was taken into custody, and on the following day was removed to York Castle, where he was committed for burglary with intent to commit murder.

When Mr. and Mrs. Earle heard of what had taken place, the latter came with the utmost speed into Yorkshire. Mr. Earle, fearing arrest for treasonable practices, did not venture to do so.

Laurie's conduct had already excited suspicion. He had not been seen issuing from the Hall on the night of the attempted robbery with the other servants, and was found on the spot fully dressed, and that not in his usual costume, but one which looked as if intended for a disguise.

Mrs. Earle sent for him to her boudoir, and dismissed him from her service. As yet there was no charge sufficiently established against him to warrant her committing him to custody; but, she added, Vasey had declared his full intention to confess before his execution.

Laurie, a desperate man, flung himself on his knees, and implored his mistress not to send him away; or if, as he heard, she was about to escape with Mr. Earle to France, would she allow him to accompany them?

She indignantly thrust the wretch from her. He started[Pg 222] to his feet, drew a pistol from his coat-pocket, and presented it at her head. She struck up his hand, and the contents of the pistol shivered the glasses of a chandelier that hung in the room. He rushed out of the room, ran to his own apartment, put another pistol to his forehead, and blew his brains out.

Vasey now confessed everything, and was executed at the Tyburn, outside Micklegate Bar, at York, on August 18th, 1670.

It is said that at night a pale, female figure is seen to steal along the bank of the Ouse, where the avenue stood in olden time, and to disappear in the churchyard of Newton, which adjoins the park, where Marian was buried.

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A YORKSHIRE BUTCHER.

The subject of this memoir has been dead but a few years, and therefore I do not give his name, lest it should cause annoyance to his relatives. He was a tall, red-faced, jovial man, with a merry twinkle in his small eyes; a man who could tell a good story with incomparable drollery, and withal was the gentlest, kindest-hearted man, who would never wound the most sensitive feelings by ridicule. He had a splendid bass voice, and sang in the church choir; his knowledge of music was not inconsiderable, and for some time he was choir-master, and performed a feat few other men have been able to accomplish—he was able to keep the discordant elements of a choir in harmony. His inimitable tact, unvarying good nature, and readiness to humour the most self-consequential of the performers, made him vastly popular with them, and prevented or healed those jars which are proverbial among professed votaries of harmony.

This worthy butcher thus narrated his courtship:—

"It's a queer thing, sir, hoo things turns oot sometimes. Noo it war a queer thing hoo I chanced to get wed. I war at Leeds once, and I'd na mair thowts aboot marrying na mair 'an nowt; and I war just going doon t' street, tha knaws, sir, when I met wi' my wife—that's her 'at's my wife noo, tha knaws. I'd kenned her afore, a piece back; soa shoo comes oop to me, an' shoo ses, 'Why, James, lad, is that thee?'—'Aye,' I ses, 'it is awever.'—'Weel, James,' ses she, 'what's ta doing wi' thysen noo?'—'Why,' I ses, 'I's joost gotten me a new hoose.' Soa wi' that she ses, [Pg 224] 'Then I lay, James, if tha's getting a new hoose, tha'll be wanting a hoosekeeper.' Soa I ses to 'er, ses I, 'Tha ma' coom and be t' wife if ta likes; tha mawn't be t' hoosekeeper, tha knaws, but tha ma' coom and be t' wife.' And soa shoo ses, 'I ain't partikler. I don't mind if I do.' So we never had na mair to do aboot t' job."

I asked him if he ever had found occasion to regret such an expeditious way of settling the matter. He shook his head and said, "Noa, sir, niver. Shoo's made a rare good wife. But shoo's her mawgrums a' times. But what women ain't got 'em? They've all on 'em maggots i' their heads or tempers. Tha sees, sir, when a bone were took out o' t' side o' Adam, to mak a wife for 'm, 't were hot weather, an' a blue-bottle settled on t' rib. When shoo's i' her tantrums ses I to her, 'Ma dear,' ses I, 'I wish thy great-great-grand ancestress hed chanced ta be made i' winter.'"

When he was married he took his wife a trip to Bolton, and spent a week on his honeymoon tour. As soon as he was returned home, the first thing he did was to put his wife into the scales and weigh her. Then the butcher took out his account-book, and divided the expenses of the marriage and wedding-tour by the weight of the wife.

"Eh! lass!" said he, "thou'st cost me fourteen pence ha'penny a pound. Thou'st the dearest piece o' meat that iver I bought."

He had a barometer. The glass stood at set-fair, and for a whole week the rain had been pouring down. On the eighth day the glass was still telling the same tale, and the rain was still falling. Our friend lost his patience, and holding the barometer up to the window he said, "Sithere, lass! thou'st been telling lees. Dost thou see how it's pouring? I'll teach thee to tell lees again!" And he smashed the glass.

He was laid up with gout. The doctor had tried all sorts of medicines, but nothing seemed to profit him.[Pg 225] At last the medical man said, "Try smoking. I daresay smoking would do you a deal of good."

"Ah," said the wife, "it's possible it might. But thou seest, doctor, chimleys is made so narrow nowadays that one cannot hang un up i' t' reek (smoke) as one did wi' one's bacon i' bygone days."

His wife was dying. She was long ill, and during her sickness was always exclaiming, "Eh! I'm boun' to dee. It win't be long afore I dee. I shan't be long here"—and the like. Our jolly butcher heard these exclamations day after day, and said nothing. At last he got a little impatient over them, and said one day, as she was exclaiming as usual, "O dear! I'm goin' to dee!"—"Why, lass, thou'st said that ower and ower again a mony times. Why doan't thou set a time, and stick to it?"

On another occasion his wife slightly varied the tune to "Eh! the poor bairns! What will become o' t' bairns when I dee? Who will mind t' bairns when their mother is dead?"

"Never thee trouble thy head about that," said her husband; "go on wi' thy deen! I'll mind t' bairns."

He was going to York with his son, a boy of eighteen. He took a ticket for himself and a half-one for the boy. When the train drew near to York, the ticket-collector came round, and exclaimed at this half-ticket, "Where's the child?"

"Here," said the butcher, pointing to the tall, awkward youth.

"What do you mean?" asked the indignant ticket-collector. "He ain't a child; he's a young man!"

"Ah! so he is, now," answered the butcher; "but that's thy fault, not mine. I know when we got in at Wakefield he were nobbut a bairn; but tha'st been going so confounded slow that he's growed sin' we started!"

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Many years ago, on a rare occasion, James took a glass too much. It was the last time such a misfortune took place with him. His clergyman was obliged to speak to him about it, and in doing so said—"You know, James, beasts do not get drunk."

"There's a deal o' things belonging to all things," answered the worthy butcher, who never suffered himself to be cornered. "If a horse were o' one side o' a pond, and another on t' other side, and t' first horse ses to t' other, 'Jim, I looks towards ye!' and t' other ses to the first, 'Thank y' kindly, Tom; I catches your eye.' And the first horse ses again, 'Tha'll tak' another sup, lad, and drink ma health'; the second will be sewer to say, 'I will, and I'll drink to lots o' your healths.' Why, sir, them two horses will be nobbin to one another iver so long. Lor bless ye! them two horses win't part till they's as drunk as Christians."

James at one time was not well off. He had a brother whom we will call Tom, who had some money.

Now James happened to hear that his brother was very ill, and as they had not latterly been very good friends, he was afraid lest, if Tom died, he would not leave him his money.

So he immediately set off to his brother's house, and on his arrival found him ill in bed. He went up to the room in which his brother lay, and began—"Weel, Tommy, an' hoo art a'?"

"Oah, James!" said Tom, "I'se vara bad. I thinks I's boun' to dee."

"Eh!" said James, "well, mebbe tha'lt outlive me, Tommy; I nobbut feels vara middlin' mysen. I hain't felt weel for a long while, and I war just thinking, Tommy, o' sending to Mr. Smith, t' lawyer, to mak' me a bit o' a will, tha knaws. Hast a' made *thy* will, Tommy?"

"Noa," said Tom, "I hain't; but I was thinking wi'[Pg 227] thee, James, o' sending for Lawyer Smith. Noo, who wast a' thinking o' making thy heir, James?"

"Weel, tha knaws, Tommy," said James, "mebbe thou and me hain't lately been vara particklers; but I war thinking it ever owt ta be, 'Let bygones be bygones'; and soa I was thinking o' leaving my bit o' brass to thee. Noo, Tommy, hoo wast a' thinking o' leaving thy money?"

"Why," said Tommy, "as thou'st been sa good as leave thy money ta me, I think it wadn't be reet if I didn't do t' same by thee, and leave thee my brass."

"Weel," said James, "I think thou couldn't do better; and soa let's send for Mr. Smith to mak' our wills, and I think mebbe, Tommy, *thou'd better ha' thy will made fust.*"

So these two men sent for the lawyer to make their wills. Tommy's was made first, and a very few days after he died. His money then came to James, who in reality was not ill in the least, but had only pretended to be so.

One of James the butcher's sayings I well remember. He was addressing a young man who was courting a girl, and was very hot and eager in his pursuit of her.

"I'll gi'e thee a bit o' advice, Joa: Don't bother to shuttle a happple-tree to get t' fruit; tak' it easy; wait, and t' apples will fall into thy lap o' their selves. Don't go coursing over hedges and threw ditches after rabbits; wait a bit, and t' rabbits 'all come into thy springes without trouble. Don't take on running after t' lasses; take it easy, and thou'lt find, Joa, lad, that t' lasses will run after thee."

At one time James rented some land of a neighbouring gentleman of large fortune and estates who was well known for his hospitality. James was invited with other tenants to dine on Court day at the Hall, and dinner was served up in the best style. On his return home to his wife, he gave her an account of it "Eh! Phœbe, but it wad ha' capped[Pg 228] owt. There were beef and mutton, and chickens and game, and ivery thing one could think of. I's sewer I were fair an' bet wi' it all; but what bet ma moast o' all were 'at we'd ivery one on us a small loaf lapped up i' a clout."

Liqueurs were handed round after dinner. Our good friend took his little glass of the, to him, unknown tipple, and after drinking it off at one gulp, and considering a while, turned round to the waiter and said, "John, bring us some o' this 'ere i' a moog."

At a club dinner, a wedding breakfast, or a funeral lunch, James was overflowing with anecdotes. He was generally the hero of his stories; but I do not believe that they all in reality happened to himself. The stories often told against the principal actor in them, and therefore he may have thought it legitimate to appropriate to himself tales which made him appear in a ludicrous light.

I can remember only a few of these stories.

"It was one night in November last that I and my wife Phœbe was sitting tawking i' t' house. It were a dark night, as black as Warren's best. Now I mun tell thee that our Rachel Anne—that's our grown up daughter—were at that age when they mostly likes to ha' a sweetheart, Shoo'd gotten a young man. I don't like to name names, but as we're all friends here, I don't mind saying he were a downright blackguard. It were old Greenwood's son, tha knaws; t' lad as were locked up by t' police for boiling a cat.

Well, Rachel Anne were mad after him, and nother her mother nor I liked it. We were nicely put out, I promise you.

"To go on with my tale. Phœbe and I were sitting by t' fire, when all at once I ses to my old woman, 'Phœbe, lass, where's Rachel Anne? Shoo's not at home, I reckon.'

"'Nay, James, lad,' said she, 'shoo's at a confirmation class.'

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"'At a confirmation!' said I, and I whistled. 'I thowt confirmation was ower.'

"'Ah! I dunnow sure; but that's what shoo said.'

"'Is owd Greenwood's son, Jim, going to confirmation class too?'

"'I cannot tell,' shoo said.

"'No more can I,' said I; 'but I'd like to know?'

"'So should I,' said she.

"'Win't thee look out o' chamber window and see if there's a leet i' t' school?' said I. So my owd woman went upstairs and looked, and when shoo came down, 'No, there ain't,' said she.

"'I thowt not,' said I.

"'Well, we sat by t' fire some while, and then my owd lass went into back kitchen to get a bit o' supper ready. Shoo hadn't been there long afore shoo come back and said, 'James, lad!'

"'Ah!' says I; 'what's up?'

"'Why, this,' says she; 'there's summun i' t' back yard.'

"'How dost a' know?' says I.

"'Says she, 'I heard 'em taukin'; and there's a lanthorn there.'

"'There's impidence!' says I. 'Who is they?'

"'I think Rachel Anne is one,' says Phœbe.

"'And Jim Greenwood is t' other,' says I; 'and I'm glad on't.'

"'Why?' says Phœbe.

"'Lass,' says I, 'I'll pay yond chap out, I will. I'll go out by t' front door, and I'll come on him, and I'll let him know what I think of him, coming arter our Rachel Anne. And when I've gotten howd on him, I'll hollow. Then do thou run out o' t' back door, and I'll howd him tight, and thou can poise him behind as much as thou like. Since we've been man and wife these fourteen year,' says I,[Pg 230] 'we've taken our pleasure in common,' says I. 'We've been to Hollingworth Lake together,' says I. 'And we've been to Southport together,' says I. 'And wunce we've went together to t' exhibition i' Wakefield together. So,' says I, 'we'll ha' the kicking, and the shuttling, and the rumpling up o' yond lad o' Greenwood's together. O glory!' And then I run out o' t' front door as wick as a scoprill,[\[15\]](#) and came shirking round towards t' back door i' t' yard. Well, t' night were dark, but I could see there were some folks there, and I could see the glint o' a lanthorn, and t' leet from t' back kitchen window came on a bit o' gownd, and I know'd it belonged to Rachel Anne.

"'Drat him!' said I to mysen, 'what is lasses coming to next, when they brings their young men under the noses o' their parents wot can't abear them?'

"So I came sloping up along the wall till I was quite near. Will you believe it?—her young man, that's owd Greenwood's lad Jim, was sitting as easy as owt i' a chair.

"'Oh, you charmer!' says Rachel Anne. I heard her voice. I know'd it were she. 'You're near perfect noo!'

"'Oh lawk!' thinks I, 'there's no accounting for tastes.' Jim he ain't ower much o' a beauty, I promise thee. He's gotten a cast i' one o' his eyes, and when he washes his face he's gotten a black stock on; and when he don't, why, then he's all o' a muck, face and neck alike.

"'Can I get thee owt?' says Rachel Anne, as shameless as owt. 'Ah! tha wants a pair o' boots. I reckon father's gotten an owd pair he win't miss. I'll get them for thee.' Then sudden, as she was going away to t' back door, she turns and says, 'My! he ain't got no pipe. I mun get him one o' father's.'

"'Oh, ye abandoned profligate!' groaned I, 'robbing thy parents to bestow all on this owdacious waggabone!'[Pg 231] But I'll be even wi' thee! I'll let my fine gentleman know the looks o' my back-yard! I'll let un ha' a taste o' my baccy! I'll let un know the feel o' my boots!'

"'Father's breeches fit un rare!' said Rachel Anne.

"Well, now! if that warn't too much. I yelled—

"Ah! ye dirty waggabone! Thou stealing rascal! Thou cock-eyed raggamuffin!' And I wor upon him in no time. I caught un by t' neck and shook un furious. I wor nigh brussen wi' rage. He were fair down capped, and said nowt. But, as you'll see presently, he were gathering up his rage for a reglar outbust. He were nigh brussen too.

"'Well,' says I, 'wot is't a doing here? I knows! Thou'rt arter my Rachel Anne. Well. Tha'tt never marry my daughter if I can help it. I'll never own thee wi' thy ugly face for a son-in-law. I win't run the chance o' a cock-eye i' my grand-children. If my dowter will ha' thee, I'll disown her; I win't speak to her again.' Then I shook him. 'Take that,' says I, and I gave him a blow o' the fist on his nose, and I reckon I flattened it in. 'Dost a' like it?' says I. 'Take another taste—a little stimulant will do thee good.' Then I kicked un off t' chair, and dragged him up, and shook, and shook, and shook him till I were all of a muck wi' sweat. So I hollered to my Phœbe. 'Phœbe, lass! come and poise un i' t' rear. I'll hold un i' position.' Well, she came out, and she gave him a crack.

"'Now,' says I, 'I'd like to look i' thy ugly face and take stock o' t' damages. I've done thy beauty. Phœbe, lass! give me t' candle.' Shoo went to t' lanthorn, and browt out t' candle and gave it to me.

"Jim Greenwood hung all limp, like old clothes i' my hand, and never spoke. But I didn't know what fire and fury was in him then. He wor just one o' them chaps as[Pg 232] endures what you may say and do up to a certain point, but when that point is passed, then—Lor'!"

"I took t' candle from my owd woman—that's my wife, I mean, tha mun know—and I held it afore me. Lor-a-mussy, I were flayed! I let go hold, and let t' candle tumble on Jim—that's owd Greenwood's son, tha knows—and I stood shakin' i' all my limbs. I'd smashed his nose right in; I'd broken t' bridge and knocked it in, and there weren't nowt on it remaining. And his eyes—Lor'! I hadn't time to think, for I had passed t' point, and t' chap couldn't stan' no more. I'd let t' candle fall on him, and set him on fire. Folks don't over much like being set fire to—leastways owd Greenwood's son didn't; for he did blaze, and bang, and fizz, and snap, and crackle away! He reglar exploded, he did! I stood in a sort o' maze like—I were dazed. Phœbe screamed. And then came a great haw-haw from my boys, who were all there. I could see 'em now by t' leet o' t' burning sweetheart. 'Lor', father!' said Rachel Anne, as innocent as owt, '*What hast a' been doing to our Guy Fawkes?*'

"Well, sir, will you believe it?—it was nowt but a Guy Fawkes full o' straw and squibs and crackers 'at I'd involuntarily set on fire."

This story was told, scarcely above a breath, during a missionary meeting, whilst a colonial bishop was addressing us. James did not laugh himself—was as grave as was proper on the occasion; but his little eyes twinkled roguishly, and those who could hear the whispered tale with difficulty restrained their laughter.

"I think I can tell you summut as happened to my brother Tommy," said James, after we had sung "From Greenland's icy mountains," and were walking at a judicious distance from the colonial bishop. "Well, my brother Tom were a rare bird to drink. He'd been to t' Horse and [Pg 233] Jockey one day, and had supped enough beer for once, and when he came out about half after ten, he warn't ower clear as to t' direction he sud go. Howm'ever, he took t' loin (lane) all right. Presently there come some one along t' road. 'Now,' thowt he, 'I mun keep clear o' he, or he'll run hissel' again' me, and knock me down.' T' mooin were up, just settin', and castin' shadows; so he made a great roundabout to avoid lurching again' t' man as were comin' along; but seeing his shadow, ma brother mistook that for t' man, and thowt t' shadow had cast t' feller. So he tried to step ower t' chap and avoid t' shadow. As tha mun see, he came wi' a crack again t' chap.

"'Ye druffen rascal,' said he, giving ma brother a bang on t' lugs (ears) as made his head spin.

"'It's thy fault,' said Tom. 'What dost a' mean by having a standing-up shadow and solid too?'

"The chap gives him another crack and tumbles him down. When ma brother got up again he went on his road again, saying to hissel', 'I winna go blundering again' no more shadows to-night if I see anybody coming.' Just then he thowt he saw another chap; so to get out o' his way he turned into a field by a gate to let un pass. Now, ma brother had a little too much beer in his head; soa when he got into t' field he couldn't get out again. He rambled round and round, and t' mooin went down.

"'Weel,' ses he, 'I don't care; I'll sleep where I am.' And he ligs him down on t' ground. He hadn't been long asleep afore he wakened wi' cold. T' dewes o' neet came falling on him and wetted him, and his teeth were chattering; so then he opened his eyes. And what dost a' think he seed? Why, standing above him were a hawful form as black as a crow. His legs was crooked, his arms was spread, and Tom could see claws on his fingers. His face were like nowt earthly; and he had bristling hair, and [Pg 234] great horns like a coo. Tom could see t' glint o' his wicked een fixed on him.

"Weel, now, Tommas weren't that sort o' chap exactly as might flatter hissen angels 'ud come after him out o' heaven; so the thowt came on him it were t' owd chap come to fetch his soul to t' other place.

"Tom lay quite still. He thowt t' owd chap mebbe would let un lig a while if he shammed sleep. He wouldn't be so unmannerly as to wake un up for the purpose o' takin' him away. Tha knaws t' owd chap war' a gem'man once, tho' he's fallen a bit sin'. Yet what's born i' t' bone comes out i' t' flesh—leastwise so Tom thowt.

"Soa Tom lay quiet. But presently he thowt he felt t' owd chap's fingers feeling in his pocket for four and twopence he'd gotten aboot him somewhere. Soa Tom turned round sudden on him and ses, 'Tha mun tak ma soul if tha's boun' to do soa; but I'll trouble thee to let t' four and twopence aloan.'

"Ah! he war' a deep one war' t' owd chap. As sharp as owt, when Tom turned on un, he were standing up stiff and unconcerned, and looking t' other way.

"Nah, as Tom had spoken, 't warn't no use his pretending any more to be asleep. So he thowt, 'What am I to do next? Tha mun do more wi' traycle than tha can wi' brimstone. I'll soap un down a bit.'

"Then Tom opens his eyes and looks at un and ses, 'Owt fresh?' But he wouldn't answer and reveal the mysteries o' his shop.

"So Tom ses, ses he, 'I reckon tha'st coom a rare long way, and it's thirsty work walking, or flying, or travelling by train, or whichever way tha hast comed. And,' ses he, 'I tak it vara civil o' thee to come for me. There's ma owd woman grummles if shoo's to come for ma to t' Horse and Jockey, and that's half a mile from my home. And mebbe[[Pg 235](#)] tha's comed for me five thousand mile. It's vara civil. It's not like a north countryman that,' ses he. 'We are outspoken folk, and there ain't much civility among us, but hard rubs. But I won't be outdone by a south countryman i' civility. I daresay tha'rt dry. Tha'll stop a bit, and I'll fetch thee a sup o' home-brewed beer.'

"Soa Tom gets up on his feet, and away he goes as wick as a scoprell, and gets home, and dashes in at t' door. There were Sarah Anne, his wife, as red as a turkey-cock, and swollen fit to brussen wi' he getting home so late.

"But Tommy he out wi' it at once. 'Sarah Anne, lass! run and get a jug o' beer and a mug, and off wi' thee as fast as tha' can to t' owd chap—he's waiting for thee.' He thowt, tha knaws, to get t' owd chap to tak t' wife instead of he. But Sarah Anne she up wi' her fist and knocked him down as flat as ginger-beer as has had t' cork out a fortnight. 'Ah, James,' ses ma brother to me, 'I've tried to send ma owd woman to t'

owd chap, but shoo winna go. Tha mun tak' a horse to t' water, but tha canna mak' un drink.'

"Weel, next morning ma brother Tom hoo went to look at t' place where he was i' t' neet, and there he see'd t' owd chap still.... But by day leet—what dost a' think?—he was nowt but a flaycrow (scarecrow)."

FOOTNOTE:

[\[15\]](#) As lively as a teetotum.

[Pg 236]

THE ONE-POUND NOTE.[\[16\]](#)

Samuel Sutcliffe lived at Hebden Hay, or Hawden Hole, about a quarter of a mile west of Newbridge, nearly at the bottom of the steep slope which descends from Whitehill Nook to the river Hebden. The house is still standing, easy to be recognised by its whitewash and by the yew-tree which grows between the door and the path leading to Upper Hepton and Tommy Rocky's. Beside the farmhouse there is under the same roof a cottage at the east end. In the field at the west end, and below the house, stretching down to the stream, were formerly some mounds, where it was said that the Heptonstall people during the [\[Pg 237\]](#) plague buried their dead. Crabtree says (p. 15): "Of that dreadful epidemic, the plague, one hundred and seventeen persons are said to have died at Heptonstall in 1631, several of whom were buried at home, but all entered in the register there." In the old barn near the house, pulled down a few years ago, since 1817, an old man cut his throat. The yew-tree is no inapt symbol of the melancholy associations of this secluded spot—a cemetery, a suicide, and a murder.

Samuel Sutcliffe, commonly called Sammy o' Kattie's, lived there to the age of eighty, a bachelor. He was a manufacturer of worsted pieces, and for several years farmed the small farm. The only person living with him was his nephew, William Sutcliffe. On Saturdays, sometimes the uncle, sometimes the nephew, attended Halifax market; sometimes both. On Saturdays, towards evening, the old man might have been seen crossing the old bridge at Hebden Bridge, and calling at the "Hole in the Wall" to take a single glass of ale and hear the news, while he gave himself a very brief rest after his walk from Halifax, before passing on. He was a stout, active man for his age; sober, steady, and industrious; and by economy, but without penuriousness, had saved a considerable sum of money. The cottage adjoining Sammy's dwelling was inhabited by a weaver named William Greenwood.

For five or six years the nephew, William Sutcliffe, had carried on a little business in the fustian trade on his own account; and for two years he had the take of the farm, on which he kept a couple of cows. His business led him to travel into Lancashire, Craven, and even Westmoreland. His journeys were taken three times a year: he started on Monday morning, and returned usually on Friday evening, sometimes on Saturday. He left Hawden Hole on one of these journeys on Monday, February 3rd, 1817, and was[Pg 238] this time expected home on the Thursday night following, but circumstances prevented his return till the Saturday.

The name of the murderer was Michael Pickles, commonly designated "Old Mike." He lived at Northwell, near Heptonstall, on the road leading from Heptonstall by Newbridge to Haworth. His cottage, since pulled down, was of one storey: it contained two rooms—one towards the valley and the township of Wadsworth, into which the door entered, formed the dwelling or "house;" the other, trenching back into the hill-side, was called the "shop," and contained the looms. Some portion of the walls of the shop are still visible. Approached from the road, Old Mike's cottage stood a little below and a little beyond the principal house now standing at Northwell. A small garden was attached, in the walls of which are still to be seen the recesses which contained Mike's bee-hives. The plump-looking navel-wort, possibly introduced by him, may be seen peeping from crevices in the walls. Like Hawden Hole, Northwell has also its characteristic tree. The sombre Scotch pine which stands prominently forward in front of Northwell is in the corner of Mike's garden, and is said to have been planted by him. He lived at this cottage fifteen years. His age was forty-one. He is described as a strong, broad-set, but not a tall man, with rather dark hair, pale, cadaverous face, no whiskers, and large rolling eyes. He was left-handed, his hands being very large: he often made exhibition of the power of his left hand in grasping and crushing anything placed within it, in which exploit he surpassed all competitors. He had a very large, flat foot; his knees inclined very much inwards. He had the reputation of being "double-jointed," whatever may be meant by that term. His occupation was sometimes that of weaving at Northwell,[Pg 239] sometimes of gardening for his neighbours, but more frequently that of an out-door labourer in dry-walling, and especially in constructing, of large stones, what is called "weiring," for preventing the river-edge from encroaching on the neighbouring fields; for which his great strength qualified him. He had the reputation of being light-fingered. In dressing the gardens of his neighbours he not unfrequently helped himself to some of the contents. His house was generally very well supplied with milk in summer, which was considered to have been obtained by milking the cows in the fields. Above all, he had the reputation of stealing bee-hives, to which the fact of his being a bee-keeper was a sort of cover. As a

gentleman was one night riding along the "Needless Road" when not quite dark, he and his horse were suddenly startled, on coming in view of the steep field stretching from that road up to Northwell, by the sight of a strange figure moving slowly and heavily up the field: it was Mike with his not uncommon night burden, a hive of bees on his head. Another gentleman, stopping late at Kebcote Inn because of the rain, saw Mike and a companion take shelter there about an hour after midnight, the former being loaded with the customary "hive-piche" on his head. In the floor of his house, under the bed, he had excavated a secret hiding-place for stolen goods, covered by a moveable flag-stone. The paving before his door had been raised by the earth taken from this so-called "cave." Notwithstanding these dishonest practices, Mike made a considerable profession of religion. He was a joined member at Birchcliffe Chapel, having, with his wife, received adult baptism. Whether he was originally sincere in his profession and afterwards fell away, is more than doubtful when we consider that, notwithstanding his mal-practices, he continued to make great religious profession. In conversation he would expound at [Pg 240] large the doctrines of Christianity. To approach him with the view of holding short discourse with him on general topics while he was gardening for you, was to incur the risk of a sermon from him. He fetched milk from old Sammy's at Hawden Hole, and was in the habit of sitting and conversing with him, not unfrequently of reading to him during the long evenings. They had been acquainted many years.

Mike's accomplice was John Greenwood, a weaver, a tallish, slender man, aged twenty-nine years, with lightish hair, whose features gave the impression of a weak and undecided, rather than a depraved and wicked disposition. His characteristic want of firmness rendered him the easy dupe of any deeper adept in villany who might throw temptation into his way. It is believed that he would not have been connected with the murder but for the persuasion of Mike. His character does not appear to have lain under any suspicion, although, as his confession afterwards showed, he was already addicted to dishonest practices. He and Mike married sisters. He lived in a cottage attached to a remote farm in Wadsworth called Bog-eggs, above Old Town, a little below the moorland prominence called Tomtitiman from which so noble a prospect of this district may be obtained. His cottage, now unoccupied, forms the upper part of the building at Bog-eggs, being contiguous to the farm-house.

On Thursday, the 6th of February, 1817, "Joan o' t' Bog-eggs" went over to Northwell to try to obtain some money from Old Mike, saying that he was "pinned." Times were very hard just now, and doubtless there was much suffering among the poor. Flour was selling at eight shillings per stone, and meal at four and sixpence to five shillings. Old Mike said that he had no money, but that he knew of a place where they could get

some. This was just[Pg 241] the sort of temptation in which Joan's (John's) weak principles were likely to fail; and Mike was exactly the sort of man to attempt to turn Joan's infirmities to his own advantage. Mike's plausible speech soon prevailed over Joan's scruples; and it was agreed that that night they should sally forth and rob Old Sammy.

On Thursday evening, February 6th, 1817, "Old Mike" and "Joan o' t' Bog-Eggs" were sitting by Old Mike's fireside at Northwell. The night was wearing late, and the family had been sometime in bed. It was clearly understood between Mike and Joan, that after waiting till the hour was sufficiently advanced, they should sally out and rob "Sammy o' Kattie's." The hour agreed upon was midnight. Mike was smoking his pipe, and thinking over the circumstances of the intended burglary. Simple, unthinking Joan had fallen asleep under the influence of the warm fire. At length the clock struck twelve, and Mike aroused his companion, saying, "Come, it's time to be going." They took with them Mike's gun, and left the house, proceeding towards Whitehill Nook, along a field called Adcock, which is to the left of and above the public road leading to Whitehill Nook. They then travelled down the steep rough wood to Hawden Hole. Thrice Joan's heart failed him as he thought of the possible consequences to them both of the meditated robbery. Reassured by Mike's arguments, he proceeded to Old Sammy's. Half-past twelve was the hour for the moon to rise; but the night was cloudy, though without rain. Arrived at the house, Joan was placed as sentry before the door, with the gun in his hand, and directed to shoot any person who should offer interruption. Mike, perfectly familiar with the premises, took out a window at the west end of the house. There were more than one window at that end. He took out the larger one, being that nearest[Pg 242] to the river. He then entered the house, and undid the door, and opened it. Besides a lock, the door was also fastened by a stout wooden bar placed across it, with the ends inserted in holes in the masonry. Coming out of the house through the now opened door, he fastened the door of William Greenwood, the neighbouring cottager, by placing the wooden bar across the doorway, and fastening the latch to the bar with string. Probably they both entered Sammy's cottage. Mike mounted the stairs into the room where Old Sammy was sleeping alone. About a month before, the old man had bought a small oak box, in which he placed such of his papers and documents as were of value, and most of his money. The box was placed in a bucket which stood in one corner of his bedroom. Mike secured this bucket, with its contents. Three cotton pieces and four warps were also taken from the bedroom: the pieces were marked by William Greenwood. A cloth-coat, and a pair of shoes belonging to William Sutcliffe, which wanted soling, were also taken, and a new shirt of Sammy's.

But old men sleep lightly. Before these things were secured and got away, Sammy awoke. Sitting up in bed to listen, he heard footsteps in the house. He endeavoured to alarm his neighbour in the adjoining cottage, and called out, "William! William! William!" Fearful of being disturbed or detected, Mike approached the bed and seized his old friend and companion by the throat with his terrible left hand. Gripping him as in a vice, he held him down; nor did he quit his grasp till the spark of life was extinguished.

William Greenwood was disturbed during the night. He fancied he heard a noise in Sammy's house, but could not be sure. He called out, but received no answer. He conjectured that the old man might be talking in his sleep; at any rate, he took no more notice of the matter, and fell[Pg 243] asleep again. The wind was very strong, and roared terrible in the yew-tree. Probably the noise which he heard was Sammy's voice calling out "William" the third and last time. The silence which ensued was, as Mr. Hardy eloquently described it at York, "the silence of death."

I have a short document drawn up at Halifax for the satisfaction of William Sutcliffe, on the 17th or 18th of February, 1817, that he might possess some account of the manner of his uncle's last struggles, in which is recorded the substance of what Mike confessed on the subject at Halifax, February 17th. It is as follows:—"The further examination of William Sutcliffe, of Hawden Hole, in Heptonstall, who saith that on Monday, the 17th day of February, 1817, Michael Pickles, the prisoner, told this examinant that after he had entered the dwelling-house of his late uncle, Samuel Sutcliffe, and had got into the bedroom, the said Samuel Sutcliffe rose up on the bed and called out, 'William! William! William!' on which the said Michael Pickles seized the said Samuel Sutcliffe by the throat, and heard no more from him, except that he sobbed, as it was soon over with him, and he bore very little. And saith that the cause of his asking the question of the said Michael Pickles as to his uncle's death was to know what his said uncle said previous to his death, and if he suffered much."

Mike now descended the stairs, and greatly alarmed his companion by telling him he was afraid he had killed Sammy. Leaving the bucket outside the house, they made off to Northwell with their booty—the cotton pieces, the warps, the shoes, the cloth-coat, the shirt, and, above all, the oak box with its contents.

Having arrived at Northwell, Mike deposited the cotton pieces and warps in the hiding-place under the flag-stone. Joan took the shoes. The oak box they at once burnt to[Pg 244] prevent detection, but preserved the contents. Mike told his wife he was afraid he had killed Sammy, and she began to cry. He also charged Joan to keep it a secret, even from his wife, for his revealing it would cause them both to be hanged. In dividing the

money Joan contrived to take advantage of his more crafty companion; for he pocketed one note unknown to Mike. Mike's "Confession" says respecting the remaining notes—"John Greenwood took the guinea-note, and gave me the two Bank of England notes, and I gave him nine shillings and sixpence in silver, which made it equal—one pound ten shillings and sixpence each."

William Sutcliffe in his evidence at York said that on going from home on Monday, February 3rd, "he left his uncle four one-pound notes and some silver, to pay wages with in his absence. His uncle had also some notes of his own; among others, one of Mytholm Bank, which had been issued without the signature of Turner, Bent, and Co. It was No. 63. His attention had been called to this note on the 1st of February (the preceding Saturday); his uncle had brought it down-stairs in an old book: there were also in this book another pound-note and a guinea-note"—in all seven notes. William Sutcliffe on his return said that Sammy's three notes were pinned in a ready reckoner. Now, on examining the house the following morning, among some loose papers in the window down-stairs, there were found three one-pound notes which had escaped the notice of the robbers. These three which were left being added to the four which Mike and Joan took away, made seven notes. It would seem that Sammy had separated one of William's four notes from the remaining three; that this note he had placed in his box up-stairs with the three notes belonging to himself; and that thus his three notes and one of William's were taken away, while three of [Pg 245] William's notes had been left in the pocket-book in the window down-stairs. The note which Joan appropriated to himself, unknown to Mike, was the unsigned Mytholm note. Had this note fallen into Mike's hands, he would probably have observed the danger arising from the circumstance, and destroyed the note; but the ignorant and unsuspecting Joan was not aware of the danger.

There was at this time a set of men in the Cragg valley who went by a bad name. In order to shift the suspicion of the murder and robbery from himself and Mike, Joan, on his way home to Bog-eggs, instead of crossing the valley at Foster Mill, travelled down towards Mytholmroyd, and crossing the Calder at Carr Bridge, threw down the papers and documents obtained from Sammy's box at Carr Green, hoping thereby to induce suspicion that some of the Cragg band were the robbers and murderers.

And now for the events of the following morning. During the week Sammy had paid some money for work to a man named James Greenwood, of Lobbmill; but a balance of four shillings was left unpaid. Before daylight on Friday morning James Greenwood presented himself at Sammy's door, having come for his four shillings. He was surprised to find the door wide open. This excited his fears that some mischief had taken place during the night. He knocked at William Greenwood's door, stated the

suspicious circumstance, and desired him to come out. On attempting to do so, he found that the door would not open. James Greenwood then discovered (it was still dark) that the door was fastened by means of the wooden bar. It was now ascertained that Sammy's house had been entered by robbers through the window, and that he lay lifeless in his bed. His mouth was full of blood, and some had run out upon the bed-clothes. The empty bucket was found outside the door. William Greenwood, [Pg 246] who had seen Sammy at half-past ten the night before in good health, looked for the cotton pieces which he had taken in the previous day, but they were gone. He observed one footstep leading to the window which had been removed. It was the mark of a bare foot.

There was great consternation in the neighbourhood as soon as the murder was known. Mr. Thomas Dineley, surgeon, of Hebden Bridge, was called in. He gave his opinion that the deceased died of strangulation. It is commonly said that he also pronounced Sammy to have been strangled by a left-handed person; but some persons very likely to know most of the facts have no remembrance of this circumstance.

The papers and documents were found at Carr Green early in the morning by Olive Heyhirst, who was going to fetch milk.

Several persons expressed to each other their suspicions that Old Mike was the criminal. A woman met him in Northwell Lane on Friday morning. He said, "Have you heard that Old Sammy's murdered?" She replied, "If he is, it's thee that's done it."

Mike afterwards confessed that the day after the murder he could neither eat, drink, nor sleep, and was always uneasy wherever he was. On Friday evening he went to Heptonstall to be shaved. He was in such a state of restless agitation that the barber had much difficulty in fulfilling his office, and when Mike was gone out, the barber said to some bystanders, "Yon's the man that's murdered Sammy."

William Sutcliffe, the nephew, returned from his journey on Saturday afternoon. A messenger had been sent to expedite his return; but he was not able to get back more than a couple of hours earlier than he would otherwise have done. He now privately made known to several [Pg 247]neighbours, and among others to Mr. John Sutcliffe, of The Lee, that among the missing property there was an unsigned Mytholm note. It had been entered by Mr. Barker, the clerk to Turner, Bent, and Co., but was not signed by them. Having been pinned in the ready reckoner, it would show the marks of pin-holes. At that time several firms near Hebden Bridge issued private notes of various values. Messrs. Turner, Bent, and Co. issued both guinea and one-pound notes, printed in black ink. Messrs. Rawden, of Callis Mill, issued both guinea-notes and five-

shilling cards, printed in blue ink, and therefore called "blue-backs." Mr. John Sutcliffe, of The Lee, issued cards, value three shillings and sixpence, printed red. Mr. Edmondson issued seven-shilling notes. Mr. Richard Chatburn, of Sprutts, issued three and sixpenny cards. Mr. Robert Sutcliffe, of New Shop, put out five-shilling notes. Silver was very scarce just then; the smooth shillings which had been current were being called in by Government, and stamped ones were being issued instead.

Monday, February 10th, Mike attended service at Birchcliffe Chapel. The minister, Mr. Hollinrake, during his sermon made some strong remarks about the murder. His text was Matthew xxiv., 43—"But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." This smote Mike's conscience so severely that he afterwards declared that, if any one had looked him earnestly in the face, he might have discovered that he was the man. An inquest was held at Heptonstall; and poor old Sammy's remains were interred at Heptonstall church. Standing outside the churchyard, at the east end, near the street, you may read his epitaph through the rails:—"In memory of Samuel[Pg 248] Sutcliffe, of Hebden Hay, in Heptonstall, who died February 7, 1817, aged eighty-one years."

John Greenwood had a brother living at Luddenden, named William. John went to him, and gave the unsigned note into his hand. He then received the note back again from his brother. This farce was enacted between them to enable John to give an evasive answer to any one who should make troublesome inquiries as to how he became possessed of the note. John now went to the house of Thomas Greenwood, of Birchcliffe, and completed the purchase of a clock from him, giving him in payment the unsigned note, with some other money. Another version of the story is that given by William Greenwood, the brother, at York, viz., that "John Greenwood came to his father's house on Tuesday, February 11th, and on going home, desired William to 'go agatards' with him; when he told him that he had bought a clock of Thomas Greenwood that came to forty-two shillings; that he would give him a note which the witness was to give to Thomas Greenwood on John's account, and say that he had lent it to John. This William did; but he then began to think that John had not come by the note in an honest manner."

A woman named Betty Wadsworth, having had an illegitimate child, had been disowned by her relatives, and was now living "afore t' friend" at Rawholme with another William Greenwood, commonly known by the name of "Will o' t' shop." She possessed a chest of drawers, which, to raise money, she disposed of to Thomas Greenwood, of Birchcliffe, who in payment handed over to her the unsigned note on Tuesday, February 11th. The same evening she went to the shop of John Hoyle, of

Woodend, to buy groceries, and offered the unsigned note in payment. Hoyle refused to receive it, seeing it was [Pg 249] unsigned. She took it back to Rawholme. Wednesday morning, the 12th, she sent it up to Thomas Greenwood by Sarah, wife of "Will o' t' shop," complaining that he had paid to her a note which was not genuine. Now this Thomas Greenwood [17] was a weaver for Mr. John Sutcliffe, of The Lee; and on the day before Tuesday he had received from Mr. John Sutcliffe, for wages, a Halifax banknote. Not being able to read, he was not aware whether the rejected note was that which he had received from William Greenwood, of Luddenden, or from Mr. John [Pg 250] Sutcliffe. Doubting whether he should be able to get a good note from John or William Greenwood in exchange for it, he decided to try The Lee first, and hope for a successful issue of the experiment. He went immediately to The Lee, and found in the warehouse Mr. Richard Aked, who was learning the business with Mr. Sutcliffe. To him he gave the note, saying that Mr. Sutcliffe must have given him an unsigned note by mistake the day before. Mr. Aked took the note to Mr. Sutcliffe, who was breakfasting. He at once saw that this note was the key to the discovery of Sammy's murderer. He sent for some constables, and meanwhile learned from Thomas Greenwood that the note had come from "Joan o' t' Bog-eggs." James Wilson, the constable, sizer, of Hebden Bridge Lanes, soon made his appearance, and with him three others—viz., George Hargreaves, John o' Paul's (Greenwood), and John Uttley, commonly called John Clerk, being the clerk of Heptonstall church. Mr. John Sutcliffe and Thomas Greenwood accompany the officers to Bog-eggs, and Joan is apprehended. He declares that the note was paid to him by his brother William. Joan is therefore set at liberty, and William is apprehended at Luddenden, and taken to Halifax in proper custody the same day. He is brought before Thomas Horton, Esq., J.P., at the justice-room, Copper Street. He refuses to give any account of the note, being afraid of criminating his brother, till Friday, February 14th. On that day William Greenwood confesses the hoax as to the passing of the note from Joan to him, and back again. The same day Joan is re-apprehended, and declares before Mr. Horton that he received the unsigned note from Old Mike. William Greenwood is set at liberty. Old Mike is looked for, but cannot be found, his wife stating that he is gone off seeking for work.

Sunday, February 16th, Mike is apprehended at his [Pg 251] brother's at Cowside, near Blackshaw Head. He is kept in custody at an inn in Heptonstall for the night. He declared to the Rev. J. Charnock, who visited him, "I am as innocent as you are; I am as innocent as a child unborn."

Monday morning, February 17th, Mike was taken to Halifax, before Justice Horton, with many other persons who had by this time been apprehended on suspicion.

(Some had already been brought before Mr. Horton at Halifax. As many as sixteen or seventeen persons in all were taken up. Some of these confessed other crimes, being, however, unconnected with this murder, as of stealing meal and flour, and a gun from Handganroyd Mill, sheep-stealing, &c. I believe that one or two persons were convicted of sheep-stealing. The rest escaped, partly from the unwillingness of the parties robbed to prosecute.) Mike is confronted with Joan, and denies Joan's accusation. Joan contradicts himself by some blunder as to the day of the week and day in the month when he went to Old Mike's to borrow money. Hereupon Mike appears to be cleared, and is set at liberty. Joan's father comes to Joan, and entreats him, if he knows anything about the robbery, to confess it. At length he yields to this persuasion, and unreservedly confesses all about both the robbery and the murder. John Uttley, the constable, is in court, and having a horse at the inn, he volunteers to pursue Old Mike on his way back to Heptonstall. He overtakes him in King's Cross Lane, walking quickly homewards, and eating "sweet parkin." Uttley calls out, "You must come back with me." Mike, off his guard, asks, "What! has he been telling something?" Uttley brings him quietly back to the magistrates' room. Mike no longer denies the crimes of murder and burglary. When he and Joan were confronted by each other there occurred such a scene of crimination and recrimination that it was found[Pg 252] necessary to place Joan in the cell (or cellar) until the minutes of Joan's confession had been read over to Mike. After Mike had confessed many circumstances connected with the affair, the prisoners exchanged places, and the minutes of Mike's confession were read over to Joan. Both were now consigned to their cells.

Tuesday, February 18th, the prisoners were again before Mr. Horton, but nothing new was elicited. They were this day committed to York Castle. The same day James Wilson, the constable, searched Mike's house for the third time. His evidence at York is that "he found, concealed under a flag, under the bed, three fustian pieces and four warps, and some other articles, and above the fireplace a gun. The cotton pieces were identified by William Greenwood, Sammy's neighbour, who had taken them into the house of the deceased and marked them; the other articles were identified by William Sutcliffe."

The *Leeds Mercury* of Saturday, Feb. 22nd, says that on Wednesday, the 13th, the two prisoners passed through that town, strongly ironed, on their way to York Castle.

The trial took place at York Castle on Friday, March 14th, 1817. The prisoners were arraigned on an indictment of murdering Samuel Sutcliffe, and also on an indictment of burglary. Both admitted the burglary; both denied the murder. By the recommendation of the judge they pleaded "Not guilty" to both indictments. No fewer

than 22 witnesses were taken to York, including all the individuals whose names have been given above; with Mr. William Sutcliffe, of Heptonstall, who made Sammy's writings; Mr. John Barker and Mr. Jas. Bent, of Mytholm, and Mr. Henry Sutcliffe, of Pendle Forest, &c. Mr. Hardy, in a very eloquent and perspicuous opening, stated the facts of the case. The names of the witnesses whose evidence is given in the *Leeds Mercury* (Saturday, March 22, 1817), [Pg 253] are William Sutcliffe, William Greenwood (the neighbouring cottager), Thomas Dyneley, Betty Wadsworth, John Hoyle, Sarah Greenwood, Thomas Greenwood, William Greenwood, of Luddenden, Thomas Horton, Esq., Olive Heyhirst, John Thomas, of Midgley, and James Wilson. John Thomas "was a shoemaker, and received a pair of shoes from the prisoner, John Greenwood, on the 8th of February, which he delivered to the constable, and which, being produced in court, were identified by William Sutcliffe as the shoes which he had left in the house" when he went on his journey. The other witnesses gave evidence agreeing in most particulars with the facts stated above.

The remainder of the proceedings at York we give in the words of the *Leeds Mercury* of Saturday, March 22nd, 1817. "The prisoners being called upon for their defence, Michael Pickles said—John Greenwood came to my house and said he was pined, and asked me to go with him to Sammy's, of Hawden Hole, which I did, and he took the gun with him. When we got to the old man's house, we got in at the window, and we both went into the chamber where the old man was. He started up in bed when he heard us, and we both ran away, and I never touched the man.

"John Greenwood said—The robbery was proposed by Michael Pickles, for I did not know that there was such a house—I had never been there in my life. When we got to the house, Pickles went in at the window, but I stayed at the outside. I was never in the biggin' at all, but stood at the shop-end all the time, and Pickles brought out all the goods to me that he had taken out of the biggin'. He then told me that he had taken the old man by the neck, and was afraid he had killed him; and I said, 'Surely thou hast not hurt the old man?' Michael Pickles gave me the gun to carry, but I tied my handkerchief in two knots over the lock, for fear I should do some mischief with it. When we [Pg 254] got back to Pickles' house, he told his wife he was afraid he had killed the old man; and his wife began to cry. Pickles charged me that I should keep it a secret from every one, even from my wife, for if I told I should be hanged.

"Three witnesses were called. Two of them spoke favourably of the character of John Greenwood. The third stated that he had a wife and three children, but that he did not know much about his character.

"His Lordship, in his charge to the jury, stated that where two or more persons were jointly engaged in the commission of any burglary or other felonious act, and one of the party killed a person in furtherance of their common object, every one of the party would in law be guilty of the crime of murder. And it was necessary, continued his Lordship, for the safety of society, that it should be so, that associations in guilt might be as much as possible prevented. If indeed an individual of any such party should put a person to death to gratify his own private revenge, and not for the furtherance of their common object, in that case he alone would be answerable for the murder. His Lordship explained that this furtherance comprises all acts done to prevent or overpower resistance and to prevent discovery. Applying this rule to the case before them, his Lordship said that if the jury were satisfied that both the prisoners had gone to the house of the deceased for the purpose of committing a robbery, and that one of them, to prevent any alarm or discovery, had by violence occasioned the death of the deceased, it would be murder in them both, though one of the prisoners should not have been within the house at the time, and should have given no consent to the murderous deed, or even not have known of its being committed. That a burglary had been committed in the house was too evident to admit of a doubt. It also appeared from all the circumstances of the[Pg 255] case that the death of Samuel Sutcliffe had been produced by strangulation, and it was admitted by Pickles that he had seized him by the throat, and that when he quitted his grasp he had reason to suppose he was dead. If the jury were satisfied of these facts, and further thought that Michael Pickles had committed this violence, not from any personal enmity (of which there was not the least proof), but with a view to prevent alarm and secure the accomplishment of their design of robbing the house, it would be the duty of the jury to find both the prisoners guilty.

"The jury turned round in the box for a moment, and then pronounced against both prisoners the fatal verdict of 'Guilty.' His Lordship proceeded, after a most solemn and affecting address, to pass the sentence of the law, which was, that they were both of them to be hung by the neck on Monday until they were dead, and that their bodies should be delivered to the surgeons for dissection.

"John Greenwood fell on his knees, begging for mercy, and protesting his innocence of the murder.

"It is understood that since his conviction he has acknowledged to the chaplain that he was in the house, and stood at the foot of the steps with the gun.

"The sentence of the law was carried into execution on Monday, March 17th, a few minutes after eleven o'clock, and their bodies, after being suspended the usual time,

were delivered to the surgeons for dissection. The body of Pickles has been sent to the Dispensary at Halifax."

FOOTNOTES:

[16] The circumstances of the murder and the discovery of the murderer were collected with great care by the brother of a friend of the author, now dead, and were communicated by him to the *Hebden Bridge Chronicle* in 1856. The papers of the compiler have been kindly sent to the author, and placed at his disposal. The facts of this extraordinary story were collected partly from individuals now surviving, who lived in the neighbourhood at the time, especially from one who was a principal witness at the trial at York, and partly from documents. Of the latter the principal are a good report of the trial given in the *Leeds Mercury* of Saturday, March 22nd, 1817, and a confession by the condemned parties drawn up in the usual style of confessions, and printed at Leeds for the purpose of being hawked about the streets. The *Manchester Mercury* of Tuesday, March, 18th, 1817, gives a short account of the trial and condemnation of the prisoners, and concludes with a confession of the principal prisoner; being a long verbatim extract from the confession printed at Leeds for sale by hawkers. One of the official books belonging to Heptonstall church contains a copy of the charge of the judge to the jury at York, taken verbatim from the *Leeds Mercury* of March 22nd.

[17] Greenwood is probably the most prevalent name in the neighbourhood. Out of 755 entries in a public register in the neighbourhood, the name Greenwood occurs 48 times, Helliwell 34, Sutcliffe 33, Cockcroft 18, Smith 18, Akroyd 15, Crabtree 15, Mitchell 14, Stansfield 13, Uttley 13, Horsfall 12, Midgley 12, Gibson 11, Taylor 11, Pickles 9, Fielden 9, Gill 9, &c. We may here remark on the prevalence of patronymic names, which sometimes are really useful, however inelegant, in a district where the same names recur so frequently. Thus "John o' Abbie's" and "Joan o' Jim's" were the ordinary names of two individuals who were each legally designated John Stansfield. By how many useful variations is the name John Sutcliffe represented! To strangers this practice is the more puzzling from the frequent use of abbreviations, such as Eam, Tham, Lol, Abbie, Jooas, Kit (or Katie), Joan, Tim, and Tum; for Edmund, Nathaniel, Lawrence, Abraham, Joseph, Catherine, John, Timothy, Thomas. There was formerly a "Jimmie, o' Jamie, o' James, o'th Jumps." "George o' my Gronny's" and "Will o' Nobody's" are bold specimens of what may be done by the principle in question carried out with a little licence. Not unfrequently, also, people are named from their residences, as "John up th' steps," and "Old Ann o' th' Hinging Royd." Bye-names also become sometimes attached as if they were real family surnames. If it were not personal, many singular instances might be given. Persons are frequently unable,

without some consideration, to recognise the legal names of their neighbours. Upon the hillside at Jumps, near Todmorden, I once asked a little girl who was her father. "Will o' th' Jumps," she replied. "And who's Will o' th' Jumps?" I again inquired. "He's Ailse o' th' Jumps, fellie," replied the girl; and I doubt whether she had any idea whatever of her legal surname.

[Pg 256]

MR. WIKES, OF LEASEHOLME. [\[18\]](#)

The living of Leaseholme, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, was held by three successive generations of the Wikeses for upwards of a century; all of whom were men of literary talents, popular preachers, great oddities—but much given to the bottle. The first of the Wikes family who held the living was a gentleman who had been captain in the army in the reign of Charles I., and had fought for the unfortunate monarch throughout the civil war. In one of the battles he received a wound in his leg, which incapacitated him from further active service, and the death of the king and the supremacy of Cromwell prevented him from looking to Government for promotion.

But on the Restoration Mr. Wikes cast about for some berth in which he might spend his declining years in ease and comfort. The living of Leaseholme fell vacant, and he applied for it, remembering how his old friend the sea-captain, Lyons, had obtained the bishopric of York from Queen Elizabeth.

Captain Wikes was ordained by the Archbishop of York, and given the living he solicited, King Charles II. being glad to reward an old soldier of his father, who had shared his misfortunes, thus economically to himself.

Mr. Wikes also held the incumbency of Ellerburn, near Leaseholme, and took service in the morning at Leaseholme, and in the afternoon at Ellerburn, or *vice versa*.

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One year, when the 30th of January fell on a Sunday, Mr. Wikes marched off to Ellerburn for morning service, with a pathetic sermon on the martyrdom of his royal master in his pocket; but on his arrival at the place he found the clerk and sexton near the churchyard, with a short pole in their hands, watching a domestic quarrel that was going forward on the opposite side of the beck that flows through the village. The parson asked why the church was empty and his subordinates were not in their places. The clerk pointed across the beck, and bade Parson Wikes "look and see a woman combing her husband's head with a three-legged stool."

Mr. Wikes at once plunged over the brook, and striking the husband with his fist, tore the furious pair asunder, shouting, "Be quiet, you brute!" to the husband, and "Hold your tongue, you vixen!" to the woman. Both fell on him, and he had hard work in defending himself from husband and wife. In the fray that ensued the yells of the parson—"Peace, you monster! Have done, termagant! Hands off, you coward! Retire, virago!"—were mingled with the abuse and blows of the disputants, till the absurdity of the whole scene burst upon them all, as the crowd of delighted parishioners and neighbours gathered in a circle about them, and they fell back laughing, and shook hands all round.

But matters did not end here. When husband and wife disagree, and a third party interferes, according to local custom, all three are doomed to "ride the stang," whilst the people shout and caper around the victims, chanting, as they beat frying-pans and blow horns—

"Rub-a-dub, dub-a-dub, ran-a-tan-tang,

It's neither what you say nor I say, but I ride the stang."

The parishioners insisted on the immemorial custom being complied with, and Parson Wikes was made to sit astride on the short pole the clerk and sexton had prepared; two[Pg 258] others were provided for the belligerent husband and wife; and the whole village prepared to march in procession with them. But though the parson sat complacently on his pole, the husband and wife refused to submit to the ignominious custom, and he armed himself with the pitch-fork, she with the poker, and began to defend themselves against the villagers. Parson Wikes was carried to the scene of conflict, and the clerk and sexton, in their eagerness to join in the struggle, dropped him into the beck. Then the villagers rushed upon him, swearing that he was shirking his duty of riding the stang, and he had to stand up to his middle in the water, and fight them off. Armed with the stick, which he whirled about him in single-stick fashion, he rattled their heads and arms with it to such good purpose that he was able to beat a retreat into the church, where he rapidly vested himself in his surplice, and placed the sanctity of the place and garb between him and his opponents.

The crowd now poured into the church, and Parson Wikes proceeded with the service, leaving a trail of water up and down the chancel as he paced to the altar and thence to the pulpit. Having prefaced his sermon with an announcement that he took in good part the disorderly conduct and undignified treatment he had met with, he preached them a moving sermon on the merits of Charles the Martyr, and the ingratitude of the people of England to such a virtuous monarch, and wound up with—"Let those who feel the consequence of such a misfortune deplore with me upon this melancholy

occasion; but if there be any among you (and I make no doubt there are) who may have secretly wished for this event, they have now got their desire, and may the devil do them good with it." After which he made the best of his way home to his rectory, and endeavoured to counteract the effects of his dipping by moistening his clay within with hot punch.

FOOTNOTE:

[\[18\]](#) "Anecdotes and Manners of a few Ancient and Modern Oddities." York, 1806.

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THE REV. MR. CARTER, PARSON-PUBLICAN.

I cannot do better than extract verbatim the following account from a curious book entitled "Anecdotes and Manners of a Few Ancient and Modern Oddities, interspersed with Deductive Inferences and Occasional Observations, tending to reclaim some Interlocutory Foibles which often occur in the Common Intercourses of Society." York, 1806:—

"The Rev. Mr. Carter, when curate of Lastingham, had a very large family, with only a small income to support them, and therefore often had recourse to many innocent alternatives to augment it; and as the best of men have their enemies—too often more than the worst—he was represented to the archdeacon by an invidious neighbour as a very disorderly character, particularly by keeping a public-house, with the consequences resulting from it.

"The archdeacon was a very humane, worthy, good man, who had imbibed the principles not only of a parson, but of a divine, and therefore treated such calumniating insinuations against his subordinate brethren with that contempt which would accrue to the satisfaction and advantage of such as listen to a set of sycophantic tattlers culled from the refuse of society. Besides, the improbability of a malevolent story generally renders it more current by increasing the scandal; and the world, like the pious S. Austin, believes some things because they are impossible. [Pg 260] However, he considered that not only the conduct of the inferior clergy claimed his attention, but also to have some idea how far their subsistence was compatible with the sanctity of their functions; therefore, at the ensuing visitation, when the business of the day was over, he, in a very delicate and candid manner, interrogated Mr. Carter as to his means of supporting so numerous a family—ever thinking of this admirable hint to charity, that the more a person wants, the less will do him good—

which was answered, as related to me by one well acquainted with the parties, in nearly the following words:—

"I have a wife and thirteen children, and with a stipend of £20 per annum, increased only by a few trifling surplice fees. I will not impose upon your understanding by attempting to advance any argument to show the impossibility of us all being supported from my church preferment. But I am fortunate enough to live in a neighbourhood where there are many rivulets which abound with fish, and being particularly partial to angling, I am frequently so successful as to catch more than my family can consume while good, of which I make presents to the neighbouring gentry, all of whom are so generously grateful as to requite me with something else of seldom less value than two or three-fold. This is not all. My wife keeps a public-house, and as my parish is so wide that some of my parishioners have to come from ten to fifteen miles to church, you will readily allow that some refreshment before they return must occasionally be necessary, and when can they have it more properly than when their journey is half performed? Now, sir, from your general knowledge of the world, I make no doubt but you are well assured that the most general topics in conversation at public-houses are politics and religion, with which ninety-nine out of one hundred of those who participate in the general clamour are totally[Pg 261] unacquainted; and that perpetually ringing in the ears of a pastor who has the welfare and happiness of his flock at heart, must be no small mortification. To divert their attention from these foibles over their cups, I take down my violin and play them a few tunes, which gives me an opportunity of seeing that they get no more liquor than necessary for refreshment; and if the young people propose a dance, I seldom answer in the negative; nevertheless, when I announce time for return, they are ever ready to obey my commands, and generally with the donation of a sixpence they shake hands with my children, and bid God bless them. Thus my parishioners enjoy a triple advantage, being instructed, fed, and amused at the same time. Moreover, this method of spending their Sundays is so congenial with their inclinations, that they are imperceptibly led along the paths of piety and morality; whereas, in all probability, the most exalted discourses, followed with no variety but heavenly contemplations, would pass like the sounds of harmony over an ear incapable of discerning the distinction of sounds. It is this true sense of religion that has rendered my whole life so remarkably cheerful as it has been, to the great offence of superstitious and enthusiastic religionists. For why should priests be always grave? Is it so sad to be a parson? Cheerfulness, even gaiety, is consonant with every species of virtue and practice of religion, and I think it inconsistent only with impiety and vice. The ways of heaven are pleasantness. Let "O be joyful" be the Christian's psalm, and leave to the

sad Indian to incant the devil with tears and screeches. Now, to corroborate my remarks upon cheerfulness as conducive to contentment, I will by leave solicit so much of your indulgence as to hear the following extract from the works of an eminent divine of the Established Church:—The Thirty-Nine Articles are incomplete[Pg 262] without a fortieth precept enjoining cheerfulness; or you may let the number stand as it does at present, provided you expunge the thirteenth article, and place that heavenly maxim in the room of it. Might not the Archbishop of Cashel have been a sound divine though he added the arch-stanza about Broglia to the old Irish ballad in praise of Moll Roe? Or did the Bishop (not the Earl) of Rochester's poems on the man-like properties of a lady's fan ever impeach his orthodoxy in the least?

"Here the archdeacon very candidly acknowledged the propriety of Mr. Carter's arguments in defence of his conduct, and complimented him on his discernment in using the most convenient vehicle for instruction; observing that, although he might deviate a little from the plans generally advised for the accomplishment of that purpose, yet it bore no less authority than the celebrated Dr. Young, who wrote a play ('The Brothers') for the propagation of the Gospel, the profits of which he consecrated to the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts."

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JOB SENIOR, THE HERMIT OF RUMBOLD'S MOOR. [\[19\]](#)

Job's mother was Ann Senior, of Beckfoot, near Ilkley; he was an illegitimate child. His father, a man named Hacksworth, left him a little money when he died. Job grew up a spruce, active young man, very strong, and not devoid of good looks. He was employed as a labourer by the farmers round Ilkley; but afterwards went to live at Whitkirk, near Leeds. He there fell into disorderly ways, drank, and became careless in his dress and dirty in his habits. Yet he was a good workman, and when he returned to Ilkley he was readily engaged by the farmers to plough, mow, and reap for them. He was a good fence-waller, and being a man of prodigious strength, is said to have used very heavy stones for the purpose, and when days were short he was frequently seen walling by candlelight. Some of his walls are still pointed out, and the large stones he lifted elicit surprise. In winter he employed himself in wool-combing at a place called The Castle, near Ilkley. It is related of him that he once laid himself down on the combing-shed floor, and that some of his fellow-workmen chalked out his figure on the floor. By this outline he used to cut his shirts, the material being coarse harden, sewed with strong hemp-string.

Job was at one time an hostler in the village, and a person who knew him well at the time says that at this[Pg 264] period his dissipated habits made him the subject of many a practical joke.

He was afterwards employed by the farmers at Burley Woodhead; but as he became old and infirm, and troubled with rheumatism, he could not work as formerly, but did what he could, making no stipulations for wages, but asking only for his board, and that his employers should pay him whatever extra they thought his labour entitled him to receive.

About this time he became acquainted with a widow named Mary Barret, who lived in a cottage near Coldstone Beck, on the edge of Rumbold's Moor. The widow had a little garden and a paddock which, together with the cottage, had been left her by her husband, who had taken the land from the common and built the cottage on it. Job thought if he could secure the hand of the widow the house and land would be his for life. So one day he paid her a visit.

"I'll tell ye what I've been thinking," said Job Senior.

"What hast a' been thinking on then, Job? Out wi' it, lad," said the widow.

"Well, I've been thinking thou'st getting ou'd, and thou lives all by thy sen i' this house. And I'm a young man"—(he was about sixty)—"and I lives all by my sen by yond crag. Why should not thou and me make it agreeable to live together?"

"Dost a' mean that I'm to take thee as a lodger?" asked Mary Barret.

"Nay, nay, lass!" answered Job; "I mean we'd better goa to t' kirk together and be wed."

"I reckon I'm ower ou'd for that," said the widow. She was in her eightieth year.

"I doan't know if tha be ou'd," said Job; "but I knows vary weel thou'rt bonny."

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No woman's heart, not even in her eightieth year, is proof against flattery, and the fair Mary blushed and yielded to the blooming Job, and married they were.

"It's an easy gotten penny by the light o' the moon," said Job, looking over his domain.

Mrs. Senior did not long survive her second marriage. She had a long sickness, and Job was kind to her in it. "It's cou'd, Job," she said to her husband one evening when he returned from his work on the moor. "It's cou'd i' this bed, and I cannot feel t' warmth o' t' fire."

"Thou shalt be warm, ou'd lass, if I can fashion it," said Job. "But as I cannot bring t' fire nigher thee, I mun bring thee nigher to t' fire." So he pulled up a couple of flags in the floor beside the hearth, dug a pit, and made the old woman's bed in this premature grave, so that she could be close to the fire and comfortable, and if she wanted a cup of tea, could put out her hand and take the pot from the hearth.

"Eh, Job!" said old Mary another day, "I think I'd like summut good to eat afore I dies."

"Ah!" answered her husband; "then I'll get thee a rare good morsel, that'll set thee up on thy legs again, ou'd lass."

So he bought a pound of bacon, roasted it, caught the melted fat in a large iron spoon, and ladled it down his wife's throat.

"It's rare good now, isn't it?" exclaimed the husband, as the old woman gulped it down. "Open the trap and I'll teem (pour) down some more."

The old woman lay back in her hole and groaned. "I'm boun' to die!" she said.

"Nay, lass! take another spoonful first."

But the poor creature was dead. Job looked at her disconsolately for a minute, and whilst doing so the fat of the [Pg 266] frying bacon fell into the fire and blazed up. "Eh! but I mustn't waste the fat," said Job. "If t' ou'd lass cannot take it, why, I mun eat it mysen. Ah! it's varry good; but it's hot. I reckon 't were too hot for her ou'd insides."

Job now thought that the house, garden, and paddock were his own; but he was mistaken. The family of Barret, the first husband of Mary, claimed it and took possession of the field. Job clung desperately to the cottage and the potato-garth. One evening when he returned from his work he found that the cottage had been pulled to pieces. He had hidden some money in the walls, and this was either lost or stolen. His rage and disappointment completely disturbed his brain, and from that time forward he lived in a miserable hovel he erected for himself out of the ruins of the house, in idleness and squalor.

His hut was like a dog-kennel; to enter it he was obliged to creep on hands and knees. Within it was only large enough for him to lie down in and turn himself about: it was thatched, and provided with a rude door, but no window. The garden had contained fruit trees; but these he stubbed up, and instead planted the whole garth with potatoes. He made large, unsightly ridges, and put in a great quantity of seed, always planting for the following year when he gathered his crop in autumn. In one corner of his garth was a peat fire where he roasted his potatoes. His custom was, when eating, to sit with one leg on each side of the fire of peat, his little bag of oatmeal before him;

then with his staff he poked the potatoes out of the embers, peeled them with his dirty fingers, rolled them in his meal bag, and then ate them. He always drank his water warm.

"Do you drink your water warm, Job?" asked a visitor.

"Yes," said the hermit, "I reckon I does."

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"And your butter-milk too?"

"Aye, aye. Sithere." And he poked two stone bottles out from the embers. "I do it to clear my voice," said the hermit. "Now thou shalt hear my four voices." He then got up, set his face to the crag, and began a wonderful performance of four voices—treble, alto, tenor, and bass. He said he had picked up his "four voices" by listening to the choir in Leeds parish church. He usually sang sacred hymns, such as "While shepherds watched their flocks by night," "Christians, awake," and the Old Hundredth. He went about the country in winter, singing in four parts for money, and his performance was sufficiently remarkable for him to be brought to perform in public at the theatre at Leeds, and in the Headingley Gardens and the Woolsorters' Gardens at Bradford, where he stayed for weeks at a time. He would sleep in any outbuilding or blacksmith's shop; indeed, he was so dirty that few people would like to have given him a bed in their houses.

He used to walk leaning on two rough sticks, wearing a pair of heavy wooden clogs on his feet, stuffed with hay, his legs bandaged with straw. His coat was of many colours and much patched; his trousers were to match. He wore no braces, but kept his trousers in position with a hempen belt, part of an old horse-girth, which he buckled round his body. A bag on his back was fastened at the front to his belt. His head was adorned with a hat of the most antique shape, without a brim, and stitched together with hemp-string.

The condition of his skin, which had not seen water for years, need not be described. His hair, once jetty black, now hung in heavy clotted locks on his shoulders. His eyebrows were black and prominent; his eyes low-set and watery. He wore a coarse beard, grizzled with age, and very[Pg 268] dirty. From his hat depended a tobacco-pipe, hung by a string.

"Never," he would say to his visitors, "never take to nowt, but whenever you can get a penny, felt (hide) it, and let nobody know about it, and then they cannot get it from you. Get all the brass ye can, and as soon as ye can buy a bit o' grund like this o' mine,

ye see, set it with potatoes, and it'll keep ye. There'll be a peck or two to spare; ye can sell them, and so ha' brass agean. Are ye married?" said the hermit to a young man who went to see him.

"No," answered the visitor.

"Then ye are right there, young chap. Keep so. If ye get a wife, ye'll see shoo'll be coming on wi' a family, and then that'll take all your brass. I' th' first place, ye'll want a house and furniture, and then there'll be rent and taxes, and your wife'll be always wanting summat for hersen or the bairns. And besides, just look how more flour ye'll want, and sugar, and soap, and candles. And look how many more potatoes ye'll want for them all to eat. Eh! but they're the animals 'at eats brass. They say that maggots eats cheese, and weevils eats cloathes, and mice eats corn; but wife and bairns eats brass, and it's t' brass as gets cheese, and cloathes, and corn. Nay, lad! have nowt to do wi' them soort o' cattle. And then—if th' wife takes to bonnets and gowns, ye're ruined directly. Nay, nay, grund is better nor a wife, and potatoes nor bairns. If ye want to save your brass and snap up a bit o' grund, ye munna be married."

Job's end came as he was on one of his singing rounds. It is thought that some youngsters drugged his drink, in prank, at Silsden, and the consequences were a violent attack of English cholera. He got back to Ilkley, and crept into a barn belonging to the White Sheaf Inn; but the landlord seeing that his end was near, sent for the[Pg 269] parish authorities, and he was moved to the Carlton workhouse, as he belonged to Burley. He died in the course of a few days, at the age of seventy-seven, and was buried in Burley churchyard, near Otley.

FOOTNOTE:

[\[19\]](#) "The Hermit of Rumbold's Moor." Bingley: Harrison (n.d.)

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NANCY NICHOLSON, THE TERMAGANT.

Mrs. Nancy Nicholson[\[20\]](#) was born at Drax, in the county of York, on the 3rd day of May, 1785, and was the only child of the Rev. John Jackson, vicar of Drax, by his second wife. Mr. Jackson had a son by a former marriage, but he was taken by his mother's relatives into Cumberland; consequently the daughter, Nancy, was the only child at home, and from her infancy was indulged to a fault, and suffered to grow up without restraint, so that she soon became a terror to the other children in the school of which her father was the master.[\[21\]](#)

It is curious that the child of a schoolmaster should have been suffered to grow to womanhood almost wholly without education; but such was the case. The following extract from a letter written by her when aged sixty-four shows how miserably her education had been neglected:—"Dear Mrs. Wilson,—Your letter just came in time as I whas thinking of letting my land but if John Harrison will come and we can a gree I ceep it on if not I shall let it Mr. Totton of Howden whants it and Taylors of Asselby also I Ceep all land and Hosses while I see him pray send him word to Come this week as I must have my Patays up and also my stakes wants thashing."

Having naturally a certain amount of shrewdness, it was[Pg 271] mistaken for talent, and low cunning for genius. Being indulged in every way, her headstrong will became intolerant of the smallest restraint. She played with the boys of the school, and acquired from them the coarsest language, and throughout her life never learned, indeed never attempted, to control her tongue.

When Miss Jackson was about twenty years old, the Rev. John Nicholson, a young man from Cumberland, came to Drax to assist Mr. Jackson in his school. He was at that time a well-disposed, gentlemanly young fellow, who gave promise of being a scholar and of use in his generation. But Miss Jackson, who was not without some charms of person, was the ill-omened star that was to blight his life. Living in the house of her father, he was brought in daily contact with her, and she exerted some sort of fascination upon him. If two young people are brought much together, they are sure to form an attachment, and it was so in this case. Nancy concealed her evil disposition from the usher, and laid herself out to catch him.

Mr. Nicholson could not be blind to the fact that Miss Jackson was entitled to property on the death of her parents, and it is probable enough that to a needy young clergyman without interest, the chance of making himself master of a competence may have had more to do with his paying his addresses to Miss Jackson than love.

In the year 1810 Mr. Jackson died, and perhaps this event decided Mr. Nicholson to offer his hand to Nancy. He was at once accepted, and the interest of her friends secured for him immediately the vacant situation of master of the Grammar School. Shortly after the marriage he also became vicar of Drax.

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson were married at Drax Church in October, 1811, and she then became undisputed mistress of the establishment. Her harsh and tyrannical [Pg 272]disposition had now free scope to develop, and the first to feel it was the mother who had encouraged her as a child. The widow was soon obliged to leave the house, where her daughter made it impossible for her to live in comfort and tranquillity. The servants would not stay; no fresh ones could be induced to enter the house under

such a mistress. She was therefore obliged to do all the work of the school-house herself, making the unhappy boarders help her in cleaning the house and in washing the clothes. The poor boys were scantily fed, and otherwise miserably provided for.

Four gentlemen, including Lord Downe, were trustees of the Grammar School at Drax, and made visits of inspection regularly every quarter. Nancy was always prepared for these occasions. She had a clean cloth on the table, a plentiful dinner provided, and a dumpling set before each boy. But she took care to impress on each boarder that the one who left the largest amount of dumpling on his plate would receive a reward, and he should receive a hiding who emptied his plate. "And," said Mrs. Nicholson, "let any boy beware how he looks sad or dissatisfied."

When these quarterly visits took place in the cold weather, she had a large fire lighted in the school-room, round which she assembled the boys, and when the trustees came in, she would address them with—"Well, gentlemen, and you, my lord, you see how saucy these boys are; scarce one of them has eaten his dumpling. And capital dumplings they are, my lord and gentlemen!"

When Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson had been married about three years they took an orphan niece of Mr. Nicholson's from Cumberland to provide for, and to this child for several years she behaved with the greatest cruelty, until at length Mrs. Nicholson's mother took compassion on the[Pg 273] child, and removed it to her own house. However, when Mrs. Nicholson considered her niece capable of working, she insisted on her return, making her do the work of a servant, and subjecting her to the harshest treatment. The work was heavy, as she kept two or three cows, besides pigs and poultry.

The schoolboys were compelled to collect her eggs, and she caused them to rob the neighbours to obtain a greater number. These depredations were not unknown to the neighbours, but they good-naturedly excused the boys, as they knew they were urged to them by Mrs. Nicholson. She gave the boys a penny a score for all the eggs they could bring. She would then say, "Now, boys, I have such nice apples; I will give you a good pennyworth of apples for your penny; do have a pennyworth." The boys durst not object, and bought the apples. But still she was not satisfied, but would say, "Come, I will play you a game at push-pin for your apples, and I daresay you will win." However, as may be supposed, they never were suffered to win, so that she obtained eggs, penny, apples, and pins also. She committed various other depredations on the property of her neighbours, such as taking coals, corn, goslings—and, in short, anything that came within her reach. One Sunday morning, while the neighbours were at church, she made some of the boys assist her in stealing a hen and fourteen

chickens. These she confined in a brick oven till the following morning, when she took them to Selby and disposed of them in the market.

For many years she regularly attended Selby market with her butter, which more than once was seized and taken from her for being light weight. She employed the boys in collecting rags, old iron, &c., all of which she took to Selby, because she could obtain a better price there than at home. It was in vain that Mr. Nicholson remonstrated with her on[Pg 274] the disgrace her conduct brought upon him; she only replied in abusive language.

On Sunday mornings she was always remarkably late in her attendance at church, generally entering in the middle of the service, and her appearance was like anything but that which became a vicar's wife, and formed a strange contrast to that of her husband, who retained his care to appear like a gentleman, in clean and well-brushed clothes, and with scrupulously white cravat.

Nancy was neither clean nor well-dressed. For many years she would not afford herself a new bonnet, until at length her mother, utterly ashamed of her appearance, bought one for her. But Mrs. Jackson made her give up the old bonnet before she received the new one, being convinced, if she had the chance, that Nancy would put the new one away and continue to wear the old one.

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson continued in the school-house several years, during which time they amassed a considerable sum of money, with which they bought various lots of property in the parish, Mrs. Nicholson always contriving to have her name inserted in the deeds as well as Mr. Nicholson's, so that he could not deprive her of her life-interest. One field which they purchased at Carlton she had conveyed to her for her own use and disposal. This caused great dissension between them when discovered by Mr. Nicholson.

At length the trustees were obliged to interfere in behalf of the school. They did so with the utmost reluctance. All respected and pitied Mr. Nicholson, who was a good Christian and a gentleman, and was prepared to discharge his duty conscientiously. But it was impossible for him to control his wife, and make her treat the boarders with ordinary humanity. She was a genuine Mrs. Squeers; but he was a very different sort of person to the Yorkshire schoolmaster of "Nicholas Nickleby."

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The trustees were obliged to insist on an investigation. It was conducted with the greatest consideration for the feelings of Mr. Nicholson; but the investigation ended in the school being taken from him.

"Oh, Nancy, Nancy!" Mr. Nicholson would repeat, "you have disgraced me terribly!"

The humiliations he was obliged to undergo broke his spirit, and his self-respect, which had battled against adverse circumstances, gradually gave way. She used the most insulting language to him, not only in private, but in public, making the most odious insinuations, and bringing the scarlet spot of shame to his cheek. The unfortunate man was made to drink to the dregs the cup of degradation.

At last, maddened beyond self-control, he beat her with his horse-whip. A friend, whose house was situated a mile from that of the Nicholsons, has told me that his father has often heard at that distance the screams of rage uttered by Nancy when in a passion with her husband. Their quarrels became the gossip and scandal of Drax. Mr. Nicholson at last, driven of an evening from his home, would visit farmers, or sometimes the public-house, and forget his humiliation in the society of his inferiors. On these occasions he sometimes took too much.

When they lost the school-house the Nicholsons built a new house for themselves on some ground they had purchased at a place called Newland, near Drax, where Mrs. Nicholson had full opportunity for keeping cows, pigs, and poultry, her favourite occupation. But having no family, she would not be at the expense of a servant, and soon gave herself up to sloth and dirt, both in her person and house.

She would rarely admit any visitors, and if Mr. Nicholson occasionally ventured to invite a friend, she would either offend the guest at the time (unless she saw her way to[Pg 276] gaining some advantage by him), or revenge herself on Mr. Nicholson after his departure. And if Mr. Nicholson absented himself from the house without her consent, she always upbraided him on his return with the vilest language, attributing the visits to his neighbours or tenants to evil motives.

The following extract from the correspondence of a young lady from Cumberland, a cousin of Mrs. Nicholson's, who was staying a few months at Drax in the year 1837, gives a lively picture of her mode of life at that period:—

"One evening after tea my sister and I proposed, as we frequently did, to walk out as far as Newland, to see Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson. It was a delightful evening, and a pleasant walk we had. Chatting over bygone times and talking about our future prospects, we soon arrived at the little gate, through which we entered the back grounds belonging to the house, and passed on into the kitchen, where we found Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson seated by the little window which looks out upon the road. As soon as we had got seated and the usual salutations were over, Mrs. Nicholson (who, by-the-bye, I must confess, however little to my credit, was my cousin) began with

saying, 'Well, Miss H——n, there is going to be a confirmation at Selby to-morrow, and Mr. Nicholson will have to go with the young people; what do you say, will you go with him? You have never been at Selby, and it will be a nice opportunity.' 'I certainly would like it very much,' I replied, 'if you are going also. But how are we to go?' 'By Langrick Ferry,' said Mr. Nicholson. 'We must be up there by nine o'clock, and meet the packet. You can be up by that time?' 'And who do you think is going to pay a shilling a-piece to go by the packet? Not I, nor you either,' said Mrs. Nicholson, in an angry tone. 'And as[Pg 277] for Mary Anne, she has more sense than to waste her money in that way.' I replied by saying, 'Oh, a shilling is not much; and as there is no other conveyance by which we can get, we have no alternative, as we cannot possibly walk it.'—'No,' said she, 'we cannot walk it, but there is a man who has a cart, and I am sure if we could get a dozen to go he would take us at threepence a-piece. There's plenty of lasses and lads who are going to be confirmed would be glad of the chance. Why, you see, we should make three ourselves, and Mr. Nicholson can speak to some of them. The man can put the shelvings on, and we'll go rarely.' 'Who do you mean will go?' said the clergyman. 'Do you think that I will go to Selby in a waggon, or Miss H——n either? No, you shall not bring me to that. You have made me give up my horse and gig long since; but, go as you will yourself, I and Miss H——n will take the packet.' At this his amiable wife got into such a rage, and went on at such a rate, that to make matters up I was glad to give my consent to go with her in the waggon, and Mr. Nicholson said he would ask one of the churchwardens to take him in his gig. This pacified her, and as we rose to take our departure, she said she would see the man about the cart, and I was to mind and be ready at nine o'clock, when they would call for me with it. However, I could not bear the idea of the neighbours around seeing a great waggon filled with country rustics stopping at our door for me to go with them, so I told her I would come up to their house by that time, and we would go direct from thence. But she was afraid I wanted to get off going, and it was not without extorting a faithful promise from me that I would not disappoint her that I succeeded in obtaining her consent at last.

"The morning came, chill and gloomy, and I rose,[Pg 278] hoping it was going to rain, that I might make that an excuse for not going. So I made myself ready, and taking an umbrella, set off for Newland. I had proceeded as far as a turn there is in the road, when I heard such a shouting and hurraing that I stopped to see from whence it proceeded. I had not long to look, for turning the corner, the waggon appeared in sight, with about fourteen or fifteen young people in it of both sexes, and Mrs. Nicholson in the centre, laughing and shouting as loud as the rest. She soon saw me, and bawled out, 'Oh, yonder is Miss H——n coming! Stop the cart!—stop the cart!' By this time I had come up to them, but was trembling with shame at the idea of going with them,

and I felt vexed at the predicament I was in. At length I said, 'I think the cart is so full there is no room for me, and as the rain is already falling, I would rather not go. So do not disturb yourselves, for I will walk back again as quick as possible.' 'Oh, it's not going to be much rain, and you shall come,' replied Mrs. Nicholson; 'so make room for her, lasses. There, Betty, you can sit on the edge of the shelves, and Polly can take your place. Now, Miss H——n, jump in, and let us be off.' It was in vain that I made every excuse I could think of. She appealed to them all, and they joined her, until I was forced to consent, and off we drove. I felt thankful that it was raining a little as we passed through the village, so I put up my umbrella to screen myself from view, pretending that my clothes would get wet and spoiled.

"On we went, and after we had got through Drax the young people and she indulged themselves in conversation such as I had never heard before, and strove in vain to get me to join them, or laugh at their low and obscene discourse. Mrs. Nicholson at length said, 'Come, lasses, can't you raise a song? We'll get her to laugh just now, I [Pg 279] warrant us.' They then inquired of her what they must sing, and she told them three or four songs, all of which they sang with all their might, she every now and then asking me how I liked it. At last she said, 'Give us some sea songs; she comes from a seaport town, and will maybe like them better.' So, first one and then another was sung, but with no better success. At length I saw a gig coming fast after us, and begged them to give over till it got past. They all looked, and said it was Mr. Nicholson. 'Oh, sing away! Don't give over. Let them see how we are enjoying ourselves. Don't stop for him,' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'Come, go on—go on!'—'No,' replied some of the young people, 'we won't sing while Mr. Nicholson is going past. Wait awhile.'

"Oh, how glad was I that they kept quiet while the gig was passing, although she was urging them to sing all the time.

"Many other carriages passed us on the road, and they sang and shouted loudly without regarding them; but I did not feel so mortified as I should have done had I not been a stranger whom they could not know.

"At length we arrived at Selby, and I begged that I might be allowed to get out at the entrance to the town. But no. She declared I should not till we arrived at the inn where the cart would put up; and I was obliged to submit. On reaching the inn many were the people that stood looking at us as we alighted. I got out almost the first, and Mrs. Nicholson was the last. I had then an opportunity of seeing her costume in full. There she stood, dressed in an old dirty print gown, so straight that it was like a sack around her, and over her shoulders was thrown an old scarlet cloak, very short, with three small capes, the largest of which did not reach down to her waist. Then the bonnet is

beyond description, and the cap beneath, with one plain muslin border that had not[Pg 280] been ironed, and sadly soiled. These, with a pair of great dirty shoes that looked fit for a ploughman, over a pair of coarse black, or rather brown, worsted stockings, which her short petticoats displayed to full advantage, completed her attire. And thus, with a great, square, butter basket hanging over her arm, stood like some gipsy woman the wife of the Rev. Mr. Nicholson.

"We then went to the inn, where Mr. Nicholson and all the other clergymen were to meet the children, from whence they would proceed to church, each at the head of his own flock. We found Mr. Nicholson in a room upstairs with some other clergymen. To these he introduced me as his cousin, but none of them appeared to notice Mrs. Nicholson. At last she said, 'Come, Mr. Nicholson, we have business at the bank, and we will have time enough to get it done before you have all to walk to church.' And bidding me come with them also, she proceeded downstairs, and left the inn. Mr. Nicholson was dressed in his gown and bands, and no one who was not acquainted with them would have thought for a moment that she was his wife. However, she trotted on before us with her basket, and, I daresay, we were neither of us sorry that she did so. When we reached the bank Mr. Nicholson's business was soon settled, and then she said he had better go on to the children, or he would be too late. 'Come, then, Miss H——n,' said Mr. Nicholson, 'she can meet us at the church.' I replied, 'I had better wait for her.' (I had been told that she was jealous of almost every female that he spoke to, so I feared if I went with him she might abuse me about it another time.) But though I declined going with him till I was ashamed, she insisted that I should go. Accordingly we left her, and went again to the inn. The procession was just walking off when Mr. Nicholson requested me to take his arm, and we walked before the children of his flock to[Pg 281] the church. At the entrance we separated. He desired me to go upstairs into the gallery, as he would have to remain below with the children. I was shown into a pew in the gallery, and viewed the imposing and solemn sight with reverential feelings. I thought, how much it was to be feared, many were there that knew not what they did. I thought of our journey to Selby; and then I wondered why Mrs. Nicholson was not coming. Often and often did I look to the entrance behind me to catch a glimpse of the bouncing dame in the old red cloak. (She was then very stout, being upwards of seventeen stones in weight.) At length the service was concluded. I hurried down as fast as possible, and, without waiting for Mr. Nicholson, went out to seek her. After having sought some time, I spied her in a spirit-shop. She saw me at the same time, and called to me to go in. She seemed quite in good humour, and asked where Mr. Nicholson was. I replied I had left him in the church, having come out to seek her, as I wondered she had not come according to promise.

She said she had been doing business all the time, but when she had ordered some spirits here she had done, and would then go with me to the inn, as it was time to be starting for home.

"When we got again to the inn, and into the room where we had been before, she inquired for Mr. Nicholson, and was told he was in another room. She said, 'I suppose he is tipsy; show me where he is.' The waiter went out, and she followed him, desiring me to wait until her return. In a short time she came back, saying, 'Aye, he is yonder, tipsy enough. He has been dining and drinking wine with a set of them, and now he is laid upon a sofa, and I cannot get him to stir. It will have cost him a fine deal; but he won't tell me anything, and what is worse, I can't get his money from him, and he has a large sum in his pocket. I expect[Pg 282] the cart will be here presently, and they won't wait for me. I suppose I must go, but if I leave him, he'll be robbed. I never can walk home, and besides, I shall have my threepence to pay. So I suppose I must go. Oh, Mary Anne, do you go and speak to him, and see if he will come. The gentleman with whom he came has gone for his gig, and if he won't go with him, and we leave him, he will be robbed, and perhaps murdered.'

"'Well,' I replied, 'I'll go and see; but if he won't move for you, I don't expect he will for me. But see, there is the waggon with its live load at the door. For my part I would rather walk all the way than go in that horrid thing.'

"She went out, and I followed her down a short passage, at the end of which we entered another room, where one or two gentlemen were sitting. We found Mr. Nicholson lying on a sofa. I went up to him and said, 'Come, Mr. Nicholson, won't you go home? The cart is at the door waiting for Mrs. Nicholson, and she is quite distressed that you would not speak to her.' He replied that he would go directly the gig was ready. She then came forward and said, 'Give me your money, or you will lose or spend it.'

"'No,' he replied, 'I won't; you shall not have it. Go away, I do not want you here.'

"'Well, then,' said she, 'may Miss H——n stop with you?'

"'Yes,' he replied, 'I shall be glad of her company.'

"'No,' I said, 'I cannot stop, for I intend walking home, and it is time I was going.'

"'Oh, you must not leave him,' said Mrs. Nicholson. 'He will get more to drink, and Mr. —— will not get him home. He will be as stupid as a mule if he gets any more drink; so, there's a dear good girl, do stay with him, and don't let him get any more drink, and

mind and watch that nobody robs him, and see that he does not lose his bands.[Pg 283] Now,' she said, addressing him, 'mind you do as Mary Anne wishes you.'

"'Yes; certainly,' he replied.

"'But,' I said, 'I shall have a long walk; so I must go directly.'

"'No,' said Mr. Nicholson, 'you had better come with us. I am sure that Mr. —, the churchwarden, will be glad to accommodate you with a seat in his gig. I will go and ask him.'

"'You'll get more drink if you go,' said Mrs. Nicholson; 'he is in the parlour below, and I'll go and ask him myself. So promise me, Mary Anne, that you won't leave him, and then I'll be content.'

"Just then the gentleman himself entered the room, and Mr. Nicholson asked him if he could take this young lady also. He said he could, with the greatest pleasure. Mrs. Nicholson was delighted with this arrangement. She charged me again not to leave him, and then hurried away, and got into the cart, where the driver was grumbling at having to wait so long.

"Mr. Nicholson, Mr. —, and myself had a pleasant chat until the gig drove up. We were soon wheeling along the road, and overtook the waggon a short distance from the town, Mrs. Nicholson bawling out as we passed—'Mind, Mary Anne, and take care of him; don't let him out of your sight till I come.'"

About this time they bought some more land, and, as usual, Mrs. Nicholson wanted to have it secured to herself, but her husband positively refused to hear of it. On the morning when he was going to order the writings she endeavoured to gain her point by a little coaxing. As she assisted him on with his coat she said, "Come, Johnny, honey, I'll give you a glass of gin for fear you get cold. It is such a cold morning." And when she gave it to him she[Pg 284] added, "Now, Johnny, honey, you'll get these deeds made the same as the others?" "No, Nancy," he replied, "I shall not indeed. I have been deceived by you too often." This led to a torrent of abuse, before which Mr. Nicholson fled. He went to Howden to order the writings, from which, however, he excluded her name, an offence which she never forgave him, and the loss of that land after Mr. Nicholson's death was a constant subject of regret.

A small orchard was attached to one of their houses at Drax, and at the end of the building was a plum-tree. Mrs. Nicholson frequently cast a longing eye on the plums, and as she was not on the best terms with the person who occupied the premises, she determined, as the tree was not within the orchard fence, that she would have the

plums for herself. Accordingly, by alternate scolding and coaxing, she prevailed on Mr. Nicholson to go with her early one morning to assist in pulling the plums. When they arrived at the place she said—"Now, Johnny, honey, you'll be like to get into the tree." He told her the consequence of the act, and endeavoured to dissuade her from the attempt, but in vain. She insisted on his climbing; to this he at length consented, and commenced pulling the plums, which Mrs. Nicholson received in her apron. While they were thus engaged the tenant discovered them, and assembled several other people as witnesses. He then ordered Mr. Nicholson out of the tree, and afterwards summoned him before a magistrate for stealing the plums.

Mr. Nicholson felt keenly the disgraceful position in which he had placed himself by yielding to his wife's solicitations, and upbraided her bitterly, declaring that he should die of shame if he had to appear before a magistrate. Mrs. Nicholson advised him to feign himself ill, and undertook to appear in his stead. Accordingly, Mrs. [Pg 285] Nicholson set out, and met at Langrick Ferry with the constable and witnesses, when the constable inquired for Mr. Nicholson. She informed him he was so poorly he would not be able to walk. The constable said he would get a horse for him, for come he must. Having procured a horse, he went to Mr. Nicholson's, who, finding he had no means of escape, determined to go and endeavour to come to some arrangement with his tenant when he arrived at the ferry.

Having proposed to settle the affair amicably, the tenant assured Mr. Nicholson that he felt no resentment against him; and if he would pay £5 for expenses, he would proceed no further. The money was paid, and the affair settled, but much to the vexation of Mrs. Nicholson. The tenant, however, generously proposed to spend the five pounds, stating that he only wanted protection, not profit. He accordingly ordered supper for all present, and spent the remainder in drink. Mrs. Nicholson sulked for some time, but at length joined the party, considering that she might as well get all she could out of the £5 as let them enjoy it without her.

After Mr. Nicholson refused to let his wife's name appear in the deeds for the property he purchased, she saved up a considerable sum of money unknown to her husband, and with it bought some property at Rawcliffe. The deeds for this property she ordered to be made in her mother's name, and thus revenged herself on Mr. Nicholson for excluding her name from his deeds. Mr. Nicholson often said it was his money which bought it, and they had frequent altercations about it.

Her disposition for avarice seems to have increased, if possible, with her years. Her mother frequently declared it was impossible for anyone to live with her, and that

although Nancy was her only child, she (her mother) would[Pg 286] rather spend her declining years in the Union than in the house with her.

In the year 1842 Mrs. Jackson died, leaving Mrs. Nicholson the whole of her property for her own disposal, over which he, her husband, notwithstanding the marriage, could have no control. After her mother's death she at once resolved to keep a separate purse, being determined that Mr. Nicholson should not squander her money by his extravagance. She told him she would not ask him for anything but the egg, butter, and fruit money, just to provide groceries, &c., and she would superintend his house for her meat without any wage. But Mr. Nicholson had to provide a servant, and he was bound to pay for coals, taxes, butcher's meat, drink, and extras of all kinds, without touching the profits of the dairy. She would never let him have a single penny without insisting on its return, but she was by no means scrupulous about helping herself from his pockets when she had an opportunity, and if he missed anything, she always persisted that he had lost it.

As soon as she had got matters settled after her mother's death, she wrote to a cousin in Dublin, desiring him to come over and divide the land, which, up to this time, had been a joint estate. But previous to his coming, Mrs. Nicholson took care to pay a visit to the person who occupied the greatest portion of the land. She got him to show her all over the property, and point out to her where the best land was situated, promising as he was an old tenant that he should never be disturbed. Having obtained all the information she could, she took advantage of her cousin, who was ignorant of the different qualities of the soil, and she took care that no person should have an opportunity of telling him till it was too late to retract. When he came over to Yorkshire to accommodate her by[Pg 287] dividing the land, she laid her plans, and partly by promises if he gratified her in letting her have such and such portions in her allotment, and partly by threats of disinheriting him if he refused, she succeeded in getting nearly all the best land laid to her share, and left him only the same quantity of the inferior quality.

At the same time that the cousin from Dublin was at Drax, another cousin, a widow from Cumberland, happened to arrive on some business of her own. Mrs. Nicholson conceived the project of getting this widow to come and live in Yorkshire, doubtless thinking she would be able to make her useful, and, besides, she had a house unoccupied at Drax, and thought she might find in this cousin an eligible tenant. These circumstances induced her to behave with tolerable civility to her visitors for a short time, but her temper was so irritable that they could not speak freely in her presence.

Her cousins had agreed to depart from Yorkshire together, and travel in company as far as Liverpool, and the day of their departure was fixed, much to the satisfaction of all parties, for she sorely grudged the expense of providing for them, and, as may well be believed, they did not find themselves particularly comfortable at Drax.

Mrs. Nicholson had living with her at this time a great-niece of Mr. Nicholson's, who was acting in place of the servant whom she had discharged in a fit of jealousy.

The young girl had striven all she could, along with Mr. Nicholson, to make the visitors comfortable, and generally contrived during the day to have some eatables deposited where she could have free access to them at night when they went to bed, so that while Mrs. Nicholson was enjoying her supper in the dairy, her visitors, thanks to the young girl's kindness, were quietly enjoying themselves upstairs in their bedrooms.

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Mr. Nicholson, during the visit of these friends of Mrs. Nicholson's, had behaved with the utmost kindness and cordiality towards them. On the Monday evening previous to their departure (which was fixed for Wednesday), as they were together walking in the orchard, Mr. Nicholson directed their attention towards some fine geese. "Yes," he repeated, as his visitors admired them, "they are fine ones, and we will have one killed and roasted for tomorrow's dinner, as it may be a long time before we shall all have an opportunity of dining together again." "No," exclaimed Mrs. Nicholson, "we will not; they are not your geese, they are mine; and I intend to send them to Selby market where I shall get four and sixpence a-piece for them." "Well, if they are yours," replied Mr. Nicholson, "you will surely not refuse to have one of them taken as a treat for your friends the last day they will be here." "Yes, but I will, though," replied she. "You care nothing about a goose, do you?" said she, addressing herself to them. Of course they answered "No." "But," said Mr. Nicholson, "we must have one; and if you will not give a paltry goose as a treat to your friends, I will buy one from you, for I am determined we shall have it." "Well, then," she replied, "I will sell you one for five shillings." "No," he answered; "you said you would get four and sixpence at the market, and I will give you no more." After much altercation and debate, it was at length agreed that he should have a goose for four and sixpence, but he refused to pay the money without a receipt, for he knew if he did not get one she would swear that he had not paid for it. At last a receipt was written out and duly signed, and deposited by Mr. Nicholson in his pocket-book. The evening passed away pleasantly enough, and the visitors retired to rest not a little amused at the bargain which had been made between the [Pg 289] husband and wife. Very different, however, were the sentiments they experienced for the two

individuals; for the husband they could not help feeling both pity and esteem, but for the wife they felt nothing but disgust.

In the morning a scene ensued which it is difficult to describe. The visitors were awakened by loud quarrelling and angry and bitter words. They arose and went down-stairs, and found Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson almost at blows. It was supposed that Mrs. Nicholson, after they had all retired for the night, crept into her husband's room when she had been assured he was asleep (for at this time, and long previous, they had occupied separate apartments), and taking the pocket-book out of his pocket stole therefrom the receipt for the goose; she then replaced the pocket-book, and went quietly to bed. In the morning Mr. Nicholson rose early to have the goose killed and dressed in good time, and it was ready for the spit when Mrs. Nicholson came down-stairs. When she saw it, she was in a furious rage. She stormed and raved, and swore she would have Mr. Nicholson taken up for theft. Just then her cousins all came down-stairs and endeavoured to make peace, but in vain. She declared she would have him taken up, for the goose was hers, and he had stolen it.

"How can you say so," he replied, "when I have your own receipt showing that I paid you for it?"

"You are a liar!" she replied. "You did not pay for it. You have no receipt. You have killed my goose; but I will have you taken up, I will."

"Did you ever hear such a woman?" said Mr. Nicholson, appealing to the company. "Is she not enough to drive a man mad? You all saw me pay for the goose last night, and I can produce the receipt she gave me for it."

"You can't! you can't! I never gave you one, and you[Pg 290] shall pay me for my goose yet. Show the receipt if you have it, you thief!"

Mr. Nicholson took out his pocket-book immediately, thinking to silence her; but the receipt was gone. Finding it had been abstracted from his pocket-book, he was very much enraged, and accused her of having taken it. But she did not care for that, and after some more angry recrimination, Mr. Nicholson, for the sake of peace, and to prevent the company from being any longer annoyed by their disagreement, consented to pay for the goose a second time, and it was then roasted for dinner.

After dinner was over she suddenly declared her intention of going to Cumberland to see some property she had there, and also to visit her half-brother and his children, whom she had not seen for many years. Another inducement was her fear that her cousin would not return to settle in Yorkshire unless she accompanied her on her journey to Cumberland, when she would have an opportunity of continually urging her

to do so. She also thought she could travel cheaper in her cousin's company than alone, for she always managed to lean pretty heavily on her companions.

The plan which the other friends had formed of travelling as far as Liverpool together was prevented by this fresh arrangement, and one of the cousins was placed in a dilemma by a little act of kindness on the part of the niece, who had hidden in her box a few fine pears as a remembrance for the children in Cumberland. Now, Mrs. Nicholson had declared that she would not take any box or trunk with her, and desired her cousin to bring down her trunk to see if room could be made for the few things she would require during her absence from home. No time was therefore to be lost in removing the pears, which the niece slyly effected by transferring them to her pocket[Pg 291] whilst her aunt was looking in another direction. Had Mrs. Nicholson seen the pears in the box, she would have had cousins, niece, and all indicted together for stealing them.

On the Wednesday morning her cousin from Dublin, with his wife and daughter, took their departure, heartily glad to leave their inhospitable relative.

Mrs. Nicholson immediately commenced preparing for her journey, giving a particular charge to her niece not to let Mr. Nicholson get possession of the butter or apple money during her absence, and to keep close watch over him that he did not get drunk. Previous to her departure, Mr. Nicholson asked her to bring back with her into Yorkshire his sister, who was decrepit and destitute, and dependent on him for her support. She agreed to the proposal, remarking if he would keep her he could do it cheaper at home. But before she would undertake to bring the old lady she required a promise in writing from Mr. Nicholson that he would refund all travelling expenses incurred on his sister's account; remarking to her cousin that she would charge him plenty, for she was not going to be at the trouble of bringing the old woman for nothing; and she thought if she proved good for anything, she might make her take the place of a servant, if the niece left her, as she often threatened to do.

Taking all these things into consideration, she promised to bring her sister-in-law with her when she returned from Cumberland. And now, all other things being arranged, she began to contrive the most economical way of making the journey. She proposed to take the packet for York at Langrick Ferry. She could walk that distance very well, but as her cousin had a trunk she advised her to hire a cart, which would take them all, for it would cost as much if she sent the trunk by itself. Accordingly, a cart was[Pg 292] procured, they bade farewell to Mr. Nicholson, and proceeded on their journey. They got safe on board the packet, and nothing particular occurred until they arrived in York, about three o'clock in the afternoon, when Mrs. Nicholson told her cousin that

she knew a respectable house in Lendal where they could lodge cheap. Upon proceeding there they found very comfortable accommodation, and the cousin was much relieved by finding that the landlady perfectly understood Mrs. Nicholson's character.

At this time Mrs. Nicholson's dress consisted of an old mourning print dress, very thin and faded, and so scanty for her corpulent figure that it was scarcely sufficient to cover her under-garments, which were of a corresponding description. Over her shoulders was an old black or rather brown stuff shawl, bound round the edge with what had once been black crape; her bonnet was an old fancy straw, trimmed with black ribbon; a cap to correspond; a large yellow silk handkerchief round her neck, and a large printed apron tied before her, completed her travelling attire. In the trunk was deposited a black, stuff dress. This, along with the shawl she wore, had been bought for her by her mother thirteen years before, as mourning for an aunt, and it had also served as mourning for her mother, for whom she was then wearing it. In addition to the gown, there was a black apron, an old vest, and an old dimity skirt, which formed the whole of her wardrobe. However, the idea of these treasures being in the trunk made her very anxious about its safety in the various stages of their journey. After they had taken some refreshment, Mrs. Nicholson said they must now consider which would be the cheapest way of getting into Cumberland. It would never do to go by train. She knew there were fly waggons travelling from York to various places, and they must try and find them out.

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Being, however, informed that the fly waggons had ceased travelling since all goods were forwarded by train, it occurred to her that perhaps she might get conveyed cheaper by luggage train. Accordingly she went to the railway station, and applied at the offices of Pickford and other carriers, telling them of her wish to travel by the fly waggons, but as they were superseded by the luggage trains, she thought they might take passengers along with the goods in the same way as was formerly done by the waggons. The clerks and porters told her they could not do anything of the sort; there were regular passenger trains, and she could not go by any other. She said she could scarcely afford to travel in that way, and begged to be allowed to go with the goods. But her labour was in vain, and much to the satisfaction of her thoroughly-ashamed companion, she was obliged to relinquish her hopes, and return to her lodgings, fatigued, dispirited, and abusing everybody she had met with.

On the following morning she reluctantly consented to take the train as far as Northallerton. When she arrived there several hours were spent in similar fruitless

attempts to procure a conveyance to Darlington. Finding her efforts were useless, she began to consider that the expense of lodgings would be incurred if they remained there much longer, and she then determined to take the last train at night for Darlington, at which station they arrived about ten o'clock. Proceeding towards the town, they inquired where they could get a decent private lodging, and were directed to an old couple, with whom they spent the night and next day till the conveyance they had chosen was ready to depart.

They found the waggon was very heavily loaded, having among other things several very long fir planks. There was some difficulty in getting Mrs. Nicholson mounted, but[Pg 294] at length she got squeezed in, and reclining herself on the planks, endeavoured to compose herself to sleep. But what with the jolting of the waggon and the confined space into which she was squeezed being insufficient for her huge person, her limbs became completely cramped; and this, with the excessive closeness of the place, for the waggon was covered with canvas, made Mrs. Nicholson ill. Reaching out her arms in the dark, she seized her companion by the hair, and exclaimed, "Oh, I am dying! Oh, do get the man to stop! Oh, do, or I shall die in this confounded waggon." In vain did her companion beg she would relinquish her hold of her hair, telling her if she did not release her she could not get to the front of the waggon to make the man hear. The only reply was, "Oh, I am dying! Get a knife out of your pocket and cut the cover open." At length her companion succeeded in disengaging herself from Mrs. Nicholson's grasp, and scrambling over the various packages in the waggon, attracted the attention of the waggoner, who immediately stopped his horses, and did all in his power to render the situation of the travellers a little more comfortable. They arrived at Barnard Castle about nine in the morning. Here the driver said they would remain until noon, and then proceed to Brough.

Mrs. Nicholson told the landlady of the house where the waggon stopped how ill she had been on the road; that she could not afford to travel by a better conveyance; that she could not take any refreshment except a cup of tea, and that she had plenty of eatables with her in her basket. The kind landlady looked at her as if she sincerely pitied her, and said, "Well, never mind, you shall have a kettle boiled, and you shall make yourself comfortable. I will charge you nothing for it." She then showed the travellers into a neat little room, and said she hoped when Mrs. Nicholson had taken some tea, and had[Pg 295] a little rest on the sofa, she would be able to proceed on her journey as soon as the waggon was ready.

They arrived in safety at Brough, intending to proceed on their journey next morning. But in the morning she was very ill. She had been little accustomed to exercise for

some time before, and the long and toilsome journey in the waggon had been too much for her.

A day or two recruited her strength, and with the recovery of health, she forgot her dislike to the waggon, for they next proceeded by carrier's cart by Appleby to Penrith. But here she declared her intention of finishing her journey on foot, for what with lodgings and what with travelling expenses, she said it was going to cost as much as if they had proceeded direct by railway. The trunk was accordingly re-directed, to be left at Coldbeck, in Cumberland, till called for, and given in charge of the carrier, with many injunctions from Mrs. Nicholson to be careful of it, as it contained many things of consequence.

When they reached the little inn at Blencow the landlady eyed them suspiciously from head to foot.

The landlady, being unable to accommodate them, set a domestic to inquire for lodgings, but returned unsuccessful, for a company of Sappers and Miners who were then in that neighbourhood occupied every place which was available in the little village.

Mrs. Nicholson declared her intention of remaining, repeatedly asserting that the landlady was compelled to accommodate them. But the landlady appeared to be anxious to get rid of them, and said she could not be compelled to accommodate more travellers than the size of the house would afford.

Fortunately Mrs. Nicholson remembered having an old acquaintance in the place, and from him a light cart was obtained to convey the travellers to Southernby, where Mrs. [Pg 296] Nicholson's tenant, Mr. Ralph, resided. Here they remained a day or two, and were treated most hospitably.

Mr. Ralph conveyed them in his own cart to Park End, near Coldbeck, where Mrs. Nicholson's brother and family resided. The travellers received a hearty welcome and the kindest treatment. On the day after their arrival at Park End, at Mrs. Nicholson's request, her nephew proceeded to Coldbeck to inquire after the trunk. He brought the trunk back with him, and informed them that it had been carried by mistake to another person of the same name, who had opened it, but finding it was not hers, she had fastened it up again as well as she could, and said the owner would find all right inside. "Oh, my apron, my good black apron, I am sure it will be gone," exclaimed Mrs. Nicholson; "I wish I had never put anything into your nasty trunk. My good skirts, too, if they are gone I'll make them pay dearly for them." The trunk was soon examined, and fortunately her precious things were all safe, so that peace was soon restored.

They remained at Park End about a week, and but for the restraint her presence always inflicted on those connected with her, the kindness they received would have made the visit delightful.

Mrs. Nicholson's nephew took his aunt and her cousin to the place where Mr. Nicholson's sister resided. She explained to the persons who had the care of her the arrangement which Mr. Nicholson had made for her future custody, and desired them to be in readiness to convey her to Whitehaven when she was sent for. Both the old woman and the person she lived with, who was a niece of Mr. Nicholson's, seemed much affected at the thought of parting with each other; but the idea of joining her dear brother seemed to console the old lady. Alas! she little knew the cheerless home that awaited her.

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When they had arranged this business, they returned to Park End. Her nephew then took her to visit another lady, an old acquaintance of Mr. Nicholson's, between whom it appeared a rather close intimacy had subsisted previous to Mr. Nicholson's removal to Yorkshire. They received as usual a very kind reception, and an invitation to remain.

Many sheep are kept in that part of Cumberland, and this was the period for the annual clipping. At this season they make a kind of feast with what is called there "butter sopps." Mrs. S——, the lady of the house where they were staying, presented Mrs. Nicholson with some of the butter sopps in a basin, requesting her to take them to Mr. Nicholson as a present from her, jocosely remarking that she would like to be within hearing when he was eating them. Mrs. Nicholson accepted the butter sopps, and promised to deliver the message.

Part of old Miss Nicholson's furniture was sold, and arrangements were made for removing the remainder to Yorkshire. Then Mrs. Nicholson and the old lady started. It happened that part of the furniture of Miss Nicholson had been bought by parties from Whitehaven, and a cart was engaged next day to convey a sofa and a clock to the abode of the purchaser. Mrs. Nicholson persuaded her cousin to proceed in this cart to Whitehaven, at which place her other sister resided. This lady was the companion of Mrs. Nicholson when she went to Selby confirmation, and wrote the lively account of her visit which appears in this memoir. Mrs. Nicholson's notable plan of travelling in the cart with the sofa and clock was adopted. The sofa was placed lengthways on the cart, so that the two passengers when seated thereon travelled sideways. The clock-case lay behind, with a basket containing the works placed on the top. They proceeded along pretty well [Pg 298] until they were near a town named Distington, through which they had to pass, when by some means the works of the clock began to

strike like a bell ringing, nor could their efforts to stop it avail. With every roll of the cart it went tingle, tingle, tingle, until the people began to look out of their houses as they passed. "Come and look," said they; "here is such a fat woman mounted on a sofa, and they are ringing a bell and going to show her."

This exasperated Nancy Nicholson to the utmost. She swore at the urchins that ran by the side of the cart, and the more furious she grew the more provoking did they become.

When they arrived at their cousin's house at Whitehaven the servants were struck with amazement at her great size, and exclaimed, "However shall we get her off the cart? We shall be forced to take her to the warehouse and bouse her out with the crane." However, they managed to assist her down without the aid of the crane, and she was very soon made so comfortable that she forgot the vexation of her journey through Distington.

Mrs. Nicholson, old Miss Nicholson, and a cousin who was travelling with them, and to whom the reader is indebted for the details of the journey, were hospitably received by the cousin at Whitehaven.

Mrs. Nicholson appears to have been still fearful that her companion would not return with her, and therefore determined to take her departure by the packet which left Whitehaven on Saturday for Liverpool, and her cousin arranged to accompany her. They had been informed that the packet would start at two o'clock in the afternoon, but just as they were sitting down to dinner a gentleman called to say the packet was then making ready. Immediately all was bustle and confusion. It was necessary to[Pg 299] convey down to the vessel not only the luggage, but Mr. Nicholson's sister also, who was unable to walk. The dinner was left untasted, but the kind cousin at whose house they had been staying placed the meat and vegetables in a basket, and sent it after them, saying they must dine when they got on board.

All their friends assembled on the pier from which the packet sailed, and the sad farewell was followed by many prayers for her who had been lured away from her friends and home by what they considered the specious promises of Mrs. Nicholson.

The travelling party now comprised Mrs. Nicholson, her sister-in-law (who was quite decrepit, and could scarcely walk even with the assistance of sticks), the cousin who had accompanied her throughout the journey, and her two children.

Soon after the packet left Whitehaven, it commenced blowing pretty strong, and many of the passengers were very sick; amongst the rest, Mrs. Nicholson and her cousin.

When the passengers left Whitehaven they expected to reach Liverpool by midnight, when they would have been able to take the first train in the morning for Manchester. The wind had caused some delay, and unfortunately the packet had run against a loaded schooner, which had carried away one of her paddles, and in consequence the remainder of the voyage was performed without the aid of steam.

It was late in the forenoon when our travellers arrived in Liverpool, and having procured a cab, as Miss Nicholson could not walk, they proceeded at once to the railway station in Lime Street. To their dismay they found the station closed, and on inquiry were informed that it would not be open again for some hours. They were now in an awkward dilemma, for Mrs. Nicholson declared her [Pg 300]intention of remaining in the street until the doors were opened, for she could not think of being at the trouble and expense of removing her sister-in-law backwards and forwards in vain.

Her cousin urged her to go to the nearest public-house, as it would be disgraceful to remain at the doors of a railway station for such a length of time on the Sabbath-day. Her cousin felt herself degraded, as she had both friends and relations in Liverpool, and was fearful of being recognised. But entreaties and expostulations were all in vain. Mrs. Nicholson seated herself and her sister-in-law on the baggage, and took out the mutton and potatoes, declaring herself right hungry, and they would have their dinners. Mrs. Nicholson shared out the mutton and potatoes, settled herself down with the dish on her knees, and commenced her dinner most vigorously, declaring the meat was very good. Heartily glad was the cousin when the doors opened; in a few minutes they obtained their tickets, and were soon on their way to Manchester. On their arrival they alighted from the train, not being certain that they could proceed any further that night, and their movements being very slow, the train started off again before they got fresh tickets. After the train had departed and the crowd dispersed, the party proceeded to the waiting-room to consult about procuring lodgings for the night, when Mrs. Nicholson settled the point by declaring she would not leave the station. They were still in the midst of their discussion when some of the company's servants entered the waiting-room, and curtly informed them it was necessary to depart, as the last train had gone, and they wanted to close the station. But Mrs. Nicholson told them the train had gone off and left them, as that old woman, pointing to her sister-in-law, was unable to walk; and if she was removed from the station that night they would not be able to get her there again in time for the morning[Pg 301] train. They replied that there was an hotel close to the doors of the station where they might all be accommodated, and being so near, the old woman could be brought to the train in the morning without much difficulty. "Oh," replied Mrs. Nicholson, "do, if you please, my good man, let us remain here; we would rather remain here than go anywhere else.

We will give you a trifle to let us stop where we are, for we cannot afford to pay for our beds. But we will give you something if you will let us stop here; we can sleep on the long settle." "Well, poor woman," replied the kind-hearted man, evidently touched with pity, "I cannot give you leave to stay, neither can I accept anything from you; but I will acquaint the master, and see what I can do for you." He accordingly departed, and in a little time returned, saying it was quite contrary to their rules to permit anyone to remain in the station all night. However, as their case was so pitiful, and they had missed the train, they would be allowed to remain till morning. He then kindly offered to make a fire, which, however, Mrs. Nicholson declined, but thanked him heartily for his kindness. She said if he would only permit the gaslight to remain burning, it would be all they would require. He granted her request, and very kindly bade them good-night, and shut the door.

The travellers then endeavoured to compose themselves to rest, Mrs. Nicholson exulting in her success in obtaining leave to remain at the station, whereby they would save the expense of lodgings. Fortunately a pair of pillows belonging to the cousin were corded on the top of one of their trunks. They were accidentally omitted when the other portion of her furniture was packed off, and they now proved extremely useful. The cords were speedily untied, and Mrs. Nicholson and her sister-in-law each took a pillow, and laid down on the long seats of the waiting-room. Her[Pg 302] cousin and her children, with the help of sundry bundles, followed their example, and wrapping themselves in shawls and cloaks, were soon settled down, and prepared for a sound sleep after the fatigues of the day.

On the following morning they took tickets for Selby, where they arrived safely without any further adventures, and returned to Drax in the evening by the carrier's cart, after having been absent from home about a month.

Mr. Nicholson received his poor old sister very kindly.

Mr. Nicholson's niece left a few weeks after her aunt returned from Cumberland, after which time Mrs. Nicholson treated the poor sister-in-law with the greatest cruelty, compelling her to walk without the assistance of her sticks, although she was scarcely able to totter along.

It will be readily imagined that under these circumstances matters became worse and worse in Mr. Nicholson's house.

It was about the end of November, 1844, that husband and wife had a violent quarrel, which ended in a mutual agreement to separate.

Mrs. Nicholson's intention was to take up her abode in a house belonging to her at Drax, which was next door but one to that occupied by her cousin, and at that time unoccupied, and thither she moved with such furniture as Mr. Nicholson would spare her. A series of miserable squabbles ensued, an account of which is given in full in the chap. book from which this notice is taken, but which we will spare our readers.

The final quarrel took place in 1845, when Mr. Nicholson beat his wife, in the house where she lived. He never from that day visited her again, or would suffer her to re-enter his doors. Indeed, they never again met.

She remained at Newland some time, and then removed to Asselby. The first change she made there was to turn out of his farm the tenant who had given her so[Pg 303] much information previous to the division of the land with her Dublin cousin, by means of which she had obtained the best land. For the purpose of gaining this information she had made her tenant a promise that he should never be disturbed. He reminded her of her promise, but she had made her plan, and cared neither for his entreaties nor for her promise. He was compelled to leave the farm at the termination of his tenancy, which was the Lady-day following her final separation from her husband.

She persuaded her cousin to come and live with her at Asselby, promising her if she would do so that she would leave her all her property. The cousin, although to do so was extremely inconvenient, and certainly most unpleasant, agreed on these terms to do what she wished.

Poor Mr. Nicholson had bought an accordion, which he amused himself in the long evenings with playing. On a summer night he sat out under the trees and practised on his instrument. Nancy was highly exasperated when she heard this. It was done, she concluded, out of malice, to exhibit to the whole parish that he was indifferent to his loss, and could be supremely happy without his wife.

"And I can be happy too," said Nancy, and she launched out in the extravagance of an organ. She could not play it, but she could pull out all the stops, bang her fist on the notes, and let the roar of the instrument proclaim to the neighbourhood through the open windows that she too was merry.

But not satisfied with this, she determined to be revenged on her husband by obtaining, if possible, his inhibition. She resolved on bringing Mr. Nicholson's intemperance under the notice of the Archbishop, yet so ingeniously did she lay her plans, that when the investigation took place, the part she had taken in it did not transpire.

It appears that Mr. Nicholson had a dispute with a[Pg 304] tenant at Drax about giving up possession of his premises at a certain time, and this tenant called on Mrs. Nicholson at Asselby, requesting her to be a witness as to the time of his entering into possession, when she instigated him to write to the Archbishop of York and give a full account of Mr. Nicholson's various acts of intemperance, with a full detail of all the circumstances in his conduct which were likely to degrade him in the eyes of the Archbishop.

Mrs. Nicholson then caused letters to be written to the Archbishop, complaining that Mr. Nicholson had beat her, and caused her to be turned away without a home. This brought about a correspondence between the Archbishop and Mrs. Nicholson, but, contrary to her hopes, it ended in the Archbishop advising Mrs. Nicholson to consult a solicitor on the subject.

The investigation caused Mr. Nicholson's suspension from preaching for two years, which event gave Mrs. Nicholson great satisfaction. She wrote several letters to him from Asselby, in some of which she abused him, and in others expressed a wish to be again reconciled, but she never received any reply.

Being now in comparative tranquillity with all around her, she was at a loss for an object on which to employ her ever active brain, when one day, as she was reading over the advertisements in the newspaper, she suddenly exclaimed, "I am tired of doing nothing, and I think it is a sin to be idle. To be sure I have what will keep me, and somebody after me, but I would rather be employed. I will try to obtain a housekeeper's situation. I know there are many who would be glad to have such a person as me, if it was only to take care of things for them." It is probable that no one else would be of the same opinion, but from that time she searched the advertisements in the newspapers with an interest truly ridiculous. Week after[Pg 305] week passed, but nothing appeared which was likely to suit her.

At length an advertisement appeared for a cook and housekeeper wanted for a single gentleman. The address was copied, and a letter written, describing her as a clergyman's daughter, &c. It was read over several times by Mrs. Nicholson previous to its being deposited in the post-office, and the reply was anxiously looked for. At length it arrived, when it appeared that the advertiser was a highly respectable physician residing at Thirsk, and he appointed a time for meeting Mrs. Nicholson at the Railway Hotel at York.

Mrs. Nicholson immediately considered herself engaged, and as she expected to leave Asselby for some time, she made great preparations for securing her

apartments and the property they contained, locking and marking every drawer and cupboard, so that she might know if anyone meddled with them during her absence.

She had then to consider what clothing would be necessary for this important occasion. She thought it probable that she would be expected to dress rather smartly in her new situation, and accordingly packed up in a band-box an old-fashioned black silk pelisse, lined in front with yellow; a pink muslin gown which she had got soon after her marriage, and which was consequently too small for her at this time; her never-failing black stuff gown for occasional use; and a light shawl. These formed her wardrobe and filled the band-box, which was then tied up in a large old shawl. She then packed a few articles in a reticule basket covered with a piece of old blue print. This she secured with a padlock passed through the lid of the basket and the willows at the top which were left uncovered by the print.

In vain her friends tried to persuade her not to take her[Pg 306] clothes with her, as it was doubtful if she would get the situation. She appeared to think that was impossible, because she was determined to go, let the place be what it might, never seeming to think the other side would refuse. She was then entreated to dress herself as tidily as possible, but she would only go her own way. So she arrayed herself in an old print gown, very much soiled, the indispensable apron, a woollen plaid shawl, a cap very much crushed, and a bonnet little better.

The day appointed for meeting the gentleman at York was wet and stormy, but Mrs. Nicholson resolutely faced the storm, and taking the packet at the ferry, arrived in safety at York. She then set off to walk to the hotel, but by the time she reached the end of Skeldergate she was pretty well fatigued with her great bundle and basket, and her shoes were covered with mud, her bonnet blown back off her face, and her hair hanging about in disorder.

She was in this state when she arrived at the hotel, and inquired if Mr. —— from Thirsk was there. She was immediately shown into his presence. On entering the room she made a low curtsy, placed her bundle on the floor, and sat down on the nearest chair, almost overcome.

The gentleman approached from the other end of the room, which was a large one, and looking at her for about a minute, he inquired, "Were you wanting me?"

"Yes, sir," she replied. "I suppose you are Mr. ——, from Thirsk?"

"I am," said the gentleman.

"Oh, then," said she, "I am Mrs. Nicholson who wrote to you about your situation as cook and housekeeper."

The gentleman, who appeared rather nervous, immediately replied, "Oh, dear me—you Mrs. Nicholson!—you the person who wrote to me! I understood——"

Here his sentence was left unfinished, and he [Pg 307]commenced again, "Oh, my good woman, it must be some mistake. Are you the person who wrote to me?"

"Yes, sir," she replied; "and I assure you I will take all possible care of anything intrusted to me."

"Oh, dear!" said he, "you are not at all the kind of person that I require. I have hitherto had my sister to superintend my house, but she is going to travel in Italy, and I want a person qualified to supply her place."

"Oh," answered Mrs. Nicholson, "I can do that. I have been used to manage a family of fifteen, and I am sure I can do all you require."

"Oh, dear, no!" again retorted the gentleman, who began to look upon her with some degree of apprehension. "I assure you, you are not the sort of person I want. There must have been some mistake, my good woman—you really will not do for me." So saying, he retreated towards the other end of the room.

Mrs. Nicholson began to feel disappointed, but resolved to try again. Once more advancing towards him, she said, "Well, sir, I am very sorry you think so. However, I have no objections to travel, and if your sister should want a companion——"

Here the gentleman interrupted her, saying, "My good woman, no such thing, I assure you. You really will not do at all. There has evidently been some mistake, for had I known before, I need not have troubled you."

"Well, indeed," said Mrs. Nicholson, "it has been a great deal of trouble, for I have come all the way on purpose, and have brought my clothes with me."

The gentleman involuntarily cast his eyes first at the great bundle and then at the speaker, and observed he was really sorry, though he could not be answerable for her actions, but if she desired, he would order her some refreshment.

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However, she declined, and took her departure, murmuring something about her disappointment and the trouble she had been at.

Week after week rolled on, and she was still pondering over a situation, when her attention was again attracted by an advertisement for a housekeeper. Application was made, and an answer duly returned, informing her that her services would be required to manage a large establishment. Her wages would be thirty pounds per annum, and she would have the control of all the female servants, except the lady's maid and the governess. The others she would have power to engage and discharge at her own discretion. She was requested to go over immediately to meet the lady and gentleman at their own house.

Mrs. Nicholson was delighted with these proposals, and already fancied herself at the head of the establishment. She immediately began to calculate how much money she could save out of her wages, and the various perquisites which she considered would be within her reach, and she then rejoiced that she had not obtained the old bachelor's situation at Thirsk.

As this situation promised to be one of importance, she thought it would be necessary to take most of her smart clothes, but after mature consideration she made up her mind to take precisely the same as she had taken to York. The band-box had not been unpacked since her former journey, so that she had only the covered basket to fill, and she was then ready to start.

The letter she had received directed her to a beautiful mansion near Skipton in Craven. As it was necessary to be there as early as possible, she was obliged to travel by rail. When she arrived at the station at Skipton, she inquired the way to A——, and after a weary walk, at length reached the entrance to the grounds surrounding the Hall.[Pg 309] After proceeding a few yards along the avenue, she sat down to arrange her dress, and then took a survey of the place. From the spot which she occupied she could obtain a slight glimpse of the building. "Why," she exclaimed, "this is much finer than K—— Hall; I shall have a grander place than him." After resting a short time she proceeded to a door, and slightly tapping at it, retired a few steps. It was speedily opened by a female domestic, who inquired of Mrs. Nicholson what she wanted. She replied by asking if Mrs. —— was at home. The girl having answered in the affirmative, she requested her to be so kind as to inform the lady that Mrs. Nicholson had arrived.

"Oh, certainly," replied the girl; and eyeing her from head to foot, she asked, "are you Mrs. Nicholson?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Nicholson, "and I have just arrived by the train."

The girl then invited her to walk in, and she was shown into a small sitting-room. In passing along she saw that the house was very extensive, and the apartments so

numerous and so grand that she would not be able to stop there. She had just made up her mind that the place was too grand for her, when the door opened and a lady entered. Mrs. Nicholson arose and curtsied, but was full of confusion, and unable to utter a word. The lady requested her to sit down, and informed her that Mrs. —— would be with her in a few minutes.

"What," answered Mrs. Nicholson, "are not you Mrs. ——?"

"Oh, no," replied she; "I am her maid."

"I suppose Mrs. —— is expecting me?" said Mrs. Nicholson.

"Oh, yes," replied the maid; "she sent the carriage to the railway station to meet the train, and bring you here. But it returned some time since. The groom said he made [Pg 310] inquiries, but could not hear of a passenger likely to be the new housekeeper."

During this speech the lady's maid appeared to be examining Mrs. Nicholson's dress most minutely.

In a short time the lady herself appeared, and the maid withdrew, but Mrs. Nicholson had both seen and heard sufficient to prevent her from feeling the least desire to remain. She therefore at once said to the lady, "Oh, ma'am, I am sorry I have come here, for I could never stay in this great place."

The lady replied, "Well, Mrs. Nicholson, I am sorry likewise, for I was really in hopes I had met with an excellent housekeeper. However, as you see it yourself, I shall be spared the necessity of wounding your feelings."

The lady then repeated what the maid had told her about sending the carriage to the railway station, but Mrs. Nicholson appeared quite incapable of entering into conversation. The lady evidently observed her confusion, and behaved with the utmost kindness and condescension. She remarked that night was coming on; therefore if Mrs. Nicholson would remain till morning, she would give orders for her accommodation.

Mrs. Nicholson decided not to remain, and she also declined taking any refreshments, but she expressed a desire to see some of the rooms in the Hall. The lady readily granted her wish, and showed her through the splendid apartments herself. She again expressed her sorrow that a mistake, as she expressed it, had occurred, and Mrs. Nicholson replied that she was sorry too, for the journey had been a great expense to her, but she hoped the lady would give her something towards it.

The lady smiled at her request, and gave her a few shillings, remarking that she had now paid for advertising for a housekeeper.

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Mrs. Nicholson humbly thanked her, and took her departure, amidst the half-suppressed titters of the servants, who had assembled to witness her exit.

These events were seldom referred to afterwards, and Mrs. Nicholson thenceforth rested satisfied without seeking another situation, but continued steadily her usual mode of living and amassing money.

In the beginning of the year 1850, having heard that Mr. Nicholson was dangerously ill, she felt anxious to see him, but first caused the question to be put to him if he wished to see her, when he expressed the greatest abhorrence at the idea, and declared that he never wished to see her more. He died on the 8th of February following.

At the invitation of the executors she attended the funeral. She was dressed in her never-failing black stuff gown, and a white Tuscan bonnet which she bought soon after she separated from her husband. The bonnet was trimmed for the funeral with a narrow black gauze ribbon.

Mr. Nicholson left a will wherein he provided for his poor old sister for life, with remainder to a niece in Northamptonshire. His household furniture and effects were to be sold. Of course he could not prevent Mrs. Nicholson from having a life interest in any property referred to in the deeds in which her name was inserted.

When the sale of the furniture was advertised, Mrs. Nicholson determined to go over to Newland and take possession of the house. Her cousin was invited to accompany her. She was much troubled at the thought of the sale, for the things had formerly been hers, and she seemed to feel great pain at parting with them in that way. At length she declared, as she could not keep them herself, she would endeavour to prevent anybody else from enjoying them. She then broke the glass over the clock face,[Pg 312] and with a penknife cut slits in the carpets and haircloth covering of the sofa. These were not visible at the time of the sale, but would undoubtedly appear when brought into use.

The sale took place on the Saturday, and it was late in the evening when it was concluded. Several friends invited Mrs. Nicholson to their homes, but she refused to leave the house. Two bedsteads and a crimson sofa were left, which the purchasers could not conveniently remove that evening, and which Mrs. Nicholson gladly allowed to remain, as they were likely to be useful to her. She had previously observed a large

bundle in the garden, which had evidently been overlooked by the auctioneer and his assistants. This she contrived to conceal in the cellar until all the company had retired, when she brought it forth, and found it to contain an excellent pair of blankets and a good quilt, which enabled the pair to make their quarters rather more comfortable. She also found in the cellar a barrel containing a considerable quantity of ale, with which she nearly filled an old kettle, and having boiled it over a fire made of sticks and old wood, she drank the greater part of the kettleful at her supper, and was soon as fast asleep in her new-found blankets, laid on the bare bedstead, as if she had been on a bed of down.

When morning arrived, the house, as might be expected, presented a very desolate appearance. The cold was intense, but Mrs. Nicholson resolutely refused every invitation to leave it. She and her cousin found plenty of sticks and wood, with which they kept up a tolerable fire, and having drunk some more boiled ale, Nancy commenced a thorough inspection of the house. She found some old lumber which had not been worth selling, and in one of the chambers a good heap of barley. Into this chamber she removed all the [Pg 313] lumber, together with all the pots and pans, whether broken or sound, a quantity of doctors' bottles, and every piece of wood about the place which was not then required for their fire.

Having only a life interest in the house, she determined to remove the fixtures. She pulled the shelves out of the cupboard, tore down the banisters at the top of the stairs, took the lock off the parlour door and the rollers from the windows, and deposited them in the chamber with the lumber and the barley. When night again drew on she had all arranged to her satisfaction. Again she boiled her kettleful of ale, and again slept soundly in her blankets as on the previous night.

Early on Monday morning she deposited in the chamber the blankets, the quilt, and the old kettle, and having securely locked the door and placed a private mark upon it that she might know if an entrance had been attempted, she waited anxiously until the owner of the bedsteads and sofa arrived and took them away. She then secured the house by nailing down the windows, &c., and taking the path across the fields, once more returned to Asselby.

Almost immediately after she arrived at home, she was informed by the niece whose husband was tenant of the farm, that, owing to the heavy rent and other circumstances, their affairs had become embarrassed. Mrs. Nicholson had always promised to be a friend to them, and they now offered to give all up to her, hoping by that means to secure a continuance of her friendship. But she suddenly took offence at something or other, and seized upon all they possessed, which was immediately

advertised to be sold by auction, and her niece and family left the house the same evening.

There was then no one left about the premises but[Pg 314] herself, and as she could not bear to be alone, she again entreated her cousin to remain with her for a time.

The sale of her niece's stock and furniture proceeded. At the conclusion, the villagers, to whom she had always been an object of dislike, made a large straw effigy, and paraded it up and down the place. They then set fire to it in front of her window, and saluted her with songs, hisses, and execrations.

The sight of the fire thoroughly alarmed her, and throwing open the window she screamed and swore like a mad woman. She sent for a constable and shouted for help. No one appeared to interfere on her behalf, but when the effigy had ceased burning, the crowd dispersed of their own accord.

Nancy Nicholson was so offended at having been burnt in effigy that she determined to leave Asselby, and as she had again a house at liberty at Drax, she moved her furniture into it, and persuaded her cousin to accompany her.

About six weeks after the death of her husband, an elderly gentleman began to pay his addresses to Mrs. Nicholson. A second suitor speedily followed, and shortly afterwards a third. This bevy of suitors had a wonderful effect on the old lady, and she began to pay great attention to her dress and personal appearance. She purchased within one week three new gowns, all of which she had made up with flounces; she got also a new bonnet, and had several caps newly trimmed. She then brought from her stores several rings, not one of which was gold except her marriage ring, and with these she adorned her fingers. An hour or more she would spend every morning in rubbing her rings, and in oiling and dressing her hair, taking great pains to set [Pg 315]herself off to the best advantage, assuming all the giddy flirting airs of a girl of sixteen. There is little doubt she would have married a second time, but feared parting with her money, and it is thought that none of her suitors were particularly anxious to take her without it.

About this time she began to attend the Roman Catholic chapel at Howden, and shortly after was received into the Roman Church by baptism; and at that time she certainly appeared to have more devotional feeling than she ever displayed either before or afterwards. But on being applied to for a small donation towards the new church then in course of erection at Howden, she speedily withdrew from the Roman communion, remarking that she had a good pew in the parish church, to which she

could go without expense whenever she felt disposed, and she would, too, in spite of every one.

Mrs. Nicholson could never get a servant to live with her for any length of time, her filthy habits being past endurance. She endeavoured to do without assistance, but finding that impossible, she prevailed on her cousin to come once a week to help her to clean up a little. She had her bed in the room down-stairs where she lived, and her chambers were not swept for months previous to her death. If her cousin offered to clean up-stairs, she would reply that it was of no consequence, for no one went up but herself. Her cousin received no payment for her attendance, although she found her own provisions, relying entirely on Mrs. Nicholson's oft-repeated promise that she should be rewarded in her will. Her weekly attendance was continued until about the beginning of July, 1854, when Mrs. Nicholson engaged a daughter of the niece before mentioned, to go three times a week. She also found her own provisions, but had wages for her labour. [Pg 316] The cousin, at Mrs. Nicholson's request, still went occasionally.

Soon after this Mrs. Nicholson became very ill, but was without medical advice until the 4th of August, making her words good in that respect, that she would never have another doctor until the last extremity. On that day she allowed one to be sent for, and on the following day she gave instructions for her will to be made. She bequeathed the farm and house she occupied, with all her furniture and money in the bank, to the niece before mentioned. She left another farm to the cousin in Ireland, who had been defrauded when they separated their land. She left £1500 to the son of a half-cousin by her mother's side, residing in Cumberland. But the great bulk of her property was left to her half-nephew mentioned in the account of her visit to Cumberland.

Although both the medical gentlemen and the solicitor very kindly urged her to remember the cousin who had so constantly attended upon her, without having hitherto received the slightest recompense or reward for her trouble and expense, she refused to leave her anything.

About a fortnight before her death she wished for some wine, and sent for a bottle of the best that could be procured. The wine was brought, and she was informed the price was four shillings, which caused her great dissatisfaction. She accused the person who brought it with extravagance in paying so much, and with folly in not ascertaining what would be allowed for the bottle when empty.

She then ordered in a five-gallon barrel of ale, all of which she consumed in the week previous to her death. Hearing from the doctor that she could not live long, she was dreadfully afraid of dying before she had finished the barrel, and so not have had all

she could out of her money.[Pg 317] As she had not been accustomed to drink fermented liquors for some years before, there is no doubt she must have been half-stupefied with beer during the last week of her existence.

She signed her will on Sunday morning, August 6th, 1854, and died the evening of the same day.

FOOTNOTES:

[20] "The Life of Mrs Nancy Nicholson, who died August 6th, 1854." Howden: W. Small. 1855.

[21] The Free Grammar School at Drax, where twelve boys are boarded and educated from a fund left for the purpose.

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THE WOODEN BELL OF RIPON.

Near the railway station at Ripon is a quaint block of old almshouses, with an ancient chapel dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen, of grey stone, backed by a grove of elms. The little chapel contains some curious wood carving, the original stone altar, and a large oak chest in which reposes a solitary curiosity—a wooden bell, painted grey-green. The chapel is fortunately unrestored, left in its picturesque antiquity to moulder away. Any one who had seen the chapel of Barden Tower some years ago, and what it has become under the hand of the restorer, will know what it is to be grateful that a venerable relic of antiquity has not been furbished up to suit modern taste. That St. Mary Magdalen's would have fallen into bad hands had it been given over to restoration may be judged by the hideous new chapel which the authorities have recently erected close to the almshouses.

By that wooden bell in the oak chest hangs a tale.

In the time of our grandfathers, Dr. W——, was Dean of Ripon, a divine of the old port-wine-drinking school.

Now St. Mary Magdalen's chapel was no longer used. By the ancient endowment there was to be a resident chaplain and daily service in the little church, which the inmates of the almshouses were expected to attend. But the chaplaincy and its emoluments were usually held by one of the canons of the Minster. The stipend went into his pocket; the duties were neglected. If the old almsfolk wished to[Pg 319] pray to God daily, they might totter three-quarters of a mile up to the Minster.

Dean W——, took on himself the chaplaincy; that is, he appropriated to the stocking of his cellar the money bequeathed to the almonership of the Magdalen Hospital.

But his cellar fell low. The Dean wanted money; his credit with the wine-merchants was as low as his cellar. How was money to be raised?

One day he had the bell of the Magdalen Chapel removed from the gable in which it had hung for many centuries, and had hung silent for many years.

The bell was supposed to have gone to the founders; and the money paid for it to the wine-merchant; anyhow, soon after, a hamper of fine old crusted port arrived at the Deanery.

But Ripon people, though long-suffering, could not quite endure the "robbing of churches." Murmurs were heard; the Dean was remonstrated with. He puffed out, turning as red as a turkey-cock—

"Well, well! the bell shall go back again."

And sure enough next week the bell was seen once more hanging in the gable of St. Mary Magdalen's chapel as of yore.

The Ripon people were content. The bell was never rung, but to that they were accustomed. Who cared whether the old goodies in the hospital were ministered to or not? It was no affair of theirs if the founder's wishes were set at nought, and the walls of the Magdalen never sounded with the voice of prayer.

But next spring, as on many a former one, the swallows built their nests among the eaves, and found a place about the altar of God's deserted house, as they had done in the days of the Psalmist. When nesting-time came, some boys began climbing about the roofs in quest of eggs.

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One of them, seeing a rope dangling from the bell, caught it and began to pull, when, to his amazement, the bell uttered no sound. He crept under it. There was no clapper; and what was more, it hardly looked hollow. His curiosity was excited, and he climbed up to it, and discovered that the bell was only a piece of deal turned, and painted the colour of bell metal!

The story sounded further than ever had the old bell; and for very shame the Dean was obliged to take it down, and hide it in the chest of the Magdalen chapel.

Autumn came round. The Dean had notable espalliers in his garden. His trees were too attractive to the urchins of Ripon to escape visits. This highly incensed the Dean; and one night, hearing the boys at his apple-trees, he rushed, stick in hand, upon them. One he caught by the scruff of his neck. The others fled over the wall.

"Oh, you young ruffian! you audacious young scoundrel!" roared the Dean; "where do you think thieves will go to hereafter? What do you think will happen to them here?"

"Please, sir! please, sir!——"

"Hold your wicked tongue, you rascal!" thundered the Dean, whistling his cudgel round his head, "I shall thrash you unmercifully now, and lock you up in the black-hole to-night, and take you to the magistrate to-morrow, and have you sent to prison. And then, if you go on with your stealing, sir! you will go—there!" And the Dean prodded with his stick in the direction of the centre of the globe.

Then he shook the boy furiously—"one, two," bang came the stick down.

"Please, mercy, Mr. Dean; spare me!"

"Spare you, sir! no—three."

"But, please, Mr. Dean, *my father made the wooden bell for you.*"

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"Go along, you rascal," gasped the Dean, relaxing his hold, and rushing back into his house.

In 1877 the Dean of Ripon (Dr. Freemantle) wrote to me relative to this matter:—"My attention has been directed to an anecdote told by you in your book called 'Yorkshire Oddities' of the late Dean W——. I have made it my business to ascertain the correctness of the story, as it has excited a good deal of feeling in the minds of some of the old residents here. We have found a bell which was sent from the Deanery at least 40 years ago, and which has been in the crypt of the Cathedral ever since. It is exactly the same size as the wooden bell, which we have recovered from a heap of cinders." So Dean W—— did not sell the bell after all!

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OLD JOHN MEALY-FACE.

Old John M——[\[22\]](#), a character in his way, and a celebrity in his very little circle, was born in the parish of Topcliffe, near Thirsk, on February 20th, 1784.

He was thrice married. His first and second wives I did not know; the third he married March 29th, 1838. She was afflicted with paralysis of her legs during a great part of her later life. She was a charming old woman—religious, amiable, and a general favourite with her neighbours.

Old John had sharp features, an eagle nose, and a prominent chin. He wore drab corduroy breeches and blue stockings. He shaved all the hair off his face. The nickname he bore in the village, where he resided on his small farm, was "Mealy-Face." He obtained it by this means: John was a close-fisted old man, who stinted himself, and his wife above all, in every possible way, for he dearly loved money. He did not allow his wife enough food, and she, poor thing, was wont, when he was out for the day at market or at fair, to bake herself a loaf from which she could cut a hunch when hungry.

Her husband found this out, and was very wroth. When he went to market he pressed his face down in the flour at the top of the bin, and on his return put his face back in the depressions, to make sure that the flour had not been disturbed.

The old man was not without dry humour. The story is told of him that a clergyman called on him one day to say[Pg 323] he was about to leave his present sphere of work, "the Lord having called him to work in another vineyard."

"Then," said Old Mealy-Face, "I lay you get a better wage."

"Yes," answered the clergyman, "it is a better living by a hundred a-year."

"Heh! I thowt seah (so)," said John, dryly; "else the Lord mud ha' called while (till) he'd been hoarse, and ye'd niver ha' heeard."

An excursionist met him on Whitson Scar, on the Hambledons. The traveller had come there from Thirsk, hoping to see the glorious view stretching to Pendle Hill, in Lancashire. But a fog came on and obscured the scene. The gentleman coming upon John, who had been to Helmsley on some business or other, accosted him in an off-hand manner:

"Hey, gaffer! there's a fine view from here, ain't there, on fine days?"

"Aye, sur, it might be worse."

"One can see a long way, I'm told."

"I reckon one may if one's got eyes."

"Now tell me, gaffer, can one see as far as America, do you think?"

"One can see a deel further," answered John

"You don't mean to say so?"

"Eh, but I do. One can see t' moon from Whitston on a moonshiny neet."

Old John had a famous pear-tree in his garden. Two years running his pears were stolen, and no doubt were sold in Thirsk market, without John being a penny the richer. The old man grimly awaited the thief as the fruit ripened in the following autumn, sitting nightly in his window, gun in hand.

One dark night, just before market-day, he heard some[Pg 324] one at his tree. He took careful aim at the spot whence the sound proceeded, fired, and a scream told him his bullet had taken effect. In fact, he had hit the thief in the thigh; but the ball had fortunately penetrated the flesh, and broken no bone.

The pear-stealer was caught, and on the first opportunity brought before the magistrates at Thirsk. The presiding magistrate—I think it was Sir John Galway, but am not certain—deemed it advisable to caution John M—— against too free a use of his gun.

"You know, my good friend, that a gun loaded with a bullet might have killed the man who stole your pears."

"Ah, it might, and it would, but t' gun snecked (kicked) as I were blazin' wi' it."

"If the gun had not 'snecked,' as you call it, the bullet would probably have gone into the poor fellow's heart and killed him dead."

"I'll tak' care it deean't sneck again," said Old John, who had no scruples against shooting a pear-stealer.

Whilst in the parish of Topcliffe I am constrained to relate an anecdote illustrative of Yorkshire shrewdness, though unconnected with Mealy-Face.

An old woman—Molly Jakes, we will call her—died, or was thought to have died, and was buried by the parish. A few days after the funeral the vicar was talking to the sexton, when the latter said, drawing the back of his hand across his nose, "Ye thowt old Molly Jakes were deead, sur?"

"Dead, dead! bless my soul! of course she was."

"Well, mebbe she is neah (now)."

"What do you mean? Speak, for heaven's sake!"

"Nay, sur, it's nowt! Only I thowt efter I'd thrown the mould in as I heeard her movin' and grum'ling under t' greand (ground)."

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"You dug her up at once, of course, man?"

"Nay," said the sexton, "I know two o' that," casting a knowing look at the parson. "T' parish paid one burying: who was to pay me for digging her up and putting her in ageean, if she died once maire? Besides," said the sexton, drawing his hand back again across his nose, "Old Molly cost t' parish hef-a-croon a week when she war wick (alive). Noo she's felted (hidden) under t' greeand, she costs nowt. If I'd dug her up and she lived ever seah (so) long, what would ha' t' rate-payers 'a said teah (to) me?"

John M——, once, when I was in his house, told me a curious tale about himself. He was riding one night to Thirsk, when he suddenly saw passing him a radiant boy on a white horse. There was no sound of footfall as he drew nigh. Old John was first aware of the approach of the mysterious rider by seeing the shadow of himself and his horse flung before him on the high-road. Thinking there might be a carriage with lamps, he was not alarmed till by the shortening of the shadow he knew that the light must be near him, and then he was surprised to hear no sound. He thereupon turned in his saddle, and at the same moment the radiant boy passed him. He was a child of about eleven, with a bright, fresh face.

"Had he any clothes on, and, if so, what were they like?" I asked. But John was unable to tell me. His astonishment was so great that he took no notice of particulars.

The boy rode on till he came to a gate which led into a field. He stooped as if to open the gate, rode through, and all was instantly dark.

"I'm an owd customer," said John when he presented himself to be married the third time; "soa, vicar, I hope ye'll do t' job cheap. Strike off two-thirds, as it's the third wife."

John Mealy-Face died at the age of eighty-four, and was buried at Topcliffe on November 5th, 1868.

FOOTNOTE:

[\[22\]](#) I suppress the name, as the old man died but lately.

THE BOGGART OF HELLEN-POT. A TALE OF THE YORKSHIRE MOORS. [23]

I took the opportunity last autumn, just before the break-up of the weather, of shaking off the dust of shoddy-mills, and getting a whiff of air, unadulterated with smoke, in a run among the Yorkshire moors for the better part of a week. I spent the first night at Bolton, and slept soundly, after a ramble through the beautiful Wharfedale, and an examination of the Strid, where the river gushes through a rift in the rock so narrow that it is supposed possible to stride across it, though I never heard of any man venturesome enough to make the attempt. A friend accompanied me, a Mr. Keene, and on the following day we ascended the valley of the Wharfe to Arncliffe, visiting on the way the picturesque ruin called Barden Tower, and the magnificent hanging crags at Kilnsea.

At Arncliffe, a quaint moor village, my companion fell lame, and was unable to accompany me next day on a mapless ramble in search of whatsoever was picturesque and wild. It was a glorious day, the sky pure and blue, the air elastic, the heather and fern twinkling with dew. It was really very hard for poor Keene to spend ten hours alone in a dismal little country inn, without either a book or a newspaper, whilst I was brushing through the heather, scrambling limestone scaurs, and exploring ravines, inhaling at every breath life and health and ozone. But it served [Pg 327] him right. What was the fellow thinking of when he put on a pair of new boots for his walking expedition? He looked wistfully after me out of the parlour window, and called to me to be back for a dinner-tea at seven, adding that he hoped his feet would be better in the afternoon, and then he would stroll to meet me.

Leaving Arncliffe, and noticing a bright, fretful little stream, dashing through a broken and beautiful cleft in the hills, I took a sheep-track above it, and determined on following its course. In a few minutes I seemed to have left civilisation behind me entirely. The great expanse of moorland which opened before, the utter absence of all signs of cultivation, the wild rocky pile of the Hard Flask on one side and of Fountains Fell on the other, gave the scene a savage grandeur which one hardly expects to find in England. The little beck moaned far away below me out of sight, the wind soughed pleasantly among the heather, and the curlew, which I constantly started, rose with a melancholy pipe and flew away to the grey scaurs on the side of Fountains Fell.

Being of the geological persuasion, I usually carry about with me a hammer and a small sack or pouch, which I sling round my neck, for the conveyance of specimens. I revelled in these limestone hills, spending hour after hour chipping off fragments of rock, and breaking them up to extract the fossils. I hardly knew whither I rambled, but I

certainly got into Silverdale, for I lunched on my bread and cheese with Penigent towering above me on the west, and beyond it rose the glorious pile of Ingleborough. I ascended Penigent, the height of which is 2270 feet, and watched the sunset from the top. Then I followed the precedent of the illustrious King of France who, having marched to the top of a hill, marched down again. But I was quite out in my geography. Now, with the map before [Pg 328] me, I see that my ideas as to the direction in which Arncliffe lay were entirely wrong. My walk during the day had been of such a zig-zag nature that I had lost my compass points, and had made no landmarks. The consequence naturally was, that I descended Penigent on the wrong side, and then instinctively perceiving I was in the wrong, I did a foolish thing—I struck off from my line of course at right angles. It would have been better for me to have retraced my steps up the mountain-side, and taken bearings again whilst there was still a little light; but instead of doing so, I involved myself more and more in confusion, and at last, as it became dark, I was utterly ignorant of where I was, and which was the direction in which my face was turned.

Under such circumstances a man is tempted to allow himself to be that which in a brighter hour he would repudiate—a fool. I remember mentally expressing my conviction that I was an idiot, and indignantly asking myself how I could have thought of setting out on a walk in an unknown country without map or compass? My exasperation with self was by no means allayed when I tripped over a stone and fell my length in a sludgy patch of swamp. At the same time I became conscious of a growing pain in my vitals, and was sensible of a vacuum in that region of the body which is situated beneath the lower buttons of the waistcoat; and a vacuum is what nature is well known to abhor. There was a dinner-tea spread for me in the inn at Arncliffe: chickens and ham I knew had been promised; trout I naturally anticipated would prove part of the fare in a famous fishing district; veal cutlets perhaps, and mashed potatoes. Heavens! and I not there. I know I groaned at the thought, for the sound as it issued from my lips startled me. As I walked on with drooping head, those veal cutlets and mashed potatoes rose up before me [Pg 329]tauntingly. I am a man of resolution, and finding that the vision only aggravated matters, I beat the veal cutlets down; yet, when they vanished, a new phantom rose to distress me. During the day I had examined on the slopes of Coska, Fountains, and Penigent several of those curious pots which are peculiar to the Yorkshire limestone moors. These pots, as they are called, are natural wells, hideous circular gaping holes opening perpendicularly into the bowels of the mountain. In rainy weather the tiny rills which descend the fells precipitate themselves into these black gulfs and disappear. Far down at the bottom of the mountain the streams bubble out again from low-browed caverns. Some of

these pots are many hundred feet deep; some are supposed by the vulgar to be unfathomable, for certainly their bottoms have not been sounded yet, and a stone dropped falls and falls, each rebound becoming fainter, but the ear catches no final splash.

Now, the number of these frightful holes I had stumbled upon during the day made me fear lest in the darkness I should come upon one, and tumble down it without hope of ever coming up alive, or indeed of my bones receiving Christian burial. It was now in vain for me to endeavour to revive the dream of veal cutlets in order to obliterate the hideous image of these pots; the pots maintained the day, and haunted me till—till I suddenly became conscious of some one walking rapidly after me, endeavouring apparently to overtake me. The conviction came upon me with relief, and I stood still, eagerly awaiting the individual, expecting at length to be put in the right direction. The stars gave light enough for me to discern the figure as that of a man, but I could scarcely discover more. His walk was strange, a wriggle and duck accompanying each step, the reason being, as I ascertained on his coming alongside of me, that he was a cripple in both legs.

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"Good evening, friend," said I; "I'm a stranger lost on the moor: can you direct me towards Arncliffe?"

"On, on with me," was the answer, and the hand was waved as though pointing forward.

"Dark night this," I said.

"Darker below," he muttered, as though to himself; "darker, darker, darker."

"Shall we have a bit of moon, think you, presently?"

He made no answer, and I turned to look at him.

There was something in the way he walked which made me uneasy. When he took a step with his right foot he worked his body round facing me, and then his head jogged on to his left shoulder and reclined upon it. When he stepped out with his left foot his body revolved so that his back was presented to me, and the head was jerked on to the right shoulder. I noticed that he never held his head upright; sometimes it dropped on his breast, and once I saw it drop backwards. The impression forced itself on me that just thus would a man walk who had his neck and legs broken, if by any means the possibility were afforded him to attempt a promenade.

"How far to Arncliffe?" I asked, but he vouchsafed no answer. I tried another question or two, but could obtain no reply. I lost my temper, and laid my hand on his shoulder to draw his attention to what I was inquiring, but with a wriggle he glided from under my hand, and hobbled on before me.

I had no resource but to follow him. He kept ahead of me, and seemed determined not to enter into conversation; yet I offered him half-a-crown if he would give me the information I desired to obtain.

I was puzzled with my strange companion, and felt somewhat uneasy. I felt that he was a bit "uncanny," both in his appearance and in his manner.

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Presently we came near water, as I judged by the sound, which was that of a beck murmuring among stones. On went my conductor, following the water-course, and so rapidly that I had difficulty in keeping up with him. When he leaped on a stone or scrambled up a turf-hummock, so as to stand against the horizon, where a feeble light still lingered, I could distinguish the horrible contortions of his body, and the sight invariably heightened my uneasiness.

Suddenly I missed him!

I called—but there was no reply! I stood still and listened, but heard nothing save the bubbling of the stream, and, far, far away, the to-whoo of an owl.

Noiselessly a bat fluttered past me, coming instantaneously out of the blackness of the night, and vanishing back into it as instantaneously.

"I say, you fellow!" hallooed I to the vanishing guide.

"You fellow!" answered the scaurs of Penigent, in a lower key.

"To-whoo," faintly called the owl.

"What do you mean by deserting me like this?" I roared.

"Like this," muttered the echo. "To-whoo," responded the owl.

"I must follow the beck," I said; "that will lead me to the river, and the river will guide me to some habitation of living man."

"Living man," growled the echo. "To-whoo," sang the owl.

I stumbled over the water-worn stones, and splashed into water. My ankles were scarified, my shins bruised; I narrowly escaped breaking my bones as I fell again and again. I did not dare leave the stream, lest I should lose my way.

Then a nightjar began to hiss from among the rocks, and the stream to dash along more wildly. The banks rose[Pg 332] higher, and I seemed to be walking through a railway cutting. I looked up, and saw the rugged outline of rock and furze on the eastern bank, and on top of a huge block stood a distorted human figure. It was that of my strange companion.

Down the slope he came with wriggle and jump; he came straight towards me, spread out his arms—in a moment they were clasped round me, and I was lifted from my feet. I was so astonished that I made no resistance at first, and it was only after he had taken a dozen steps with me, and I heard the splash of the beck falling into what must be a pot, and saw the black yawning hole open before me, and felt the man bending as though about to leap down it with me in his arms, that I tore my right arm loose, and caught at a young rowan-tree which leaned over the gulf.

At the same moment there flashed before my eyes the light of a lanthorn, the flame small and yellow, yet sufficient to illumine the face of the bearer—a young woman, the countenance wondrously beautiful, but full of woe unutterable.

The lanthorn passed across the open mouth of the pot. The moment it became visible the arms which held me were unclasped, and I saw the man sink down the abyss, with the light reflected from his upturned face. He went down it, not with a whizz as a falling stone, but slowly as a man might sink in water. Thus I was well able to observe his blanched face and wide dilated eyes fixed with horror on the lanthorn flame.

Having recovered my feet, naturally my first impulse was to run up the bank, and get as far as possible from the ugly well into which I might have been precipitated. My next was to look round for the young woman who bore the light. I could see the lanthorn at some little distance, but I could not distinguish the bearer.

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I called to her; she lifted the light till her hand came within its radiance. The small white hand beckoned me to follow.

I ran to catch her up, but the faster I pursued, the swifter glided the flame before me. Evidently the bearer did not desire to be overtaken. When I stopped, she stopped; when I advanced, she moved onwards; always keeping the same distance ahead of me. So we must have proceeded for a couple of miles, when suddenly the light went

out, and at the same instant I became conscious of a small farm-house lying before me.

In less time than it takes me to write this I had entered the enclosure which surrounded it, and had rapped hastily at the door. A gaunt moorland farmer opened it, and looked at me with surprise.

"Can you let me have shelter for a little while, and then a guide to Arncliffe?" I asked. "I have lost my way, and have met with a strange adventure, which has somewhat shaken my nerves."

"Sit here; come here; sit thee down there," he said, pointing to the ingle corner with the stem of his pipe, and then closing and bolting the door, he stalked over to the opposite corner and sat down on a rocking-chair. He eyed me musingly, and smoked steadily without making any remark. After having puffed away for ten minutes, he shouted at the top of his voice:

"Gi'e him a glass of ale, lass."

"A'm boune to, lad," replied a voice from the back-kitchen: and looking over my shoulder, I noticed that there was a woman in the little lean-to back room, "fettling up" by the light of a rush-candle.

"Thou'rt none boune to Arncliffe to-neet?" said the man, slowly withdrawing his pipe from his mouth.

"I am, if you will direct me," I replied, "for I have a [Pg 334] friend there who is expecting me, and who will be sorely put out at my non-appearance earlier."

"Humph!"

He smoked for ten minutes more, and then said:

"And what brought thee this road?"

"I will tell you," I replied; and then proceeded to relate what had happened to me. As soon as I mentioned the strange companion I had met with—

"It's t' Boggart, lass!" called the farmer to his wife, "he's gotten agait misleading folk again."

When I spoke of the flash of light before which the man had quailed, and which had revealed the face of a woman, pale and sad, bending over it—

"Weel done, Peggy!" roared the farmer; "'tis no but Peggy wi' t' lanthorn, lass,"—again to his wife.

"She's a good 'un," responded the lady from the kitchen.

"Who are the Boggart and Peggy?" I asked; "they seem to be intimate acquaintances of yours."

The great Yorkshireman did not answer, but whiffed away, with his dreamy eyes fixed on the fire.

"So t' Boggart thowt to ha' hugged thee down Pothoile!" Then he laughed. "I reckon," mused he again, "I reckon he were a bit flayed to see Peggy come anent him that road!"

"I wish," said I, "that you would tell me all about him and her."

"So I will, lad, bi'm bye, if thou'rt boune to Arncliffe to-neet." He looked up at me. "We can gi' thee a bed if thou likes: it's no but a poor one, but it's none so bad—eh, lass?" The last two words were shouted to his wife.

"Ay, ay," she replied from the kitchen.

"Thank you very kindly," said I; "if it were not for my friend at Arncliffe, I would accept your offer with alacrity; but as it happens, I *must* return there to-night."

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"Gi'e us a leet, lass!" called the man, knocking the ashes from his pipe, rising, and taking down a lanthorn.

The good woman lighted the candle for him, and the great Yorkshireman shut the lanthorn door, took up his cap, and said to me—

"Now, if thou'rt boune to come, come on."

I rose and followed him. He led the way, and as we walked towards Arncliffe he told me the following tale:—

"Some hundred years ago there lived a young woman in a cottage near Kettlewell. A strange man came into the neighbourhood, gained her affections, and married her. They settled at the little farm in which my guide now resided. They had not lived a twelvemonth together before the constables entered the house one evening, and took the man up on the charge of bigamy. He had a wife and family living at Bolton, in Lancashire. As they were carrying him off, he broke from them and fled over the

moors, and was never retaken. By some it was supposed that he had escaped to America, but by others that he had fallen into one of the pots and had perished. His poor second wife, heart-broken, wandered all that night searching for him, and was found dead on the side of Penigent next morning. And they say," added my guide, in a low voice, "that she seeks him still; and when she's gotten him she'll tak' him before the throne of God to be sentenced for having ruined her happiness, and been the cause of her death. That's why he's so flayed (afraid) of meeting wi' she, and sma' blame to him."

"So you think the wretched man perished in one of the pots?"

"I reckon he did. And he'll never have rest till his bones are laid i' t' churchyard, and that'll never be."

"Farmer," said I, after a pause, "have you plenty of rope about your house?"

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He grunted an assent.

"Then I will descend the pot to-morrow."

I am sorry to state here that my companion was so completely thrown off his balance by this announcement that he swore.

"Shall you have time to assist me?" I asked.

"I'm none particular thronged," he replied.

"Some additional help will be needed," I continued; "if you have a workman or two disposed to earn a day's wage by being useful to me, bid them be ready with all that is requisite at the mouth of the pot to-morrow."

"Ay! if we can addle us a bit brass that road," responded the farmer, "we're t' chaps for thee. But I reckon thou'rt no but making gam' of me."

"I am not, indeed," I replied; "get plenty of rope ready, and a stout pole laid across the mouth of the hole, and I will go down to-morrow."

I was as good as my word. Keene accompanied me next day to the little farm, and there we found half-a-dozen men with ropes and windlass ready to assist in the exploit.

As the sun was shining, I felt no fear whatever, and I laughed and chatted whilst a belt was strapped round my waist, another under my arms, and the cord passed beneath

them. Before descending I took up my geological bag and slung it round my neck; I also picked up my hammer.

"You may be sure I shall find some magnificent stalactites down there," said I.

"Are you ready?" asked Keene.

I sat on the edge of the gulf under the mountain ash to which I had clung for life the night before. I directed my eyes downwards, and saw the little stream lose itself in spray after a leap or two. How awfully black the abyss seemed! "Now, then!" I slipped down, and the windlass was slowly unwound. Click, click, click! I heard each[Pg 337] sound of the crank as it descended. The air about me was cold and damp. Beautiful ferns and mosses flourished on every ledge; presently, however, I got beyond the fern zone. I was in darkness. The spray of the falling stream was so finely comminuted that it was more like mist than spray. The walls of the pot were green with lichen, and now I was below the region of mosses. Here, on a little patch of moist *Marchanta polymorpha*, I found a poor butterfly, the common meadow brown. It had probably fluttered some way down the chasm in the giddiness of the moment, its wings had been clogged with spray, and it had been carried lower and lower till at last it had alighted, dripping and chilled, without hope of seeing sunlight again, on a small ledge covered with lichen. I rescued the poor insect, and put it inside my hat. I began to swing like a pendulum, and at one time had some difficulty in preventing myself from striking the rocky sides.

I could not see the walls now; I could not hear the click of the windlass. All below was perfectly black; not a sign of a bottom; but white terraces, covered with stalagmite, gleamed up round the well-like ribs, catching a little light from above. With my hammer I broke off a large mass of deposit formed by the droppings of water largely impregnated with lime. It whizzed down, but still I heard no final splash. I shouted—only faintly, as the pressure on my lungs from the belt prevented my using my voice to its full extent—but the whole well seemed alive with echoes. I tried to turn my head and look up at the sky, but I was unable. The darkness and chill began to tell upon me, and an agonising cramp contracted my legs. However I managed to place my feet upon a ledge, and to stand up. Those working the windlass, feeling that the strain was off the rope, let out no more. When the cramp left me, I cast myself off again, and dropped below the ledge. After a[Pg 338] while I began to hear a sound of falling water, and in a few minutes passed an opening in the side of the pit, out of which gushed an underground stream, and precipitated itself down the chasm.

Now I became conscious of a broad ledge of rock, extending considerably out into the well, and contracting its size; something lay upon it—fragments of broken stalactites

and stalagmites, I fancied—what they were I could not distinguish, especially as at the same moment that I saw them I perceived something black rising towards me. In one second I saw the face of the Boggart flash up at me full of hideous triumph, and I felt the grip of his arms about my waist. Next moment I lost all consciousness.

When I came to myself I was lying in the sunshine on the slope above the pot—Hellen or Hull-pot is its name—with Keene and the farmer bending anxiously over me.

"I'm all right," said I, in a low voice; and in a couple of minutes I was sufficiently recovered to sit up.

I took off my hat, and away flew the butterfly I had rescued, oblivious of the hours of darkness and misery it had passed through.

"Did you reach the bottom?" asked Keene. I shook my head.

"We let out all the rope we had," said my friend, "and then we pulled up again, and found you at the end in a dead faint. I see you have not been idle," he added, lifting my geological bag. "Full of stalactites, I suppose," and as he shook it the contents rattled.

"No," said I, "I put nothing into it."

"Then how comes it filled?" he asked. "Why, halloo! what have we here?" and he emptied out of it a heap of human bones and a shattered skull. *How* they got into the sack I shall never know. The remains were very old, and[Pg 339] were encrusted with stalagmite. They lie now in Horton churchyard. I believe the Boggart has not been seen since.

* * * * *

For a considerable time during our walk from Malham Tarn to Settle I had been silent. Keene could endure it no longer, and at last exclaimed, "Really this is intolerable! You have been in a brown study for the last half-hour without speaking a word. A penny for your thoughts!"

"To tell you the truth," I replied, "I have been thinking over what might have happened if you had fallen lame at Arncliffe, *if* I had gone on a geological walk without you, and had lost my way on Penigent, and had fallen in with a Boggart, who tried to precipitate me down a pot, and if I had been rescued by an *ignus fatuus*, and had finally descended the pot and brought up the Boggart's bones!"

Mr. Keene stared at me with amazement. I then related to him what I have just related to you, good reader, and I concluded with the observation: "All this, you

know, *might* have happened, but unfortunately it *didn't*. You have had my thoughts, so hand me your penny."

FOOTNOTE:

[\[23\]](#) Contributed by me to *Once a Week*, March, 1867.

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JONATHAN MARTIN, THE INCENDIARY OF YORK MINSTER. [\[24\]](#)

Jonathan Martin was not a native of Yorkshire, but as it was in Yorkshire that he lived part of his time, and as his name is inseparably connected with the glorious Minster at York, which he partially burnt, he claims our notice in this volume.

He was born, according to his own account, at Hexham, in Northumberland, in 1782, of poor but honest parents, and by them, at a suitable age, was put apprentice to a tanner. He appears to have served his apprenticeship with steadiness, and on its expiration, when he was in his twenty-second year, he removed to London, intending to travel. Soon after his arrival in the metropolis, as he was one day viewing the Monument, a man accosted him, and inquired if he wanted a situation. Martin told him he wished to go abroad, on which the man replied that he could suit him exactly, as a gentleman of his acquaintance had a son on board a frigate on the Indian station, who wanted a person of Martin's description, and would give him thirty-two shillings per month, besides his chance of prize-money.

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Martin eagerly accepted this offer. But he soon found that he was in the hands of a press-gang; and he was sent to the Nore, where he was placed on board the *Hercules*, 74 guns, which formed a part of the expedition against Copenhagen in 1804 under Lord Nelson. After the surrender of the Danish fleet he was drafted into one of the prizes, an 84-gun ship, which, with a squadron of seven other vessels, was ordered to proceed to Lisbon to blockade the Russian fleet in the Tagus, in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of the French. These ships were taken by the British, and were brought to England.

The next affair Martin mentions in his biography as having been engaged in was in assisting to bring off the troops from Corunna in January, 1809. He says, setting sail from Vigo Bay—

"We reached Corunna in one day, and then approached the shore: the numerous carcasses of dead horses, all floating in the bay, showed us the toil our army had suffered. We could plainly see the French and English camps from our ships, each occupying a hill very near the other. We made every exertion to get close in, to cover the embarkation of our troops, who were sadly annoyed by the fire from the French artillery on the heights. Our ships replied to the French as well as the heavy sea then setting would allow. By great exertion the whole embarkation was completed. They then directed their batteries against our transports, who had to slip their cables, and stand out of the reach of their guns. During this scene of confusion and terror several boats were sunk by the fire of the enemy and some by the violence of the sea. Our vessels presented an awful spectacle, from the number and condition of the wounded, who occupied our cockpit, cable tier, and every spare place on board, and whose misery was rendered[Pg 342] greater by the tempest which arose, and prevented that attention being paid to them which their situation required: a great number perished solely on this account. During the gale five transports were lost, from which only few lives could be saved, owing to the state of the weather and the rocky nature of the coast."

Having landed the wounded men in England, the ship on board which Martin was sailed for Lisbon. Of his adventures at sea Martin tells several remarkable incidents; but they are many of them connected with dreams, and if not wilful falsehoods, are most probably misrepresentations. Of such probably is what he relates as occurring whilst he was at Lisbon. He says that whilst in the Tagus the whole crew went on shore except himself, a young negro, and the captain's wife and daughter. The black, knowing the captain had a quantity of gold in his chest, proposed to Martin to murder the ladies, and take a boat and escape with it—to India, Martin says. To this he refused to accede, and ultimately succeeded in persuading the Indian (African?) to abandon his dreadful intention. About this time, he says—

"I began to see my lost and ruined state as a sinner, and to cry to God for mercy and salvation, hoping He would spare me to return to my native land, when I would join myself to the people of God. But alas! my vows, often repeated, were as often broken. Notwithstanding, the Lord heard my prayers, and restored me to my parents as safe and well as when I left them. My deliverance from on board a man-of-war was extraordinary, but the Lord having given me favour in the sight of the whole crew, when all hands were piped to breakfast, a boat appointed for the purpose was brought under our bows, and the soldiers formed a circle on the forecastle of the ship, to prevent the sentry seeing what was going forward; I dropped into the[Pg 343] boat and got ashore, and remained in safety at the waterman's house until our ship sailed. I

entered on board a transport going to Egypt for corn for our troops then lying at Messina. When I arrived in Egypt, I was filled with delight on beholding the place where our blessed Lord took refuge from the rage of Herod; and where the wisdom of Joseph (directed by Almighty God) saved the land of Egypt and his own father's house from the effects of the seven years' famine, of which I had so often read. A wide range of buildings was pointed out to me by the Turks, which they said formerly held the grain preserved by Joseph. Reflecting on these things, led me to review my mis-spent life, and to see how often God had preserved me in many dangers, and how ill I had requited Him; so that my thoughts troubled me sore, and I resolved anew to amend my life. I began to be comforted by reflecting that He preserved me for wise purposes, and that I should live to praise Him. Blessed be the name of the Lord, I was not disappointed."

A Mr. Nicoll, a native of Peterhead, who was formerly in the navy, and was a messmate with Martin in two vessels, of which one was the "Hercules," says—

"I remember Martin well, and sailed with him first about 1803. He was always skittish. We used to say that he was fitter for a parson than a sailor; nicknamed him Parson Saxe. He was often sulky and idle. He did not pray much, but was inclined to argue on religious subjects; he said he had a light that we had not, and that he held meetings in his dreams. He told extraordinary and unaccountable tales; but," said Mr. Nicoll, "they have gone from me, as I treated them as fudge and palaver." Mr. Nicoll adds that Martin was jolly as any at one time, and would drink and dance and be merry as the rest; at another time he would weep bitterly. Some were angry with him, [Pg 344] others ridiculed him; "but I," said Mr. Nicoll, "thought him more rogue than fool. I remember his saying that a book was shot from his hands at Cadiz, and that he considered it a warning from heaven. Some one told him he should have been otherwise employed than in reading at such a time; in reply to which he abused the person who rebuked him. It was my opinion that he shammed a good deal for a sulk. He was particularly fond of viewing and conversing about the celestial bodies, but had a dread of any one pointing to a star, [\[25\]](#) and would not believe that they were other worlds; and, indeed, grew quite angry at such an assertion. I have often said such things as a scot (jest), to draw him on, and he has abused me. He was hale enough, but used to complain of weakness, and, as I thought, sham sick."

A Greenwich pensioner, who served with him, says:—"I knew Jonathan twenty-three years ago and upwards; he was a good sailor, but had fits of melancholy, and then would talk of dying and a future state. I have often told him that our days were fixed, and he blamed me for saying so. I remember somebody larking in the top, and he, Martin, fell, catching the hair of the sailor in his way; he actually tore off a portion of

his scalp; he saved himself by clinging to the cross-trees. He quarrelled with and fought a man named Dobson, who died in Greenwich Hospital some years since. They sat across a bench and fought. Martin was beaten. He was laughed into this quarrel."

Martin gives the following account of his escape:—

"Being on the main yard, and losing my balance, I found myself falling; there seemed nothing to save me[Pg 345] from being dashed to pieces. The loose end of the tracing line, about an inch thick, was hanging near me. I got it round my left hand, and grasping it with my right, the swing of the rope, together with my weight, threw me overboard, and I remained suspended by my arm, within a few feet of the sea, until my shipmates came to my assistance; and I praised God that I received no material injury, except my arm being a little wrenched by my weight. Again, falling by accident out of a gun-port, my shipmates succeeded in rescuing me when not able to help myself. And being on the top-gallant-yard, the topping-lift broke, and the end I was on went down like the end of a beam. In my fall I grappled with the backstay, and brought myself up, and landed on the cross-trees. Thus the Almighty preserved me from death when there was no other hope—the height from the deck being about eighty feet."

He relates also the following circumstance, which was corroborated by a Greenwich pensioner:—

"After I was appointed to the gunners' crew, when on our voyage to Cadiz, the gunners' yeoman, who had charge of the stores and all the powder, shot himself through the head in the store-room, where there were upwards of five hundred barrels of gunpowder, and joining the place where all our oakum and old ropes lay. When the report of the pistol was heard in that place, the consternation became general throughout the ship's company, as an explosion was to be dreaded. Some were for making to the boats; others, more desperate, were for leaping overboard, expecting the ship to blow up every moment. In the midst of the panic produced, I and four of my shipmates ran below, rushed into the store-room amidst the smoke, and soon extinguished the little fire produced by the wadding of the pistol, and then we discovered the body of the unfortunate man lying bleeding, his brains literally strewed over the floor. Thus[Pg 346] did God put in our hearts to risk our lives, and by that means save our ship's company, six hundred in number, from an awful death."

"Martin," says one of the Greenwich pensioners, "went with a boat's crew to get water. In crossing some buoys he fell in; the accident was not perceived, but we at length missed him; when we got him out he was all but gone. He said we had conspired against him, but God had delivered him. I remember this, for Dobson threatened to thrash him if he repeated it. Martin was punished for drunkenness, and bore it in a very

cowardly manner. When he was in the mortar-boat he sang psalms, but when we were afterwards very near wrecked, he was as cool or cooler than any one on board. He fell overboard whilst assisting in hooking a shark, but was picked up almost immediately. He got hurt in falling, and would never assist in the hooking again. We had many sick and dying aboard, and the sharks often followed in our wake: we burnt bricks and covered them with tarpauling, &c., fixing a hook in the brick; this the fish would swallow. Martin was very active in this, until his accident. After that he said, 'The Lord was vexed at the guile.' He hated the Catholics."

Another pensioner, who corroborated a portion of the foregoing, added: "Martin was much noticed by the officers; but he told them many falsehoods, and at last was generally disliked. He was at one time in such favour with his superiors, that two men were punished for cutting the slings of his hammock whilst he was asleep, which is generally passed over as a joke; but he pretended to have been hurt with the fall. When angered, he would swear as much as anyone, and sometimes immediately afterwards would cry and pray. His dreams and stories would have filled a book. I saw him years afterwards at [Pg 347] Portsmouth. Never knew that he had deserted; he was continually amongst the crews of the King's ships. Went to London with him, and he talked a good deal about religion when at Portsmouth, but lived very loosely in London. [26] Martin told me a variety of his adventures—that he was nearly murdered by the Algerines, &c., &c., but that he was marvellously delivered, and that God had told him in his dreams to quit the sea. He had a good deal of prize-money to receive, but there was a delay in his getting it. The day he was to have it finally, he was to meet me at Rotherhithe; he never came, and from that time (1810) I never saw nor heard of him."

Martin does not tell us how long he remained in the transport service; but when he was paid off, he proceeded to Newcastle to visit his parents, probably in 1810; and then went to work with Mr. Page, a farmer at Norton, in Durham.

"Here," he observes, "commenced that series of trials which almost obliterated the remembrance of my former difficulties, and which, were they not well-known to many now living, might appear to border on romance." In reading his life, however, we can find no traces of "trials" which were not brought upon himself; and there is very little of the "romantic" about them. A few months after his residence at Norton he married, and became the father of a son.

"I had him baptised Richard," he says. "I was deterred from giving him my own name on account of the sins of my youth, as I conceived if I did, the Lord might take [Pg

348] him away." Not long after, he dreamed that his mother came to see him, and told him he would be hanged; and his dream produced a strong impression upon his mind.

His thoughts became more directed than before to religious matters, but not without "manifold backslidings," as he himself confessed.

At Yarm, in Yorkshire, four miles from Norton, where he lived, was a Methodist chapel, and he used to attend church at Norton in the morning, and chapel at Yarm in the evening. One Sunday morning he received the Holy Communion in the church at Norton, and in the evening he was at a love-feast at the Wesleyan chapel.^[27] This was his first formal reception into full membership with the Methodist body. He had obtained, as he calls it, "perfect liberty." He was converted, a new being, emancipated from obedience to the law, being justified by faith only.

He now began to feel strongly against the Church of England, which taught the necessity of obedience to the moral law even to those who walked in the Spirit. The laxity of the clergy in going to parties, balls, and plays, offended him.

"I knew also that I was not authorised by law to interfere with the Establishment. I betook myself to fasting and prayer, earnestly seeking direction of the Lord how I should proceed in this matter. I dreamed on Friday night that a man held out to me a piece of honeycomb, of which^[Pg 349] I did eat, and felt refreshed, and concluded this a gift divine. I felt greatly encouraged. On Saturday I gave away most of my working clothes among my shopmates, having fully resolved to confess my Lord and Saviour the next day before the congregation; not doubting but the step I was about to take would lead me into trouble. I spent that night chiefly in prayer, for strength to perform the task I had undertaken—of warning people of their dangerous state by their carnal security; the necessity of repentance and regeneration, by the operation of the Spirit; and finally of their having the witness of the Holy Ghost that their sins were blotted out through faith in a crucified Saviour."

He accordingly entered the church with the clerk early in the morning, and whilst the latter went to ring the bell, Martin secreted himself in the pulpit, and remained hidden there till the end of the prayers, when he suddenly stood up, and gave forth as his text, St. Mark iv. 21-23, and began to preach, with violent gesticulations. He was at once removed by the churchwardens and constable, but was allowed to remain in the church, though dislodged from the pulpit.

About this time he was favoured, or deluded, with the following vision:—

"I dreamed that I was called to the city gates of London, and beheld the inhabitants tearing each other's flesh in the most horrible manner, and I heard a voice speak to

me—"In one day this city shall be burnt to the ground." And I was taken by the Spirit to the banks of a river, and I commenced digging the earth, and cast up several sharp-edged weapons, in particular a large axe, stained with human blood. I took hold of it, and that instant there appeared, as I thought, St. James, and I struck off his head at one blow, and awoke out of my sleep. This strange concern[Pg 350] oppressed me in the spirit, and I said, 'This is no other than Popery and persecution are intending to come forward amongst true Christians. Oh! England, beware of Popery!'"

Martin now began to write letters to the clergy and other members of the Church, "entreating them, as they valued their souls, to amend their lives, and flee to the blood of sprinkling for mercy and pardon." His conduct seems to have been so improper, so marked by a "zeal not according to knowledge," that he was expelled the Methodist Society; and he complains that his religious friends were afraid to own him—he was left alone in the world; and, to add to his troubles, he lost his employment. He then went to Whitby and worked for a few weeks, but soon returned to Norton, and from thence went to Bishop Auckland, where he obtained employment; and determined once more to attempt exhorting the people in the church. He was, however, taken out by a constable; and then he began that practice which he appears never afterwards to have abandoned, of posting papers on the church doors, as a warning to the clergy and congregation. The following is a copy of one of these singular productions:—

"Oh! hear the word of the Lord, you clergymen, for the mighty sword is expanded over your guilty heads; now shall you come to a complete dissolution; now shall your candlesticks be completely overthrown; now shall your blindness come to the light, and your shame before all the people, for the Lord will not suffer you to deceive the work of His hands any longer. Oh! prepare yourselves to meet your God, you double-hearted sinners; cry aloud for mercy, and now shall my God make bare His arm and conquer the devil, your great master, for the monster of hell shall be completely overthrown, and you and him shall not deceive the nations any longer, for now shall God be worshipped in[Pg 351] spirit and truth; now you shall and must throw away your little books you carry into the pulpits to deceive the people with; you now preach for wine and gluttonous living, and not for precious souls—will you not get your portion with the rich man in hell if you do not repent and find mercy?

"Jonathan Martin,

"Your sincere friend."

Martin continued for some time attending church, and disturbing the service by his groans and exclamations of assent to, or dissent from, what was enunciated from the pulpit. At Bishop Auckland one day he heard the preacher declare that no man could

be absolutely certain that his sins were forgiven, and his happiness hereafter was assured, till he had put off mortality, and his eyes were opened in the light of eternity. This was too much for Martin to bear. He says:—

"The bitterness of my soul constrained me to call out—'Thou hast no business in that pulpit, thou whitened sepulchre, thou deceiver of the people, how canst thou escape the damnation of hell?' I was determined to address the people on the following Sunday, and tell them the state they must be in under such a ministry, and of the justness of that God who will judge the world in righteousness. John Bunyan admonished his hearers to an upright and strict life, being assured if this were neglected they were void of religion, and Popery would again spread through England. Like poor John Bunyan, I was pulled out of the place as soon as I began to speak. The clergyman employed an attorney to write against me, and I was apprehended as a vagabond; and they wanted my master to swear that I was deranged. My master objected thereto, stating that I had been with him seven months, and had been a faithful servant. He inquired of my[Pg 352] master and several neighbours at Norton if they were not afraid of me, but was answered in the negative."

Martin mentions here that his wife had become a great enemy to him since he joined the Methodists; that she wanted him to leave them, and vowed to God that, unless he deserted them, she would disown him as a husband; and "from that period to the day of her death, eight years, she kept her word, but his firmness was not shaken."

"About this time the Bishop (I think of Lincoln) was to hold a confirmation at Stockton, for the Bishop of Durham. I had heard that he was a good man, and that numbers attended his visitation. I was glad to hear so good a report of him, and concluded that if he were really so good a man and so eminent a Christian, he would not fear death, and resolved to try his faith by pretending to shoot him. I had been in Newcastle to see my brother, and recollecting he had an old pistol, I asked and obtained it, and brought it home with me. On my arrival, my wife, observing the pistol, inquired what I wanted with it. I replied with a smile that I got it to shoot the Bishop. I laid it down carelessly, determined, if she should remove it, and I should receive no encouragement by a dream, I would proceed no further in the matter. When I got up in the morning the pistol was not to be found, and there, as I thought, the matter dropped; but some officious person hearing of it, told the clergyman of Norton, and he laid a complaint before the magistrate against me. A vestry meeting was then called, to which I was summoned. My previous interference with the church was urged against me, and so much was I tormented with questions on the subject, before I went to the vestry, and while there, that I was considerably agitated and off my guard. However, the reverend gentleman was little better tempered than[Pg 353] myself, and showed a degree of

rancour that I did not expect. I was asked if I had a pistol to shoot the Bishop with; to which I replied, 'that I did not mean to injure the man, although I considered they all deserved shooting, being blind leaders of the blind; consequently both must fall into the ditch.' I was then suffered to depart, but was next day taken into custody, and brought before the meeting of justices at Stockton, and examined very harshly. They asked me, if I had found the pistol, would I really have shot the Bishop? I replied, 'It depended upon circumstances—I would ask him some questions out of the Creed, and if he did not answer me satisfactorily as to his conversion, and the evidence of the Spirit, he must be branded as a deceiver of the people.' For this I was sentenced to be confined in a mad-house for life, but glory be to God, they could not keep me an hour longer than my Lord and Saviour thought fit. I felt as happy under this trial, in the assurance of Jesus' love, as if I had been going to a palace."

He was at first confined in a lunatic asylum at West Auckland, but was afterwards removed to a similar establishment at Gateshead. His afflictions then and subsequently he relates thus:—

"I had not for a long time seen my wife and child, as during the time I was so rigorously confined they had been denied admittance. My poor wife had long been labouring under heavy affliction, having a cancer in her breast. When I began to work they were allowed to come and see me, and my wife at parting said—'Farewell, Jonathan, look to Jesus; pray for me; may God bless you; my strength is fast failing, and I feel that I shall not be able to come any more.' She spoke prophetically, for we met no more. A short time after, she took to her bed, from which she never rose. My readers may judge [Pg 354] of my grief to think that my poor wife was a-dying, at no great distance, and when she requested to see me, even in custody and in chains, the keeper was so unfeeling as to refuse her dying request. She afterwards sent my son (little more than seven years old), hoping that his youth, innocence, and distress might soften their hearts, but his appeal was unheeded. She sent him again with her dying love to me, and the keeper's wife shut the door in his face, and the child was suffered to return weeping to his mother. His supplication, as I afterwards heard, would have melted any heart, crying, 'What will become of me? My mother is dying, and my father is shut up in a mad-house, where I am not so much as allowed to see him.'"

It must be remembered that Martin's account of things is not to be trusted in all particulars. At the same time it is certain that asylums were not conducted at that period with humanity and judgment.

Mrs. Orton, the keeper's wife alluded to, was examined at the trial of Martin, ten years later. She said: "When Martin was with me I thought him a really insane person. He

would sit on the floor with two cross-sticks as if he was fiddling, either singing hymns or whistling. He called his sticks an imitation of David's harp. I have known him fast four days—and say it was God Almighty's orders—in imitation of Christ fasting forty days on the Mount. He was often under restraint, and was bad to manage."

He succeeded in making his escape from the asylum [\[28\]](#) on the 17th of June, 1820, but was caught at Norton and brought back. On the 1st of July, 1820, he made his escape again by rubbing the rivets of his irons with [\[Pg 355\]](#)freestone, which he managed to secrete in his room. He broke through the ceiling, got into a garret, and escaped through the tiles upon the roof. He thence descended cautiously and safely to the ground; and thus ended his captivity of three years.

With great difficulty—still with the rings of his chains on his ankles—he reached the house of Mr. Kell, an intimate friend, of the same way of thinking, at Cadlaw Hill. Mr. Kell freed him from the remains of his fetters—"the degrading emblem of slavery," as Jonathan termed them. Mr. Kell was a distant relation of Martin on his mother's side; and he remained there a fortnight, till his strength was recruited, when he left him, designing to proceed to an uncle's, a distance of sixteen miles, to assist him to get in his hay harvest. However, before he reached his uncle's house, he was met by his cousin, who told him that Orton, the keeper, with a constable, had been there in search of him: he therefore escaped as fast as he could to Glasgow, where another uncle resided; and he reached it in safety. From Glasgow he went to Edinburgh; and was in that city at the rejoicings on account of the coronation of George IV. Martin stopped at Edinburgh only one day, being anxious to see his wife; and on returning to Norton he found his wife still alive, but in the last stage.

After remaining three weeks with his friend Mr. Kell, he determined to go to London to be near his brothers, one of whom was the celebrated imaginative painter so well known by his wonderful pictures, "The Eve of the Deluge," "The Plains of Heaven," &c.

His friend having furnished him with money, he left Darlington for London on the 1st of August, 1820, exactly a month after he had made his escape. He went, however, no farther than Boroughbridge, where, on September 8th, he received a letter informing him of his wife's death, [\[Pg 356\]](#) and of his having had his house robbed of money and goods to the amount of £24. He gives a pitiable account of the last illness and the distress of his poor wife:—

"I learned afterwards that my dear wife had to go through great tribulation. There was a woman allowed one shilling and sixpence per week to wait on her, but she always locked her in at night, without any attendant but the poor child to wait on his wretched mother; until my sister, hearing of their condition, came and took him away with her.

So greatly neglected was he, that there was none to cut the bread for him; and when my sister came to see them he had the loaf picked out, as if eaten by mice, not being able to cut it himself. In this pitiable condition my poor boy sat up several nights with his mother, to hold the drink to her when she became too weak to do it for herself."

He then went to Hull, where he began to preach to his mates in the tannery where he worked. "I was moved to speak to them of their drunken lives, what would be the consequence if they did not repent. One or two of them, more wicked than the rest, got above me with a bucket of bullock's blood, which they heaved over me; but that did not move me from my stand: then they tried water. Then the devil put it into their minds to heave wet skins in my face, and that did not make me quit my stand until the hour was up."

Notwithstanding these checks, which in Jonathan's description strongly remind the reader of the sufferings of Mawworm, he continued his exhortations in and out of the shop, and if we are to believe his own account, two hundred persons were converted by him.

From Hull he was driven by this treatment by his carnally-minded shopmates, and went to Norton, where his old master, Mr. Page, having obtained the consent of [Pg 357] the magistrates that Martin should not be again consigned to the asylum, employed him as a tanner. But he soon after (in 1822) removed to Darlington, where he also worked at his trade, and spent his evenings in preaching to and praying with those who would hear him. He boasts that through his labours in seven weeks "two hundred precious souls were set at liberty." He remained at Darlington apparently till 1827, and here he pretends to have had some remarkable visions.

"I should inform my readers how I was taken to the seaside in a vision, and beheld a countless army of men arising from the waves. As I stood gazing thereon a man advanced towards me, and said, 'Where shall we find bread for so great a multitude?' He quickly answered, 'Where they can.' They then advanced with great fury, and covered, as it were, the whole earth, and I thought England fled before them. This dream made great impression on my mind after I came to Darlington, and I determined to make known the things that will befall England, unless we all turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, for I dreamed of a great battle between Newcastle and Sunderland; and again, that the son of Buonaparte came and conversed with me, and having a musket, said he would shoot through the door of an Englishman. He tried three times, and the third was successful.

"I then left him, and was soon overtaken by some baggage waggons; all the French fired their muskets in the air. I was taken prisoner, and they shut me up with the Word

of God and a Wesley hymn-book in my hand. In the prison the sun shone upon me with all its splendour, and I rejoiced to see the mercy of God towards me."

He then bursts out into the following denunciation against clergymen:—

"Deceive not yourselves, oh, you clergymen, for my[Pg 358] dream has been doubled, for you will have to fly to the mountains to hide yourselves from your enemies, for the son of Buonaparte has a second time appeared to me. The first time he stood before me, he stood with a firelock in his hand, and said to me, I will shoot through the door of an Englishman. The first time he tried to present, but he was too weak, but willing to avenge the death of his father, though but a child. The second time he levelled the firelock, but could not stand the force of powder. The third time he levelled and fired, and hit his mark, and said, I will shoot through the door of an Englishman. The second dream was like unto the first: he broke through the door, and demolished the house before me with great dexterity and art. The youth appeared before me with a beautiful countenance, with a light complexion, and light curled hair; and as he passed before me through the door, I held out my hand, and he shook hands with me. I have the honour of shaking hands with the son of Buonaparte, though I have not seen his father, and he vanished out of my sight. He came from Denmark to reside in England. O England! prepare for war, and to meet a hot reception; for as you surprised the Danes at Copenhagen, so will the son of Buonaparte surprise you and reign in England, and come off victoriously. The thing is certain, and will come to pass. You must not think the time long, for the youth will soon be ready to act the part of his father, and do valiantly; for he shall be a scourge to the wicked clergymen of England."

At Darlington he was wont to declare that Prayer-books had been the means of sending many souls to hell. He then wore a coat and boots of seal-skin, with the hairy side outwards. Afterwards he procured an ass, which he rode upon, to be more like Christ; and he used to preach to a[Pg 359] society of Oddfellows at the High Cross at Darlington. His son Richard he put with a pedlar Jew, as his assistant; and when remonstrated with, said that his reason was that little Dick might labour at the conversion of the Jews. He was a good workman.

"I came to Lincoln on one Saturday in September, 1827, and on the following Sunday went to view the Cathedral, as I was a stranger in the town. I heard the voice of singing close by the Cathedral; I drew near, and as I stood listening, a young man, a Methodist, opened the door and invited me in. Three violent young men (for piety), Sunday-school teachers, pressed me hard to join them to assist them in instructing the rising generation, and pray that God would give a blessing to their labours. I told them I would as well as God would teach me. We had not been long together before

the Lord put it in our minds to hold a short prayer-meeting, that God would own our feeble efforts, and bless the children. Whilst I was at prayer it was impressed on my mind to pray that the Lord would fill the large Cathedral full of converted clergymen, and that He would distribute them amongst all the churches of Great Britain, that blind guides and the devil might not deceive the people any longer. I was fervent in prayer, and that prayer disturbed the devil out of his den. A public-house being next door, the landlady and her company came into the room whilst I was on my knees, the landlady afraid of losing her company, and, as it were, hell broke loose upon me. The devil fiercely attacked me, but I stood to my arms: the powers of the bottomless pit could not make me rise from my knees until I had prayed for my enemies; then I arose and gave out a hymn to conclude the meeting. When the landlady could not turn us out, then she engaged her wicked company to attack me. They surrounded me, and flew upon me like fiery[Pg 360] serpents from hell, gnashing their teeth, and crying out: 'Out with him, head first! Break his neck over the stones!' But I alighted on my feet, and the devil was conquered."

At Lincoln, where Martin worked for a man named Weatherall, he compiled and printed his biography; two editions were soon disposed of, and he printed a third edition in 1828, of five thousand copies. A friend and fellow-believer wrote his biography from his dictation, and it underwent some sort of supervision, for Martin was wholly ignorant of spelling, and had little idea of constructing a grammatical sentence.

By hawking his little book about the country, and by quartering occasionally in the houses of those who were willing to extend their hospitality to him on account of his gifts of prayer and the Word, he contrived to make a decent living. He frequented the Methodist chapel at Lincoln, and received his card of membership from the minister there. In 1828 he got acquainted with a young woman, twenty years his junior, named Maria Hodson, who lived at Boston. Martin visited her there, and they were married in Boston parish church. Shortly after the marriage they came together to York, on the day after Christmas-day, 1828, and obtained lodgings in the house of a shoemaker named William Lawn, No. 60, Aldwark.

During his stay in York he employed himself in vending his books, and was well known in the city from wearing a glazed, broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat, and a singular black leather cape, which came down to his elbows, with a square patch of fur sewn on the back, and extending from one corner to the other. At York he attended the Methodist meeting, but sometimes was with the Primitives, or Ranters. When he had any vacant time, he spent it in reading either the Bible or his hymn-book. On Sunday [Pg 361]afternoon he was wont to go to the Minster, and on the 6th of January

the following letter was found tied to one of the iron gates of the Minster choir; it was fastened by a shoemaker's waxed thread, but was not directed. A verger, however, took it down and gave it to one of the canons or minor canons, who, however, thought it too absurd to deserve notice. The following is a verbatim copy of it:—

"York, Janrey the 5— 1829.

"Hear the word of Lord, Oh you Dark and Lost Clergymen.

"Repent and cry for marcey for know is the day of vangens and your Cumplet Destruction is at Hand for the Lord will not sufer you and the Deveal and your blind Hellish Docktren to dseve the works of His Hands no longer.

"Oh, you Desevears will not milleons of the mighty and Rich men of the Earth have to Curs the Day that ever they gat under your blind Docktren know to be a shamd of your selvs and wepe for your Bottls of Wine and your downey Beds will be taken away from you I warn you to repent in the name of Jesuse and believe he is able on Earth to forgeve Sines, for there is no repenting in the greave Oh you blind Gydes are you not like the man that bilt his Hous upon the Sands when the Thunder starmes of Gods Heavey vangens lites upon your Gildrys Heads a way gos your sandey Foundaytons and you to the deepest pet of Hell re Serve the Curses of millions that your blind Doctrens has Decevd and to reseve Gods Heve Curs and the Ward pronounst Depart you Carsit blind Gides in to the Hotist plase of Hell to be tormented with the Deveal and all his Eanguls for Ever and Ever

"Jona. Martin, a frind of the Sun of Boneypart Must Conclude By warning you again Oh Repent repent He will soon be able to act[Pg 362]

"the part of his Father

"Derect for Jonathan Martin

"Aldwark No. 60"

Another epistle was also found, on Wednesday, the 21st of January, by a sailor from Hull, who being at York, visited the Cathedral in company with his wife. When walking along the western aisle he saw on the ground near a pillar, a small packet, which he had the curiosity to open. It was tied with a shoemaker's waxed thread, covered with old matting, and contained a stone, round which was wrapped a pamphlet, entitled "The Life of Jonathan Martin." He also found in the parcel a letter, sealed with cobbler's wax, and addressed to the Clergy of York. He read and exhibited both the letter and pamphlet at the house where he was stopping, but they were thought of no

consequence. Fortunately, unimportant as they were considered, he did not destroy them. The letter was couched in the same strain as that already given.

In other MSS. dropped in or near the Minster, and bearing the signature of "M.," the following expressions were found:—

"Your great churches and minsters will fall down on your guilty heads;" but no sort of suspicion was entertained that anyone was wicked or mad enough to cherish the determination of destroying one of the finest existing specimens of the munificence and piety of our ancestors; therefore no precautionary measures were taken.

On the 27th of January, Martin left York with his wife, stating that they were going to Leeds to reside, and his luggage was sent off accordingly to that place. They arrived in Leeds on the 28th, and Martin remained there till the Saturday following. They lodged at the house of John Quin, No. 6, Brick Street. His conduct is described [Pg 363] as having been most orderly and decorous. He attended worship at a chapel of the Primitive Methodists one evening; his conversation was cheerful and perfectly rational; he appeared to be kind and affectionate to his wife, and spent the time while he was in the house chiefly in singing hymns, reading the Scriptures, and conversing on sacred subjects. The principal part of Thursday and Friday he was engaged in vending his pamphlet. When he left Quin's house on Saturday morning, between nine and ten o'clock, he seemed perfectly tranquil, and said he was going to fulfil an appointment that he had in the neighbourhood of Tadcaster, and that he should return to his wife at Leeds on Monday by dinner-time. Instead of stopping at Tadcaster, he came back to York, and went to his old lodgings in Aldwark. He told Mr. and Mrs. Lawn that he and his wife had been no further than Tadcaster, and that he was going to stop in that neighbourhood for the purpose of hawking books. He asked if he could sleep there that night, and on being answered in the affirmative, he took possession of the room he had before occupied. In the afternoon he went out and was observed perambulating the Minster-yard, and taking special note of the building. His attention appeared particularly directed to the western towers. He returned to Mr. Lawn's in the evening, and remained till eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, when he went out—and returned no more.

This wretched incendiary had then, no doubt, laid all his plans for the destruction of the Minster; a project which, to judge from his subsequent communications to Mr. Wilson, a local preacher at the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion at Hexham, he seems to have entertained for some time. The motives which prompted him to attempt the destruction of this beautiful church were the fanatical antipathy he [Pg 364] entertained towards the clergy of the Church, whom he condemned as "blind

guides"—to whom, however, he said he felt no ill-will, malice, or personal hostility, but he was sorry for them, as he believed they were leading the higher ranks in society astray; and the destruction of the Minster, he was of opinion, "was for the glory of God, the good of the people of England generally, and for the good of the inhabitants of York in particular, as when the Cathedral was destroyed they would be compelled to disperse themselves to other places of worship, where they would hear the Gospel preached." When he had fully made up his mind on the subject, he began to apprehend opposition from his wife; and he told Mr. Wilson that he adopted the following extraordinary mode of neutralising it:—"He took the ring from her finger whilst she slept, and though she manifested much concern at the loss of her ring, he allowed her to vent her feelings in unavailing regrets, until he thought her sufficiently moulded to his purpose. He then exacted a vow from her that she was to keep his secret, and he would restore her ring. This being agreed to, he told her his intention, on which she seemed greatly disturbed, and they went to Leeds."

After Martin left his lodgings on Sunday morning he went to the Minster and heard the sermon. In the afternoon he repaired there again, and entered the south transept as soon as the doors were open. He walked about till after the service began; and the sexton (Job Knowles) noticed him passing several times as he was ringing the bell for prayers. Before he entered the Minster in the afternoon he had provided himself with a "razor with a white haft, the back of which he used instead of a steel; a flint, tinder, matches, and a penny candle cut in two." This, however, soon burnt out, and he replaced it with one of the wax candles which had been used in the Minster the[Pg 365] previous evening. During service he concealed himself behind a tomb—probably Archbishop Grinfield's, in the north transept—muttering to himself as the organ played, "Buzz, buzz—I'll teach thee to stop thy buzzing." There he remained till all the people had left. He then quitted his place of concealment and walked about, looking where he could best make the fire. The ringers were in the belfry in the evening, and from behind a column he watched them go out. And here it may be remarked that very important consequences often result from apparent accidents. If the ringers had locked the door of the belfry after them, in all probability he could not have made his escape from the Minster, but would have been compelled to remain till the doors were opened in the morning; when mingling with the crowd, in the hurry and confusion, he might not have been noticed, and the calamity would always have been ascribed to accident.

After the ringers left, Martin went into the belfry and struck a light. A gentleman who was passing the Minster about half-past eight o'clock, saw a light in the belfry at that time; but as the ringers had been there, he thought they were about ringing again, and

took no notice of the circumstance. Two persons who were confined in Peter Prison also saw a light in the belfry after nine o'clock. At this time the incendiary was busy preparing his means of escape. He cut about ninety feet off the rope attached to the prayer-bell, which passed through a hole in the floor of the belfry into the aisle below, and having pulled it up, he formed it into a ladder by doubling it and tying knots at regular distances. After he had worked some time, he put out his light, and finished his ladder in the dark. When this was completed he left the belfry, and having climbed over the iron gates which separate the nave from the north-east aisle, he used the rope-ladder to get over the gate[Pg 366] leading from that aisle into the choir, which is usually kept fast. He then struck a light the second time, and with the razor cut three yards of gold fringe, two gold tassels, &c., from the pulpit, and the crimson velvet curtains from the dean's and precentor's seats at the bottom of the choir, and those from the archbishop's throne. He also took a small Bible, and as he expected to be taken and imprisoned, he brought away the Bible that it might be a comfort to him in his confinement. He then piled the cushions and Prayer-books in two heaps, on each side near the carved work, and set them on fire by introducing matches among them.

Having done this, he set about making his escape. He had brought with him a pair of shoemaker's pincers, which Mr. Lawn had left in the room where he slept on Saturday night, and having tied one end of his rope to the machine used for cleaning the Minster, he dragged it under the window in the west aisle of the north transept, which he broke with the pincers; and having seen that one of the piles (that by the archbishop's throne) to which he had set fire was burning briskly, he descended, and left the Cathedral a little after three o'clock in the morning of the 2nd of February, taking with him the articles before mentioned, and also some purple silk—a part of one of the robes of the clergy.

During the time he was in the Minster he says he felt no fear, but was, "on the contrary, quite happy; sometimes he prayed, and sometimes he praised God, because, as he said, He had strengthened him to do so good a work!"

The incendiary had left the Minster several hours before the fire was discovered. The patrol left the Minster-yard about half-past two o'clock, before he had made his escape, and they saw no indications of anything unusual when they left. About four o'clock a man going past saw a light in[Pg 367] the Minster, but he thought the workmen were preparing a vault, and unfortunately passed on without endeavouring to ascertain what was really the cause of so unusual an occurrence as a light burning in the sacred edifice at that early hour.

At five o'clock a series of reports, resembling repeated explosions, were heard. The parties who heard them wondered what they meant, but never thought of tracing them to their source. The discovery at last took place in the following singular manner:—A lad named Swinbank, one of the younger choristers, whose duty it was to go and practise at the Minster early every morning, went as usual a little before seven o'clock on the morning of the 2nd of February. He found the doors were not open, and began to slide on a piece of ice in the Minster-yard to amuse himself. Whilst so doing he fell on his back, and before he recovered himself from that position he saw smoke issuing from the roof of the Minster. Alarmed at the sight, he went to Job Knowles, the sexton, for the keys. On his return he found the doors had been opened by some of the workmen, and Mr. Scott, the builder, entered the building at the south door, but had scarcely got in when he was compelled to retreat—so dense was the smoke that respiration was impossible. A gentleman with difficulty then made his way to the organ screen; but was compelled to retreat to avoid suffocation. By the vestry-door, however, access was obtained to the choir—the gates from the vestry, and also those leading from the aisle into the choir, being fortunately open. The fire, which originated at one end of the stalls, had consumed the whole row, with all their tabernacle work; and about half-an-hour after it was first discovered, the flames had spread to the stalls on the other side. One of the Minster engines was kept in the vestry, and this was immediately placed in the aisle, where[Pg 368] it played on the place where the communion-plate was kept, and around which the flames were raging with great intensity: the tabernacle screen was in this spot burnt to the ground, and the plate was melted into one mass. As soon as this engine was got to work, several individuals succeeded in carrying out the whole of the cushions and books from the north side of the choir; the cushions and part of the hangings of the Cathedral were also saved, as was the curious old chair which stood within the rails. The next effort was to remove the brass eagle or lectern. This was effected with great difficulty, owing to its weight, by the few persons who had the courage to brave the suffocating effects of the smoke. They were driven back three times before they succeeded in carrying off the upper part of the eagle, which was taken into the vestry; the other portion was afterwards carried out at a door on the chapter-house side. All this was the work of a few minutes; and at this time (perhaps about a quarter after seven), the organ screen, the north side of the choir, and the roof, were to all appearance untouched by the fire. At this period, if a few firemen had been present who understood their business, this part of the church might have been saved. Shortly after, however, the flames spread round the south-west corner of the choir and reached the organ; and when this noble instrument caught fire, an appalling noise—occasioned by the action of the air in the

pipes upon the flames—resounded through the building, and struck with awe all who heard it.

Whilst this was passing in the interior of the building, the alarm had been spread through the city by the ringing of the bells of St. Michael-le-Belfry, and the Yorkshire Insurance Company's engine was soon on the spot. It was placed at the south door, and the pipes were carried into the Minster, and directed over the organ upon the fire which was then raging in the choir. The city engines[Pg 369] arrived soon after, and were stationed at different parts of the building. An express was sent to the barracks, and the barrack engine arrived about eight o'clock. Major Clark and several officers accompanied it with a file of the 7th Dragoon Guards, who were of great use in facilitating the operations of the persons employed in extinguishing the flames.

About ten minutes before eight o'clock another engine was brought into the Minster; but the roof having caught fire from the organ—the flames from the latter igniting some of the bosses of the groining, which were of maple-wood—the melted lead and pieces of burning timber began to fall so rapidly that the men were compelled to abandon their positions, and the engine was stationed further off, in the nave, whence it continued to play over the screen upon the burning ruins in the choir for several hours. Previous to the removal of this engine, an attempt was made by two or three gentlemen to cut down the great gates leading from the choir into the north-east aisle, with a view to cut off the communication with the altar: the molten lead and burning rafters, however, fell about them so rapidly that they were obliged to desist.

By eight o'clock, or a little later, the organ—one scarce equalled for tone and power by any instrument in the world—was totally consumed, together with the valuable collection of music which was deposited in the organ loft; and much of which, being in manuscript, could not be replaced.

By the exertions of Mr. Plows, stone-mason, a number of men were about this time got upon the roof of the side aisle; by means of ropes, buckets and the pipe of an engine were hoisted up, and from this elevation a torrent of water was discharged upon the flames beneath. A number of men were also employed in cutting away the[Pg 370] roof towards the east window, who continued their exertions as long as they were practicable. About a quarter past eight o'clock the flames burst through the roof, near the lantern tower, and the spectacle from the exterior was awful and impressive in the extreme, whilst the effect of the scene in the interior was magnificent beyond description. Immediately in front of the screen which divides the nave from the choir, the engine already alluded to was playing directly upon the fire, but with little effect, owing to the magnitude of the space over which the flames had spread themselves.

From the screen to the altar the vast area had the appearance of an ignited furnace; and the men who were employed in working the engines, and in various other ways endeavouring to stop the progress of the flames, resembled beings of another world rather than inhabitants of this material globe. Their voices, as they shouted to their comrades for "water" or for more assistance, fell in harsh and discordant tones on the ear; they moved enveloped in an atmosphere so dense that it was scarcely possible to breathe in it, partially illumined by the flames and partly by the rays of the sun, which now streamed in through the painted windows, producing altogether an effect indescribably beautiful and grand. A number of bats and other birds, burnt out of their retreats, were now seen flitting about, unable to find an outlet, and many perished in the flames.

About half-past eight o'clock an express was sent by Archdeacon Markham to the Mayor of Leeds, informing him that the Minster was on fire, and requesting that two of the largest engines belonging to that town might be sent off immediately. This was shortly followed by another express from Mr. Newman, the actuary of the Yorkshire Fire Office, requesting that two more engines might be immediately forwarded to York. At this period serious fears were [Pg 371]entertained that the fire would extend over the whole of this immense fabric; the flames were rapidly gaining ground at the east end, and the engines had not the least effect in allaying their progress. The lantern tower, and the whole of the roof of the nave appeared to be saturated with smoke, which also poured out of the windows of the western towers. The knotted rope having been discovered by which Martin made his escape, and not satisfactorily accounted for, and its being rumoured that a bunch of matches had also been found which had been lighted at both ends, the opinion that the fire was not caused by the gas, or by candles being left in the organ-loft or in the clergymen's robing-room, which had at first been entertained, began to give way to the idea that this was the work of an incendiary; and when the smoke was seen issuing from the places we have mentioned, it was at once said that a train had been laid, and that it was breaking out in different places. This, providentially, was not the case; the smoke penetrating the roof, &c., was merely occasioned by the denseness of the volume of vapour collected in the church before the doors were opened, and which at last found vent in that manner; and the fire never extended beyond the lantern tower.

At ten minutes past nine a portion of the burning roof fell in with a tremendous crash. For an instant the whole area was illuminated, and the next moment a volume of smoke and ashes was sent forth which involved for a short time everything in darkness and obscurity. From that time till half-past ten portions of the roof kept falling in, till from the lantern tower to the east window the blue vault of heaven was

the only canopy. The molten lead from the roof during this period poured down in torrents.

Soon after ten o'clock an engine arrived from Escrick Park, near York, the seat of Paul Beilby Thompson, Esq., [Pg 372] M.P. That no time might be lost, that gentleman's beautiful grey carriage horses were yoked to his engine, and it was driven into the city with the utmost promptitude. About half-past ten another engine arrived from Tadcaster, and was immediately got to work. One of these engines was brought to the east end, and played into the choir through an aperture made in the lower department of the window; another also played for a short time through the farthest window at the north-east end.

As great alarm was felt lest the east end of the Minster should fall, a part of the staff of the 2nd West York Militia was placed to prevent the public from passing in that direction; the inmates of the opposite houses had previously removed their families. Providentially, however, this alarm turned out to be unfounded. This fine window—the largest, we believe, in England, if not in the world—was only very partially injured.

The floor of the choir was strewed with fierce-burning timbers, and resembled a liquid lake of fire; it was heated completely through, and the vaults below glowed with a radiance that occasioned a general cry from those who could get near, of "The vaults are on fire." But the heat now began sensibly to abate, owing partly to the quantity of water poured upon the burning timbers which covered the floor of the choir and the Lady's Chapel behind the altar screen, and partly to the removal of the burning rubbish from the bases of the pillars, which latter being of limestone, were very much injured by the action of the fire. The rafters of the roof, and other immense pieces of timber, were converted literally into charcoal, and were removed to the nave and into the Minster-yard.

About noon the fears of the fire spreading any farther were removed; but the engines continued to play for hours after upon the mass of fire and flame on the floor of the [Pg 373] church. Great efforts were also made to save the beautiful screen which divides the nave from the choir, and this was effected, for that ornament of the Minster was only very slightly injured.

About two o'clock the engine of the Norwich Union Company, with the requisite number of men, arrived from Leeds. They had been barely two hours on the road, and in less than three minutes after the engine stopped in the Minster-yard it was at work. Two other engines arrived from Leeds shortly after. A fourth arrived about four o'clock.

When the fire was so far got under that no fears were apprehended of its extending beyond the choir and chancel, several parties were admitted into the nave to view the spectacle. Some ladies were amongst them, one of whom was heard to exclaim, on viewing the awfully splendid yet distressing scene, "What a subject for Martin!" alluding to the celebrated painter. Little did she then think that Martin's brother had occasioned this terrible conflagration.

The crowds of people who flocked to the scene of this calamity continued to increase all the afternoon, and it was found necessary to place constables at the Minster doors, to prevent the influx of persons desirous of seeing the state of the edifice; many arrived from a considerable distance, and it was quite impossible that more intense feelings of anxiety and distress could have been evinced than were displayed by the inhabitants of York, who from their infant days had been accustomed to consider the Minster as their boast and glory.

A great-aunt of mine has often described to me the overwhelming sensation it caused. Her father, a man of remarkable self-restraint, wept like a child. The feeling in many a home was as if some accident had befallen and carried off a dearly-loved relation.

There was gloom that day on every countenance, and[Pg 374] in the early part of the day a sort of stupor appeared to pervade all ranks; people were overcome by the greatness of the unexpected calamity, and seemed scarcely to know whether to consider as real the events which were passing around them, or whether they were under the influence of a dream.

During the whole of the afternoon the workmen and others were busily employed in removing the fallen rafters and other rubbish from the choir. Most of these were carried out into the Minster-yard, which was thickly strewn from the south door to the vestry with the fragments of the roof, blackened and reduced to charcoal. Within the nave a detachment of the Dragoon Guards was drawn up to prevent intrusion there, and a guard of the staff of the 2nd West York was mounted for the same purpose, as well as to secure the ornamental portions of that part of the structure from damage. The floor of the nave was strewn with fragments of the roof which had been brought from the choir; and against one of the pillars lay the remains of the organ—a few fragments of the gilt pipes and a portion of the iron work. A dense mass of smoke still rose from the embers, on which several of the engines continued to play during the night. The fire was not totally extinguished when the shades of evening drew on, for occasionally a fitful flash of lambent flame was seen struggling with the gloom, but was quickly extinguished by the water from the engines directed to the spot.

During the evening the silence which reigned around, only broken at intervals by the tread of the sentinels or the occasional remarks of a passenger, formed a striking contrast to the bustle and confusion which had prevailed during the day. About ten o'clock men were observed with lanterns visiting every part of the roof, to see that all was safe; and the night was passed without any further alarm.

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As to the extent of injury which the sacred building sustained. The roof of the central aisle, which was of exquisite workmanship, was entirely destroyed from the lantern tower to the east window; this roof occupied a space of 131 feet in length by 45 in breadth, and was 99 in height from the floor of the choir. In the interior, from the organ screen to the altar screen, all the beautiful tabernacle work, the stalls, galleries, bishop's throne, pulpit, &c., were entirely consumed. The altar screen was so much injured that it was obliged to be taken down. Of the monuments, several were damaged either from the effect of the fire or the falling of the timbers of the roof.

It is impossible to conclude this part of the subject without alluding to the remarkable circumstance that one of the lessons appointed to be read on the Sunday after this calamity at the evening service was the 64th chapter of Isaiah, being the Church's prayer to God. It was singularly applicable to the fire which destroyed the Cathedral; one verse especially—"Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste." Few in the congregations assembled in the numerous churches of York on the Sunday evening heard it unmoved. Another thing, thought to be a coincidence, but which is certainly a very remote one, was that the Cathedral was fired by Martin on Candlemas Day, using one of the wax-candles employed in the choir during evensong.

Various reports as to the origin of the fire circulated in York. Some supposed it originated from the gas, others attributed it to the candles left alight in the organ loft or in the vestry of the clergy. But others suspected it was the work of an incendiary, and they were confirmed in this belief by finding the knotted rope which had been left by Martin, and was discovered early in the morning.

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On Monday evening a committee of inquiry was formed, consisting of clergy and gentlemen. They met at the Residence; and the vergers, workmen, and other individuals connected with the Minster, underwent a rigorous examination. The investigation was continued on Tuesday and Wednesday, and the strictest secrecy was observed in the proceedings; in the course of which it was ascertained that the

rope was cut from the one which is attached to the prayer-bell, and that not with a knife, but by being chafed with a sharp stone. It was also ascertained that the window was opened from the interior; and a bunch of matches, burnt at both ends, was found among the rubbish, and afterwards a pair of shoemaker's pincers. The matches were found under the rubbish of the burnt organ; the pincers on the stool of the window out of which the knotted rope was suspended. The fact was also proved that several anonymous letters had been sent to the vergers; and also that the parcel, with the letter and pamphlet before alluded to, had been found in the Minster by a person from Hull. A gentleman was despatched to Hull to obtain possession of these documents; but in the meantime they had fallen into the hands of Mr. Isaac Wilson, of that place, who with great promptitude came to York and laid them before the committee.

Mr. Pardoe, the active police officer of York, was employed to ascertain to whom the shoemaker's pincers belonged, and they were owned by Mr. Lawn, at whose house Martin had lodged. Other circumstances formed a chain of evidence so complete and conclusive as to leave no doubt that Jonathan Martin was the incendiary, and hand-bills were issued on Thursday offering a reward for his apprehension. Pardoe had been despatched to Leeds in pursuit the previous day, with a warrant from Archdeacon Markham, which on his arrival was instantly backed by the [Pg 377] Mayor of the borough. For the rest of the day and during the night Pardoe and the whole force of the police were employed in endeavouring to find a clue to the retreat of the incendiary. They were not successful; but on Thursday morning his wife was taken into custody while vending the "History of his Life." When discovered by the officers, she expressed her surprise at the charge against her husband; and after admitting that he left that town on Saturday morning, said that she understood, on his departure, he was going into the neighbourhood of Tadcaster; that she had not heard of him since; and that she had experienced great uneasiness at his long absence. She added that his place of concealment, or anything further connected with the affair, was totally unknown to her. She was kept in custody at Leeds, in her own house, in the charge of two constables, who obtained possession of all Martin's books and papers.

On Thursday morning information was received which caused an express to be sent off to the neighbourhood of Pontefract, where an active and diligent search was commenced. A clue was obtained, which led to the belief that the incendiary had passed through Pontefract on the road to Wakefield. The Mayor of Pontefract ordered the police of that town to afford every assistance to the gentlemen in pursuit, and he was traced to Polston toll-gate. From the information there obtained it was supposed he had taken the direction to Heath; and the pursuit was immediately followed up in that direction, and continued through most of Friday. It was reported in the evening

about seven o'clock that Martin had been captured about five miles from Bedale, and would be brought into York by the Carlisle Express coach. The coach was half-an-hour beyond its time, and the streets were filled with crowds of anxious spectators, who waited in the [Pg 378]expectation that the incendiary would arrive by it. Many persons went out of Micklegate Bar, and ran alongside of the coach till it stopped in Coney Street. It was then found that the report was an erroneous one, for Martin was not there; nor was it true that he had been captured.

On Saturday morning it was ascertained that the police had been on a wrong scent, as Martin had proceeded to the north instead of to the west; and about half-past nine o'clock that morning an express was received stating that he had been arrested the previous evening near Hexham. The following are the particulars of his flight and capture:

Martin left the Minster, as has been stated, a little after three o'clock in the morning. He proceeded to Easingwold and got a pint of ale; from thence to Thirsk, at which place he arrived at eleven o'clock; from Thirsk he went to Northallerton, where he arrived about three o'clock in the afternoon in a state of apparent fatigue. He remained till evening with a brother-in-law who resided there, and expressed great anxiety to get on to Hexham to see a friend. At nine that evening he left Northallerton in a coal cart, in which he travelled all night till he arrived at Joft-hill pit, near West Auckland, on the Watling Street road. The next morning he proceeded to Alensford, on the Derwent, where he slept on the Tuesday evening. He left Alensford about eight o'clock on the Wednesday morning, and stopped at the Riding Mill, where he had a pint of ale; from thence he proceeded to Corbridge, where he arrived about twelve o'clock, and had half-a-pint of ale; and then went to Cadlaw Hill to his friend Mr. Kell, where he arrived about two the same afternoon, being the same place where he sought refuge when he escaped from the asylum at Gateshead. Martin remained there till eleven o'clock on Friday morning, and during his stay he expressed a great anxiety to see newspapers.

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The handbills giving a description of Martin's person, and offering a reward for his apprehension, were circulated in all parts of the North; and one of them fell into the hands of Mr. Stainthorpe, a sheriff's officer, of Newcastle, who knew him. Mr. S., on Friday, the 6th, having to go to Corbridge, heard that Martin had returned home, but did not at that time know there was any charge against him. Returning to Hexham, where he kept a public-house, Mr. S. found the handbill lying on the table; and he immediately saddled his pony and set off to Mr. Kell's, where he felt satisfied he would

find him. The house, called Cadlaw Hill, is situated between Stagshaw Bank and Hexham, on the north side of the Tyne. It is a house situated by itself, and had Martin not been well known in the neighbourhood, it might have afforded concealment for some time. On alighting he inquired of a young woman who was standing at the door if Jonathan Martin had got home. The family, it would seem, were not aware of the crime he had committed, as the bailiff was readily answered in the affirmative. On receiving this information he bolted in, and found Mr. Kell and Martin sitting together, the latter engaged in reading a hymn-book. They both rose on his entrance, and he, accosting Martin, asked, "Is not your name Jonathan Martin?" He immediately replied, "Yes, it is." On which Mr. Stainthorpe said, "You are my prisoner." Martin displayed very little emotion, nor did he even ask why he was made a prisoner. Mr. Kell was greatly surprised, and asked Mr. Stainthorpe what Martin was charged with. He replied he was not at liberty to tell him; but that he should require his assistance to convey the prisoner to Hexham, on reaching which place he would give him every information necessary. Mr. Kell readily agreed, and the prisoner as readily seemed disposed to take the road. The first question he asked [Pg 380] Mr. Stainthorpe was, "Do you belong to York?" Mr. Stainthorpe replied in the negative, and cautioned him not to say anything that might criminate himself. On their coming in sight of Hexham, from which Cadlaw Hill is distant nearly four miles, Martin, pointing to Highside House, two miles from Hexham, said, "Yonder is the house in which I was born;" and seeing the church of Hexham, he exclaimed, "That is a fine old church. Did the Catholics build that too?" On the way Martin asked if any York papers came to Hexham. And also he said to Mr. Stainthorpe, "Am I advertised in the Newcastle papers?" On being told he was, and also that he was charged with burning York Cathedral, he readily said *he had done it*; and he added, "As soon as I knew I was advertised, I intended to tell everything." On reaching the House of Correction, Martin's bundle was opened, when it was found to contain part of the valuable crimson fringe, &c., which he said he had cut away from the pulpit, or some part of the Minster, a small Bible which he had brought away at the same time, and a piece or two of the painted glass of the Minster. An old razor was found in his pocket, with which he said he cut the crimson fringe, &c., and with which also he struck the fatal light by which he was able to fire the Minster. There were found also seven copies of his Life, but only one penny of money. He appeared up to the moment of his apprehension to have been profoundly ignorant of the extent of the injury he had occasioned; but on a gentleman telling him he had totally destroyed the Cathedral, his countenance brightened, and the news seemed to exhilarate him. He exclaimed, seemingly pleased, "Have I?" After he was lodged in the House of Correction an express was sent off to York with the intelligence.

It was whilst he was in the House of Correction at [Pg 381] Hexham that Mr. Wilson (of whom mention has been made) visited him, in company with Mr. Stainthorpe. Mr. Wilson asked him whether his desire to see the newspapers at Cadlaw Hill arose from an anxiety for self-preservation. He replied, "None whatever;" but as he was ignorant what effects had been produced by the fires he had kindled, he was anxious to know; on which Mr. Stainthorpe said the damage was estimated at £100,000. He coolly said, "If it were not for the glory of God, if that could be promoted, £200,000 would not have been too much, and that in his opinion it would have been well if all the Minster had gone together, as the worship carried on in it was idolatrous and superstitious." He declared that he was quite happy and fully resigned to his situation, and "would give himself up into the hands of the Lord."

Such had been the demonstration of popular feeling shown by the persons collected at different times to wait the coaches coming in when Martin was expected, that the magistrates very prudently arranged that he should arrive in York early on Monday morning, and that the examination should take place immediately on his arrival. It was as near as possible half-past three o'clock when Mr. Newstead and Pardoe arrived with their prisoner in a post-chaise at the Session House in the Minster-yard. He was taken into the room occupied by Harrison, the keeper of Peter Prison, where he seated himself on a chair with his hands clasped, his feet elevated on the fender, and his eyes closed. Mr. Pardoe asked him if his feet were cold; to which he replied "Yes"; and this was the only word he spoke till the examination commenced. He was dressed in a blue coat and trousers, with a drab great-coat. He had by no means the appearance of a "stout man," as described in the bill; but the person where he lodged said he had fallen away very much in that short period.

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It was half-past four o'clock when everything was arranged for examination. The magistrates took their seats on the bench, and Martin was placed at the bar; the warrant under which he was apprehended was read over to him, and the depositions of witnesses were also read.

It is unnecessary here to give the evidence either on this occasion or at the subsequent trial. On being asked what he had to say for himself, he made the following confession in a firm tone of voice:—

"The reason that I set fire to the Cathedral was on account of two particular dreams. In the first dream I dreamed that a man stood by me with a bow and a sheath of arrows. He shot an arrow, and the arrow stuck in the Minster door. I then wished to shoot, and the man presented me the bow, and I took an arrow from the sheath and shot, and it

struck on a stone and I lost it. In the second dream I dreamed that a cloud came down on the Cathedral, and came over to the house where I slept, and it made the whole house tremble. Then I woke; and I thought it was the hand of God pointing out that I was to set fire to the Cathedral. And those things which were found on me I took lest any one should be blamed wrongfully. I took them to bear witness against myself; I cut the hangings from the throne, or cathedra, or whatever you call it, and tore down the curtains."

Here he stopped rather abruptly, and being asked whether he had anything more to say, he replied, "No."

During the whole of the proceedings Martin appeared perfectly calm, and stood with his eyes closed nearly the whole of the time, his head inclining over the right shoulder.

His committal was then made out, and signed by Mr. Dickens, the chairman, and the Rev. D. R. Curren, and he was removed to the City Gaol, and given into the custody of Mr. Kilby, to remain till the Assizes.

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After Martin was committed to the charge of the gaoler on the morning of the 9th of February, he breakfasted and went to bed. His sleep was sound and tranquil, and he awoke much refreshed and in good spirits.

Strangers were not admitted to see him. Next day he appeared greatly depressed, and was very anxious to avoid public observation. He attended prayers in the chapel during the morning. The next day, however, he refused to attend the chapel. Subsequently he was visited by the Rev. G. Coopland, the chaplain, in his day-room, who found that so deeply rooted was his aversion to the Liturgy of the Church of England as to leave him no reason to doubt that a forced attendance during the chapel service would be much more likely to prove injurious than beneficial to his own mind. Besides, he thought it not at all improbable that were he compelled to attend, he might consider it his duty to interrupt the service, and publicly to protest against a mode of worship which he deemed unscriptural. Under these circumstances his attendance at chapel was not enforced. He frequently prayed and sang hymns, and when the order was relaxed by which strangers were prohibited from seeing him, he entered very freely into conversation with them. He still pretended to be favoured with extraordinary visions. On one occasion he said he dreamed that two angels appeared to him in prison, one of whom told him to apply his lips to the tip of his wings, which he did, when he was immediately conveyed beyond the walls of his prison.

His brother arrived in York about ten days before the Assizes commenced, to make preparations for his defence. The defence intended to be set up was insanity; and a number of witnesses were collected with a view to support this plea. Dr. Wake, at the request of his brother, visited him on Friday, the 20th. Up to this period his conduct[Pg 384] had been extremely mild, and his feelings composed; but a little change had been observed for a day or two previous, and that night, about twelve o'clock, he attempted to make his escape. He slept in what was called the Hospital Room—a room in which there were two beds, a person who was appointed as his guard sleeping in one of them, and Martin in the other. The guard fell asleep about half-past eleven o'clock, and was soon after awoken by a knocking, apparently outside the room. Not apprehending anything, he went to sleep again; and Martin, having torn his bed-rug into lengths, tied them together, and formed a rope about nine yards long. He fastened this round his ankles, and having on only his shirt and his drawers, he ascended the chimney. An iron grate which was fixed in near the top prevented him, however, from getting to the outside of the prison, and he was obliged to descend again. He then placed his sooty shirt under the bed, swept the soot into the same place, and put on his flannel dress, and retired to bed. The attendant, on awaking about two o'clock, found him up, but he soon lay down again; and both rose at half-past six o'clock. Almost as soon as the door was opened Martin bolted out, and went into the yard. His attendant, alarmed, followed him, and found him washing himself. The state of the room and of his person, together with two bricks being laid in the fireplace, proved the fact that an escape had been attempted. Indeed, when charged with it, he did not deny it. He said, if he had been a smaller person he should have effected his escape; but that it was the "will of God" he should make the attempt, and be frustrated.

Of course, after this, a closer watch was kept upon the actions of the prisoner.

On Monday, March 23rd, he was brought before Mr.[Pg 385] Justice Bayley at the Guildhall, and true bills were found against him for arson and sacrilege. He is described during the examination at the Guildhall as having been perfectly placid, and as having smiled occasionally.

When the Court adjourned for rest and refreshment to the Mansion House during the proceedings, he engaged in conversation with the parties near him, and laughed at their observations. A lady said to him—"In destroying that beautiful pile of buildings you inflicted no real punishment on its clergy."

Martin laughed, and answered—"Eh, but it may mak' them stand and consider their ways. All those who are really converted will think I've done reight enuff."

The trumpets soon after sounded, heralding the approach of the judge. The prisoner said—"Hark, how the watchman cries. Oh! attend to the sound." The crowd was so dense in the hall that it was with difficulty a passage could be made for his lordship. Martin laughed, and observed to Mr. Kilby, "They'll have t' ould man down." A gentleman asked him if he was not afraid. He said, "No, not at all."

The populace entirely filled the hall and part of the yard; and Jonathan turned his face towards them, frequently laughing, and talking to those with whom he came immediately in contact. He said he "believed he was the most righteous man in court"; adding, "I have made as much noise as Buonaparte ever did. I think this is a very throng day." He then turned round to the counsel and reporters, and said, "I keep them very busy; I have given them all a job. I'll put their hands in by-and-bye." When the judge returned he said, "Here's t' ould man coming again." He seemed quite pleased at being the object of such universal interest, and repeatedly laughed at the attempts of the people to get a sight of him.

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The trial of Jonathan Martin took place in the Crown Court of York Castle before Mr. Baron Hullock, on Monday, March 30. The Court was crowded. When placed at the bar, and the first charge, that of having feloniously set fire to the Cathedral Church of St. Peter's, York, had been read to Martin by the clerk of arraigns, and he had been asked the usual question whether he were "guilty or not guilty," he placed himself in a theatrical attitude, and said, "It was not me, my lord, but my God did it. It is quite common to Him to punish to the third and fourth generation, and to show mercy to all that fear Him and keep His commandments."

A plea of "Not guilty" was entered.

The second indictment was then read over to him, charging him with feloniously stealing a quantity of crimson velvet and gold fringe and two gold tassels, the property of the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral and Metropolitcal Church of York. He was asked whether he was guilty or not guilty. Throwing out his left hand, he replied—

"My God gave me that for my hire. The Lord gave the silk to mak' a robe, like David the King, and the velvet to mak' a cap, and the tassels I took from the pulpit to hang down over my right and left ear."

The Clerk of Indictments.—"Are you guilty or not guilty?"

Martin.—"I had it given me for my hire."

This was taken as a plea of "Not guilty;" and Mr. Baron Hullock addressing him, said, "You will be tried to-morrow morning at nine o'clock." He bowed, and said, "Very well, my lord;" and was removed from the bar.

The crier of the Court then announced, at the desire of the judge, that the trial of Jonathan Martin would not take place till Tuesday morning at nine o'clock.

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On Tuesday, March 31st, the Court was as crowded as on the preceding day, and great confusion was the result; this seemed to cause Martin much amusement, and he laughed repeatedly at the struggles of the crowd at the door, and leaped on a seat to observe it.

After the hearing of the evidence, the substance of which has been incorporated in the narrative, Jonathan Martin was called upon for his defence. Martin, who had become very listless during the examination, seemed at this moment full of animation, and in a very vehement manner uttered in broad Northern dialect the following words in his defence:—

"The first impression that I had was by two particular dreams, sir; and after I had written five letters to warn the clergy. I think the last I wrote was a very severe one. I believe I wrote in it all the curses of the Scripture to warn them, and likewise signed my name to every letter, and the place I lodged at, No. 60, Aldgate. I never received any letters, which I was anxious to have from these clergymen, to speak to them by mouth, but there was found none among them that dared to answer me. I prayed to the Lord what I was to do. The next night I dreamt that a wonderful thick cloud came from heaven and rested upon the Minster." [Here the prisoner gave a long account of his dream, mentioned above, and about the cloud resting over the house.] He continued:—"The house was so shook that it awoke me from sleep. I was astonished, and began to ask the Lord what it meant. I felt a voice inwardly speak that the Lord had chosen me to destroy the Cathedral for the wrong that was doing by the clergy in going to plays, and balls, and card-tables, and dinners. Different things impressed my mind that the Lord had chosen me, because the house shook and trembled. I thought it resembled the pillar of smoke, and fulfilled the [Pg 388] prophecy of Joel, that God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and the old men should see visions, and the young men dream dreams, and that there should be signs in the heavens, blood and fire, and vapour and smoke. I thought that I should be fulfilling the word of God, and it was so impressed on my mind I had no rest night or day; for I found the Lord had determined to have me to show this people a warning to flee from the wrath to come. I was rather at a loss, and astonished about my wife lest she should attack me, for I

could not do it without being all night from her. After I had considered a while and got everything in order, I began to think it was impossible for me to do it, as if I was away without my wife knowing where, she might conceive I was about the Cathedral, and come and put me out. Therefore I thought of this, to take my wife's ring off her finger, and tie her over to this concern, which I did, as I have mentioned before, and the circumstance of my wife's keeping the vow. After I told her the circumstance she was much grieved, and strove to get me away to Leeds, to get me from the purpose I had informed her of. We went to Leeds and stayed a few days there, but I could get no rest to my mind till I had accomplished the deed. I was obliged to take leave of her on the Saturday morning. I had a severe contest between flesh and blood. It was a sair contest, especially when she asked what was to become of her, and of my child Richard I had at school at Lincoln. I thought she would have nailed me to the spot; but after a moment a passage of Scripture struck my ears, and it cried out like a whisper, 'What thou doest, do quickly.' I heard another—'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' And I heard a third whisper—'Even thine own life.' I tore myself from her arms. I said—'Lord, not my will, but thine be done.' I then felt the love of God in my[Pg 389] heart. I thought I would go to Tadcaster, and took twenty books with me. When I got them the Spirit told me to go forward. I had no money to keep me over the Sunday. I had only fourpence-halfpenny." The prisoner then gave a minute detail of his proceedings, and the different expedients resorted to in order to set fire to the building, which he described as having been a work of great labour and difficulty. He said, at the evening service he was "very much vexed at hearing them sing the prayers and amens; he thought the prayer of the heart came from the heart, and that they had no call for prayer-books." He observed—"The organ then made such a buzzing noise, I thought, 'Thou shalt buzz no more—I'll have thee down to-night.' Well," he continued, "they were all going out, and I lay me down aside of the bishop, round by the pillar." [The prisoner concealed himself behind a tomb.] "I lay here till all went out. I thought I heard the people coming down from ringing the bells; they all went out, and then it was so dark that I could not see my hand. Well, I left the bishop, and came out and fell upon my knees, and asked the Lord what I was to do first, and he said—'Get thy way up into the belfry and cut a rope;' and I had never been there, and I went round and round; I had a sort of a guess of the place from hearing the men, as I thought, come down. Then the Spirit said, 'Strike a light.' And I then struck a light with a flint and razor that I had got, and some tinder that I had brought from my landlord's. I saw there were plenty of ropes: then I cut one, and then another; but I had no idea they were so long, and I kept draw, draw, and the rope came up till I daresay I had near 100 feet. I have been a sailor, and thought to myself, this will make a man-rope, a sort of scaling-rope, and I tied knots in it. Aye, this is it, I know it well enough (pointing to the rope

which lay upon[Pg 390] the table). So I went down to the body of the Cathedral, and bethought me how I should go inside. I thought if I did so, by throwing the rope over the organ, I might set it *ganging*, and that would spoil the job. So I made an end of the rope fast, and went hand-over-hand over the gates, and got down on the other side, and fell on my knees, and prayed to the Lord, and He told me that do what I would they would take me. Then I asked the Lord what I was to do with the velvet, and He told me," (the prisoner here repeated what he had before stated in his plea about the robe, cap, and tassels.) "The fringe, I thought, would do for my hairy jacket that I have at Lincoln. I have a very good sealskin one there; I wish I had it with me, that I might show it you. Then I got all ready. Glory to God! I never felt so happy; but I had a hard night's work of it, particularly with a hungry belly. Well, I got a bit of wax-candle, and I set fire to one heap, and with the matches I set fire to the other. I then tied up the things that the Lord had given me for my hire in this very handkerchief that I have in my hand." He then observed that he had "hard work" while engaged in making his preparations; "but," said he, "I had a glorious time of it; and many a time I called 'Glory be to God' in a way which I wonder they did not hear on the outside." He left the pincers, he said, because the old man with whom he lodged could not afford to lose them, and he knew he would get them again. He thought it a work of merit to burn prayer-books and music-books, but not to burn the Word of God, and he appeared to regret that he could not save the large Bible by getting it over the gates and putting it outside. He detailed the particulars of his journey to the North; and described himself as having, from his arrival at York till he reached Northallerton, had very little food, but "t' Lord refreshed my soul on t' road[Pg 391] wi' t' snow upon t' ground." He then went on with his story till he reached Mr. Kell's house, and "t' Hexham man came, tapped me on t' shoulder, and took me to t' lock-up." He concluded, after speaking twenty minutes—"I am almost tired of talking, but I will afterwards tell ye a bit more."

A minute or two after, he said to the reporters—"An' you have been writing down what I said—I think I talked o'er fast for thee!" He then espied one of his publications, and said—"I see the'se gotten one of my bukes. I wrote mysen at different times, and have sold 10,000 copies."

The defence set up for the prisoner by Mr. Brougham, acting for Jonathan Martin's brother, was that Jonathan had perpetrated the deed when in an unsound state of mind. The jury returned the verdict—"We are of opinion that he set fire to the Cathedral, being at the time insane, or of unsound mind."

Baron Hulloch:—"Then your verdict must be *not guilty* on the ground of insanity; and the prisoner must remain in close custody during his Majesty's pleasure."

Martin was highly irritated at the line of defence adopted by Mr. Brougham; but that some suspicion of his lunacy was entertained by himself at an early period appears from his own words in his autobiography, written before he set fire to York Minster:—"The devil suggested to me that the people would think me mad. My wife endeavoured to comfort me, as she feared for my head."

After the sentence he was handcuffed and conveyed into the Castle. He made no observation, but was evidently disappointed and dejected at the result. For some days after this Martin seemed rather despondent, but he soon resumed his activity, pacing up and down at the rate of five miles an hour, and at an average of twenty miles per[Pg 392] day. He asked some one he knew, who visited him, after his son, who was at school at Lincoln, and said—"I'm thinking that God ha' used me varry badly."

He was removed from York Castle to St. Luke's Hospital in London, where his conduct is described as having been generally rational. He seldom spoke on the subject of his crime. Towards his brother he entertained the bitterest enmity for having had him proved insane. But he consoled himself in his confinement with the thought, "The Lord will take His own time to deliver me, and that will not be long, for He has a great work which cannot be done without me."

When he heard of the death of Baron Hulloch, before whom he was tried, and which took place the same year, he seemed much agitated, walked about a while, as if talking to himself, but made no observation. It transpired afterwards that he looked on this as a signal instance of the Lord punishing one of his enemies.

FOOTNOTES:

[24] Authorities for this memoir:—"A Full and Authentic Report of the Trial of Jonathan Martin for setting fire to York Minster; with an Account of the Life of the Lunatic." York: Bellerby, 1829. His own Life, written by himself, 1828, 1829. "York Castle in the Nineteenth Century; being an Account of the Principal Offences Committed in Yorkshire from the year 1800." By L. T. Rede. Leeds, 1829.

[25] In Yorkshire this prejudice exists strongly. A Yorkshireman once pulled down my hand as I pointed to the Great Bear, saying that if I pointed to a star I should be struck dead—it was a sin.

[26] Neither Mr. Nicoll nor the other pensioner assert that Martin was guilty of a loose life. Perhaps this was only on the occasion of his visiting London with the sailor who mentions it. Mr. Nicoll says Martin was a moral man.

[27] As an instance of Martin's carelessness of expression, I may say that he relates in his own biography that he attended the love-feast at Yarm half-an-hour after Communion at the church at Norton. Yarm is four miles from Norton. This mistake arose from the Life being written from his dictation by a second, who wrote half-an-hour per afternoon.

[28] Nicholson, the keeper of the Gateshead Asylum before the Ortons, said at the trial: "Martin was under my care eleven or twelve months. He conversed very rationally. I should not have thought him fit for a lunatic asylum."

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BROTHER JUCUNDUS.

At York were two religious houses—St. Mary's Abbey and St. Leonard's Priory—so close together that their walls abutted. The magnificent ruins of St. Mary's Abbey Church, the heavy fragments of the Priory Church of St. Leonard's, now stand in the gardens of the Botanical Society, and resound no longer to the sound of psalmody, but to the strains of the band playing marches, waltzes, and overtures.

At the close of the fifteenth century, before the Dissolution was thought of, there lived, and fasted, and prayed in St. Leonard's Priory a fat monk named Brother Jucundus. He had not been long in the house. He had joined the order in a fit of headache and remorse, after heavy potations on the occasion of the installation of a new Lord Mayor, and it is possible—probable, I suspect—that he somewhat regretted his precipitancy. Yet there was no escape. The irrevocable vows were on him; for life he was bound to eat only vegetables and bread, drink very small beer, and sleep only six hours in the night.

Convivial songs floated through his mind when he ought to have been chanting the Psalms of David, and the flavour of old sack rose upon his palate when he looked dolefully down at dinner-time into his mug of "swipes."

A year passed. The full paunch of Brother Jucundus began to subside; his fat cheeks to fall flabby, like the dewlaps of a cow; a dispirited expression took the place of the watery twinkle which had once animated his eye.

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Come what might, Brother Jucundus felt he must have a fling. He should die without it. Just one jolification in the twelvemonth, and then he would put up for the rest of the year with beans and cabbage, small beer and matins before dawn.

York fair approached. York fair! of all that is ravishing! The shows of dancing dogs, the whirli-go-rounds, the giantesses and dwarfs, the "spice" stalls, the drinking-booths! To York fair he must, he would go, if condemned to a bean and a thimbleful of water for fasting dinner ever after.

And go he did. He managed it in this way:—After dinner the whole community took an hour's sleep. As they rose at midnight and dined at mid-day, this was very necessary, and the Priory was silent, save for snores, from one o'clock to two. At half-past one Brother Jucundus stole to the porter's lodge, found the porter asleep in his chair—so took possession of his keys; went to the Prior's apartment; the Prior was asleep; pocketed a crown from his money-box, and left the Priory.

At two o'clock the community awoke. The porter missed his keys. The Prior missed the crown. All the monks were summoned into the chapter-house, and all missed Brother Jucundus.

After long deliberation it was decided that two sedate and trusty brothers should be sent out in quest of him.

It was a bright, sunny afternoon. Jucundus had enjoyed himself amazingly. The amount of gingerbread horses and men he had consumed was prodigious. He had seen "The Spotted Boy" and "The Bearded Woman;" he had gone round in the whirligig on the back of a wooden horse; he had shot for nuts at a mark, and won his pocket full, which he cracked every now and then, and washed down with a draft of really good ale. And now, just now,[Pg 395] he was going up in the boat of a great see-saw, with a foaming tankard in his hand, his jolly red face illumined with glee, and his ample throat thundering forth—

"In dulce jubilo-o-o,

Up, up, up we go-o-o;"

when his sweet jubilee was cut short by the sight of two monks from his Priory, with grim faces, making their way towards the see-saw.

Brother Jucundus tried to scramble out, and in so doing tumbled down. He was picked up. Either his libations, or the fall, or disinclination to return to St. Leonard's weakened his legs, and he tottered so much that the reverend fathers were obliged to put him in

a wheelbarrow and roll him to the Priory gate. At the entrance stood the Prior with a brow of thunder.

Brother Jucundus looked pleasantly up in his face from out of his conveyance, smiled benignantly, and piped—

"In dulce júbilo-o-o,

Up, up, up we go-o-o."

The chapter was still sitting, stern and threatening.

The helpless monk was trundled in his barrow into the midst of the assembled fathers, to be tried and sentenced.

He had been caught, *flagrante delicto*, in a see-saw, drunk, riotous, and incapable. Nevertheless, Brother Jucundus was not disposed to view his case unfavourably. He looked round on the chapter with an affectionate glance from out of his watery eye, and the kindest, most winsome smile on his ruddy cheeks.

He was asked at once for his defence. He murmured, with a hiccup—

"In dulce júbilo-o-o."

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The sentence was unanimous, and unfalteringly given. He was to be walled alive into a niche in the Priory cellar. The execution was to be carried into effect immediately.

As he was helped down the cellar stairs, some glimmer of his situation came in on the mind of Jucundus, and he sadly trolled out—

"Down, down, down we go-o-o."

A convenient niche was soon found. A cruse of water and a loaf of bread, with cruel mockery, were placed in the recess. The ready hands of zealous monks mixed the mortar, brought the bricks, and in a quarter of an hour Brother Jucundus was firmly walled in to his living grave.

Now for the first time did the extreme inconvenience of his position break upon the unfortunate monk. In the wheelbarrow he had been able to sit; here he was walled upright. It was cramping, intolerable. He kicked, he pressed backwards with all his might; and suddenly, with a crash, the wall behind him gave way, and he rolled backwards over a heap of fallen bricks into a cellar.

The shock brought him completely to his senses. Where was he? Now he saw the gravity of his offence—the terrible fate that had been prepared for him. Escape was fortunately open to him. He ran up the cellar stairs, and found himself in the Abbey of St. Mary's. The cellars of the two monasteries had adjoined; a wall alone had divided them. He had tumbled out of St. Leonard's into St. Mary's.

St. Mary's Abbey belonged to the severe Cistercian Order. Complete silence was one of the rules of the society. Except on Easter day, no monk might speak; on Easter day every one talked, and nobody listened. When Brother Jucundus accordingly appeared in the cloisters, no monk turned to look at him, or asked him [Pg 397] "how the saints he had come there?" but swept by him like a ghost. Jucundus made himself as much at home as was possible. He took his place at table, ate and drank what was set before him, occupied a pallet in the common dormitory, lifted his voice in concert with the others in the Abbey choir, and nobody meddled with him. The monks, if they thought about him at all—and it was against their rules to think of anything but their own spiritual affairs—thought he was a new monk just joined in the usual accepted manner.

A twelvemonth passed. It had been dull in St. Leonard's; it was duller in St. Mary's. The day came round on which York fair was held, the day, that happy day, which had ended so dolorously.

Now the day before York fair the office of cellarer fell vacant in St. Mary's Abbey by the death of the monk who had presided over the wine and beer. The Abbot by a happy inspiration committed the keys to Brother Jucundus. Here was an opportunity! If York fair might not be enjoyed in the market-place and the Pavement, he would at least commemorate it in the Abbey cellar.

On York fair day, accordingly, Brother Jucundus, after having seen all his fellow monks safe in bed, stole down the stone steps into the vault where were the barrels, with a tankard in his one hand and a lantern in the other.

St. Mary's Abbey was often called upon to receive noble, even royal guests, and entertain them nobly and royally. It therefore contained barrels of very prime wine and very strong audit ale. Brother Jucundus went along the range of barrels trying one tippie after another. There is nothing so dangerous as mixing your drink, and this the reverend brother discovered at last, for he sat down, unable to proceed further, by the best cask of Malmsey, and turning the tap, filled his tankard.

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Next day at noon the Cistercians assembled in the refectory for their frugal repast, dinner and breakfast in one: and as they had been up since midnight, and had eaten and drunk nothing for twelve hours, were tolerably hungry and dry. But the mugs were empty. At the Abbot's table even was neither wine nor beer. The silent fraternity bore with this some time, but at last even the rules of the Order could not keep them perfectly silent. They shuffled with their feet, growled and grunted discontentedly. At last the Abbot, in a voice of thunder, shouted—

"I want my beer!" and the example of the head becoming infectious, "Beer, beer, beer! we all want our beer!" resounded from every part of the refectory.

"Where was the cellarer?" Nobody knew. At last two brothers were commissioned to go to the cellar and fetch ale. They presently returned with awe-struck countenances, beckoned to the Abbot to follow them, and led the way along the cloisters down the cellar stairs. Curiosity, though against the rule, was infectious, and all the monks crept *en queue* after the Abbot. When they reached the vault a shocking sight presented itself to their eyes. Brother Jucundus lay with his head against the butt of Malmsey, flourishing his tankard over his head, and feebly, incoherently, trolling forth—

"In dulce júbilo-o-o,

Up, up, up we go-o-o."

It was too flagrant an offence to be passed over. A chapter of the Order was at once constituted in the cellar itself. All the monks were present. Unanimously it was decided that after solemn excommunication with bell, book, and candle, the guilty brother should be walled up alive on the scene of his crime in that very cellar.

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The awful scene of excommunication was proceeded with. It took some time, and during the ceremony Brother Jucundus gradually resumed consciousness—the fumes of Malmsey slowly evaporated. A convenient recess was found, where a heap of crumbling bricks lay prostrate. It was the identical nook out of which a year and a day before Brother Jucundus had escaped into the Cistercian Order and Abbey of St. Mary.

Into this niche therefore he was built. His terrible position had not, however, as yet forced itself on the monk's brain; he still tasted Malmsey, still was his heart buoyant, and with swelling lungs he roared forth his song—

"In dulce júbilo-o-o,

Up, up, up we go-o-o."

Now, it happened that the clocks in St. Leonard's and St. Mary's differed by a quarter of an hour. That of St. Leonard's was slower than that of St. Mary's. Consequently it was only just dinner-time in St. Leonard's Priory, and the cellarer, pitcher in hand, had just descended the stairs, and was filling his vessel with small beer, when he heard close to his ear, from behind the wall, a stentorian voice thunder forth—

"In dulce júbilo-o-o,

Up, up, up we go-o-o."

The voice, the strain, the words were those of Brother Jucundus, who a year and a day before had been immured at that very spot.

Down went the pitcher, and away fled the monk—amazement, admiration in his countenance, "A miracle! a miracle!" in his mouth—to the monks, just issuing from the church and the recitation of Sext and the office for the[Pg 400] dead around the body of their Prior, lately deceased, and that day to be buried.

The whole community rolled like a tidal wave down the cellar-stairs, and stood with breathless awe in a circle about the spot where twelve months and a day before they had walled in Brother Jucundus.

It was a miracle—there could be no doubt of it. Eager hands tore down the wall, and revealed the reverend brother, hale and rosy as of yore, and at his side a loaf as fresh as when put in, and a pitcher still full to the brim.

There could be no doubt but that this was a special interposition to establish the innocence of the monk, and to indicate to the community who was to be their future Prior.

With one voice they shouted, "Jucundus our Prior! Saint Jucundus our head and father!"

On the shoulders of the enthusiastic brethren the miraculous monk was carried upstairs and installed in the Prior's seat in the chapter-house.

Under him St. Leonard's jogged along very pleasantly, and he did much in his long rule of the monastery for its discipline and good order, if not to justify, at least to excuse the dissolution which fell on it immediately after his death.

MARY BATEMAN, WITCH AND MURDERESS.

Mary Harker was the daughter of a small farmer at Aisenby, in the parish of Topcliffe, near Thirsk, where she was born in 1768. From an early age she exhibited great quickness, which, instead of taking a direct course and developing into intelligence, was warped into low cunning.

She received, for one in her situation, a good education—was taught to read, and write, and cypher. But she very early showed a want of moral principle, very possibly because it was never instilled into her by her parents, and her first petty thefts having been pardoned or laughed at, she grew bolder, and what had been occasional grew to be frequent, and matured into a habit of peculation. Her father sent her into service at the age of thirteen, in Thirsk, and for a while she either concealed or did not yield to her propensity for theft. At all events, if she did pilfer, she was neither suspected nor discovered.

At the age of twenty she left Thirsk for York, and after a year's sojourn in that city, was detected in an attempt at robbery, and ran away to Leeds, where, in 1788, she worked as a mantua-maker; but as her knowledge of dressmaking was imperfect—she had only acquired it during her twelvemonth at York, where her mistress had been a dressmaker—she was able to work for the lower classes alone. She lived in Leeds for four years, following this occupation and occasionally telling fortunes. Her professed calling[Pg 402] admirably served to introduce dupes to her, and the servant-girls for whom she worked not infrequently introduced her to their young mistresses.

In the year 1792 she married an honest, hard-working man named John Bateman, who had made her acquaintance only three weeks previously. This man, there is no reason for believing, was, at first at all events, an accomplice in, or acquainted with, the crimes committed subsequently by his wife, though afterwards it is scarcely possible to exculpate him from connivance in them.

She now began openly to profess fortune-telling, the removal of spells, the power of controlling the future, &c., in which, however, she did not act in her own name, but as the deputy of Mrs. Moore, whom she represented as a person endowed with the supernatural powers belonging to the seventh child of a seventh child.

Whether such a person existed or not was never ascertained, but it is certain that Mary Bateman, at the outset of her career, had some accomplice, and she was from her youth fond of associating with gipsies and other vagrants, from whom she learned the art she afterwards practised.

The Batemans lodged in High Court Lane, Leeds, and she stole from a fellow-lodger a silver watch, a spoon of the same metal, and two guineas. The theft was discovered, and she was made to restore what she had taken, but she was not prosecuted.

Several charges of obtaining silk goods under various names of persons with whom she was acquainted were made and substantiated at this time, but the shopkeepers, with mistaken clemency, regarding her as a poor milliner, forgave her.

A poor man, a neighbour, who earned his living and supported his family with the assistance of a horse and[Pg 403] cart, sickened and died, leaving a widow and four children, the eldest a boy about fifteen years of age. The widow, who was only stepmother of the children, was persuaded by Mary Bateman that the eldest boy meant to sell all the little property his father had left, and appropriate the money to his own use, to prevent which she advised the mother to sell the horse, cart, and furniture as soon as possible, and to quit Yorkshire. This advice the infatuated woman took, turned everything into money, left a share with Mary for the children, and departed. Mary Bateman appropriated the sum entrusted to her, and sent the children to the union.

A gentleman living in Meadow Lane, in Leeds, bought a leg of mutton at the shambles, and requested that it might be sent home immediately. Mary, ever on the watch for her prey, hastened to the bridge over which the butcher's boy had to pass, and when she saw him approach, made towards him in a great hurry, pretending she was the gentleman's servant, scolded the boy for being so long upon the road, and taking the mutton by the shank, gave him a slap on the back, telling him she would carry it home herself. It is needless to say that carry it home she did, but not to the gentleman's house. When dinner-time came the joint had not arrived. The gentleman went to his butcher to inquire about the neglect, but he was informed that the meat had been sent an hour ago, and was taken from the boy by a woman, whom the butcher described, and whom the gentleman recollected to have seen at the stall when he was buying the meat, and whose residence he luckily knew to be in the Old Assembly-room Yard, in Kirkgate. He accordingly posted down to her house, and the first object that presented itself to his eyes on entering it was his leg of mutton roasting before Bateman's fire. After upbraiding Mary, she agreed[Pg 404] to pay for the mutton, and the matter was thus compromised.

In 1793 Bateman took a small house in Well's Yard, and furnished it decently—by what means, unless from the proceeds of her frauds, it is difficult to say, though it is due to the husband to admit that he was never proved to be cognisant of any of her malpractices, and was sometimes the victim of them. She once went to his workshop

and took with her a letter representing that his father, who was then town-crier at Thirsk, was at the point of death.

Her husband instantly set off for that town, and had scarcely entered it when he heard his father's voice in the market-place announcing an auction. He hurried back to Leeds to inform his wife of the hoax that had been practised upon them; but on his return he found his house stripped of every article of furniture, which Mary had sold, in all probability to hush up some robbery she had committed.

After some time they jointly found means to get fresh furniture, and they took in lodgers, one of whom, a Mr. Dixon, discovered Mary in the act of purloining money from his box. She was forced to refund it, and make good several losses that Mr. Dixon had before sustained, but for which he had not been able to account.

In the year 1796 a tremendous fire broke out in a large manufactory in Leeds, and by the falling of one of the walls many unfortunate people lost their lives. This calamity Mary Bateman turned to her own advantage. She went to Miss Maude, a lady known for her charitable disposition, and telling her that the child of a poor woman had fallen a victim, and that she had not linen to lay the child out on, begged she would lend her a pair of sheets. This request was complied with; but the sheets, instead of being turned[Pg 405] to such a benevolent purpose, were pledged at a pawnbroker's shop. Three similar instances occurred at the same time, and all the sheets were disposed of in the same way. Nor did her frauds on the plea of this calamity end here. She went round the town representing herself as a nurse at the General Infirmary, and collecting all the old linen she could beg to dress the wounds, as she said, of the patients who had been brought into the infirmary, but in reality to dispose of them for herself.

Bateman, ashamed of the disgrace caused by his wife's conduct, entered the supplementary militia, but he took with him his plague—his wife. And here a wide field opened for a woman of her disposition. She practised her old arts and learnt fresh ones. Of her exploits while in this situation we have no information; but when she quitted the army with her husband in the year 1796, on their return to Leeds, they took up their residence in Marsh Lane, near Timble Bridge. Mary then began to practise on a large scale. She herself, as she said, had no skill in casting nativities or reading the stars, but a certain Mrs. Moore was a proficient in this art, and to Mrs. Moore she referred all knotty points. It is hardly necessary to say that Mrs. Moore had no existence whatever.

The first experiment in witchcraft was made upon a Mrs. Greenwood, whom she attempted to persuade that she, Mrs. Greenwood, was in danger of committing suicide on account of domestic misfortunes, and that the skill of Mrs. Moore would be

necessary to prevent so dire a catastrophe. Next she informed her that her husband, who was then from home, was taken up for some offence, and placed in confinement; that four men had been set to watch him; and that if four pieces of gold, four pieces of leather, four pieces of blotting-paper, and four brass screws were not produced that night, and placed in her hands to [Pg 406] give to Mrs. Moore to "screw down" the guards, her husband would be a dead man before morning. In vain did Mrs. Greenwood plead that she had no pieces of gold; this difficulty Mrs. Bateman proposed to overcome by suggesting to her that she might borrow or steal them; the latter proposal startled her intended dupe, and, fortunately for her, she had fortitude enough to emancipate herself from the witch's trammels.

The family of Barzillai Stead, a person who had been unsuccessful in business, next became the object of Mary's iniquitous exactions. Upon the husband's fears she contrived to work with so much success, by representing the bailiffs to be in continual pursuit of him, that she obliged him to enlist, and to share his bounty with her and her imaginary wise-woman. Her next object was to arouse the jealousy of the wife: this she did by assuring her that it was the intention of Barzillai to take with him, when he went to his regiment, a young woman out of Vicar Lane, Leeds. In order to prevent this it became necessary to "screw down" the rival queen; this was to be effected by the agency of Mrs. Moore, but Mrs. Moore's screws would never drive without money—three half-crowns were to be produced for this purpose, and two pieces of coal; the coals were to be placed at the woman's door in Vicar Lane; they were then to be laid on the fire—the woman was to be thrown into a sound sleep—the fire was to communicate to her clean clothes, which had been washed in contemplation of the intended journey, and, the clothes being consumed, she could not of course elope without them. The morning after this charm had taken effect, Stead left Leeds to join his regiment, and left the imaginary woman of Vicar Lane behind him. Mary was then left at liberty to play off the whole artillery of her frauds upon the unsuspecting wife of [Pg 407] Stead. To enter into all the expedients she adopted to fleece this poor woman would swell this article to an inconvenient length; suffice it to say that she obliged her to sell or pawn every article in her house that would raise money, and drove her to such a state of desperation as to lead her victim to attempt suicide. While Mary Bateman was practising upon this woman, her dupe was confined, and the Leeds Benevolent Society, finding her in a state of destitution, determined to apply a guinea to the relief of her wants. This sum was given to her in three payments of 7s., and out of this guinea Mary Bateman had the inhumanity to extort 18s. by persuading the credulous woman that she would "screw down" the Benevolent Society, so as to force the managers to give her more alms.

The furniture and clothes were now all gone, and nothing remained but a few tools left by Stead when he went into the army, but even these could not escape the avarice of Mary Bateman, who was never at a loss for expedients to effect her purposes. She persuaded Stead's wife that it was in the power of Mrs. Moore—Mrs. Moore again!—to "screw down" all the officers in her husband's regiment, and so to screw them that they could not avoid giving him his discharge; but then money must be raised, and how, when nothing remained in the house but the tools? They of course must be sent to the pawnbroker's and every farthing they fetched was paid to Mary to get her friend Moore to interpose her kind offices for the liberation of the soldier. This charm failed, as the officers were too much for the witch.

Mary Bateman next became acquainted with a tradesman's wife of the name of Cooper. She persuaded this woman that her husband was about to abscond, and take with him all the property he could raise, and that she might not be left quite destitute, Mary prevailed upon her to [Pg 408]convey as much of the furniture as she could out of the house, including an excellent clock, and to lodge all this furniture at Bateman's. There it did not remain long. Mary took it all to the pawnbroker's, got for it what it would fetch, and left the abused husband and his credulous wife to redeem it at their leisure.

Blown upon as the credit of Mrs. Bateman's witchcraft then was, she removed from Timble Bridge to the Black Dog Yard, at the Bank. While she lived here one of her hens laid a wonderful egg, remarkable for bearing this inscription—

"Christ is coming."

But as so singular a phenomenon was not likely to obtain all the credit necessary for carrying into effect her fraudulent intentions unless supported by some kind of proof, she had the ingenuity and cruelty to contrive that two other eggs, bearing similar inscriptions, should be deposited in the nest by the same unfortunate hen. Persons flocked from all quarters to see the wonderful eggs, and they who dared to disbelieve stood a good chance of being maltreated by the credulous multitude. Mary's motive for producing those eggs is not well made out, but it is supposed that she had at that time a notion of following the example of Joanna Southcote, as she was then in the habit of attending the meetings of the sect founded by that extraordinary woman. Mary succeeded in realising no inconsiderable sum by means of these eggs, for she made those who came to see the miracle pay a penny each for the gratification of their curiosity.

Shortly after, the subject of this narrative contrived to ingratiate herself, as she well knew how, into the good graces of a family of the name of Kitchin, two maiden

ladies[Pg 409] of the Quaker persuasion, who kept a small linen-draper's shop near St. Peter's Square, in Leeds. There is every reason to suppose that she had deluded these unfortunate young women with some idea of her skill in looking into futurity, or, at least, that some of her friends—a Mrs. Moore or a Miss Blythe perhaps—could read their destiny in the stars! For some time Mary was the confidant of the Misses Kitchin. She was frequently at their house; she assisted in their shop; and her interference extended even to their domestic concerns. In the early part of September, 1803, one of the young women became very ill; Mary Bateman procured for her medicines, as she said, from a country doctor. These medicines, like those administered afterwards to Perigo and his unfortunate wife, were of powerful efficacy, and in the course of less than one week Miss Kitchin died. In the meantime her mother, hearing of her dangerous situation, came from Wakefield, and though in good health when she left home, the mother as well as the second daughter took the same illness, and in a few days both were laid in the grave, at the side of their ill-fated relation.

Previous to the death of one of the sisters a female friend of the family was sent for, and when she arrived the poor sufferer seemed oppressed with some secret that she wished to communicate, but her strength failing her, she expired without being able to do so.

Only ten days sufficed to carry off the mother and two sisters. The complaint of which they died was said to be *cholera*—a complaint, let it be remembered, attended by symptoms resembling those produced by poison. It did not, however, suit the purposes of Mary Bateman to give the disorder so mild a name. She represented it to be the plague, and the whole neighbourhood shunned the place, and would as soon have entered the most [Pg 410]infectious wards of a pest-house as this dwelling. Mary alone, in the face of all danger, was ready to afford her friendly offices; and when the persons composing this unfortunate family were buried, the door was closed, and a padlock placed upon it.

A physician of eminence in the town, on being called in to visit the last surviving sister, was so strongly impressed with the opinion that her sickness and sudden death had been caused by poison, that he examined with much care many of the vessels in the house, inquired if any water for poisoning flies had been used, and expressed a wish to open the body; but the family being all dead, and no persons at hand who thought themselves authorised to give that permission, the corpse was interred unopened, and with it the opportunity for detection. During the time of the fatal illness in the Misses Kitchin's house, Mary Bateman was unremitting in her attention; she administered their food, and from her hands the medicine was conveyed to their lips. Some time after the death of these ladies their creditors looked over their effects,

when it was found that their house and shop had been plundered of almost everything they contained: and to add to the embarrassment of their affairs, the shop books were missing. The creditors only divided eightpence in the pound.

Two young women, then servants in Leeds, had long been in Mary's toils, and she had fleeced them pretty handsomely; and not only them, but their friends, for she had prevailed upon one of them to rob her mother of several articles, and amongst the rest of a large family Bible. When she had got all from them that could be extorted without awakening the suspicions of their friends, she sent both these deluded girls, at different times, to seek service in Manchester, cautioning them, if they met, not to speak to each other, on pain of breaking the charm. When they[Pg 411] arrived in Manchester, Mary contrived to keep up a correspondence with them, and got from them even the clothes they wore, so that they were almost reduced to a state of nakedness. One day these poor destitute girls met in the streets of Manchester; the meeting being quite unexpected, they both burst into tears, and their emotions became so violent that further concealment was out of the question. They thereupon related to each other their sad history, and by comparing notes, found that they were both the dupes of Mary Bateman. They then wrote to Leeds, and laid their case before their friends, who interfered in their behalf, and got from the witch part of the property she had so wickedly extorted.

The witch also contrived to ingratiate herself into the good opinion of another young woman, and got from her several sums of money for the purpose of curing her of an "evil wish" laid upon her by an old beggar-woman whom she had refused to relieve. The cure was to be effected by Miss Blythe, to whom a pocket-handkerchief was to be sent. In due course the directions arrived, and Miss Blythe, who, like Mrs. Moore, could never put her charms in motion without money, required that different sums, amounting in all to five guineas, should be produced, and as much wearing apparel as was worth about the same sum; but this money and these clothes were only to be kept till the evil wish was removed, and then to be restored to the owner. The period fixed for the opening of the mysterious bags, in which these articles were deposited, had arrived, when one day a person brought a fruit-pie to the young woman, telling her that her sweetheart had sent it. This pie she tasted, and let a fellow-servant partake with her, but though very nice in appearance, the taste was hot and offensive; they in consequence desisted from eating it, and the young woman took it down to Mary[Pg 412] Bateman to ask her opinion. Mary affected that she knew nothing herself of such things, but she would send it to the sagacious Miss Blythe. This, as the simple girl supposed, was done, and Miss Blythe informed her that it was very well she had not eaten much of the pie, for if she had, it would have been her last, as it was "full of

poison!" Soon after the girl opened the bags, and found that her guineas had turned to copper and her clothes to old rags!

In the year 1807, Bateman, who, owing to the conduct of Mary, never remained long in one place, removed into Meadow Lane. While living in this situation a very extraordinary circumstance occurred, and it is not improbable that Mary was in some way privy to the transaction. A man of the name of Joseph Gosling, a cloth-dresser, had been long out of employ, and his family, which consisted of a wife and four children, was reduced to great extremity. One day the whole of the family had been out for some time, when one of the children, a boy about seven years of age, returned, and found on the table a small cake; the mother and other children soon after returned, and partook of this cake. They immediately became so sick as to render medical aid necessary. Mr. Atkinson, the surgeon, was then sent for, and by administering emetics saved the lives of the family. On analysing the cake it was found to contain a large quantity of arsenic. It is impossible to say why or by whom this poisonous bread was placed in the situation in which the boy found it, and the only reason why it is supposed to have been placed there by Mary Bateman is the knowledge that poisonous drugs were much in use by her, that human life was in her estimation of little value; and that the cries or tricks of the children may have inconvenienced her.

In the month of April, 1807, Judith Cryer, a poor old washerwoman, and a widow, was occasioned uneasiness[Pg 413] by the misconduct of her grandson, a boy about eleven years of age. Winifred Bond, a person who had some dealings with Mary Bateman, either as her dupe or her agent, recommended the old woman to apply to Mary, as a person who could remove the cause of her distress. Judith consented to consult her; Mary soon found out the foible of the poor woman. An inordinate fear about the future fate of this darling grandson was the spring in Judith's mind on which the witch found she could play with success. She recommended that an application should be made to Miss Blythe, a lady of her acquaintance, who she said lived at Scarboro', but who, in fact, had no more real existence than the invisible Mrs. Moore. She then undertook to write to her dear friend. In a few days an answer was received from this lady, which shocked Judith beyond description. The letter contained the representation of a gallows, with a rope dangling from it. The letter also stated that the grandson would be executed before he attained the age of fourteen years, unless the catastrophe was prevented by the old woman raising four guineas, and applying them as Miss Blythe should direct. To raise such a sum seemed as impossible to poor Judith as to pay the National Debt. At last, however, she contrived to scrape it together with the utmost difficulty. When raised, it was, as Mary pretended, to remain unapplied till

she received further instructions from Miss Blythe. The instructions at length arrived, and ordered that three guineas should be put into a leathern bag, and sewed up in Judith's bed, where they were to remain untouched till the boy had attained the age of fourteen. The former part of these directions were, as far as concerned Judith, faithfully complied with—Mary, as she thought, deposited the money as directed; but when the witch was afterwards apprehended, Judith opened her bed, took out the bag, and found it empty.

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Mary having embraced the faith of the followers of Joanna Southcote, got introduced to the houses of many of them, and invariably robbed them: sometimes by practising on their fears, and at others by absolute theft.

In the year 1808, Bateman's family removed to Camp Field, in Water Lane, and there Mary met with a new and profitable subject for the exercise of her villainous arts. The wife of James Snowden, a neighbour, had a sort of presentiment that one of her children would be drowned; but whether this notion proceeded from morbid fancies originating in her own mind, or was suggested to her by Mary Bateman, is not known. Mary Bateman offered her services, or rather the services of Miss Blythe, to save the child from a watery grave. Miss Blythe was then represented as living at Thirsk, and a letter was received from her, directing that James Snowden's silver watch should be sewed up in the bed by Mary Bateman. This was accordingly done.

Next, money to the amount of twelve guineas was required. Letters were received from Miss Blythe, directing that this money should also be sewn up in the bed, to be restored when the charm had taken effect. By-and-bye it was found necessary to increase the terrors, and in addition to the death of the son, Miss Blythe suggested that ill would befall the daughter, unless the family left Leeds, and removed to Bowling, near Bradford. The bed containing the charms they were allowed to take with them, but it was thought expedient to leave a considerable portion of their property in the house, and deposit the key with Bateman.

At length they expressed a wish to be allowed to rip open the bed and take out the watch and money, but the proper time, they were told, had not yet arrived; and before the[Pg 415] property was taken out, the family of Snowden was to take a DOSE, which was at that time in preparation for them, and was to have been administered about the end of October, 1808. Happily for them this dose was never taken.

At this juncture, so critical to the family in question, Mary Bateman was apprehended for the frauds committed on William Perigo's family, and the wilful murder of Perigo's

wife, by administering poison, of which she had died nearly two years before. This event naturally created a good deal of interest, and a narrative of the transaction was published in the *Leeds Mercury* of the 22nd of October. On the evening of that day Snowden was sitting in a public-house at Bradford when the *Mercury* was produced, and the narrative read by some person in the company. Snowden heard the relation with violent emotion, and as soon as it was finished, started from his chair and hurried home with all possible expedition. His first care was to give his wife a hasty and confused notion of the imposition that had been practised upon them, and next to unrip the folds of the bed; when, instead of watch and money, he discovered—a coal! He then went to Leeds, and found his house, which he had left in the care of Mary Bateman, plundered of almost everything it had contained, and on a search-warrant being procured, part of the property was found in Bateman's house.

John Bateman, the husband, was in consequence apprehended and committed to prison, to take his trial for the offence, either as a principal or as an accomplice. At the following Sessions his trial came on, and he was acquitted.

A brother of Mary Bateman, who had deserted from his Majesty's navy, had come with his wife to live in Leeds, and lodged with Bateman. Mary finding that her lodgers were a restraint upon her, determined to be quit of them. For this purpose she wrote, or procured to be written, a letter to her sister-in-law, stating that her father was on the[Pg 416] point of death, and summoning her to attend to receive his last blessing. The affectionate daughter answered the summons instantly, but when she arrived at Newcastle, where her father lived, she found him in perfect health. In the absence of his wife, Mary contrived to persuade her brother that she was inconstant, and was plunging him into debt, and so far succeeded as to induce him to write to his wife and tell her she need not return, for he would not receive her. She did, however, return, and convinced him of her innocence; when on examining their trunks it was discovered that Mary had, in the wife's absence, stolen their clothes, and disposed of them for what they would bring. This, as might be expected, roused the brother's indignation; but Mary soon got him out of the way, for she actually went before the magistrates and lodged an information against him as a deserter. He was in consequence obliged to quit Leeds, and afterwards entered military service. This did not, however, content Mary. She wrote to his mother, and told her that her son had been apprehended as a deserter, and that if she could send £10, a substitute was ready to go, and would be accepted in his stead. The ten pounds were sent, and Mary pocketed the money.

On the 21st of October, 1808, Mary Bateman was apprehended by the Chief Constable of Leeds on a charge of fraud, and was, after undergoing several long

examinations before the magistrates of the borough, committed to York Castle on suspicion of the wilful murder of Rebecca Perigo, of Bramley.

A poor family of the name of Perigo, living at Bramley, near Leeds, had been defrauded by Mary Bateman of money to the amount of nearly £70, and of clothes and furniture to a considerable amount. These frauds were committed under the pretence of engaging Miss Blythe to relieve Mrs. Perigo from the effects of an "evil wish"[Pg 417] under which she was supposed to labour. The money was all represented as sewn up in the bed, and was to be at the disposal of the Perigos when the spell was broken. But when the appointed time for restoring the property approached, Mary Bateman conveyed poison to Perigo and his wife in their food. The woman died, but providentially Perigo recovered, and was able to bring the poisoner to justice.

It is unnecessary to give the particulars of the series of extortions committed on the Perigos. When nothing more could be extracted from the unfortunate people, and Mary saw that the time was come when she must refund or be exposed, the following letter reached her victims, purporting to come from Miss Blythe:—

"My Dear Friends,—

"I am sorry to tell you you will take an illness in the month of May next, either one or both, but I think both; but the work of God must have its course. You will escape the chambers of the grave; though you seem to be dead, yet you will live. Your wife must take half a pound of honey down from Bramley to Mary Bateman's at Leeds, and it must remain there till you go down yourself, and she will put in such like stuff as I have sent from Scarboro' to her, and she will put it in when you come down and see her yourself, or it will not do. You must eat pudding for six days, and you must put in such like stuff as I have sent to Mary Bateman from Scarboro', and she will give your wife it, but you must not begin to eat of this pudding while I let you know. If ever you find yourselves sickly at any time, you must take each of you a teaspoonful of this honey. I will remit £20 to you on the 20th day of May, and it will pay a little of what you owe. You must[Pg 418] bring this down to Mary Bateman's, and burn it at her house when you come down the next time."

The rest shall be told by Perigo himself, as given in his evidence at the trial.

Pursuant to the directions in this letter, witness stated that his wife took the honey to Mary Bateman's; that when she returned she brought six powders with her. The witness went to Mary Bateman's house, and talked to her about the letter he had received, and said it was a queerish thing that Miss Blythe should be able to foresee that they should be ill. Mary explained that she (Miss Blythe) knew everything relating

to them, and that if they followed her directions all would be well. Mary also told him that they were to do with the powders each day as they were marked, or it would kill them all. Mrs. Bateman then mixed a powder in the honey in his presence, and he took the honey home. On the 5th of May witness received another letter from Miss Blythe, but after reading it over one or twice, and copying a few lines from it, he destroyed it. He said the copy he had taken was also destroyed. The witness was then desired to state the contents of this letter, which he recited, as he did all the letters that had been destroyed, from memory, as follows:—

"My Dear Friends,—

"You must begin to eat pudding on the 11th of May, and you must put one of the powders in every day as they are marked, for six days; and you must see it put in yourself every day, or else it will not do. If you find yourself sickly at any time, you must not have no doctor, for it will not do, and you must not let the boy that used to eat with you eat of that pudding for six days; and you[Pg 419] must make only just as much as you can eat yourselves; if there is any left it will not do. You must keep the door fast as much as possible, or you will be overcome by some enemy. Now think on and take my directions, or else it will kill us all. About the 25th of May I will come to Leeds, and send for your wife to Mary Bateman's. Your wife will take me by the hand, and say, 'God bless you that I ever found you out.' It has pleased God to send me into the world that I might destroy the works of darkness. I call them the works of darkness because they are dark to you. Now, mind what I say, whatever you do. This letter must be burnt in straw on the hearth by your wife."

The witness proceeded to state that in consequence of these directions, on the 11th of May (Monday) they began to eat of the pudding, a powder being put in each day as marked on the paper, and that they found no particular taste in the pudding for five days. And that on Saturday the witness was coming to Leeds without seeing the powder put in, when his wife reminded him that it was necessary he should see it put in. Witness said his wife had made the pudding earlier than usual for that purpose. Witness saw the powder put in, which was four or five times larger than any of the other powders. On his return from Leeds, about twenty minutes after twelve o'clock, his wife had prepared a small cake from some of the dough which was left after making the pudding; this she broke in two pieces, and he ate one of them. Witness said the cake tasted very keen, and observed to his wife if the pudding tasted as bad he would not eat it. When the pudding was ready he ate a single mouthful, but it was so nauseous that he could eat no more of it; his wife, however, swallowed three or four mouthfuls, but was unable to eat more, and she carried the pudding into the cellar, and was there seized[Pg 420] with the most violent vomitings. His wife said this was

the illness predicted by Miss Blythe, and they should take the honey. Witness took two spoonfuls of it, and his wife took six or seven. This made them worse than before. The vomiting continued incessantly for twenty-four hours. His wife would not hear of a doctor being sent for, as that was contrary to Miss Blythe's directions, who had assured them that their sickness should not be unto death, and though they might seem to be dead, yet should they live, for that she was sent to destroy the works of darkness. Witness said a violent heat came out of his mouth, which was very sore, that his lips were black, and that he had a most violent pain in his head, twenty times worse than a common headache; everything appeared green to him. Witness had also a violent complaint in his bowels; he could eat nothing for several days, and began to get better only by hairbreadths. The witness then proceeded to detail the symptoms of his wife, which were similar to his own, only more violent. Her tongue swelled so that she could not shut her mouth, she was constantly thirsty, entirely lost her strength, and expired on Sunday, the 24th of May. Before she died he sent for Mr. Chorley, a surgeon from Leeds, but as she died before his arrival, a messenger was sent to acquaint him with this circumstance, and therefore he did not come. His wife before she died made him promise not to be rash with Mary Bateman, but to wait the appointed time. Witness himself went to Mr. Chorley on the day after the death of his wife. Mr. Chorley having examined him and heard his account of the symptoms, expressed his opinion that he had received poison into his stomach. Witness said that his wife was perfectly well immediately before eating of the pudding on Saturday. By the directions of Mr. Chorley, a paste was made of the flour of which their pudding had been made and given to a [Pg 421] fowl; but it received no injury, and the witness said it was alive to this day. A part of the fatal pudding was also given to a cat, which it poisoned, but the result of this experiment was detailed by another witness.

Witness now went into a detail of transactions subsequent to the death of his wife. In the month of June, a short time after that event, the witness went to the prisoner's house, and acquainted her with the death of his wife, and told her he was sorry they had not sent for a doctor when they were sick, but that they had acted according to the directions of the letter. Mary Bateman said, "Perhaps you did not lick up all the honey as directed in the letter;" and I said, "No; I am afraid it is that honey that has done our job."

About the beginning of June, Perigo received a letter to the following effect, purporting to be from Miss Blythe:—

"My Dear Friend,—

"I am sorry to tell you that your wife should touch of those things which I ordered her not, and for that reason it has caused her death. It had likened to have killed me at Scarboro' and Mary Bateman at Leeds, and you and all; and for this reason she will rise from the grave, she will stroke your face with her right hand, and you will lose the use of one side, but I will pray for you. I would not have you to go to no doctor, for it will not do. I would have you eat and drink what you like, and you will be better. Now, my dear friend, take my directions, do, and it will be better for you. Pray God bless you. Amen, amen. You must burn this letter immediately after it is read."

Soon after this, witness was ordered by Mr. Chorley to Buxton, and having on his return called on the poisoner,[Pg 422] she expressed her surprise that he should have gone to a doctor contrary to Miss Blythe's command, and said that had she known he had been going to Buxton, she would have given him a bottle that would have cured him on the road.

William Perigo proceeded to relate that on the 19th of October, 1808, he unripped the bed in which all the bags were sewn up, and having opened the whole of them, he found no money whatever. In the bags in which he expected to find guinea-notes, he found only waste paper, and where he expected to find gold, he found only a halfpenny or a farthing. But the four silk bags in which he saw four guinea-notes put, he could not find at all, nor could he give any account as to how or where they were gone. Upon making this discovery the witness went to Leeds, and saw Mary Bateman, and said to her, "I am sorry to think you should use me in this manner;" to which she replied, "How?" He then said, "I have opened the bags, and there is nothing in them but bits of lead, plain paper, bad halfpennies, and bad farthings." At which she did not seem at all surprised, but said, "You have opened them too soon." He answered, "I think it is too late." He then said he would come down to her house in the morning with two or three men and have things settled. The prisoner begged that he would not, and said if he would appoint a time and place to meet her alone, she would satisfy him. To this the witness consented, and the Leeds and Liverpool canal bank, near the bridge, was fixed as the place of meeting.

The officers of justice arrested Mary Bateman at this meeting.

The trial was conducted at York before Sir Simon Le Blanc on the 17th March, 1809; she was found guilty, and condemned to death.

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During the brief interval between her receiving the sentence of death and her execution, the Rev. George Brown took great pains to prevail upon her to acknowledge

and confess her crime. On his touching upon the subject of the Quaker ladies, whose death had been so sudden and mysterious, she seemed perfectly to understand his meaning, but said that she knew nothing about it, as at the time she was confined in childbirth.

Though the prisoner behaved with her usual decorum during the time that remained to her, and joined with apparent fervour in the customary offices of devotion, she exhibited no compunction for crimes of which she would not acknowledge herself to be guilty. She maintained her caution and mystery to the last. On the day preceding her execution she wrote a letter to her husband, in which she enclosed her wedding-ring, with a request that it might be given to her daughter. In this letter she lamented the disgrace she had brought upon her husband and family, but declared her entire innocence of the crime laid to her charge, and for which she was about to suffer, though she acknowledged—what, indeed, she could not deny to her husband—that she had been guilty of several frauds. "I have made my peace with my God, and am easy in mind. To-morrow will end all here, and the Lord will care for me hereafter."

It will hardly be credited, though it is a certain fact, that this unhappy woman was so addicted to fraud that even then she was incapable of refraining from her trickery and deception. A young female prisoner had, in her presence, expressed a wish to see her sweetheart. Mary Bateman took her aside, and said that if she could procure a sum of money to be made into a charm, and sewed into her stays, the young man would be compelled to visit her. The simple girl complied, and Mary Bateman having prepared a [Pg 424] potent spell, it was bound round the breast of the young woman. No sweetheart made his appearance, and the girl's confidence beginning to waver, she unbound the charm to take out her money, and found that it had vanished.

The circumstance having been reported to the Governor of York Castle, where Mary Bateman and the girl were confined, part of the spoil was refunded, and Mary Bateman directed to balance the account by giving to the dupe some of her clothes. Exhortations and remonstrances failed to move her to confess her crimes. At five o'clock on the morning of Monday, March 20th, 1809, she was removed from her cell and from her infant child, which lay sleeping on the bed, unconscious of the fate of its wretched mother. She stopped and kissed it for the last time, but without showing any emotion at having to leave it for ever. Every possible effort, every religious influence was brought to bear on her to make her confess, but in vain. At twelve o'clock she was led forth to execution. On the scaffold she again denied her guilt, and with this denial on her lips was launched into eternity.

Her body was taken to the General Infirmary at Leeds. Though the hearse did not reach Leeds till midnight, it was met by a considerable number of people who were waiting for it. At the Infirmary her body was exhibited at the charge of 3d. a head to visitors for the benefit of the institution. At this rate 2500 individuals were admitted, and upwards of £30 was realised. Her body was afterwards dissected, and in compliance with a favourite Yorkshire custom, her skin was tanned and distributed in small pieces to various applicants.