

WILLIAM ANDREWS

CURIOUS EPITAPHS,
COLLECTED FROM THE
GRAVEYARDS OF GREAT
BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

William Andrews

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from the Graveyards of
Great Britain and Ireland.**

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Содержание

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Preface | 5 |
| EPITAPHS ON PARISH CLERKS AND SEXTONS | 6 |
| TYPOGRAPHICAL EPITAPHS | 17 |
| EPITAPHS ON SPORTSMEN | 23 |
| EPITAPHS ON TRADESMEN | 32 |
| Конец ознакомительного фрагмента. | 38 |

William Andrews

Curious Epitaphs, Collected from the Graveyards of Great Britain and Ireland

Preface

For many years I have collected curious epitaphs, and in this volume I offer the result of my gleanings. An attempt is herein made to furnish a book, not compiled from previously published works, but a collection of curious inscriptions copied from gravestones. Some of the chapters have appeared under my name in *Chambers's Journal*, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, *Newcastle Courant*, *People's Journal*, (Dundee), *Press News*, and other publications. I have included a Bibliography of Epitaphs, believing that it will be useful to those who desire to obtain more information on the subject than is presented here. I have not seen any other bibliography of this class of literature, and as a first attempt it must be incomplete. In compiling it I have had the efficient aid of Mr. W. G. B. Page, of the Hull Subscription Library, who has also prepared the Index.

I must tender my thanks to the following friends for their valued assistance: Mrs. Geo. Linnæus Banks, author of the "Manchester Man," Mr. W. G. Fretton, F.S.A., Mr. Walter Hamilton, F.R.G.S., Mr. Jno. H. Leggott, F.R.H.S., Rev. R. V. Taylor, B.A., Mr. H. Vickery, and others whose names appear in the following pages.

In conclusion, I hope that this book will merit from readers and reviewers a similar welcome to that granted to my former works; in that case I shall have every reason to be satisfied with my pleasant labour.

WILLIAM ANDREWS.
Hull Literary Club,

October 1st, 1883.

EPITAPHS ON PARISH CLERKS AND SEXTONS

Amongst the most curious of the many peculiar epitaphs which are to be found in the quiet resting-places of the departed are those placed to the memory of parish clerks and sextons. We have noted at various times, and at different places, many strange specimens, a few of which we think will entertain our readers.

In the churchyard of Crayford is a grave-stone bearing the following inscription: —

Here lieth the body

OF

Peter Isnell,

Thirty years clerk of this Parish

He lived respected as a pious and mirthful man, and died on his

way to church to assist at a wedding,

On the 31st day of March, 1811,

Aged 70 years

The inhabitants of Crayford have raised this stone to his cheerful

memory, and as a tribute to his long and faithful services

The life of this clerk, just three score and ten,
Nearly half of which time he had sung out “Amen;”
In youth he was married, like other young men,
But his wife died one day, so he chanted “Amen.”
A second he took, she departed – what then?
He married and buried a third with “Amen.”
Thus his joys and his sorrows were treble, but then

His voice was deep bass, as he sung out “Amen.”
On the horn he could blow as well as most men;
So his horn was exalted to blowing “Amen.”
But he lost all his wind after three score and ten,
And here, with three wives, he awaits till again
The trumpet shall rouse him to sing out “Amen.”

In addition to being parish clerk, Frank Raw, of Selby, Yorkshire, was a grave-stone cutter, for we are told: —

Here lies the body of poor Frank Raw,
Parish clerk and grave-stone cutter,
And this is writ to let you know
What Frank for others used to do,
Is now for Frank done by another.

The next epitaph, placed to the memory of a parish clerk and bellows-maker, was formerly in the old church of All Saints, Newcastle-on-Tyne: —

Here lies Robert Wallas,
The King of Good Fellows,
Clerk of All-Hallows,
And maker of bellows.

On a slate head-stone, near the south porch of Bingham Church, Nottinghamshire, is inscribed:

—
Beneath this stone lies Thomas Hart,
Years fifty eight he took the part
Of Parish Clerk: few did excel.
Correct he read and sung so well;
His words distinct, his voice so clear,
Till eighteen hundred and fiftieth year.
Death cut the brittle thread, and then
A period put to his Amen.
At eighty-two his breath resigned,
To meet the fate of all mankind;
The third of May his soul took flight
To mansions of eternal light.
The bell for him with awful tone
His body summoned to the tomb.
Oh! may his sins be all forgiv’n
And Christ receive him into heav’n.

In the same county, from the churchyard of Ratcliffe on Soar, we have a curious epitaph to the memory of Robert Smith, who died in 1782, aged 82 years: —

Fifty-five years it was, and something more,
Clerk of this parish he the office bore,

And in that space, 'tis awful to declare,
Two generations buried by him were!

In a note by Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt, F.S.A., we are told that with the clerkship of Bakewell church, the “vocal powers” of its holders, appear to have been to some extent hereditary, if we may judge by the inscriptions recording the deaths and the abilities of two members of the family of Roe which are found on grave-stones in the churchyard there. The first of these, recording the death of Samuel Roe, is as under: —

To

The memory of

Samuel Roe,

Clerk

Of the Parish Church of Bakewell,

Which office

He filled thirty-five years

With credit to himself

And satisfaction to the Inhabitants

His natural powers of voice,

In clearness, strength, and sweetness

Were altogether unequalled

He died October 31st, 1792,

Aged 70 years

died aged

Millicent,

Wife of Saml Roe,

She died Sepr 16th, 1745, aged 22

Dorothy,

Wife of Saml Roe,

She died Novr 13th, 1754, aged 28

Respecting the above-mentioned Samuel Roe, a contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine* wrote, on February 13th, 1794:

“Mr. Urban,

“It was with much concern that I read the epitaph upon Mr. Roe, in your last volume, p. 1192. Upon a little tour which I made in Derbyshire, in 1789, I met with that worthy and very intelligent man at Bakewell, and, in the course of my antiquarian researches there, derived no inconsiderable assistance from his zeal and civility. If he did not possess the learning of his namesake, your old and valuable correspondent, I will venture to declare that he was not less influenced by a love and veneration for antiquity, many proofs of which he had given by his care and attention to the monuments in the church, which were committed to his charge; for he united the characters of sexton, clerk, singing-master, will-maker, and school-master. Finding that I was quite alone, he requested permission to wait upon me at the inn in the evening, urging, as a reason for this request, that he must be exceedingly gratified by the conversation of a gentleman who could read the characters upon the monument of Vernon, the founder of Haddon House, a treat he had not met with for many years. After a very pleasant gossip we parted, but not till my honest friend had, after some apparent struggle, begged of me to indulge him with my name.”

To his careful attention is to be attributed the preservation of the curious Vernon and other monuments in the church, over which in some instances he placed wooden framework to keep off the rough hands and rougher knives of the boys and young men of the congregation. He also watched with special care over the Wendesley tomb, and even took careful rubbings of the inscriptions.

While speaking of this Mr. Roe, it may be well to put the readers of this work in possession of an interesting fact in connection with the name of Roe, or Row. The writer above, in his letter to Mr. Urban, says, “If he did not possess the learning of his namesake, your old and valued correspondent,” &c. By this he means “T Row,” whose contributions to the *Gent's. Mag.* were very numerous and interesting. The writer under this signature was the Rev. Samuel Pegge, rector of Whittington, and the letters forming this pseudonym were the initials of the words, T[he] R[ector] O[f] W[hit]tington].

Philip Roe, who succeeded his father (Samuel Roe) as parish clerk of Bakewell, was his son by his third wife. He was born in 1763, and succeeded his father in full parochial honours in 1792, having, we believe, for some time previously acted as his deputy. He died in 1815, aged 52 years,

and was buried with the other members of the family. The following curious inscription appears on his grave-stone: —

Erected

In remembrance of

Philip Roe

who died 12th September, 1815

Aged 52 years

The vocal Powers here let us mark
Of Philip our late Parish Clerk
In Church none ever heard a Layman
With a clearer Voice say “Amen!”
Who now with Hallelujahs Sound
Like Him can make the Roofs rebound?
The Choir lament his Choral Tones
The Town – so soon Here lie his Bones.
“Sleep undisturb’d within thy peaceful shrine
Till Angels wake thee with such notes as thine.”

Also of Sarah his wife who departed this life on the

24th of January 1817

aged 51 years

Our genial friend, Cuthbert Bede, B.A., author of “Verdant Green,” tells us, “As a boy I often attended the service at Belbroughton Church, Worcestershire, where the parish clerk was Mr. Osborne, tailor. His family had there been parish clerks and tailors since the time of Henry the Eighth, and were lineally descended from William FitzOsborne, who, in the twelfth century, had been deprived by Ralph FitzHerbert of his right to the manor of Bellem, in the parish of Belbroughton. Often have I stood in the picturesque churchyard of Wolverley, Worcestershire, by the grave of its old parish clerk, whom I well remember, old Thomas Worrall, the inscription on whose monument is as follows: —

Sacred to the Memory of

Thomas Worrall,

Parish Clerk of Wolverley for a period of forty-seven years

Died A.D. 1854, February 23rd

Aged 76 years

“He served with faithfulness in humble sphere,
As one who could his talent well employ.
Hope that when Christ his Lord shall reappear,
He may be bidden to his Master’s joy.”

This tombstone was erected to the memory of the deceased

by a few of the parishioners in testimony of his worth

April, 1855. Charles R. Somers Cocks, vicar

It may be noted of this worthy parish clerk that, with the exception of a week or two before his death, he was never once absent from his Sunday and weekday duties in the forty-seven years during which he held office. He succeeded his father, James Worrall, who died in 1806, aged seventy-nine, after being parish clerk of Wolverley for thirty years. His tombstone, near to that of his son, was erected “to record his worth both in his public and private character, and as a mark of personal esteem – h. l. F. H. & W. C. p. c.” I am told that these initials stand for F. Hurtle and the Rev. William Callow, and that the latter was the author of the following lines inscribed on the monument, which are well worth quoting: —

“If courtly bards adorn each statesman’s bust,
And strew their laurels o’er each warrior’s dust
Alike immortalise, as good and great,
Him who enslaved as him who saved the state,
Surely the muse (a rustic minstrel) may
Drop one wild flower upon a poor man’s clay;
This artless tribute to his mem’ry give
Whose life was such as heroes seldom live.

In worldly knowledge, poor indeed his store —
He knew the village and he scarce knew more.
The worth of heavenly truth he justly knew —
In faith a Christian, and in practice too.
Yes, here lies one, excel him ye who can;
Go! imitate the virtues of that man!”

First amongst notable sextons is the name of Old Scarlett, who died July 2, 1591, at the good old age of ninety-eight, and occupied for a long time the position as sexton of Peterborough Cathedral. He buried two generations of his fellow-creatures. A portrait of him, placed at the west end of that noble church, has perpetuated his fame, and caused him to be introduced in effigy in various publications. Dr. Robert Chambers in his entertaining work, the “Book of Days,” writes: “And what a lively effigy – short, stout, hardy, and self-complacent, perfectly satisfied, and perhaps even proud, of his profession, and content to be exhibited with all its insignia about him! Two queens had passed through his hands into that bed which gives a lasting rest to queens and to peasants alike. An officer of Death, who had so long defied his principal, could not but have made some impression on the minds of bishop, dean, prebends, and other magnates of the Cathedral, and hence, as we may suppose, the erection of this lively portraiture of the old man, which is believed to have been only once renewed since it was first put up. Dr. Dibdin, who last copied it, tells us that ‘Old Scarlett’s jacket and trunkhose are of a brownish red, his stockings blue, his shoes black, tied with blue ribbons, and the soles of his feet red. The cap upon his head is red, and so also is the ground of the coat armour.’”

The following lines below his portrait are characteristic of his age: —

You see old Scarlett’s picture stand on hie;
But at your feet here doth his body lye.
His gravestone doth his age and death-time show,
His office by heis token [s] you may know.
Second to none for strength and sturdy lymm,
A scare-babe mighty voice, with visage grim;
He had inter’d two queenes within this place,
And this townes householders in his life’s space
Twice over; but at length his own time came
What he for others did, for him the same
Was done: no doubt his soule doth live for aye,
In heaven, though his body clad in clay.

The first of the queens interred by Scarlett was Catherine, the divorced wife of Henry VIII, who died in 1535, at Kimbolton Castle, in Huntingdonshire. The second was Mary Queen of Scots, who was beheaded at Fotheringay in 1587, and first interred here, though subsequently transported to Westminster Abbey.

Our next example is from Bingley, Yorkshire: —

In memory of Hezekiah Briggs, who died August 5th, 1844, in the

80th year of his age. He was sexton at this church 43 years,

and interred upwards of 7000 corpses

[Here the names of his wife and several children are given.]

Here lies an old ringer, beneath the cold clay,
Who has rung many peals both for serious and gay;
Through Grandsire and Trebles with ease he could range,
Till death called a Bob, which brought round the last change.

For all the village came to him
When they had need to call;
His counsel free to all was given,
For he was kind to all.

Ring on, ring on, sweet Sabbath bell,
Still kind to me thy matins swell,
And when from earthly things i part,
Sigh o'er my grave, and lull my heart.

An upright stone in the burial ground at Hartwith Chapel, in Nidderdale, Yorkshire, bears the following inscription: —

In memory of William Darnbrough, who for the last forty

years of his life was sexton of this chapel. He died

October 3rd, 1846, in the one hundreth year of his age

“Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a

good old age.” —*Genesis* xv. 15

The graves around for many a year
Were dug by him who slumbers here, —
Till worn with age, he dropped his spade,

And in the dust his bones were laid.

As he now, mouldering, shares the doom
Of those he buried in the tomb;
So shall he, too, with them arise,
To share the judgment of the skies.

An examination of Pateley Bridge Church registers proves that Darnbrough was 102 years of age.

An epitaph from Saddleworth, Yorkshire, tells us: —

**Here was interred the body of John Broadbent, Sexton,

who departed this life, August 3rd, 1769, in the 73rd year of his age**

Forty-eight years, strange to tell,
He bore the bier and toll'd the bell,
And faithfully discharged his trust,
In "earth to earth" and "dust to dust."
Cease to lament,
His life is spent,
The grave is still his element;
His old friend Death knew 'twas his sphere,
So kindly laid the sexton here.

At Rothwell, near Leeds, an old sexton is buried in the church porch. A monumental inscription runs thus: —

In memory of Thomas Flockton, Sexton 59 years, buried

23rd day of February, 1783, aged 78 years

Here lies within this porch so calm,
Old Thomas. Pray sound his knell,
Who thought no song was like a psalm —
No music like a bell.

At Darlington, there is a Latin epitaph over the remains of Richard Preston, which has been freely translated as follows: —

Under this marble are depos'd
Poor Preston's sad remains.
Alas! too true for light-rob'd jest
To sing in playful strains.

Ye dread possessors of the grave,
Who feed on others' woe,
Abstain from Richard's small remains,
And grateful pity shew;

For many a weighty corpse he gave
To you with liberal hand;
Then sure his little body may
Some small respect command.

The gravestone bears the date of 1765.

Further examples might be included, but we have given sufficient to show the varied and curious epitaphs placed to the memory of parish clerks and sextons.

TYPOGRAPHICAL EPITAPHS

The trade of printer is rich in technical terms available for the writer of epitaphs, as will be seen in the following examples.

Our first inscription is from St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, placed in remembrance of England's benefactor, the first English printer: —

To the memory of

William Caxton,

who first introduced into Great Britain the Art of Printing;

And who, A.D. 1477 or earlier, exercised that art in the

Abbey of Westminster

This Tablet,

In remembrance of one to whom the literature of this

country is so largely indebted, was raised,

anno Domini MDCCCXX., by the Roxburghe Club,

Earl Spencer, K.G., President

The next is in memory of one Edward Jones, *ob.* 1705-6, *æt.* 53. He was the "Gazette" Printer of the Savoy, and the following epitaph was appended to an elegy, entitled, "The Mercury Hawkers in Mourning," and published on the occasion of his death: —

Here lies a Printer, famous in his time,
Whose life by lingering sickness did decline.
He lived in credit, and in peace he died,
And often had the chance of Fortune tried.
Whose smiles by various methods did promote

Him to the favour of the Senate's vote;
And so became, by National consent,
The only Printer of the Parliament.
Thus by degrees, so prosp'rous was his fate,
He left his heirs a very good estate.

Another is on a noted printer and bookseller in his day, Jacob Tonson, who died in 1735: —

The volume of his life being finished, here is the end of Jacob Tonson. Weep, authors, and break your pens; your Tonson, effaced from the book, is no more; but print the last inscription on this last page of death, for fear that, delivered to the press of the grave, he, the Editor, should want a title. Here lies a bookseller, the leaf of his life being finished, awaiting a new edition, augmented and corrected.

The celebrated Dr. Benjamin Franklin imitated the above, and designed it for himself: —

The body of B. Franklin, Printer, like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out, and stripped of its lettering and gilding, lies here, food for worms. But the work shall not be wholly lost, for it will, as he believed, appear once more, in a new and more perfect edition, corrected and amended by the Author. He was born Jan. 6, 1706. Died — , 17 — . B.F.

Franklin died on the 17th of April, 1790, aged eighty-four years. After the death of this sturdy patriot and sagacious writer, the following singular sentiment was inscribed to his memory: —

Benjamin Franklin, the * of his profession; the type of honesty; the! of all;
and although the ☞ of death put a. to his existence, each § of his life is without a ll.

On a plain, flat slab in the burial-ground of Christ-church, Philadelphia, the following simple inscription appears over the remains of the good man and his worthy wife: —

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Benjamin | } | Franklin. |
| Deborah | | |
| | February, 1790. | |

The pun on the supersession of an old edition by a new and revised one, has often been worked out, as in the following example, which is that of the Rev. John Cotton, who died in New England, in 1652: —

A living, breathing Bible; tables where
Both covenants at large engraven were;
Gospel and law in his heart had each its column,
His head an index to the sacred volume!
His very name a title-page; and, next,
His life a commentary on the text.
Oh, what a moment of glorious worth,
When in a new edition he comes forth!
Without errata, we may think 'twill be,
In leaves and covers of Eternity.

A notable epitaph was that of George Faulkner, the alderman and printer, of Dublin, who died in 1775:

Turn, gentle stranger, and this urn revere,
O'er which Hibernia saddens with a tear.
Here sleeps George Faulkner, printer, once so dear
To humorous Swift, and Chesterfield's gay peer;
So dear to his wronged country and her laws;
So dauntless when imprisoned in her cause;
No alderman e'er graced a weighter board,
No wit e'er joked more freely with a lord.
None could with him in anecdotes confer;
A perfect annal-book, in Elzevir.
Whate'er of glory life's first sheets presage,
Whate'er the splendour of the title-page,
Leaf after leaf, though learned lore ensues;
Close as thy types and various as thy news;
Yet, George, we see that one lot awaits them all,
Gigantic folios, or octavos small;
One universal finis claims his rank,
And every volume closes in a blank.

In the churchyard of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, is a good specimen of a typographical epitaph, placed in remembrance of a noted printer, who died in the year 1818. It reads as follows:

Here lie the remains of L. Gedge, Printer

Like a worn-out character, he has returned to the Founder,

Hoping that he will be re-cast in a better and

more perfect mould

Our next example is profuse of puns, some of which are rather obscure to younger readers, owing to the disuse of the old wooden press. It is the epitaph of a Scotch printer: —

Sacred to the memory of

Adam Williamson,

Pressman-printer, in Edinburgh,

Who died Oct. 3, 1832,

Aged 72 years

All my stays are loosed;

My cap is thrown off; my head is worn out;

My box is broken;

My spindle and bar have lost their power;

My till is laid aside;

Both legs of my crane are turned out of their path;

My platen can make no impression;

My winter hath no spring;

My rounce will neither roll out nor in;

Stone, coffin, and carriage have all failed;

The hinges of my tympan and frisket are immovable;

founder, directed to be placed upon a tomb of masonry in the shape of a cone, and erected over his remains: —

Stranger

Beneath this cone, in unconsecrated ground,

A friend to the liberties of mankind

Directed his body to be inurned

May the example contribute to emancipate thy mind

from the idle fears of superstition, and the

wicked arts of priestcraft

It is recorded that “The tomb has long since been overturned, and even the remains of the man himself desecrated and dispersed till the final day of resurrection, when the atheism which in his later years he professed, will receive assuredly so complete and overwhelming a refutation.”

In 1599 died Christopher Barker, one of the most celebrated of the sixteenth century typographers, printer to Queen Elizabeth – to whom, in fact, the present patent, held by Eyre and Spottiswode, can be traced back in unbroken succession.

Here Barker lies, once printer to the Crown,
Whose works of art acquired a vast renown.
Time saw his worth, and spread around his fame,
That future printers might imprint the same.
But when his strength could work the press no more
And his last sheets were folded into store,
Pure faith, with hope (the greatest treasure given),
Opened their gates, and bade him pass to heaven.

We shall bring to a close our examples of typographical epitaphs with the following, copied from the graveyard of St. Michael's, Coventry, on a worthy printer who was engaged over sixty years as a compositor on the *Coventry Mercury*: —

Here
lies inter'd
the mortal remains
of
John Hulm,
Printer,
who, like an old, worn-out type,
battered by frequent use, reposes in the grave
But not without a hope that at some future time
he might be cast in the mould of righteousness,
And safely locked-up in the chase of immortality
He was distributed from the board of life
on the 9th day of Sept., 1827,
Aged 75
Regretted by his employers,
and respected by his fellow artists

EPITAPHS ON SPORTSMEN

The stirring lives of sportsmen have suggested spirited lines for their tombstones, as will be seen from the examples we bring under the notice of our readers.

The first epitaph is from Morville churchyard, near Bridgnorth, on John Charlton, Esq., who was for many years Master of the Wheatland Foxhounds, and died January 20th, 1843, aged 63 years; regretted by all who knew him: —

Of this world's pleasure I have had my share,
And few the sorrows I was doomed to bear.
How oft have I enjoy'd the noble chase
Of hounds and foxes striving for the race!
But hark! the knell of death calls me away,
So sportsmen, all, farewell! I must obey.

Our next is written on Mills, the huntsman: —

Here lies John Mills, who over the hills
Pursued the hounds with hallo:
The leap though high, from earth to sky,
The huntsman we must follow.

A short, rough, but pregnant epitaph is placed over the remains of Robert Hackett, a keeper of Hardwick Park, who died in 1703, and was buried in Ault Hucknall churchyard: —

Long had he chased
The Red and Fallow Deer,
But Death's cold dart
At last has fix'd him here.

George Dixon, a noted foxhunter, is buried in Luton churchyard, and on his gravestone the following appears: —

Stop, passenger, and thy attention fix on,
That true-born, honest, fox-hunter, George Dixon,
Who, after eighty years' unwearied chase,
Now rests his bones within this hallow'd place.
A gentle tribute of applause bestow,
And give him, as you pass, one *tally-ho*!
Early to cover, brisk he rode each morn,
In hopes the *brush* his temple might adorn;
The view is now no more, the chase is past,
And to an earth, poor George is run at last.

On a stone in the graveyard of Mottram the following inscription appears: —

In the memory of George Newton, of Stalybridge,

who died August 7th, 1871,

in the 94th year of his age

Though he liv'd long, the old man has gone at last,
No more he'll hear the huntsman's stirring blast;
Though fleet as Reynard in his youthful prime,
At last he's yielded to the hand of Time.
Blithe as a lark, dress'd in his coat of green,
With hounds and horn the old man was seen.
But ah! Death came, worn out and full of years,
He died in peace, mourn'd by his offsprings' tears.

“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”

In the churchyard of Ecclesfield, may be read the following epitaph: —

In memory of Thomas Ridge,

the Ecclesfield huntsman,

who died 13th day of January, 1871,

Aged 77 years

Though fond of sport, devoted of the chase,
And with his fellow-hunters first in place,
He always kept the Lord's appointed day,
Never from church or Sunday-school away.
And now his body rests beneath the sod,
His soul relying in the love of God.

Of the many epitaphs on sportsmen to be seen in Nottinghamshire, we cull a few of the choicest. Our first is a literal copy from a weather-worn stone in Eakring churchyard, placed to the memory of Henry Cartwright, senior keeper to his Grace the Duke of Kingston for fifty-five years, who died February 13th, 1773, aged eighty years, ten months, and three weeks: —

My gun discharged, my ball is gone
My powder's spent, my work is done,
those panting deer I have left behind,
May now have time to Gain their wind,
Who I have oft times Chass'd them ore
the burial Plains, but now no more.

We next present particulars of a celebrated deer-stealer. According to a notice furnished in the "Nottingham Date Book," the deeds of Tom Booth were for many years after his death a never-failing subject of conversational interest in Nottingham. It is stated that no modern deer-stealer was anything like so popular. Thorsby relates one exploit as follows: "In Nottingham Park, at one time, was a favourite fine deer, a chief ranger, on which Tom and his wily companions had often cast their eyes; but how to deceive the keeper while they killed it was a task of difficulty. The night, however, in which they accomplished their purpose – whether by any settled plan or not is not known – they found the keeper at watch, as usual, in a certain place in the park. One of them, therefore, went in an opposite direction in the park, and fired his gun to make the keeper believe he had shot a deer; upon which away goes the keeper, in haste, to the spot, which was at a very considerable distance from the place where the favourite deer was, and near which Tom Booth was skulking. Tom, waiting a proper time, when he thought the keeper at a sufficient distance for accomplishing his purpose, fired and killed the deer, and dragged it through the river Leen undiscovered." Booth was a stout man, and by trade a whitesmith. The stone marking the place of his interment is still in good preservation, and stands in St. Nicholas' burial-ground, against the southern wall of the church. It bears the following inscription: —

Here lies a marksman, who with art and skill,
When young and strong, fat bucks and does did kill.
Now conquered by grim Death (go, reader, tell it!)
He's now took leave of powder, gun, and pellet.
A fatal dart, which in the dark did fly,
Has laid him down, among the dead to lie.
If any want to know the poor slave's name,
'Tis old Tom Booth, – ne'er ask from whence he came.

Old Tom was so highly pleased with the epitaph, which was written before his death, that he had it engraved on the stone some months before its services were required. In addition to the epitaph itself, the head-stone was made to include Booth's name, &c., and also that of his wife, blank places being left in each case for the age and time of death. Booth's compartment of the stone was in due course properly filled up; but the widow, disliking the exhibition of her name on a tombstone while living, resolved that such stone should never indicate her resting place when dead; she accordingly left an injunction that her body be interred elsewhere, and the inscription is incomplete to this day.

Some time before Amos Street, a celebrated Yorkshire huntsman died, a stone was obtained, and on it engraved the following lines: —

This is to the memory of Old Amos,
Who was when alive for hunting famous;
But now his chases are all o'er,
And here he's earth'd, of years four score.
Upon this tomb he's often sat
And tried to read his epitaph;

And thou who dost so at this moment
Shall ere long like him be dormant.

Poor “Old Amos” passed away on October 3rd, 1777, and was buried in Birstal churchyard. The foregoing inscription may still be read.

The Rev. R. H. Whitworth tells us: “There is an old monument in the south aisle of Blidworth Church, to the memory of Thomas Leake, Esq., who was killed at Blidworth Rocking in A.D. 1598. He may be regarded as the last of the race who sat in Robin Hood’s seat, if those restless Forest Chiefs, typified under that name, can be supposed ever to have sat at all. Leake held office under the Crown, but was as wild a freebooter as ever drew bow. His character is portrayed in his epitaph —

HERE RESTS T. LEAKE WHOSE VERTUES WEERE SO KNOWNE IN
ALL THESE PARTS THAT THIS ENGRAVED STONE NEEDS NAUGHT
RELATE BUT HIS VNTIMELY END WHICH WAS IN SINGLE FIGHT:
WYLS YOUTH DID LEND HIS AIDE TO VALOR, HEE WTH EASE
OVPAST MANY SLYGHT DANGERS, GREATER THEN THIS LAST BUT
WILLFVLLE FATE IN THESE THINGS GOVERNS ALL HEE TOWLD OVT
THREESCORE YEARS BEFORE HIS FALL MOST OF WCH TYME HE
WASTED IN THIS WOOD MVCH OF HIS WEALTH AND LAST OF ALL HIS
BLOOD

The border of this monument is rudely panelled, each panel having some forest hunting subject in relief. There are hounds getting scent, and a hound pursuing an antlered stag; a hunting horn, ribboned; plunging and flaying knives, a cross-bow, a forest-bow, two arrows, and two hunters’ belts with arrows inserted. This is his register —

Thomas Leake, esquire, buried the

4th February, 1598

There is a captivating bit of romance connected with Leake’s death, which occurred at Archer’s Water. Although somewhat ‘provectus in ætate,’ he had won the affections of the landlady’s daughter, much to the annoyance of the mother. Archer’s Water was on the old driftroad by Blidworth, from Edinburgh to London, that by which Jeannie Deans travelled, and over which Dick Turpin rode. Hundreds of thousands of Scotch cattle went by this way to town, and there was a difficulty connected with a few of them in which Leake was concerned, and a price being set upon his head, his mother-in-law, that was to be, betrayed him to two young soldiers anxious to secure the reward, one of whom was, in the mother’s eyes, the more favoured lover. Tom was always attended by two magnificent dogs and went well armed. Thrown off his guard he left his dogs in an outhouse, and entering the inn laid aside his weapons, when he was set upon and overpowered, and like many better men before him, slain. The name of a Captain Salmond of the now extinct parish or manor of Salterford is connected with this transaction. The date of the combat is 2nd February, being the festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, with which the highly interesting and historical observance of Blidworth *Rocking* is connected. Within the memory of living men, a baby decked with such flowers as the season afforded, was placed in a cradle and carried about from house to house by an old man, who received a present on the occasion. As the church is dedicated to St. Mary in connection with the Purification, the 2nd of February being the Feast Day, this is probably an interesting reminiscence of some old species of Miracle Play, or observance connected with the foundation. Anciently people from all neighbouring counties used to attend this season. Forest games were played, and amid the

attendant licence and confusion, Leake came to his last grief. Not only in the church does this Ranger of the Blidworth Wood, for this was his office, possess a memorial. A large cross was erected, now standing at Fountain Dale, thus inscribed: —

Hoc crucis fragmen

Traditum a sylvicolis monumentum

Loci ubi in singulari certamine

Gladiator ille insignis

Tho. Leake

Mori occubuit

Anno MDCVIII

Ab antiqua sede remotum

H. P. C

Joannes Downall

Prid. Non Sext. MDCCCXXXVI

What became of the daughter tradition sayeth not. Doubtless she died, as Tom Leake's intended bride ought, of grief, and was buried under some grand old oak in Blidworth Forest."

Let us direct attention to another class of sportsmen. At Bunney, a monument is erected to Sir Thomas Parkyns, the well-known wrestler. It bears four lines in Latin, which have been translated thus: —

At length he falls, the long contest's o'er,
And Time has thrown whom none e'er threw before;
Yet boast not (Time) thy victory, for he
At last shall rise again and conquer thee.

The next is copied from a stone in St. Michael's churchyard, Coventry, on a famous fencing-master: —

To the memory of Mr. John Parkes,

A native of this City

He was a man of mild disposition,

A Gladiator by profession;

Who after having fought 350 battles,

In the principal parts of Europe,

With honour and applause,

At length quitted the stage, sheathed his sword,

And with Christian resignation,

Submitted to the Grand Victor

In the 52nd year of his age

Anno Domini 1733

An old stone bearing the foregoing inscription was replaced by a new one some years ago at the expense of the late S. Carter, Esq., formerly member of parliament for Coventry. In the pages of the *Spectator* honourable mention is made of John Parkes.

In the churchyard of Hanslope, is buried Sandy M'Kay, the Scottish giant, who was killed in a prize-fight with Simon Byrne. A headstone bears the following inscription: —

Sacred to the memory of

Alex. M'kay,

(Late of Glasgow),

Who died 3rd June, 1834,

Aged 26 years

Strong and athletic was my frame;
Far from my native home I came,
And manly fought with Simon Byrne;
Alas! but lived not to return.
Reader, take warning of my fate,
Lest you should rue your case too late:
If you ever have fought before,
Determine now to fight no more.

We are informed that Byrne was killed shortly afterwards, whilst engaged in fighting.

From the prize-ring let us turn to the more satisfactory amusement of cricket. In Highgate cemetery, Lillywhite, the celebrated cricketer, is buried, and over his remains is placed a monument with the significant emblem of a wicket being upset with a ball.

The following lines are said to be copied from the tombstone in a cemetery near Salisbury: —

I bowl'd, I struck, I caught, I stopp'd,
Sure life's a game of cricket;
I block'd with care, with caution popp'd,
Yet Death has hit my wicket.

The Tennis Ball is introduced in an epitaph placed in St. Michael's Church, Coventry. It reads thus: —

“Here lyes the Body of Captain Gervase Scrope, of the Family of Scropes,
of Bolton, in the County of York, who departed this life the 26th day of August,
Anno Domini, 1705.”

An Epitaph Written by Himself in the Agony and

Dolorous Paines of the Gout, and dyed soon after

Here lyes an Old Toss'd Tennis Ball,
Was Racketted from Spring to Fall
With so much heat, and so much hast,
Time's arm (for shame) grew tyr'd at last,
Four Kings in Camps he truly seru'd,
And from his Loyalty ne'r sweru'd.
Father ruin'd, the Son slighted,
And from the Crown ne'r requited.
Loss of Estate, Relations, Blood,
Was too well Known, but did no good,
With long Campaigns and paines of th' Govt,
He cou'd no longer hold it out:
Always a restless life he led,
Never at quiet till quite dead,
He marry'd in his latter dayes,
One who exceeds the com'on praise,
But wanting breath still to make Known
Her true Affection and his Own,
Death kindly came, all wants supply'd
By giuing Rest which life deny'd.

We conclude this class of epitaphs with a couple of piscatorial examples. The first is from the churchyard of Hythe: —

His net old fisher George long drew,
Shoals upon shoals he caught,
'Till Death came hauling for his due,
And made poor George his draught.
Death fishes on through various shapes,
In vain it is to fret;
Nor fish nor fisherman escapes
Death's all-enclosing net.

In the churchyard of Great Yarmouth, under date of 1769, an epitaph runs thus: —

Here lies doomed,
In this vault so dark,
A soldier weaver, *angler*, and clerk;
Death snatched him hence, and from him took
His gun, his shuttle, fish-rod, and hook.
He could not weave, nor fish, nor fight, so then
He left the world, and faintly cried — Amen.

EPITAPHS ON TRADESMEN

Many interesting epitaphs are placed to the memory of tradesmen. Often they are not of an elevating character, nor highly poetical, but they display the whims and oddities of men. We will first present a few relating to the watch and clock-making trade. The first specimen is from Lydford churchyard, on the borders of Dartmoor: —

Here lies, in horizontal position,
the outside case of
George Routleigh, Watchmaker;
Whose abilities in that line were an honour
to his profession
Integrity was the Mainspring, and prudence the
Regulator,
of all the actions of his life
Humane, generous, and liberal,
his Hand never stopped
till he had relieved distress
So nicely regulated were all his motions,
that he never went wrong,
except when set a-going
by people
who did not know his Key;

Here lies one who strove to equal time,
A task too hard, each power too sublime;
Time stopt his motion, o'erthrew his balance-wheel,
Wore off his pivots, tho' made of hardened steel;
Broke all his springs, the verge of life decayed,
And now he is as though he'd ne'er been made.
Such frail machine till time's no more shall rust,
And the archangel wakes our sleeping dust;
Then in assembled worlds in glory join,
And sing – "The hand that made us is divine."

Our next is from Berkeley, Gloucestershire: —

Here lyeth Thomas Peirce, whom no man taught,
Yet he in iron, brass, and silver wrought;
He jacks, and clocks, and watches (with art) made
And mended, too, when others' work did fade.
Of Berkeley, five times Mayor this artist was,
And yet this Mayor, this artist, was but grass.
When his own watch was down on the last day,
He that made watches had not made a key
To wind it up; but useless it must lie,
Until he rise again no more to die.
Died February 25th, 1665, aged 77.

The following is from Bolsover churchyard, Derbyshire: —

Here
lies, in a horizontal position, the outside
case of
Thomas Hinde,
Clock and Watch-maker,
Who departed this life, wound up in hope of
being taken in hand by his Maker, and being
thoroughly cleaned, repaired, and set a-going
in the world to come,
On the 15th of August, 1836,
In the 19th year of his age

Respecting the next example, our friend, Mr. Edward Walford, M.A., wrote to the *Times* as follows: "Close to the south-western corner of the parish churchyard of Hampstead there has long stood a square tomb, with a scarcely decipherable inscription, to the memory of a man of science of the last century, whose name is connected with the history of practical navigation. The tomb, having stood there for more than a century, had become somewhat dilapidated, and has lately undergone a careful restoration at the cost and under the supervision of the Company of Clockmakers, and the fact is recorded in large characters on the upper face. The tops of the upright iron railings which surround the tomb have been gilt, and the restored inscription runs as follows: 'In memory of Mr. John Harrison, late of Red Lion-square, London, inventor of the time-keeper for ascertaining the longitude at sea. He was born at Foulby, in the county of York, and was the son of a builder of that place, who brought him up to the same profession. Before he attained the age of 21, he, without any instruction, employed himself in cleaning and repairing clocks and watches, and made a few of the former, chiefly of wood. At the age of 25 he employed his whole time in chronometrical improvements. He was the inventor of

the gridiron pendulum, and the method of preventing the effects of heat and cold upon time-keepers by two bars fixed together; he introduced the secondary spring, to keep them going while winding up, and was the inventor of most (or all) the improvements in clocks and watches during his time. In the year 1735 his first time-keeper was sent to Lisbon, and in 1764 his then much improved fourth time-keeper having been sent to Barbadoes, the Commissioners of Longitude certified that he had determined the longitude within one-third of half a degree of a great circle, having not erred more than forty seconds in time. After sixty years' close application to the above pursuits, he departed this life on the 24th day of March, 1776, aged 83.

In an epitaph in High Wycombe churchyard, life is compared to the working of a clock. It runs thus: —

Of no distemper,
Of no blast he died,
But fell,
Like Autumn's fruit,
That mellows long,
Even wondered at
Because he dropt not sooner.
Providence seemed to wind him up
For fourscore years,
Yet ran he nine winters more;
Till, like a clock,
Worn out with repeating time,
The wheels of weary life
At last stood still.
In memory of John Abdidge, Alderman.
Died 1785.

We have some curious specimens of engineers' epitaphs. A good example is copied from the churchyard of Bridgeford-on-the-Hill, Notts: —

Sacred to the Memory of John Walker, the only son of

Benjamin and Ann Walker, Engineer and Pallisade Maker,

died September 22nd, 1832, aged 36 years

Farewell, my wife and father dear;
My glass is run, my work is done,
And now my head lies quiet here.
That many an engine I've set up,
And got great praise from men,
I made them work on British ground,
And on the roaring seas;
My engine's stopp'd, my valves are bad,

And lie so deep within;
No engineer could there be found
To put me new ones in.
But Jesus Christ converted me
And took me up above,
I hope once more to meet once more,
And sing redeeming love.

Our next is on a railway engineer, who died in 1840, and was buried in Bromsgrove churchyard:

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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