EDWIN WAUGH

LANCASHIRE SKETCHES

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Waugh E.

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Содержание

Edwin Waugh
Lancashire Sketches / Third Edition

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In this volume, relating to a district with which the writer is intimately acquainted, he has gathered up a few points of local interest, and, in connection with these, he has endeavoured to embody something of the traits of present life in South Lancashire with descriptions of its scenery, and with such gleanings from its local history as bore upon the subject, and, under the circumstances, were available to him. How far he has succeeded in writing a book which may be instructive or interesting, he is willing to leave to the judgment of those who know the country and the people it deals with. He is conscious that, in comparison with the fertile peculiarities which Lancashire presents to writers who are able to gather them up, and to use them well, this volume is fragmentary and discursive; yet he believes that, so far as it goes, it will not be wholly unacceptable to native readers.

The historical information, interspersed throughout the volume, has been gleaned from so many sources that it would be a matter of considerable difficulty to give a complete and detailed acknowledgment of it. In every important case, however, this acknowledgment has been given, with some degree of care, as fully and clearly as possible, in the course of the work. Some of this historical matter may prove to be ill-chosen, if not ill-used—perhaps in some cases it might have been obtained in a better form, and even more correctly given—but the writer has, at least, the satisfaction of knowing that, with such light as he had, and with such elements as were convenient to him, he has been guided, in his selection of that kind of information, by a desire to obtain the most correct and the most applicable matter which was available to him.

A book which is purely local in its character and bearing, as this is, cannot be expected to have much interest for persons unconnected with the district which it relates to. If there is any hope of its being read at all, that hope is centred there. The subjects it treats upon being local, and the language used in it being often the vernacular of a particular part of the county, these circumstances combine to narrow its circle of acquaintance. But, in order to make that part of it which is given in the dialect as intelligible as possible to all readers not intimate with that form of native language, some care has been taken to explain such words as are unusually ambiguous in form, or in meaning. And here it may be noticed, that persons who know little or nothing of the dialect of Lancashire, are apt to think of it as one in form and sound throughout the county, and expect it to assume one unvaried feature whenever it is represented in writing. This is a mistake, for there often exist considerable shades of difference —even in places not more than eight or ten miles apart—in the expression, and in the form of words which mean the same thing; and, sometimes, the language of a very limited locality, though bearing the same general characteristics as the dialect of the county in general, is rendered still more perceptibly distinctive in features, by idioms and proverbs peculiar to that particular spot. In this volume, however, the writer has taken care to give the dialect, as well as he could, in such a form as would convey to the mind of the general reader a correct idea of the mode of pronunciation, and the signification of the idioms, used in the immediate locality which he happens to be writing about.

Lancashire has had some learned writers who have written upon themes generally and locally interesting. But the successful delineation of the quaint and racy features of its humble life has fallen to the lot of very few. John Collier, our sound-hearted and clear-headed native humourist of the last century, left behind him some exquisite glimpses of the manner of life in his own nook of Lancashire, at that time. The little which he wrote, although so eccentric and peculiar in character as to be almost unintelligible to the general reader, contains such evidence of genius, and so many rare touches of nature, that to those who can discern the riches hidden under its quaint vernacular garb, it wears a

perennial charm, in some degree akin to that which characterises the writings of such men as Cervantes and De Foe. And, in our own day, Samuel Bamford—emphatically a native man—has, with felicitous truth, transferred to his pages some living pictures of Lancashire life, which will probably be read with more interest even than now, long after the writer has been gathered to his fathers. There are others who have illustrated some of the conditions of social existence in Lancashire, in a graphic manner, with more polish and more learning; but, for native force and truth, John Collier and Samuel Bamford are, probably, the foremost of all genuine expositors of the characteristics of the Lancashire people.

In conclusion, all that has hitherto been done in this way is small in amount, compared with that which is left undone. The past, and still more the disappearing present, of this important district teem with significant features, which, if caught up and truthfully represented, might, perhaps, be useful to the next generation.

E. W.

Manchester.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

Since the second issue of this volume, the matter it contained has been revised and corrected; and considerable additions have been made thereto. But, even yet, the writer is sensible of many crudities remaining in this, his first venture upon the world of letters. And amongst the new matter which has been added to the present edition, the reader will find, at least, one article—"Saint Catherine's Chapel"—which has no direct connection with a volume of "Lancashire Sketches." He must now, however, leave the book to such fate as awaits it; hoping that, if time and health be granted to him, he may yet do something worthier of the recognition which his efforts have already met with from the people of his native county.

E. W.

Manchester.

Chapel Island; OR, An Adventure on Ulverstone Sands

The wills above be done! but I would fain die a dry death.

The Tempest.

I have spent many a pleasant day at the village of Bardsea, three miles south of Ulverstone. It stands close to Conishead Park, high upon a fertile elbow of land, the base of which is washed on two sides by the waters of Morecambe Bay. It is an old hamlet, of about fifty houses, nearly all in one wandering street, which begins at the bottom of a knoll, on the Ulverstone side, and then climbs to a point near the summit, where three roads meet, and where the houses on one side stand back a few yards, leaving an open ground like a little market-place. Upon the top of the knoll, a few yards east of this open space, the church stands, overlooking sea and land all round. From the centre of the village the street winds on towards the beach. At this end a row of neat houses stands at a right angle, upon an eastward incline, facing the sea. The tide washes up within fifty yards of these houses at high water. At the centre of the village, too, half a dozen pleasant cottages leave the street, and stand out, like the fin of a fish, in a quiet lane, which leads down into a little shady glen at the foot of Birkrigg. The same lane leads, by another route, over the top of that wild hill, into the beautiful vale of Urswick. Bardsea is a pretty, out of the way place, and the country about it is very picturesque and varied. It is close to the sea, and commands a fine view of the bay, and of its opposite shores, for nearly forty miles. About a mile west of the village, Birkrigg rises high above green pastures and leafy dells that lap his feet in beauty. Northward, the road to Ulverstone leads through the finest part of Conishead Park, which begins near the end of the village. This park is one of the most charming pieces of undulant woodland scenery I ever beheld. An old writer calls it "the Paradise of Furness." On the way to Ulverstone, from Bardsea, the Leven estuary shows itself in many a beautiful gleam through the trees of the park; and the fells of Cartmel are in full view beyond. It is one of the pleasantest, one of the quietest walks in the kingdom.

The last time I saw Bardsea it was about the middle of July. I had gone there to spend a day or two with a friend. There had not been a cloud on the heavens for a week; and the smell of new hay came on every sigh that stirred the leaves. The village looked like an island of sleepy life, with a sea of greenery around it, surging up to the very doors of its white houses, and flinging the spray of nature's summer harmonies all over the place. The songs of birds, the rustle of trees, the ripple of the brook at the foot of the meadows, and the murmur of the sea, all seem to float together through the nest of man, making it drowsy with pleasure. It was fairly lapped in soothing melody. Every breath of air brought music on its wings; and every song was laden with sweet smells. Nature loved the little spot, for she caressed it and croodled about it, like a mother singing lullabies to a tired child. And Bardsea was pleased and still, as if it knew it all. It seemed the enchanted ear of the landscape; for everywhere else the world was alive with the jocund restlessness of the season. My friend and I wandered about from morning to night. In the heat of the day the white roads glared in the sun; and, in some places, the air seemed to tremble at about a man's height from the ground, as I have seen it tremble above a burning kiln sometimes. But for broad day we had the velvet glades and shady woods of Conishead to ramble in; and many a rich old lane, and some green dells, where little brooks ran whimpling their tiny undersongs, in liquid trebles, between banks of nodding wild flowers. Our evening walks were more delightful still; for when soft twilight came, melting the distinctions of the landscape in her dreamy loveliness, she had hardly time to draw "a thin veil o'er the day" before sea and land began to shine again under the radiance of the moon. Wandering among such scenes, at such a time, was enough to touch any man's heart with gratitude for the privilege of existence in this world of ours.

My friend's house stands upon a buttressed shelf of land, half-way up the slope which leads from the shore into Bardsea. It is the most seaward dwelling of the place; and it is bowered about on three sides with little plots of garden, one of them kept as a playground for the children. It commands a glorious view of the bay, from Hampsfell, all round by Arnside and Lancaster, down to Fleetwood. Sometimes, at night, I have watched the revolutions of the Fleetwood light, from the front of the house, whilst listening to the surge of the tide along the shore, at the foot of the hill.

One day, when dinner was over, we sat down to smoke at an open window, which looked out upon the bay. It was about the turning of the tide, for a fisherman's cart was coming slowly over the sands, from the nets at low water. The day was unusually hot; but, before we had smoked long, I felt as if I couldn't rest any longer indoors.

"Where shall we go this afternoon?" said I, knocking the ashes out of my pipe upon the outside sill.

"Well," replied my friend, "I have been thinking that we couldn't do better than stroll into the park a while. What do you say?"

"Agreed," said I. "It's a bonny piece of woodland. I dare say many a Roman soldier has been pleased with the place, as he marched through it, sixteen centuries ago."

"Perhaps so," said he, smiling, and taking his stick from the corner; "but the scene must have been very different then. Come along."

At the garden gate we found three of his flaxen-headed children romping with a short-legged Scotch terrier, called "Trusty." The dog's wild eyes shone in little slits of dusky fire through the rusty thicket of gray hair which overhung them. "Trusty" was beside himself with joy when we came into the road; and he worried our shoes, and shook our trousers' slops in a sham fury, as if they were imaginary rats; and he bounced about and barked, till the quiet scene, from Bardsea to Birkrigg, rang with his noisy glee. Some of the birds about us seemed to stop singing for a few seconds, and, after they had taken an admiring look sideway at the little fellow, they burst out again louder than ever, and in more rollicking strains, heartily infected with the frisky riot of that little four-legged marlocker. Both the dog and the children clamoured to go with us. My friend hesitated as first one, then another, tugged at him, and said: "Pa, let me go." Turning to me, he scratched his head, and said: "I've a good mind to take Willie." The lad instantly gave a twirl round on one heel, and clapped his hands, and then laid hold of his father's coat-lap, by way of clenching the bargain at once. But, just then, his mother appeared at the gate, and said: "Eh, no, Willie, you'd better not go. You'll be so tired. Come, stay with me. That's a good boy." Willie let go his hold slowly, and fell back with a disappointed look. "Trusty" seemed to know that there was a hitch in the matter, for he suddenly became quieter; and, going up to Willie, he licked his hands consolingly, and then, sitting down beside him, he looked round from one to another, to see how the thing was to end.

"Don't keep tea waiting for us," said my friend, "we'll be back in time for an early supper."

"Very well," replied his good wife; "we'll have something nice. Don't be late."

The dog was now whining and wrestling in the arms of Willie, who was holding him back. We made our bows, and bade "Good-bye" to the children and to their mother, and then turned up the road. Before we had got many yards, she called out:—

"I say, Chris, if you go as far as Ulverstone, call at Mrs. Seatle's, and at Town and Fell's, for some things which I ordered. Bella Rigg can bring them down in her cart. These children want a new skipping rope, too: and you might bring something for Willie."

The little girls begun to dance about, shaking their sunny locks, and singing, "Eh, a new skipping rope! a new skipping rope!" Then the youngest seized her father's hand, and cocking up her rosy button-hole of a mouth, she said, "Pa! Pa! lift me up! I want to tell you somefin."

"Well; what is it, pet?" said he, taking her in his arms.

Clipping his neck as far as she could, she said, "Div me a tis, first." And then she whispered in his ear, "If—you'll—buy—me—a *big* doll, I'll sing, 'Down in a low and drassy bed,' four times, when

you tum home,—*now* then. 'Trusty' eated my odder doll, when we was playin' shop in de dardin." And then he had to kiss them again, and promise—I know not what.

Once more we said "Good bye," and walked up towards the white village; the chime of sweet voices sinking into a silvery hum as we got farther off. Everything in Bardsea was unusually still. Most of the doors and windows were open; and, now and then, somebody peeped out as we passed by, and said it was "a fine day." Turning round to look at the sands, we saw the dumpy figure of "Owd Manuel," the fisherman, limping up from the foot of the slope, with his coat slung upon his arm. The old man stopped, and wiped his forehead, and gave his crutch a flourish, by way of salutation. We waved our hats in reply, and went on. At the centre of the village stands the comfortable inn, kept by "Old Gilly," the quaint veteran who, after spending the prime of manhood in hard service among the border smugglers, has settled down to close the evening of his life in this retired nest. Here, too, all was still, except the measured sound of a shoemaker's hammer, ringing out from the open door of a cottage, where "Cappel" sat at his bench, beating time upon a leather sole to the tune of a country song. And, on the shady side, next door to the yard wall, which partly encloses the front of the old inn, the ruddy, snow-capped face and burly figure of "Old Tweedler" was visible, as still as a statue. He was in his shirt sleeves, leaning against the door-cheek of his little grocery shop, smoking a long pipe, and looking dreamily at the sunny road. "Tweedler" needs a good deal of wakening at any time; but when he is once fairly wakened, he is a tolerable player on the clarionet, and not a very bad fiddler; and he likes to talk about his curious wanderings up and down the kingdom with show-folk. When the old man had found us out, and had partly succeeded in getting his heavy limbs into a mild disposition to move, he sidled forth from his little threshold, and came towards us, gurgling something from his throat that was not unlike the low growl of an old hoarse dog. His gruff, slow-motioned voice sounded clear all around, waking the echoes of the sleepy houses, as he said, "Well,—gen-tle-men. What? Wheer are you for,—to-day?" We told him that we were going down to the Priory, for a stroll; but we should like to call at "Gilly's" first, for a few minutes, if he would go in with us. "Well," said he; "it's a very het day an' I don't mind hevin' an odd gill. In wi' ye,—an' I'll follow—in a minute," and then he sidled back to his nest.

There was not a sound of life in "Old Gilly's" house; but the trim cap of his kind dame was visible inside, bobbing to and fro by the window of the little bar. "Gilly," in his kind-hearted way, always calls her "Mammy." We looked in at the bar, and the old lady gave us a cordial welcome. "My good-man has just gone to lie down," said she; "but I'll go and tell him." We begged that she would let him rest, and bring us three glasses of her best ale. The sun shone in strongly at the open back door. At the rear of the house, there is a shady verandah, and a garden in front of it. There we sat down, looking at the bright bay. The city of Lancaster was very distinct, on the opposite side of the water, more than twenty miles off. In a few minutes we heard Tweedler's cart-horse tread, as he came through the lobby, with two books in his hand.

"There," said he, handing one of them to me; "I've turned that up amang a lot o' lumber i't house. I warnd it's just the thing for ye. What the devil is't, think ye? For it's past my skill."

It was an old, well-thumbed Latin Delectus, with one back off, and several leaves gone. It was not of much use to me; but when the old man said, "Now, that's a fine book, I'll awarnd, an' I'll mak' ye a present on't," I felt bound to receive it thankfully; and I did so.

"An' this," said he, holding up the other; "is a book o' sangs. Cummerlan' sangs."

It was a thin volume, in papered boards—a cheap edition of Anderson's ballads—printed in double column, royal octavo.

"Ay." replied my friend; "I should like to look at that."

"Varra well," said Tweedler; "put it i' your pocket. I'll land it ye." And then, as if half-repenting, he continued, "But I set a deal o' store o' that book. I don't think as I could get another for ony money."

"You shall have it back in a day or two," said my friend.

"Oh," replied Tweedler, "it's all reight wi' ye. But I wouldn't ha' lant it onybody, mind ye."

My friend put the book in his pocket, promising to take especial care of it; and then we drank up, and came away; and Tweedler sauntered back to lean against the door-cheek, and smoke.

It was about half-past one when we walked out at the landward end of the village. The only person we met was a horseman, riding hastily up from the skirt of the park. As he sped by I recognised the tall figure and benevolent face of Dr. Anderson, of Ulverstone. Near Bardsea Hall an old lane leads off at the right-hand of the road, down to the sea-beach, from whence there is a pleasant walk along the shore of the Leven estuary, to a little fishing village, called Sandside, and thence a good road, between meadow lands, up into Ulverstone. After a minute's conversation, at the end of this lane, we agreed to go that way. When we came out upon the shore, my friend stopped, and looked across the sands.

"Was you ever on Chapel Island?" said he, pointing towards it.

"No," replied I; "but I should like to see that spot. Are there any remains of the old chantry left?"

"A few," said he; "mostly incorporated with the house of a fisherman who lives on the island. But we'll go over to it. There's nice time to get across before the tide comes in. It's not much more than a mile."

I was pleased with the idea of seeing this little historic island, of which I had read and heard so much; so we strode out towards it at once. The sands between looked as level as a bowling-green, and perfectly dry; and it did not seem to me more than half the distance my friend had said. Before we had gone many yards he began a story:—

"The last time I was on the island there were several friends—But hold! we had better take something to eat and drink. They'll have next to nothing there; and we shall have to stop till the next ebb. Wait here. I'll run back. I shan't be many minutes." And away he went to the green lane.

There was an old black boat on the sands, close to where he had left me. I got into it, and, pulling my hat over my eyes to shade the sun away, I lay down on my back and listened to the birds in Conishead Park. It was something more than a quarter of an hour before he appeared at the end of the lane again, with a brown bottle in one hand and with pockets well stored. Without stopping an instant, he walked right out upon the sands, wiping the perspiration from his brow as he went. Staring straight at the island, he said, "Come on. We've no time to lose, now. But we can manage it." I remember fancying that there was an unusual earnestness in the tone of his voice; but I did not think much more about it at the time, for the sands still seemed quite dry between us and the island; so I followed him in silence, looking round at the beautiful scene, with my mind at ease. My friend was a tall, lithe man, in the prime of life, and a very good walker. I had not been well for some days previous, and I began to feel that the rate he was going at was rather too much for me. Besides, I had a pair of heavy, double-soled boots on, and my thick coat was loaded with books and papers. But I laboured on, perspiring freely. I thought that I could manage well enough to keep up with him for the distance we had to go. In a few minutes we began to come to patches of wet sand, where the feet sank at every step, and our progress was slower, though a good deal more difficult. We did not seem to get much nearer the island, though we were walking so hard. This tried me still more; and, not seeing any need for such a desperate hurry, I said, "Don't go so fast!" But he kept up the pace, and, pointing to where a white sail was gliding up the other side of the island, towards Ulverstone, he said, "Come along! The main channel's filling! We've a channel to cross on this side, yet. D'ye see yon white line? It's the tide rushing in! Come on! We can't turn back now!" It was only then that I began to see how we were situated; and I tramped on at his heels, through the soft wet sand, perspiring and panting, and still without seeming to get over much ground. In a few minutes we came to a shallow channel, about eight or ten yards across. We splashed through, without speaking. It only took us a little above the knee; but, I perceived that the water was rising rapidly. Thinking that the danger was over, I stammered out, "Stop! Slacken a bit! We're all right now!" But the tone, as well as the words of his reply, startled me, as he shot ahead, crying, "This is not it! This is nothing! Come on!" I was getting exhausted; and, when he cried out, "Double!" and broke into a run, I had not breath to spare

for an answer; but I struggled on desperately. The least false step would have brought me down; and, if I had fallen, I think that even that delay would have been more than we had to spare. Three or four minutes brought us up to the channel he had spoken of. It was an old bed of the river Leven. It must have been from fifteen to twenty yards wide at that moment, and the tide was increasing it at a terrible rate. When we got to the edge of the water, I was so done up that I panted out: "Stop! I can't go so fast!" But my friend turned half round, with a wild look, and almost screamed: "But you must! It's death!" Then we went into the water, without any more words. I was a little on one side of him, and about two yards in the rear. It is a wonder to me now how I got through that deep, strong, tidal current. The water must have revived me a little, unconsciously to myself, at the time. Before we had got to the middle, I saw the book of ballads in the side pocket of my friend's shooting coat disappearing in the water as he went deeper into the channel. My clothes began to grow heavy, and the powerful action of the tide swayed me about so much that I could hardly keep my feet, and I expected every moment being whelmed over. But somehow I strove on, the water deepening at every step. A thousand thoughts crowded into my mind whilst wading that channel. I remember distinctly the terrible stillness of the scene; the frightful calm of the blue sky; the rocky island, with its little grove of trees, waving gracefully in the sunshine—all so beautiful, yet all looking down with such a majestic indifference upon us, as we wrestled for life with the rising tide. About mid-channel, when the water was high up my breast, my friend gave a wild shout for help, and I instantly did the same. The island was not much more than forty yards off. As my friend turned his head, I caught a glimpse of his haggard look, and I thought all was over. The rocks re-echoed our cries; but everything was still as death, except the little grove of trees waving in the sunshine. There was not a living soul in sight. My heart sank, and I remember feeling, for an instant, as if it was hardly worth while struggling any longer. And here let me bear testimony to a brave act on the part of my friend. In the deepest part of the channel, when the water was near the top of my shoulders, he put out his stick sideway, and said, "Get hold!" I laid only a feeble grasp upon it, for I had enough to do to keep my feet. When we had waded about three yards in this way, we began to see that we were ascending the opposite bank rapidly, for it was steeper than the other one. In two minutes more we were out upon the dry sands, with our clothes clinging heavily about us, and our hearts beating wild with mingled emotions. "Now," said I, panting for breath, "let's sit down a minute." "No, no!" replied he in a resolute tone, pushing on; "come farther off." A walk of about thirty yards brought us to the foot of the rocks. We clambered painfully up from stone to stone, till we came upon a little footpath which led through the grove and along the garden to the old fisherman's cottage, on the north side of the island. As we entered the grove I found that my friend had kept hold of the brown bottle all the way. I did not notice this till we came to the first patch of grassy ground, where he flung the bottle down and walked on. He told me afterwards that he believed it had helped to steady him whilst coming through the channel.

The fisherman's cottage is the only dwelling on the little island. We found the door open, and the birds were singing merrily among the green bushes about the entrance. There was nobody in but the old fisherman's wife, and she was deaf. We might have shouted long enough before she could have heard us; and if she had heard, the poor old body could hardly have helped us. When we got to the door, she was busy with something at the fire, and she did not hear our approach. But, turning round, and seeing us standing there, she gazed a few seconds with a frightened look, and then, lifting up both hands, she cried out, "Eh, dear o' me; good folk! Whativver's to do? Whereivver han yo cum fra? Eh; heawivver han yo getten ower?"

We told our tale in a few words; and then she began again:—

"Good lorjus days, childer! What browt yo through t' channel at sich an ill time as this? It's a marcy 'at yo weren't draan'd mony a time ower! It mud ha' bin my awn lads! Eh, what trouble there'd ha' bin for someb'dy. What, ye'll ha' mothers livin', likely; happen wives and childer?… Eh, dear o' me! Bud cum in wi' ye! Whativver are ye stonnin' theer for? Cum in, an' get your claes off—do! an' get into bed this minute," said she, pointing to a little, low-roofed room in the oldest part of the house.

The water from our clothes was running over the floor; but when we spoke about it in the way of apology, the old woman said, "Nivver ye mind't watter. Ye've had watter enough for yance, I should think. Get in theer, I tell ye; an' tak' your weet claes off. Now, don't stan' gabblin', but creep into bed, like good lads; an' I'll bring ye some het tea to drink.... Eh, but ye owt to be thankful 'at ye are wheer ye are!… Ye'd better go into that inside room; It'll be quieter. Leave your claes i' this nar room, an' I'll hing 'em up to dry. An' put some o' thoose aad shirts on. They're poor, but they're comfortable. Now, in wi' ye! ye can talk at efter."

The old woman had four grown-up sons, labourers and fishermen; and there was plenty of working clothes belonging to them, lying about the bedroom. After we had stript our wet things, and flung them down, one after another, with a splash, we put on a rough shirt a-piece, and crept into bed. In a few minutes she came in with a quart pitcher full of hot tea, and a cup to drink it from; and, setting it down upon a chair at the bedside, she said, "Now, get that into ye, and hev a bit of a sleep. Eh, dear o' me! It's a marcy ye warn't draan'd!"

We lay still, talking and looking about us; but we could not sleep. The excitement we had gone through had left a band of intense pain across the lower part of my forehead, as if a hot wire was burning into it. The walls of the room we lay in were partly those of the ancient chapel which gives name to the island. In fact, the little ragged, weed-grown belfrey still stood above our heads, almost the only relic of the ruined chantry, except the foundations, and some pieces of the old walls built up into the cottage. This chapel was founded above five centuries ago, by the monks of Furness. Here they prayed daily "for the safety of the souls of such as crossed the sands with the morning tide." The Priory of Conishead was charged with the maintenance of guides across this estuary, which is perhaps the most dangerous part of the Morecambe Sands. Baines says of the route across these sands: "The tract is from Holker Hall to Plumpton Hall, keeping Chapel Island a little to the left; and the mind of a visitor is filled with a mixture of awe and gratitude when, in a short time after he has traversed this estuary, almost dry shod, he beholds the waters advancing into the bay, and bearing stately vessels towards the harbour of Ulverstone, over the very path which he has so recently trodden." I can imagine how solemn the pealing of that little island chapel's bell must have sounded upon the shores of the estuary, floating over those dangerous waters its daily warning of the uncertainty of human life. Perhaps the bodies of drowned men might have lain where we were lying; or travellers rescued from the tide by those ancient ministers of religion might have listened with grateful hearts to the prayers and thanksgivings offered up in that venerable chantry. The chastening interest of old pious usage clings to the little island still; and it stands in the midst of the waters, preaching in mute eloquence to every thoughtful mind. There was something in the sacred associations of the place; there was something in the mouldering remnant of the little chapel, which helped to deepen the interest of our eventful visit that day. We could not sleep. The sun shone in aslant at the one tiny window of our bedroom, and the birds were singing merrily outside. As we lay there, thinking and talking about these things, my friend said, "I feel thankful now that I did not bring Willie with me. If I had done so, nothing could have saved us. The tide had come in behind, and a minute more at the channel would have been too much."

After resting about three hours, we got up, and put on some of the cast-off clothes which had been worn by the old woman's sons whilst working in the land. My trousers were a good deal too long, and they were so stiff with dried slutch that they almost stood up of themselves. When they were on, I felt as if I was dressed in sheet-iron. I never saw two stranger figures than we cut that day, as we entered the kitchen again, each amusing himself with the other's comical appearance.

"Never ye mind," said the old woman; "there's naabody to see ye bud mysel; ye may think varra weel 'at ye're alive to wear owt at all. But sart'ny ye looken two bonny baygles! I daat varra mich whether your awn folk would knaw ye. It quite alters your fayturs. I should't tak ye to be aboon ninepence to t' shillin' at the varra most. As for ye," said she, addressing myself, "ye'n na 'casion to talk, for ye're as complete a flay-crow as ivver I set e'en on,"

The kitchen was cleaned up, and the things emptied from our pockets lay about. Here books and papers were opened out to dry. There stockings hung upon a line, and our boots were reared against the fender, with their soles turned to the fire. On the dresser two little piles of money stood, and on a round table were the sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs which my friend had brought in his pockets.

"What are ye for wi' this?" said the old woman, pointing to the eatables. "One or two o't eggs are crushed a bit, but t' ham's naa warse, 'at I can see."

"Let us taste what it is like," said my friend.

"That's reight," replied she; "an' yell hev a cup o' het tea to it. I have it ready here." The tea was very refreshing; but we couldn't eat much, for we had not quite recovered from the late excitement. After a little meal, we went out to walk upon the island. Our damp clothes were fluttering upon the green bushes about the cottage. They were drying fast; for, though the sun was hot, a cool breeze swept over the bay from the south-west. We wandered through the grove, and about the garden, or rather the "kailyard," for the chief things grown in it were potatoes, cabbages, brocoli, pot-herbs, and such like things, useful at dinner time. There were very few flowers in it, and they were chiefly such as had to take care of themselves. In the grove there were little bowery nooks, and meandering footpaths, mostly worn by visitors from the neighbouring shores. The island has been much larger than it is now. Great quantities of limestone rock have been sold, and carried away to the mainland; and it seems as if this little interesting leaf of local history was fated to ultimate destruction in that way. We walked all round it, and then we settled down upon a grassy spot, at the south-western edge, overlooking the channel we had waded through. There was something solemn in the thought that, instead of gazing upon the beautiful bay, we might have been lying at that moment in the bed of the channel there, with the sunny waters rippling above us, or drifting out with the retiring tide to an uncrowded grave in the western sea. The thick woods of Conishead looked beautiful on the opposite shore, with the white turrets of the Priory rising out of their embowering shades. A little south of that the spire of Bardsea church pointed heavenward from the summit of a green hill, marking the spot where the village stood hidden from our view. White sails were gliding to and fro upon the broad bay, like great swans with sunlit wings. It was a beautiful scene. We sat looking at it till we began to feel chill, and then we went back to the cottage.

About six o'clock the old fisherman returned home from Ulverstone; and, soon after, two of his sons arrived from Conishead Park, where they had been working at a deep drain. They were tall, hardy-looking men, about middle-age. The old fisherman, who knows the soundings of the sands all round, seemed to think we had picked our way to the island as foolishly as it was possible to do. He talked about the matter as if we had as good a knowledge of the sands as himself, and had set out with the express intention of doing a dangerous exploit. "Now," said he, pointing a good way north of the way we had crossed, "if ye'd ha' come o'er by theer, ye mud ha' done it easy. Bud, what the devil, ye took the varra warst nook o't channel. *I* wonder as ye weren't *draan'd*. I've helped to get mony a ane aat o' that hole—baith deead an' alive. I yence pulled a captain aat by th' yure o't' yed, as had sailed all ower t' warld, nearly. An' we'd summat to do to bring him raand, an' all. He was that far geean.... Now, if ye'd ha' getten upo' yon bank," continued he, "ye mud ha' managed to ha' studden till help had come to ye. What, ye wadn't ha' bin varra mich aboon t' middle.... But it's getten near law watter. I mun be off to t' nets. Will ye go daan wi' me?"

There were two sets of "stake nets" belonging to the island; one on the north end, and the other on the western side, in our own memorable channel. The sons went to those on the north; and the old man took a stick in his hand, and a large basket on his arm, and we followed him down the rocks to the other nets. They are great cages of strong network, supported by lofty poles, or stakes, from which they take their name. They are so contrived that the fish can get into them at high water, but cannot escape with the retiring tide. There was rather more than a foot of water at the bottom of the nets; but there was not a fish visible, till the old man stepped in; and then I saw that flukes lay thick about the bottom, half-hidden in the sand. We waded in, and helped to pick them up, till the great

basket was about half full. He then closed the net, and came away, complaining that it was "nobbut a poor catch." When we got to the cottage we put on our own clothes, which were quite dry. And, after we had picked out two dozen of the finest flukes, which the old man strung upon a stout cord for ease of carriage, we bade adieu to the fisherman and his family, and we walked away over the sands, nearly by the way we had come to the island.

The sun had gone down behind old Birkrigg; but his westering splendour still empurpled the rugged tops of the Cartmel hills. The woods of Conishead were darkening into shade; and the low of cattle came, mellowed by distance, from the rich pastures of Furness. It was a lovely evening. Instead of going up the green lane which leads to the landward end of Bardsea, we turned southward, along the shore, and took a grass-grown shady path, which winds round the sea-washed base of the hill upon which the church stands and so up into the village by a good road from the beach. The midges were dancing their airy rounds; the throstle's song began to ring clearer in the stilling woods; and the lone ouzel, in her leafy covert, chanted little fits of complaining melody, as if she had lost something. There were other feathered lingerers here and there in those twilight woods, not willing yet to go to rest, through unwearied joyfulness of heart, and still singing on, like children late at play, who have to be called in by their mothers as night comes on. When we drew near my friend's house, he said, "Now, we had better not mention this little affair to our people." But, as we sat at supper that night, I could not help feeling thankful that we were eating fish instead of being eaten by them.

Ramble from Bury to Rochdale

"Its hardly in a body's pow'r
To keep, at times' fra being sour."

Burns.

One fine afternoon, at the end of February, I had some business to do in Bury, which kept me there till evening. As twilight came on, the skies settled slowly into a gorgeous combination of the grandest shapes and hues, which appeared to canopy the country for miles around. The air was clear, and it was nipping cold; and every object within sight stood out in beautiful relief in that fine transparence, softened by the deepening shades of evening. The world seemed to stand still and meditate, and inhale silently the air of peace which pervaded that tranquil hour of closing day, as if all things on earth had caught the spirit of "meek nature's evening comments on the fuming shows and vanities of man." The glare of daylight is naturally fitted for bustle and business, but such an eventide as this looked the very native hour of devout thought, and recovery from the details of worldly occupation. It is said that the town of Bury takes its name from the Saxon word *byri*, a burgh, or castle. One of the twelve ancient Saxon fortresses of Lancashire stood in the place now called "Castle Croft," close to the town, and upon the banks of the old course of the river Irwell. Immediately below the eminence, upon which the castle once stood, a low tract of ground, of considerable extent, stretches away from below the semicircular ridge upon which the northern extremity of the town is situated, up the valley of the Irwell. Less than fifty years ago this tract was a great stagnant swamp, where, in certain states of the weather the people of the neighbourhood could see the weird antics of the "Wild Fire," or "Jack o' Lantern," that fiend of morass and fen. An old medical gentleman, of high repute, who has lived his whole life in the town, lately assured me that he remembers well that, during the existence of that poisonous swamp, there was a remarkable prevalence of fever and ague amongst the people living in its neighbourhood; which diseases have since then comparatively disappeared from the locality. There is something rich in excellent suggestions in the change which has been wrought in that spot. The valley, so long fruitful of pestilences, is now drained and cleared, and blooms with little garden allotments, belonging to the working people thereabouts. Oft as I chance to pass that way, on Saturday afternoons, or holidays, there they are, working in their little plots, sometimes assisted by their children, or their wives; a very pleasant scene.

I lingered in the market-place a little while, looking at the parish church, with its new tower and spire, and at the fine pile of new stone buildings, consisting of the Derby Hotel, the Town Hall, and the Athenæum. South Lancashire has, for a very long time past, been chiefly careful about its hard productive work, and practicable places to do it in; and has taken little thought about artistic ornament of any sort; but the strong old county palatine begins to flower out a little here and there, and this will increase as the wealth of the county becomes influenced by elevated taste. In this new range of buildings, there was a stateliness and beauty, which made the rest of the town of Bury look smaller and balder than ever it seemed to me before. It looked like a piece of the west end of London, dropped among a cluster of weavers' cottages. But my reflections took another direction. At "The Derby," there, thought I, will be supplied—to anybody who can command "the one thing needful"—sumptuous eating and drinking, fine linen, and downy beds, hung with damask curtaining; together with grand upholstery, glittering chandelier and looking-glass, and more than enough of other ornamental garniture of all sorts; a fine cook's shop and dormitory, where a man might make shift to tickle a few of his five senses very prettily, if he was so disposed. A beggar is not likely to put up there; but a lord might chance to go to bed there, and dream that he was a beggar. At the other end of these fine buildings, the new Athenæum was quietly rising into the air. The wants to be

provided for in that edifice were quite of another kind. There is in the town of Bury, as, more or less, everywhere, a sprinkling of naturally active and noble minds, struggling through the hard crust of ignorance and difficulty, towards mental light and freedom. Such salt as this poor world of ours has in it, is not unfrequently found among these humble strugglers. I felt sure that such as these, at least, would watch the laying of the stones of this new Athenæum with a little interest. That is their grand citadel, thought I; and from thence, the artillery of a few old books shall help to batter tyranny and nonsense about the ears;—for there is a reasonable prospect that there, the ample page of knowledge, "rich with the spoils of time," will be unfolded to all who desire to consult it; and that from thence the seeds of thought may yet be sown over a little space of the neighbouring mental soil. This fine old England of ours will some day find, like the rest of the world, that it is not mere wealth and luxury, and dexterous juggling among the legerdemain of trade, that make and maintain its greatness, but intelligent and noble-hearted men, in whatever station of life they grow; and they are, at least, sometimes found among the obscure, unostentatious, and very poor. It will learn to prize these, as the "pulse of the machine," and to cultivate them as the chief hope of its future existence and glory; and will carefully remove, as much as possible, all unnecessary difficulties from the path of those who, from a wise instinct of nature, are impelled in the pursuit of knowledge by pure love of it, for its own sake, and not by sordid aims.

The New Town Hall is the central building of this fine pile. The fresh nap was not yet worn off it; and, of course, its authorities were anxious to preserve its pristine Corinthian beauty from the contaminations of "the unwashed." They had made it nice, and they wanted none but nice people in it. At the "free exhibition" of models for the Peel monument, a notice was posted at the entrance, warning visitors, that "Persons in Clogs" would not be admitted. There are some Town Halls which are public property, in the management of which a kindred solicitude prevails about mere ornaments of wood and stone, or painting, gilding, and plaster work; leading to such restrictions as tend to lessen the service which they might afford to the whole public. They are kept rather too exclusively for grandee-festivals; and gatherings of those classes which are too much sundered from the poor by a Chinese wall of exclusive feeling. I have known the authorities of such places make "serious objections to evening meetings;" and yet, I have often seen the farce of "public meetings" got up ostensibly for the discussion of some important question then agitating the population of the neighbourhood, inviting *public* discussion, at *eleven* o'clock in the *forenoon*, an hour when the heterodox multitude would be secure enough at their labour; and, in this way, many a pack of fanatic hounds—and there are some such in all parties—have howled out their hour with a clear stage and no foe; and then walked off glorying in a sham triumph, leaving nothing beaten behind them but the air they have tainted with *ex parte* denunciation. And, in my erroneous belief that this Town Hall, into which "Persons in Clogs" were not to be admitted, was public property, the qualification test seemed to be of a queer kind, and altogether at the wrong end of the man. Alas, for these poor lads who wear clogs and work-soiled fustian garments; it takes a moral Columbus, every now and then, to keep the world awake to a belief that there is something fine in them, which has been running to waste for want of recognition and culture. Blessed and beautiful are the feet, which fortune has encased in the neat "Clarence," of the softest calf or Cordovan, or the glossy "Wellington," of fine French leather. Even so; the woodenest human head has a better chance in this world if it come before us covered with a good-looking hat. But woe unto your impertinent curiosity, ye unfortunate clog-wearing lovers of the fine arts!—(I was strongly assured that there were several curious specimens of this strange animal extant among the working people of Bury.) It was pleasant to hear, however, that several of these ardent persons, of questionable understanding, meeting with this warning as they attempted to enter the hall, after duly contemplating it with humourous awe, doffed their condemned clogs at once, and, tucking the odious timber under their arms, ran up the steps in their stocking-feet. It is a consolation to believe that these clogs of theirs are not the only clogs yet to be taken off in this world of ours. But, as this "Town Hall" is private property, and, as it has been settled by somebody in the north that "a man can do

what he likes with his own," these reflections are, perhaps, more pertinent to other public halls that I know of than to this one.

In one of the windows of "The Derby" was exhibited a representation of "The Eagle and Child," or, as the country-folk in Lancashire sometimes call it, "Th' Brid and Bantlin'," the ancient recognizance of the Stanleys, Earls of Derby, and formerly kings of the Isle of Man, with their motto, "Sans changer," in a scroll beneath. This family still owns the manor of Bury, and has considerable possessions there. They have also large estates and great influence in the north and west of Lancashire. In former times they have been accounted the most powerful family of the county; and in some of the old wars, they led to the field all the martial chivalry of Lancashire and Cheshire under their banner. As I looked on the Stanley's crest, I thought of the fortunes of that noble house, and of the strange events which it had shared with the rest of the kingdom. Of James, Earl of Derby, who was beheaded at Bolton-le-Moors, in front of the Man and Scythe Inn, in Deansgate, two centuries since; and of his countess, Charlotte de Tremouille, who so bravely defended Lathom House against the parliamentary forces during the last civil wars. She was daughter to Claude, Duke of Tremouille, and Charlotte Brabantin de Nassau, daughter of William, Prince of Orange, and Charlotte de Bourbon, of the royal house of France. Apart from the pride of famous descent, both the earl and his lady were remarkable for certain noble qualities of mind, which commanded the respect of all parties in those troubled times. I sometimes think that if it had pleased Heaven for me to have lived in those days, I should have been compelled by nature to fall into some Roundhead rank, and do the best I could, for that cause. When a lad at school I had this feeling: and, as I poured over the history of that period, I well remember how, in my own mind, I shouted the solemn battle-cry with great Cromwell and his captains, and charged with the earnest Puritans, in their bloody struggles against the rampant tyrannies of the time. Yet, even then, I never read of this James, Earl of Derby—the faithful soldier of an infatuated king—without a feeling of admiration for the chivalry of his character. I lately saw, in Bolton, an antique cup of "stone china," quaintly painted and gilt, out of which it is said that he drank the communion immediately before his execution. Greenhalgh, of Brandlesome, who was a notable and worthy man, and who governed the Isle of Man for the Earls of Derby, lived at Brandlesome Hall, near Bury. Respecting Edward, the third earl, Camden says: "With Edward, Earl of Derby's death, the glory of hospitality seemed to fall asleep." Of his munificent housekeeping, too, he tells us: how he fed sixty old people twice a day, every day, and all comers twice a week; and every Christmas-day, for thirty-two years, supplied two thousand seven hundred with meat, drink, money, and money's worth; and how he offered to raise ten thousand soldiers for the king. Also, that he had great reputation as a bone-setter, and was a learned man, a poet, and a man of considerable talent in many directions. The present Lord Stanley[1] is accounted a man of great ability as a politician and orator, and of high and impetuous spirit; and is the leader of the Conservative party in parliament. A century ago, the influence of great feudal families, like the Stanleys, was all but supreme in Lancashire; but, since that time, the old landlord domination has declined in the manufacturing districts; and the people have begun to set more value upon their independent rights as men, than upon the painful patronage of feudal landlords.

I had no time to devote to any other of the notabilities of Bury town; and I thought that "Chamber Hall," the birthplace of the great departed statesman, Peel, would be worth a special pilgrimage some Saturday afternoon.[2] I had finished my business about seven o'clock, and, as the nightfall was fine and clear, I resolved to walk over to Rochdale, about six miles off, to see an

[1] Succeeded his father, the thirteenth Earl of Derby, in 1851. Has been Chief Secretary for Ireland, and Secretary of State for the Colonies. Accepted office as Premier, in 1851.

[2] Since that time the people of Bury have erected a monument in their market-place to the memory of this brave-hearted benefactor to his country. The statue itself has a noble and simple appearance, but the pedestal on which it stands looks an insignificant footing for a figure of such proportions, and is a little open to the criticism of "Owd Collop," who said that it looked "like a giant trying to balance hissel' upov a four-peawnd loaf."

old friend of mine there. Few people like a country walk better than I do; and being in fair health and spirits, I took the road at once, with my stick in hand, as brisk as a Shetland pony, in good fettle. Striking out at the town-end, I bethought me of an old herbalist, or "yarb doctor," who lived somewhere thereabouts—a genuine dealer in simples, bred up in the hills, on Ashworth Moor, about three miles from the town, and who had made the botany of his native neighbourhood a life-long study. Culpepper's "Herbal" was a favourite book with him, as it is among a great number of the country people of Lancashire, where there are, perhaps, more clever botanists in humble life to be found than in any other part of the kingdom. Nature and he were familiar friends, for he was a lonely rambler by hill, and clough, and field, at all seasons of the year, and could talk by the hour about the beauties and medicinal virtues of gentian, dandelion, and camomile, or tansy, mountain flax, sanctuary, hyssop, buckbean, wood-betony, and "Robin-run-i'-th'-hedge," and an endless catalogue of other herbs and plants, a plentiful assortment of which he kept by him, either green or in dried bundles, ready for his customers. The country people in Lancashire have great faith in simples, and in simple treatment for their diseases. I well remember that one of their recipes for a common cold is "a wot churn-milk posset, weel sweet'nt, an' a traycle cake to't, at bed-time." They are profound believers in the kindly doctrine expressed in that verse of George Herbert's:—

"More servants wait on man
Than he'll take notice of; in ev'ry path
He treads down what befriends him
Then sickness makes him pale and wan.
Oh, mighty love! man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him."

Therefore, our primitive old herb-doctor had in his time driven what he doubtless considered, in his humble way, a pretty gainful trade. And he was not exactly "a doctor-by-guess," as the Scotch say, but a man of good natural parts, and of some insight into human physiology, of great experience and observation in his little sphere, and remarkable for strong common sense and integrity. He was also well acquainted with the habits and the peculiar tone of physical constitution among the people of his neighbourhood. Like his pharmacopæia, his life and manners were simple, and his rude patients had great confidence in him. It was getting dark, and I did not know exactly where to find him, or I should have liked very well to see the old botanist, of whom I had heard a very interesting account in my native town.

When one gets fairly into the country it is fine walking by a clear starlight, when the air is touched with frost, and the ground hard under the foot. I enjoyed all this still more on that old road, which is always rising some knoll, or descending into some quiet clough, where all is so still that one can hear the waters sing among the fields and stunted woods off the wayside. The wind was blowing fresh and keen across Knowl Hill and the heathery wastes of Ashworth and Rooley, those wild heights which divide the vale of the Roach from the Forest of Rossendale. I stood and looked upon the blue heavens, "fretted with golden fire," and around me upon this impressive night-scene, so finely still and solemn, the effect deepened by the moanings of the wind among the trees. My mind reverted to the crowded city, and I thought to myself—this is rather different to Market-street, in Manchester, on a Tuesday forenoon, about the time of "high change," as I listened to the clear "Wo-up!" of a solitary carter to his horse on the top of the opposite knoll, and heard the latch of a cottage-door lifted, and saw the light from the inside glint forth into the trees below for an instant. It was a homely glimpse, which contrasted beautifully with the sombre grandeur of the night. The cottage-door closed again, the fireside picture was gone; and I was alone on the silent road, with the clear stars looking down.

I generally put off my meals till I get a hint from the inside; and, by the time that I reached the bottom of a lonely dell, about three miles on the road, I began to feel hungry, and I stepped into the

only house thereabouts, a little roadside inn, to get a bite of something. The house stands near to a narrow woody ravine which runs under the highway at that place. It is said to have been entirely built by one man, who got the stone, hewed it, cut the timber, and shaped it, and altogether built the house, such as it is; and it has an air of primitive rudeness about it, which partly corroborates the story. The very hearth-flag is an old gravestone, brought from the yard of some ancient moorland chapel; and part of the worn lettering is visible upon it still. It is known to the scattered inhabitants of that district by the name of "The house that Jack built." On entering the place, I found the front room dark and quiet, and nothing stirring but in the kitchen, where I saw the light of a candle, and heard a little music among the pots, which somebody was washing. The place did not seem promising, so far as I could see at all, but I felt curious, and, walking forward, I found a very homely-looking old woman bustling about there, with a clean cap on, not crimped nor frilled any way, but just plainly adorned with a broad border of those large, stiff, old-fashioned puffs, which I used to watch my mother make on the end of the "Italian iron," when I was a lad at home. Old Sam, the landlord, had just come home from his work, and sat quietly smoking on the long settle, in a nook by the fireside, while his wife, Mary, got some tea ready for her tired old man. The entrance of a customer seemed to be an important affair to them, and partly so, I believe, because they were glad to have a little company in their quiet corner, and liked to hear, now and then, how the world was wagging a few miles off. I called for a glass of ale, and something like the following conversation ensued:—

Mary. Aw'll bring it, measter. See yo, tay this cheer. It's as chep sittin' as stonnin'. An' poo up to th' fire, for it's noan so warm to-neet.

Sam. Naw, it's nobbut cowdish, for sure; draw up to th' hob, an' warm yo, for yo look'n parish't.[3]

"If you can bring me a crust of bread and cheese, or a bit of cold meat, or anything, I shall be obliged to you," said I.

Mary. Ah, sure aw will. We'n a bit o' nice cowd beef; an' I'll bring it eawt. But it's bhoylt (boiled), mind yo! Dun yo like it bhoylt? Yo'n find it middlin' toothsome.

I told her that it would do very well; and then the landlord struck in:—

Sam. Doesto yer, lass. There's a bit o' pickle theer, i'th cubbort; aw dar say he'd like some. Fot it eawt, an' let him *feel* at it.

Mary. Oh, ay, sure there is; an' aw'll bring it, too. Aw declare aw'd forgetten it! Dun yo like pickle, measther?

"I do," said I, "just for a taste."

Mary. Well, well; aw meeon for a taste. But aw'll bring it an' yo can help yorsel to't. Let's see, wi'n yo have hard brade? Which side dun yo come fro?

"I come from Manchester," said I.

Mary. Fro Manchester, eh! Whau, then, yo'd'n rather ha' loaf-brade, aw'll uphowd yo.

"Nay, nay," said I, "I'm country-bred; and I would rather have a bit of oat-cake. I very seldom get any in Manchester; and, when I do, it tastes as if it was mismanaged, somehow; so a bit of good country bread will be a treat to me."

Mary. That's reet; aw'll find yo some gradely good stuff! An' it's a deeol howsomer nor loaf, too, mind yo.... Neaw, wi'n nought uncuth to set afore yo; but yo'n find that beef's noan sich bad takkin', if yor ony ways sharp set.... Theer, see yo! Nea, may yoursel' awhom, an' spare nought, for wi'n plenty moor. But houd! yo hannot o' vor tools yet. Aw'll get vo a fork in a crack.

I fell to with a hearty good-will, for the viands before me were not scanty, and they were both wholesome, and particularly welcome, after my sharp walk in the keen wind, which came whistling over the moors that night. The first heat of the attack was beginning to slacken a bit, and Old Sam, who had been sitting in the corner, patient and pleased, all the while, with an observant look, began to think that now there might be room for him to put in a word or two. I, also, began to feel as if

[3] *Parish't*—perished.

I had no objection to taper off my meal with a little country talk; and the old man was just asking me what the town's folk said about the parliamentary crisis, and the rumour which had reached him, that there was an intention of restoring the corn-laws again, when Mary interrupted him by saying, "Husht, Sam; doesta yer nought?" He took the pipe out of his mouth, and, quietly blowing the smoke from the corner of his lips, held his head on one side in a listening attitude. Old Sam smiled, and lighting his pipe again, he said, "Ah, yon's Jone o' Jeffry's." "It's nought else, aw believe," said Mary; "does ta think he'll co'?" "Co', ah," replied Sam; "does he eves miss, thinks ta? Tay thy cheer to th' tone side a bit, an' may reawm for him, for he'll be i'th heawse in a minute." And then, turning to me, he said, "Nea, then, measter, yo'n yer some gam, if yor spare't." He had scarcely done speaking, when a loud "Woigh!" was heard outside, as a cart stopped at the door, and a heavy footstep came stamping up the lobby. The kitchen door opened, and a full-blown Lancashire Cossack stood before us. Large-limbed and broad-shouldered, with a great, frank, good-tempered face, full of rude health and glee. He looked a fine sample of simple manhood, with a disposition that seemed to me, from the expression of his countenance, to be something between that of an angel and a bull-dog. Giving his hands a hearty smack, he rubbed them together, and smiled at the fire; and then, doffing his rough hat, and flinging it with his whip upon the table, he shouted out, "Hello! Heaw are yo—o' on yo! Yo'r meeterly quiet again to-neet, Mary! An' some ov a cowd neet it is. My nose sweats." The landlord whispered to me, "Aw towd yo, didn't aw. Sit yo still; he's rare company, is Jone."

Mary. Ah, we're quiet enough; but we shannut be so long, neaw at thir't come'd, Jone.

Jone. Well, well. Yor noan beawn to flyte mo, owd crayter, are yo?

Sam. Tay no notiz on hur, wilto, foo; hoo meeons nought wrang.

Mary. Nut aw! Sit to deawn, Jone. We'er olez fain to sitho; for thir't noan one o'th warst mak o' folk, as roof as to art.

Jone. Aw'st sit mo deawn, as what aw am; an' aw'st warm me too, beside; an' aw'll ha' summat to sup too, afore aw darken yon dur-hole again.... Owd woman, fill mo one o'th big'st pots yo han, an' let's be havin' houd, aw pray yo; for my throttle's as dry as a kex. An' be as slippy as ever yo con, or aw'st be helpin' mysel, for it's ill bidein' for dry folk amung good drink!

Mary. Nay, nay; aw'll sarve tho, Jone, i' tho'll be patient hauve a minute; an' theaw'st ha' plenty to start wi', as heaw't be.

Jone. "That's just reet," said Pinder, when his wife bote hur tung i' two! Owd woman, yo desarv'n a comfortable sattlement i'th top shop when yo dee'n; an' yo'st ha' one, too, iv aw've ony say i'th matter.... Eh, heaw quiet yo are, Sam! By th' mass, iv aw're here a bit moor, aw'd may some rickin' i' this cauve-cote, too. Whau, mon, yo'dd'n sink into a deeod sleep, an' fair dee i'th shell, iv one didn't wakken yo up a bit, neaw and then.

Mary. Eh, mon! Thea sees, our Sam an' me's gettin owd, an' wi'dd'n raythur be quiet, for th' bit o' time at wi' ha'n to do on. Beside, aw could never do wi' roof wark. Raylee o' me! It'd weary a grooin' tree to ha' th' din, an' th' lumber, an' th' muck at te han i' some ale heawses. To my thinkin', aw'd go as fur as othur grace[4] grew or wayter ran, afore aw'd live amoon sich doin's. One could elthur manage we't at th' for-end o' their days. But what, we hannot so lung to do on neaw; an' aw would e'en like to finish as quietly as aw can. We hannot had a battle i' this heawse as—let's see—as three year an' moor; ha'n wi, Sam?

Sam. Naw, aw dunnot think we han. But we soud'n a deeol moor ale, just afore that time, too.

Jone. Three year, sen yo! Eh, the dule, Mary; heaw ha'n yo shap'd that! Whau owd Neddy at th' Hoo'senam—yo known owd Neddy, aw reckon, dunnot yo, Sam?

Sam. Do I know Rachda' Church steps, thinksto?

Jone. Aw dar say yo known th' steps a deeol better nor yo known th' church, owd brid!

[4] Grass.

Sam. Whau, aw have been bin up thoose steps a time or two i' my life; an thea knows, ony body at's bin up 'em a twothore[5] times, 'll nut forget 'em so soon; for if thi'n tay 'em sharpish fro' th' botham to th' top, it'll try their wynt up rarely afore they getten to Tim Bobbin gravestone i'th owd church-yort. But, aw've bin to sarvice theer as oft as theaw has, aw think.

Jone. Ah!—an' yo'n getten abeawt as mich good wi't, as aw have, aw dar say; an' that's nought to crack on;—but wi'n say no moor upo' that footin'. Iv yo known ony body at o', yo known owd Neddy at th' Hoo'senam; and aw'll be bund for't, 'at i' three years time he's brunt mony a peawnd o' candles wi' watchin' folk feight i' their heawse. Eh, aw've si'n him ston o'er 'em, wi' a candle i' eyther hont, co'in eawt, "Nea lads. Turn him o'er Tum! Let 'em ha' reawm, chaps; let 'em ha' reawm! Nea lads! Keep a lose leg, Jam! Nea lads!" And then, when one on 'em wur done to th' lung-length, he'd sheawt eawt, "Houd! he's put his hont up! Come, give o'er, and ger up." And, afore they'd'n getten gradely wynded, and put their clooas on, he'd offer "another quart for the next battle." Eh, he's one o'th quarest chaps i' this nation, is owd Ned, to my thinkin'; an' he's some gradely good points in him, too.

Sam. There isn't a quarer o' this countryside, as hea't be; an' there's some crumpers amoon th' lot.

Jone. Aw guess yo known Bodle, too, dunnot yo, owd Sam?

Sam. Yigh, aw do. He wortches up at th' col-pit yon, doesn't he?

Jone. He does, owd craytur.

Mary. Let's see, isn't that him 'at skens a bit?

Sam. A bit, saysto, lass? It's aboon a bit, by Guy. He skens ill enough to crack a looking-glass, welly (well-nigh).

Mary. Eh, do let th' lad alone, folk, win yo. Aw marvel at yo'n no moor wit nor mayin foos o' folk at's wrang wheer they connut help it. Yo met happen be strucken yorsels! Beside, he's somebory's chylt, an' somebory likes him too, aw'll uphowd him; for there never wur a feaw face i' this world, but there wur a feaw fancy to match it, somewheer.

Jone. They may fancy him 'at likes, for me; but there's noan so mony folk at'll fancy Bodle, at after they'n smelled at him once't. An', by Guy, he's hardly wit enough to keep fro' runnin' again woles i'th dayleet. But, aw see yo known him weel enough; an' so aw'll tell yo a bit of a crack abeawt him an' Owd Neddy.

Mary. Well let's ha't; an' mind to tells no lies abeawt th' lad i' thy talk.

Jone. Bith mon, Mary, aw connut do, beawt aw say at he's other a pratty un or a good un.

Sam. Get forrud wi' thy tale, Jone, wilto: an' bother no moor abeawt it.

Jone (Whispers to Owd Sam): Aw say. Who's that chap at sits hutchin i' the nook theer, wi' his meawth oppen?

Sam. Aw know not. But he's a nice quiet lad o' somebory's, so tay no notice. Thae'll just meet plez him i' tho'll get forrud; thae may see that, i' tho'll look at him; for he stares like a ferret at's sin a ratton.

Jone. Well, yo see'n, Sam, one mornin', after Owd Neddy an' Bodle had been fuddlin' o' th' o'erneet, thi'dd'n just getten a yure o' th' owd dog into 'em, an' they sit afore th' fire i' Owd Neddy's kitchen, as quiet, to look at, as two pot dolls; but they didn't feel so, nother; for thi'dd'n some of a yed-waache apiece, i' th' treawth wur known. When thi'dd'n turn't things o'er a bit, Bodle begun o' lookin' very yearn'stfully at th' fire-hole o' at once't, and he said, "By th' mass, Ned, aw've a good mind to go reet up th' chimbley." Well, yo known, Neddy likes a spree as well as ony mon livin', an' he doesn't care so mich what mak' o' one it is, nother; so as soon as he yerd that he jumped up, an' said, "Damn it, Bodle, go up—up wi' tho!" Bodle stood still a minute, looking at th' chimbley, an' as he double't his laps up, he said, "Well, neaw; should aw rayley goo up, thinksta, owd crayter?" "Go? —ah; what elze?" said Owd Ned—"Up wi' tho; soot's good for th' bally-waach, mon; an' aw'll gi'

[5] *A Twothore*—a few.

tho a quart ov ale when tho comes deawn again!" "Will ta, for sure?" said Bodle, prickin' his ears. "Am aw lyin' thinks ta?" onswer'd Owd Neddy. "Whau, then, aw'm off, by th' mon, iv it's as lung as a steeple;" an' he made no moor bawks at th' job, but set th' tone foot onto th' top-bar, an' up he went into th' smudge-hole. Just as he wur crommin' hissel' in at th' botham o'th chimbley, th' owd woman coom in to see what they hadd'n agate; an' as soon as Bodle yerd hur, he code eawt, "Howd her back a bit, whol aw get eawt o'th seet, or else hoo'll poo me deawn again." Hoo stare't a bit afore hoo could may it eawt what it wur at're creepin up th' chimney-hole, an' hoo said, "What mak o' lumber ha'n yo afoot neaw? for yo're a rook o'th big'st nowmuns at ever trode ov a floor! Yo'n some make o' divulment agate i'th chimbley, aw declare." As soon as hoo fund what it wur, hoo sheawted, "Eh, thea greight gawmless foo! Wheer arto for up theer! Thea'll be smoor't, mon!" An, hoo would ha' darted forrud, an' getten howd on him; but Owd Ned kept stonnin afore hur, an' sayin, "Let him alone, mon; it's nobbut a bit of a spree." Then he looked o'er his shoulder at Bodle, an' said, "Get tee forrud, wilto, nowmun; thae met a bin deawn again by neaw;" an, as soon as he see'd at Bodle wur gettin meeterly weel up th' hole, he leet her go; but hoo wur to lat to get howd. An' o' at hoo could do, wur to fot him a seawse or two o' th' legs wi' th' poker. But he wur for up, an' nought else. He did just stop abeawt hauve a minute—when he feld hur hit his legs—to co' eawt, "Hoo's that at's hittin' mo?" "Whau," said hoo, "It's me, thae greight leather-yed;—an' come deawn wi' tho! Whatever arto' doin' i'th chimbley?" "Aw'm goin' up for ale." "Ale! There's no ale up theer, thae greight brawsen foo! Eh, aw wish yor Mally wur here!" "Aw wish hoo wur here, istid o' me," said Bodle. "Come deawn witho this minute, thae greight drunken hal!" "Not yet," said Bodle—"but aw'll not be lung, nothur, yo may depend;—for it's noan a nice place—this isn't. Eh! there is some ov a smudge! An' it gwos wur as aw go fur;—a—tscho—o! By Guy, aw con see noan—nor talk, nothur;—so ger off, an' let mo get it o'er afore aw'm chauk't;" and then th' owd lad crope forrud, as hard as he could, for he're thinkin' abeawt th' quart ov ale. Well, Owd Neddy nearly skrike't wi' laughin', as he watched Bodle draw his legs up eawt o' th' seet; an' he set agate o' hommerin' th' chimbley whole wi' his hont, an sheawtin' up, "Go on, Bodle, owd lad! Go on, owd mon! Thir't a reet un! Thea'st have a quart o' th' best ale i' this hole, i' tho lives till tho comes deawn again, as hea 'tis, owd brid! An i' tho dees through it, aw'll be fourpence or fi'pence toawrd thi berrin." And then he went sheawting up an' deawn, "Hey! Dun yo yer, lads; come here! Owd Bodle's gone up th' chimbley! Aw never sprad my e'en upo th' marrow trick to this i' my life." Well, yo may think, Sam, th' whole heawse wur up i' no time; an' some rare spwort they ha'dd'n; an' Owd Neddy kept goin' to th' eawtside, to see if Bodle had getten his yed eawt at th' top; an' then runnin' in again, an' bawlin' up th' flue, "Bodle, owd lad, heaw arto gettin' on? Go throo wi't, owd cock!" But, whol he're starin' and sheawtin' up th' chimbley, Bodle lost his houd, somewheer toawrd th' top, an' he coom shutterin' deawn again, an' o' th' soot i' th' chimbley wi' him; an' he let wi' his hinder-end thump o'th top-bar, an' then roll't deawn upo th' har'stone. An' a greadly blash-boggart he looked; yo may think. Th' owd lad seem't as if he hardly knowed wheer he wur; so he lee theer a bit, amoon a cloud o' soot, an' Owd Neddy stoode o'er him, laughin', an' wipein' his e'en, an' co'in eawt, "Tay thy wynt a bit, Bodle; thir't safe londed, iv it be hard leetin'! Thir't a reet un; bi' th' mon arto, too. Tay thy wynt, owd bird! Thea'st have a quart, as hea 'tis, owd mon; as soon as ever aw con see my gate to th' bar eawt o' this smudge at thea's brought wi' tho! Aw never had my chimbley swept as chep i' my life!"

Mary. Well, if ever! Whau, it're enough to may th' fellow's throttle up! A greight, drunken leather-yed! But, he'd be some dry, mind yo!

Jone. Yo'r reet, Mary! Aw think mysel' at a quart ov ale 'ud come noan amiss after a do o' that mak. An' Bodle wouldn't wynd aboon once wi' it, afore he see'd th' bottom o' th' pot, noather.

Well, I had a good laugh at Jone's tale, and I enjoyed his manner of telling it, quite as much as anything there was in the story itself; for, he seemed to talk with every limb of his body, and every feature of his face; and told it, altogether, in such a living way, with so much humour and earnestness, that it was irresistible; and as I was "giving mouth" a little, with my face turned up toward

the ceiling, he turned to me, and said quickly, "Come, aw say; are yo noan fleyed o' throwing yo'r choles off th' hinges?". We soon settled down into a quieter mood, and drew round the fire, for the night was cold; when Jone suddenly pointed out to the landlord, one of those little deposits of smoke which sometimes wave about on the bars of the fire-grate, and, after whispering to him, "See yo, Sam; a stranger upo th' bar, theer;" he turned to me, and said, "That's yo, measther!" This is a little superstition, which is common to the fire-sides of the poor in all England, I believe. Soon after this, Mary said to Jone, "Hasto gan thy horse aught, Jone?" "Sure, aw have," replied he, "Aw laft it heytin', an plenty to go on wi', so then. Mon, aw reckon to look after deawn-crayters a bit, iv there be aught stirrin'." "Well," said she, "aw dar say thea does, Jone; an' mind yo, thoose at winnut do some bit like to things at connut talk for theirsels, they'n never ha' no luck, as hoo they are." "Well," said Jone, "my horse wortches weel, an' he sleeps weel, an' he heyts weel, an' he drinks weel, an' he parts wi't fearful weel; so he doesn't ail mich yet." "Well," replied Mary, "there isn't a wick thing i' this world can wortch as it should do, if it doesn't heyt as it should do." Here I happened to take a note-book out of my pocket, and write in it with my pencil, when the conversation opened again.

Sam. (Whispering.) Sitho, Jone, he's bookin' tho!

Jone. Houd, measther, houd! What mak' o' marlocks are yo after, neaw! What're yo for wi' us, theer! But aw caren't a flirt abeawt it; for thi' connot hang folk for talkin' neaw, as thi' could'n once on a day; so get forrud wi't, as what it is.

He then, also, began to inquire about the subject which was the prevailing topic of conversation at that time, namely, the parliamentary crisis, in which Lord John Russell had resigned his office at the head of the government; and the great likelihood there seemed to be of a protectionist party obtaining power.

Jone. Han yo yerd aught abeawt Lord Stanley puttin' th' Corn Laws on again? There wur some rickin' abeawt it i' Bury teawn, when aw coom off wi' th' cart to-neet.

Sam. They'n never do't, mon! They connot do! An' it's very weel, for aw dunnut know what mut become o' poor folk iv they did'n do. What think'n yo, measther?

I explained to them the unsettled state of parliamentary affairs, as it had reached us through the paper; and gave them my firm belief that the Corn Laws had been abolished once for all in this country; and that there was no political party in England who wished to restore them, who would ever have the power to do so.

Jone. Dun yo think so? Aw'm proud to yer it!

Sam. An' so am aw too, Jone. But what, aw know'd it weel enough. Eh, mon; there's a deal moor crusts o' brade lyin' abeawt i' odd nooks an' corners, nor there wur once't ov a day. Aw've sin th' time when thi'd'n ha' bin cleeked up like lumps o' gowd.

Jone. Aw think they'n ha' to fot Lord John back, to wheyve (weave) his cut deawn yet. To my thinkin' he'd no business to lev his looms. But aw dar say he knows his own job betther nor me. He'll be as fause as a boggart, or elze he'd never ha' bin i' that shop as lung as he has bin; not he. There's moor in his yed nor a smo'-tooth comb con fot eawt. What thinken yo, owd brid?

Sam. It's so like; it's so like! But aw dunnot care who's in, Jone, i' thi'n nobbut do some good for poor folk; an' that's one o' th' main jobs for thoose at's power to do't. But, iv they wur'n to put th' Corn Bill on again, there's mony a theawsan' would be clemmed to deeoth, o' ov a rook.

Jone. Ah, there would so, Sam, 'at I know on. But see yo; there's a deal on 'em 'ud go deawn afore me. Aw'd may somebody houd back whol their cale coom! Iv they winnot gi' me my share for wortchin' for, aw'll have it eawt o' some nook, ov aw dunnot, damn Jone! (striking the table heavily with his fist.) They's never be clemmed at ir heawse, as aw ha' si'n folk clemmed i' my time—never, whol aw've a fist a th' end o' my arm! Neaw, what have aw towd yo!

Sam. Thea'rt reet lad! Aw houd te wit good, by th' mass! Whol they gi'n us some bit like ov a choance, we can elther do. At th' most o' times, we'n to kill 'ursels (ourselves) to keep 'ursels, welly; but, when it comes to scarce wark an' dear mheyt, th' upstroke's noan so fur off.

Mary. Ay, ay. If it're nobbut a body's sel', we met manage to pinch a bit, neaw an' then; becose one could reayson abeawt it some bit like. But it's th' childer, mon, it's th' childer! Th' little things at look'n for it reggelar; an' wonder'n heaw it is when it doesn't come. Eh, dear o' me! To see poor folk's little bits o' childher yammerin' for a bite o' mheyt—when there's noan for 'em; an' lookin' up i' folk's faces, as mich as to say, "Connut yo help mo?" It's enough to may (make) onybody cry their shoon full!

Here I took out my book to make another note.

Jone. Hello! yo'r agate again! What, are yo takkin th' pickter on mo, or summat?… Eh, Sam; what a thing this larnin' is. Aw should ha' bin worth mony a theawsan peawnd if aw could ha' done o' that shap, see yo!

Sam. Aw guess thea con write noan, nor read noather, con ta, Jone?

Jone. Not aw! Aw've no moor use for a book nor a duck has for a umbrell. Aw've had to wortch hard sin aw're five year owd, mon. Iv aw've aught o' that mak to do, aw go to owd Silver-yed at th' lone-side wi't. It may's mo mad, mony a time, mon; one looks sich a foo!

Sam. An' he con write noan mich, aw think, con he?

Jone. Naw. He went no fur nor pot-hook an' ladles i' writin', aw believe. But he can read a bit, an' that's moor nor a deeol o' folk abeawt here can do. Aw know nobory upo this side at's greadly larnt up, nobbut Ash'oth parson. But there's plenty o' chaps i' Rachdaw teawn at's so brawsen wi' wit, whol noather me, nor thee, nor no mon elze, con may ony sense on 'em. Yo reckelect'n a 'torney co'in' here once't. What dun yo think o' him?

Sam. He favvurs a foo, Jone; or aw'm a foo mysel'.

Jone. He's far larnt i' aught but honesty, mon, that's heaw it is. He'll do no reet, nor tay no wrang. So wi'n lap it up just wheer it is; for little pigs ha'n lung ears.

Sam. Aw'll tell tho what, Jone; he's a bad trade by th' hond, for one thing; an' a bad trade'll mar a good mon sometimes.

Jone. It brings moor in nor mine does. But wi'n let it drop. Iv aw'd his larnin, aw'd may summat on't.

Sam. Ah, well; it's a fine thing is larnin', Jone! It's a very fine thing! It tay's no reawm up, mon. An' then, th' ballies connut fot it, thea sees. But what, poor folk are so taen up wi' gettin' what they need'n for th' bally an' th' back, whol thi'n noathur time nor inclination for nought but a bit ov a crack for a leetenin'.

Jone. To mich so, owd Sam! To mich so!…

Mary. Thae never tells one heaw th' wife is, Jone.

Jone. Whau, th' owd lass is yon; an' hoo's noather sickly, nor soory, nor sore, 'at aw know on.... Yigh, hoo's trouble't wi' a bit ov a breykin'-eawt abeawt th' meawth, sometimes.

Mary. Does hoo get nought for it?

Jone. Nawe, nought 'at'll mend it. But, aw'm mad enough, sometimes, to plaister it wi' my hond, —iv aw could find i' my heart.

Mary. Oh, aw see what to meeons, neaw.... An' aw dar say thea gi's her 'casion for't, neaw an' then.

Jone. Well, aw happen do; for th' best o' folk need'n bidin' wi' a bit sometimes; an' aw'm noan one o' th' best, yo known.

Mary. Nawe; nor th' warst noathur, Jone.

Jone. Yo dunnut know o', mon.

Mary. Happen not, but, thi'rt to good to brun, as hea't be.

Jone. Well, onybody's so, Mary. But, we're o' God Almighty's childer, mon; an' aw feel fain on't, sometimes; for he's th' best feyther at a chylt con have.

Mary. Ah, but thea'rt nobbut like other childer, Jone; thea doesn't tak as mich notice o' thy feyther, as thea should do.

Sam. Well, well; let's o' on us be as good as we con be, iv we aren't as good as we should be; an' then wi's be better nor we are.

Jone. Hello! that clock begins 'o givin' short 'lowance, as soon as ever aw get agate o' talkin'; aw'm mun be off again!

Sam. Well; thae'll co' a lookin' at us, when tho comes this gate on, winnut to, Jone? Iv tho doesn't, aw'st be a bit mad, thae knows.

Jone. As lung as aw'm wick and weel, owd crayter, aw'st keep comin' again, yo may depend, —like Clegg Ho' Boggart.

Sam. Well neaw, mind tho does do; for aw'd sooner see thee nor two fiddlers, ony time; so good neet to tho, an' good luck to tho, too, Jone; wi' o' my heart!

The night was wearing late, and, as I had yet nearly three miles to go, I rose, and went my way. This road was never so much travelled as some of the highways of the neighbourhood, but, since railways were made, it has been quieter than before, and the grass has begun to creep over it a little in some places. It leads through a district which has always been a kind of weird region to me. And I have wandered among those lonely moorland hills above Birtle, and Ashworth, and Bagslate; up to the crest of old Knowl, and over the wild top of Rooley, from whence the greatest part of South Lancashire—that wonderful region of wealth and energy—lies under the eye, from Blackstone Edge to the Irish Sea; and I have wandered through the green valleys and silent glens, among those hills, communing with the "shapes, and sounds, and shifting elements" of nature, in many a quiet trance of meditative joy; when the serenity of the scene was unmixed with any ruder sounds than the murmurs and gurglings of the mountain stream, careering over its rocky bed through the hollow of the vale; and the music of small birds among the woods which lined the banks; or the gambols of the summer wind among the rustling green, which canopied the lonely stream, so thickly that the flood of sunshine which washed the tree-tops in gold, only stole into the deeps in fitful threads; hardly giving a warmer tinge to the softened light in cool grots down by the water side. Romantic Spoddenlond! Country of wild beauty; of hardy, simple life; of old-world manners, and of ancient tales and legends dim! There was a time when the very air of the district seemed, to my young mind, impregnated with boggart-lore, and all the wild "gramerie" of old Saxon superstition,—when I looked upon it as the last stronghold of the fairies; where they would remain impregnable, haunting wild "thrutches" and sylvan "chapels," in lonely deeps of its cloughs and woods; still holding their mystic festivals there on moonlight nights, and tripping to the music of its waters, till the crack of doom. And, for all the boasted march of intellect, it is, even to this day, a district where the existence of witches, and the power of witch-doctors, wisemen, seers, planet-rulers, and prognosticators, find great credence in the imaginations of a rude and unlettered people. There is a little fold, called "Prickshaw," in this township of Spotland, which fold was the home of a notable country astrologer, in Tim Bobbin's time, called "Prickshaw Witch." Tim tells a humourous story about an adventure he had with this Prickshaw planet-ruler, at the Angel Inn, in Rochdale. Prickshaw keeps up its old oracular fame in that moorland quarter to this day, for it has its planet-ruler still; and, it is not alone in such wild, outlying nooks of the hills that these professors of the art of divination may yet be found; almost every populous town in Lancashire has, in some corner of it, one or more of these gifted star-readers, searching out the hidden things of life, to all inquirers, at about a shilling a-head. These country soothsayers mostly drive a sort of contraband trade in their line, in as noiseless and secret a way as possible, among the most ignorant and credulous part of the population. And it is natural that they should flourish wherever there are minds combining abundance of ignorant faith and imagination with a plentiful lack of knowledge. But they are not all skulkers these diviners of the skies, for now and then a bold prophet stands forth, in distinct proportions, before the public gaze, who has more lofty and learned pretentions; witness the advertisement of Dr. Alphonso Gazelle, of No. 4, Sparth

Bottoms, Rochdale, which appears in the *Rochdale Sentinel*, of the 3rd of December, 1853.[6] Oh, departed Lilly and Agrippa; your shadows are upon us still! But I must continue my story of the lone old road, and its associations; and as I wandered on that cold and silent night, under the blue sky, where night's candles were burning, so clear and calm, I remembered that this was the country of old Adam de Spotland, who, many centuries since, piously bequeathed certain broad acres of land, "for the cure of souls," in the parish of Rochdale. He has, now, many centuries slept with his fathers. And as I walked down the road, in this sombre twilight, with a hushed wind, and under the shade of the woody height on which the homestead of the brave old Saxon stood, my footsteps sounding clear in the quiet air, and the very trees seeming to bend over to one another, and commune in awful murmurs on the approach of an intruder, how could I tell what the tramp of my unceremonious feet might waken there? The road crosses a deep and craggy glen, called "Simpson Clough," which is one of the finest pieces of ravine scenery in the county, little as it is known. The entire length of this wild gorge is nearly three miles, and it is watered by a stream from the hills, called "Nadin Water," which, in seasons of heavy rain, rages and roars with great violence, through its rocky channels. There is many a strange old tale connected with this clough. Half way up a shaley bank, which overhangs the river on the western side of the clough, the mouth of an ancient lead mine may still be seen, partly shrouded by brushwood. Upon the summit of a precipitous steep of wildwood and rock, which bounds the eastern side of the clough, stands Bamford Hall, a handsome, modern building of stone, a few yards from the site of the old hall of the Bamfords of Bamford. The new building is a residence of one branch of the Fenton family, wealthy bankers and cotton spinners, and owners of large tracts of land, here and elsewhere. On an elevated table-land, at the western side of the clough, and nearly opposite to Bamford Hall, stood the ancient mansion of Grizlehurst, the seat of the notable family of Holt, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The Holt family were once the most powerful and wealthy landowners in the parish of Rochdale. The principal seats of the family in this parish were Stubley Hall, in the township of Wardleworth, and Castleton Hall, in the township of Castleton. The manor of Spotland was granted by Henry VIII., to Thomas Holt, who was knighted in Scotland, by Edward, Earl of Hertford, in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of that monarch. Part of a neighbouring clough still bears the name of "Tyrone's Bed," from the tradition that Hugh O'Neal, Earl of Tyrone and King of Ulster, took shelter in these woody solitudes, after his defeat in the great Irish Rebellion, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Mr. John Roby, of Rochdale, has woven this legend into an elegant romance, in his "Traditions of Lancashire."

I reached home about ten o'clock, and, thinking over the incidents of my walk, I was a little impressed by one fact, suggested by the conversation at the roadside public-house, with "Jone o'Jeffrey's," and the old couple; namely, that there is a great outlying mass of dumb folk in this country, who—by low social condition, but more by lack of common education among them—are shut out from the chance of hearing much, and still more from the chance of understanding what little they do hear, respecting the political questions of the time; and, also, with respect to many other matters which are of essential importance to their welfare. Whether this ignorance which yet pervades a great proportion of the poor of England, is chargeable upon that multitude itself, or upon that part of the people whom more favourable circumstances have endowed with light and power, and who yet withhold these elements from their less fortunate fellows, or, whether it is chargeable

[6] "Beneficial practical philosophy, No. 4, Sparth Bottoms, near Rochdale.—Prognostic astro-phrenology, or nature considered as a whole—its matter, its properties, its laws, physical, moral, and intellectual; and the effect of their influence on individual life, character, and ability. From these premises, and nearly twenty years' experience, any lady or gentleman may have the most valuable advice on matters of health, sickness, profession, trade, emigration, and speculation; also marriage—its prospects to the inquirer, whether it will be attended with happiness, the time of its occurrence, a full description and character of the present or future partner, with copious instruction to the unmarried—which offer or party to take, and thus secure the fullest amount of happiness, shown to any individual by this combination of science. The principal requisite points of information for applying the science to the benefit of an inquirer are—the precise date, place of birth, and the station in life. Attendance every day except Mondays, at No. 4, Sparth Bottoms, Rochdale."Dr. Alphonso Gazelle."

upon neither, let casuists decide. The fact that this ignorance does exist among the poor of England, lies so plainly upon the surface of society, that it can only be denied by those who are incurious as to the condition of the humbler classes of this kingdom; or, by those who move in such exclusive circles of life, that they habitually ignore the conditions of human existence which lie outside of their own limits of society and sympathy; or, by such as wink their eyes to the truth of this matter, in order to work out some small purpose of their own. Wherever there is ignorance at all there is too much of it; and it cannot be too soon removed, especially by those who are wise enough to see the crippling malignities of its nature. That portion of our population which hears next to nothing, and understands less, of politics and the laws—any laws whatever—is nevertheless compelled to obey the laws, right or wrong, and whatever strange mutations they may be subject to; and is thus continually drifted to and fro by conflicting currents of legislation which it cannot see; currents of legislation which sometimes rise from sources where there exists, unfortunately, more love for ruling than for enlightening. Many changes come over the social condition of this blind multitude, they know not whence, nor how, nor why. The old song says—

Remember, when the judgment's weak,
The prejudice is strong.

And, certainly, that part of the popular voice which is raised upon questions respecting which it has little or no sound information, must be considerably swayed by prejudice, and by that erratic play of unenlightened feeling, which has no safer government than the ephemeral circumstances which chase each other off the field of time. Shrewd demagogues know well how prostrate is the position of this uneducated "mass," as it is called; and they have a stock of old-fashioned tricks, by which they can move it to their own ends "as easy as lying." He who knows the touches of this passive instrument, can make it discourse the music he desires; and, unhappily, that is not always airs from heaven.

'Tis the time's plague,
When madmen lead the blind.

Now, the educated classes have all the wide field of ancient learning open to them—they can pasture where they will; and, the stream of present knowledge rushing by, they can drink as they list. Whatever is doing in politics, too, they hear of, whilst these things are yet matters of public dispute; and, in some degree, they understand and see the drift of them, and, therefore, can throw such influence as in them lies into one or the other scale of the matter. This boasted out-door parliament —this free expression of public opinion in England, however, as I have said before, goes no farther down among the people than education goes. Below that point lies a land of fretful slaves, dungeoned off by ignorance from the avenues which lead to freedom; and they drag out their lives in unwilling subservience to a legislation which is beyond their influence. Their ignorance keeps them dumb; and, therefore, their condition and wants are neither so well known, nor so often nor so well expressed as those of the educated classes. They seldom complain, however, until the state of affairs drives them to great extremity, and then their principal exponents are mobs, and uproars of desperation. It is plain that where there is society there must be law, and obedience to that law must be enforced, even among those who know nothing of the law, as well as those who defy it; but my principal quarrel is with that ignorant condition of theirs which shuts them out from any reasonable hope of exercising their rights as men and citizens. And so long as that ignorance is *unnecessarily* continued, the very enforcement of laws among them, the nature of which they have no chance of knowing, looks, to me, like injustice. I see a remarkable difference, however, between the majority of popular movements which have agitated the people for some time past, and that successful one—the repeal of the corn-laws. The agitation of that question, I believe, awakened and enlisted a greater breadth

of the *understanding sympathy* of the nation, among all classes, than was ever brought together upon any one popular question which has been agitated within the memory of man. But it did more than this—and herein lies one of the foundationstones which shall hold it firm awhile, I think; since it has passed into law, its effects have most efficiently convinced that uneducated multitude of the labouring poor, who could not very well understand, and did not care much for the mere disputation of the question. Everybody has a stomach of some sort—and it frequently happens that when the brain is not very active the stomach is particularly so—so that, where it could not penetrate the understanding, it has by this time triumphantly reached the stomach, and now sits there, smiling defiance to any kind of sophistry that would coax it thenceforth again. The loaves of free trade followed the tracts of the League, and the hopes of protectionist philosophers are likely to be "adjourned *sine die*," for this generation at least—perhaps for ever; for the fog is clearing up a little, and I think I see, in the distance, a better education getting ready for the next generation.

O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey
Binding herself by statute to secure
For all her children whom her soil maintains,
The rudiments of letters.

The Cottage of Tim Bobbin, and the Village of Milnrow

If thou on men, their works and ways,
Canst throw uncommon light, man;
Here lies wha weel had won thy praise,
For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou art staunch without a stain,
Like the unchanging blue, man;
This was a kinsman o' thy ain,
For Matthew was a true man.

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
And ne'er good wine did fear, man;
This was thy billie, dam, and sire,
For Matthew was a queer man.

Burns.

It is not in its large towns that the true type of the natives of Lancashire can be seen. The character of its town population is greatly modified by mixture with settlers from distant quarters. Not so in the country parts, because the tenancy of land, and employment upon it, are sufficiently competed by the natives; and while temptations to change of settlement are fewer, the difficulties in the way of changing settlement are greater there than in towns. Country people, too, stick to their old sod, with hereditary love, as long as they can keep soul and body together upon it, in any honest way. As numbers begin to press upon the means of living, the surplus fights its way in cities, or in foreign lands; or lingers out a miserable life in neglected corners, for want of work, and want of means to fly, in time, to a market where it might, at least, exchange its labour for its living. The growth of manufacture and railways, and the inroads of hordes of destitute, down-trodden Irish, are stirring up Lancashire, and changing its features, in a surprising way; and this change is rapidly augmenting by a varied infusion of new human elements, attracted from all quarters of the kingdom by the immense increase of capital, boldly and promptly embarked in new inventions, and ever-developing appliances of science, by a people remarkable for enterprise and industry. Still, he who wishes to see the genuine descendants of those old Saxons who came over here some fourteen hundred years ago, to help the Britons of that day to fight for their land, and remained to farm it, and govern in it, let them ramble through the villages on the western side of Blackstone Edge. He will there find the open manners, the independent bearing, the steady perseverance, and that manly sense of right and wrong, which characterised their Teutonic forefathers. There, too, he will find the fair comeliness, and massive physical constitution of those broad-shouldered farmer-warriors, who made a smiling England out of an island of forests and bogs—who felled the woods, and drained the marshes, and pastured their quiet kine in the ancient lair of the wild bull, the boar, and the wolf.

Milnrow is an old village, a mile and a half eastward from the Rochdale station. The external marks of its antiquity are now few, and much obscured by the increase of manufacture there; but it is, for many reasons, well worth a visit. It is part of the fine township of Butterworth, enriched with many a scene of mountain beauty. A hardy moor-end race, half farmers, half woollen-weavers, inhabit the district; and their rude, but substantial cottages and farmsteads, often perch picturesquely about the summits and sides of the hills, or nestle pleasantly in green holms and dells, which are mostly watered by rivulets, from the moorland heights which bound the township on the east. There is

also a beautiful lake, three miles in circumference, filling a green valley, up in the hills, about a mile and a half from the village. Flocks of sea-fowl often rest on this water, in their flight from the eastern to the western seas. From its margin the view of the wild ridges of the "Back-bone of England" is fine to the north, while that part of it called "Blackstone Edge" slopes up majestically from the cart-road that winds along the eastern bank. A massive cathedral-looking crag frowns on the forehead of the mountain. This rock is a great point of attraction to ramblers from the vales below, and is called by them "Robin Hood Bed." A square cavity in the lower part is called "Th' Cellar." Hundreds of names are sculptured on the surface of the rock, some in most extraordinary situations; and often have the keepers of the moor been startled at peep of summer dawn by the strokes of an adventurous chiseller, hammering his initials into its hard face as stealthily as possible. But the sounds float, clear as a bell, miles over the moor, in the quiet of the morning, and disturb the game. One of the favourite rambles of my youth was from Rochdale town, through that part of Butterworth which leads by "Clegg Hall," commemorated in Roby's tradition of "Clegg Ho' Boggart," and thence across the green hills, by the old farmhouse, called "Peanock," and, skirting along the edge of this quiet lake—upon whose waters I have spent many a happy summer day, alone—up the lofty moorside beyond, to this rock, called "Robin Hood Bed," upon the bleak summit of Blackstone Edge. It is so large that it can be seen at a distance of four miles by the naked eye, on a clear day. The name of Robin Hood, that brave outlaw of the olden time—"The English ballad-singer's joy"—is not only wedded to this wild crag, but to at least one other congenial spot in this parish; where the rude traditions of the people point out another rock, of several tons weight, as having been thrown thither, by this king of the green-woods, from an opposite hill, nearly seven miles off. The romantic track where the lake lies, is above the level of Milnrow, and quite out of the ordinary way of the traveller; who is too apt to form his opinion of the features of the whole district, from the sterile sample he sees on the sides of the rail, between Manchester and Rochdale. But if he wishes to know the country and its inhabitants, he must get off that, "an' tak th' crow-gate," and he will find vast moors, wild ravines, green cloughs, and dells, and

> Shallow rivers, to whose falls,
> Melodious birds sing madrigals,

which will repay him for his pains. And then, if he be a Lancashire man, and a lover of genius, let him go to Milnrow—it was the dwelling-place of Tim Bobbin, with whose works I hope he is not unacquainted. His written works are not much in extent. He was a painter, and his rough brush was replete with Hogarthian sketches, full of nature, and radiant with his own broad, humourous originality. He also left a richly-humourous dialectic tale, a few Hudibrastic poems and letters, characteristic of the sterling quality of his heart and head, and just serving to show us how much greater the man was than his book.

I was always proud of Tim, and in my early days have made many a pilgrimage to the village where he used to live, wandering home again through the green hills of Butterworth. Bent on seeing the place once more, I went up to Hunt's Bank, one fine day at the end of last hay-time, to catch the train to Rochdale. I paid my shilling, and took my seat among a lot of hearty workmen and country-folk coming back from Wales and the bathing places on the Lancashire coast. The season had been uncommonly fine, and the trippers looked brighter for their out, and, to use their own phrase, felt "fain at they'rn wick," and ready to buckle to work again, with fresh vigour. The smile of summer had got into the saddest of us a little; and we were communicative and comfortable. A long-limbed collier lad, after settling his body in a corner, began to hum, in a jolting metre, with as much freedom of mind as if he was at the mouth of a lonely "breast-hee" on his native moorside, a long country ditty about the courtship of Phœbe and Colin:—

> Well met, dearest Phœbe, oh, why in such haste?

The fields and the meadows all day I have chased,
In search of the fair one who does me disdain,
You ought to reward me for all my past pain.

The late-comers, having rushed through the ticket-office into the carriages, were wiping their foreheads, and wedging themselves into their seats, in spite of many protestations about being "to full o'ready." The doors were slammed, the bell rung, the tickets were shown, the whistle screamed its shrill signal, and off we went, like a street on wheels, over the little Irk, that makes such a slushy riot under the wood bridge by the college wall. Within the memory of living men, the angler used to come down the bank, and settle himself among the grass, to fish in its clear waters. But since Arkwright set this part of the world so wonderfully astir with his practicable combination of other men's inventions, the Irk, like the rest of South Lancashire streams, has been put to work, and its complexion is now so "subdued to what it works in," that the angler comes no more to the banks of the Irk to beguile the delicate loach, and the lordly trout in his glittering suit of silver mail.

The train is now nearly a mile past Miles Platting, and about a mile over the fields, on the north side, lies the romantic dell called "Boggart Hole Clough," hard by the village of Blackley—a pleasant spot for an afternoon walk from Manchester. An old Lancashire poet lives near it, too, in his country cottage. It is a thousand to one that, like me, the traveller will see neither the one nor the other from the train; but, like me, let him be thankful for both, and ride on. Very soon, now, appears, on the south side of the line, the skirts of Oldham town, scattered about the side and summit of a barren slope, with the tower of the parish church, peeping up between the chimneys of the cotton factories behind Oldham Edge. If the traveller can see no fine prospective meaning in the manufacturing system, he will not be delighted with the scene; for the country has a monotonous look, and is bleak and sterile, with hardly anything worthy of the name of a tree to be seen upon it. But now, about a hundred yards past the Oldham Station, there is a little of the picturesque for him to feast on. We are crossing a green valley, running north and south. Following the rivulet through the hollow, a thick wood waves on a rising ground to the south. In that wood stands Chadderton Hall, anciently the seat of the Chaddertons, some of whom were famous men; and since then, the seat of the Horton family. The situation is very pleasant, and the land about it looks richer than the rest of the neighbourhood. There was a deer-park here in the time of the Hortons. Chadderton is a place of some note in the history of the county; and it is said to have formerly belonged to one of the old orders of knighthood. On the other side of the line, about a mile and a half off, the south-east end of Middleton is in sight; with its old church on the top of a green hill. The greater part of the parish of Middleton, with other possessions in South Lancashire, belonging to the Ashetons from before Richard III., when extraordinary powers were granted to Randulph Asheton. The famous Sir Ralph Asheton, called "The Black Lad," from his wearing black armour, is traditionally said to have ruled in his territories in South Lancashire with great severity. In the town of Ashton, one of the lordships of this family, his name is still remembered with a kind of hereditary dislike; and till within the last five or six years he has been shot and torn to pieces, in effigy, by the inhabitants, at the annual custom of "The Riding of the Black Lad." The hero of the fine ballad called "The Wild Rider," written by Bamford, the Lancashire poet, was one of this family. The Middleton estates, in 1776, failing male issue, passed by marriage into the noble families of De Wilton and Suffield. Now, many a rich cotton spinner, perhaps lineally descended from some of the villain-serfs of the "Black Lad," has an eye to buying the broad lands of the proud old Ashetons.

The train is now hard by Blue Pits Station, where it is not impossible for the traveller to have to wait awhile. But he may comfort himself with the assurance that it is not often much more than half an hour or so. Let him amuse himself, meanwhile, with the wild dins that fill his ears;—the shouting and running of porters, the screams of engine-whistles, the jolts and collisions on a small scale, and the perpetual fuff-fuff of trains, of one kind or other, that shoot to and fro by his window, then stop

suddenly, look thoughtful, as if they had dropt something, and run back again. If he looks out, ten to one he will see a red-hot monster making towards him from the distance at a great speed, belching steam, and scattering sparks and red-hot cinders; and, in the timidity of the moment, he may chance to hope it is on the right pair of rails. But time and a brave patience delivers him from these terrors, unshattered in everything—if his temper holds good—and he shoots ahead again.

The moorland hills now sail upon the sight, stretching from the round peak of Knowl, on the north-west, to the romantic heights of Saddleworth on the south-east. The train is three minutes from Rochdale, but, before it reaches there, let the traveller note that picturesque old mansion, on the green, above Castleton Clough, at the left-hand side of the rail. His eye must be active, for, at the rate he is going, the various objects about him literally "come like shadows, so depart." This is Castleton Hall, formerly a seat of the Holts, of Stubley, an ancient and powerful family in this parish, in the reign of Henry VIII. Castleton Hall came afterwards into the possession of Humphrey Chetham, the founder of Chetham College, in Manchester. Since then it has passed into other hands; but the proverb, "as rich as a Chetham o' Castleton," is often used by the people of this district, at this day; and many interesting anecdotes, characteristic of the noble qualities of this old Lancashire worthy, are treasured up by the people of those parts of the country where he lived; especially in the neighbourhoods of Clayton Hall, near Manchester, and Turton Tower, near Bolton, his favourite residences. Castleton Hall was an interesting place to me when I was a lad. As I pass by it now I sometimes think of the day when I first sauntered down the shady avenue, which leads to it from the highroad behind; and climbed up a mossy wall by the wayside, to look into the green gloom of a mysterious wood, which shades the rear of the building. Even now, I remember the flush of imaginations which came over me then. I had picked up some scraps of historic lore about the hall, which deepened the interest I felt in it. The solemn old rustling wood; the quaint appearance, and serene dignity of the hall; and the spell of interest which lingers around every decaying relic of the works and haunts of men of bygone times, made the place eloquent to me. It seemed to me, then, like a monumental history of its old inhabitants, and their times. I remember, too, that I once got a peep into a part of the hall, where in those days, some old armour hung against the wall, silent and rusty enough, but, to me, teeming with tales of chivalry and knightly emprise. But, here is Rochdale station, where he, who wishes to visit the village of Milnrow, had better alight.

If the traveller had time and inclination to go down into Rochdale town, he might see some interesting things, old and new, there. The town is more picturesquely situated than most of the towns of South Lancashire. It lines the sides of a deep valley on the banks of the Roch, overlooked by moorland hills. In Saxon times it was an insignificant village, called "Rocheddam," consisting of a few rural dwellings in Church Lane, a steep and narrow old street, which was, down to the middle of last century, the principal street in the town, though now the meanest and obscurest. The famous John Bright, the Cromwell of modern politicians—a man of whom future generations of Englishmen will be prouder even than his countrymen are now—was born in this town, and lives at "One Ash," on the north side of it. John Roby, author of the "Traditions of Lancashire," was a banker, in Rochdale, of the firm of Fenton and Roby. The bank was next door to the shop of Thomas Holden, the principal bookseller of the town, to whom I was apprentice. For the clergy of the district, and for a certain class of politicians, this shop was the chief rendezvous of the place. Roby used to slip in at evening, to have a chat with my employer, and a knot of congenial spirits who met him there. In the days when my head was yet but a little way higher than the counter, I remember how I used to listen to his versatile conversations. Rochdale was one of the few places where the woollen manufacture was first practised in England. It is still famous for its flannel. The history of Rochdale is in one respect but the counterpart of that of almost every other South Lancashire town. With the birth of cotton manufacture, it shot up suddenly into one of the most populous and wealthy country towns in England. After the traveller has contemplated the manufacturing might of the place, he may walk up the quaint street from which the woollen merchants of old used to dispatch their goods, on pack horses, to all

parts of the kingdom; and from which it takes the name of "Packer Street." At the top, a flight of one hundred and twenty-two steps leads into the churchyard; which commands an excellent view of the town below. There, too, lies "Tim Bobbin." Few Lancashire strangers visit the town without looking at the old rhymer's resting-place. Bamford, author of "Passages in the Life of a Radical," thus chronicles an imaginary visit to Tim's grave, in happy imitation of the dialect of the neighbourhood:—

Aw stood beside Tim Bobbin grave,
At looks o'er Rachda teawn,
An th'owd lad woke within his yearth.
An sed, "Wheer arto beawn?"

Awm gooin into th' Packer-street,
As far as th' Gowden Bell,
To taste o' Daniel Kesmus ale.
Tim: "Aw could like a saup mysel"

An by this hont o' my reet arm,
If fro that hole theawl reawk,
Theawst have a saup oth' best breawn ale
At ever lips did seawk.

The greawnd it sturrd beneath meh feet,
An then aw yerd a groan.
He shook the dust fro off his skull,
An rowlt away the stone.

Aw brought him op a deep breawn jug,
At a gallon did contain:
He took it at one blessed droight,
And laid him deawn again.

Some of the epitaphs on the grave-stones were written by Tim. The following one, on Joe Green, the sexton, is published with Tim's works:—

Here lies Joe Green, who arch has been,
And drove a gainful trade,
With powerful Death, till out of breath,
He threw away his spade.
When Death beheld his comrade yield,
He like a cunning knave,
Came, soft as wind, poor Joe behind,
And pushed him into his grave

Near to this grave is the grave of Samuel Kershaw, blacksmith, bearing an epitaph which is generally attributed to the pen of Tim, though it does not appear among his writings:—

My anvil and my hammer lie declined,
My bellows, too, have lost their wind,
My fire's extinct, my forge decayed,

And in the dust my vice is laid.
My coal is spent, my iron is gone,
My last nail driven, and my work is done.

"Blind Abraham," who rang the curfew, and who used to imitate the chimes of Rochdale old church, in a wonderful way, for the lads at the Grammar School, could lead a stranger from any point of the churchyard, straight as an arrow's flight, to Tim's gravestone. The Grammar School was founded in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, by Archbishop Parker. The parish church is an interesting old edifice, standing on the edge of an eminence, which overlooks the town. Tradition says its foundations were laid by "Goblin Builders." The living was anciently dependent on the Abbey of Whalley. It is now the richest vicarage in the kingdom. A short walk through the glebe lands, and past "Th' Cant-hill Well,"[7] west of the vicarage, will bring the traveller to the hill on which, in 1080, stood the castle of Gamel, the Saxon Thane, above the valley called "Kill-Danes," where the northern pirates once lost a great fight with the Saxon.

After spending a few days in the town, I set out for Milnrow, one fine afternoon. The road leads by the "Railway Inn," near the station. The hay was mostly gathered in, but the smell of it still lingered on the meadows, and perfumed the wind, which sung a low melody among the leaves of the hedges. Along the vale of the Roch, to the left, lay a succession of manufacturing villages, with innumerable mills, collieries, farmsteads, mansions, and cottages, clustering in the valley, and running up into the hills in all directions, from Rochdale to Littleborough, a distance of three miles. As I went on I was reminded of "wimberry-time," by meeting knots of flaxen-headed lads and lasses from the moors, with their baskets filled, and mouths all stained with the juice of that delicious moorland fruit. There are many pleasant customs in vogue here at this season. The country-folk generally know something of local botany; and gather in a stock of medicinal herbs to dry, for use throughout the year. There is still some "spo'in'" at the mineral springs in the hills. Whether these springs are really remarkable for peculiar mineral virtues, or what these peculiar virtues are, I am not prepared to say; but it is certain that many of the inhabitants of this district firmly believe in their medicinal qualities, and, at set seasons of the year, go forth to visit these springs, in jovial companies, to drink "spo wayter." Some go with great faith in the virtues of the water, and, having drunk well of it, they will sometimes fill a bottle with it, and ramble back to their houses, gathering on their way edible herbs, such as "payshun docks," and "green-sauce," or "a burn o' nettles," to put in their broth, and, of which, they also make a wholesome "yarb-puddin'," mixed with meal; or they scour the hill-sides in search of "mountain flax," a "capital yarb for a cowd;" and for the herb called "tormental," which, I have heard them say, grows oftenest "abeawt th' edge o' th' singing layrock neest;" or they will call upon some country botanist to beg a handful of "Solomon's seal," to "cure black e'en wi'." But some go to these springs mainly for the sake of a pleasant stroll and a quiet feast. One of the most noted of these "spo'in'" haunts is "Blue Pots Spring," situated upon a lofty moorland, at the head of a green glen, called "Long Clough," about three miles from the village of Littleborough. The ancient Lancashire festival of "Rushbearing," and the hay-harvest, fall together, in the month of August; and make it a pleasant time of the year to the folk of the neighbourhood. At about a mile on the road to Milnrow, the highway passes close by a green dingle, called "Th' Gentlewoman's Nook," which is someway connected with the unfortunate fate of a lady, once belonging to an influential family, near Milnrow. Some of the country people yet believe that the place is haunted; and, when forced to pass it after dark has come on, they steal fearfully and hastily by.

About a mile on the road stands Belfield Hall, on the site of an ancient house, formerly belonging to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. It is a large old building, belonging to the Townley

[7] Properly, "Th' Camp-hill Well," a well in what is called "Th' Broad Feelt," where the Danes encamped, previously to their attack on the Saxon castle, and their slaughter at Kill-Danes, in the vale below.

family. The estate has been much improved by its present occupant, and makes a pleasant picture in the eye from the top of a dinge in the road, at the foot of which a by-path leads up to the old village of Newbold, on the brow of a green bank, at the right-hand side of the highway. I stood there a minute, and tried to plant again the old woods, that must have been thick there, when the squirrel leaped from tree to tree, from Castletor Hall to Buckley Wood. I was trying to shape in imagination what the place looked like in the old time, when the first rude hall was built upon the spot, and the country around was a lonesome tract, shrouded by primeval trees, when a special train went snorting by the back of the hall, and shivered my delicate endeavour to atoms. I sighed involuntarily; but bethinking me how imagination clothes all we are leaving behind in a drapery that veils many of its rough realities, I went my way, thankful for things as they are. A little further on, Fir Grove bridge crosses the Rochdale canal, and commands a better view of the surrounding country. I rested here a little while, and looked back upon the spot which is for ever dear to my remembrance. The vale of the Roch lay smiling before me, and the wide-stretching circle of dark hills closed in the landscape, on all sides, except the south-west. Two weavers were lounging on the bridge, bareheaded, and in their working gear, with stocking-legs drawn on their arms. They had come out of the looms to spend their "baggin-time" in the open air, and were humming one of their favourite songs:—

Hey Hal o' Nabs, an Sam, an Sue,
Hey Jonathan, art thea theer too,
We're o' alike, there's nought to do,
So bring a quart afore us.
Aw're at Tinker's gardens yester noon,
An' what aw see'd aw'll tell yo soon,
In a bran new sung; it's to th' owd tune
Yo'st ha't iv yo'n join chorus.
Fal, lal, de ral.

At the door of the Fir Grove ale-house, a lot of raw-boned young fellows were talking with rude emphasis about the exploits of a fighting-cock of great local renown, known by the bland sobriquet of "Crash-Bwons." The theme was exciting, and in the course of it they gesticulated with great vehemence, and, in their own phrase, "swore like horse-swappers." Some were colliers, and sat on the ground, in that peculiar squat, with the knees up to a level with the chin, which is a favourite resting-attitude with them. At slack times they like to sit thus by the road side, and exchange cracks over their ale, amusing themselves meanwhile by trying the wit and temper of every passer by. These humourous road-side commentators are, generally, the roughest country lads of the neighbourhood, who have no dislike to anybody willing to accommodate them with a tough battle; for they, like the better regulated portion of the inhabitants of the district, are hardy, bold, and independent; and, while their manners are open and blunt, their training and amusements are very rough.

I was now approaching Milnrow; and, here and there, a tenter-field ribbed the landscape with lines of woollen webs, hung upon the hooks to dry. Severe laws were anciently enacted for the protection of goods thus necessarily exposed. Depredations on such property were punished after the manner of that savage old "Maiden" with the thin lip, who stood so long on the "Gibbet Hill," at Halifax, kissing evil-doers out of the world. Much of the famous Rochdale flannel is still woven by the country people here, in the old-fashioned, independent way, at their own homes, as the traveller will see by "stretchers," which are used for drying their warps upon, so frequently standing at the doors of the roomy dwelling-houses near the road. From the head of the brow which leads down into the village, Milnrow chapel is full in view on a green hill-side to the left, overlooking the centre of the busy little hamlet. It is a bald-looking building from the distance, having more the appearance of a little square factory than a church. Lower down the same green eminence, which slopes to the

edge of the little river Beal, stands the pleasant and tasteful, but modest residence of the incumbent of Milnrow, the Rev. Francis Robert Raines, honorary canon of Manchester, a notable archæologist and historian; much beloved by the people of the locality.

There are old people still living in Milnrow, who were taught to read and write, and "do sums" in Tim Bobbin's school; yet, the majority of the inhabitants seem unacquainted with his residence. I had myself been misled respecting it; but having obtained correct information, and a reference from a friend in Rochdale to an old relative of his who lived in the veritable cottage of renowned Tim, I set about inquiring for him. As I entered the village, I met a sturdy, good-looking woman, with a chocolate-coloured silk kerchief tied over her snowy cap, in that graceful way which is known all over the country-side as a "Mildro Bonnet." She stopt me and said, "Meastur, hea fur han yo com'd?" "From Rochdale." "Han yo sin aught ov a felley wi breeches on, an' rayther forrud, upo' th' gate, between an' th' Fir Grove?" I told her I had not; and I then inquired for Scholefield that lived in Tim Bobbin's cottage. She reckoned up all the people she knew of that name, but none of them answering the description, I went on my way. I next asked a tall woollen-weaver, who was striding up the street with his shuttle to the mending. Scratching his head, and looking thoughtfully round among the houses, he said, "Scwofil? Aw know no Scwofils, but thoose at th' Tim Bobbin aleheawse; yodd'n better ash (ask) theer." Stepping over to the Tim Bobbin inn, Mrs. Schofield described to me the situation of Tim's cottage, near the bridge. Retracing my steps towards the place, I went into the house of an old acquaintance of my childhood. On the strength of a dim remembrance of my features, he invited me to sit down, and share the meal just made ready for the family. "Come, poo a cheer up," said he, "an' need no moo lathein'."[8] After we had finished, he said, "Neaw, win yd have a reech o' bacco? Mally, reytch us some pipes, an th' pot out o'th nook. Let's see, who's lad are yo, sen yo? for aw welly forgetten, bith mass." After a fruitless attempt at enlightening him thereon in ordinary English, I took to the dialect, and in the country fashion described my genealogy, on the mother's side. I was instantly comprehended; for he stopt me short with—"Whau then, aw'll be sunken iv yo are not gron'son to 'Billy, wi' th' pipes, at th' Biggins.'" "Yo han it neaw," said I. "Eh," replied he, "aw knowed him as weel as aw knew my own feythur! He're a terrible chap for music, an' sich like; an' he used to letter grave-stones, an' do mason-wark. Eh, aw've bin to mony a orrytory wi' Owd Billy. Why, —let's see—Owd Wesley preytched at his heawse, i' Wardle fowd once't.[9] An' han yo some relations i' th' Mildro, then?" I told him my errand, and inquired for Scholefield, who lived in Tim Bobbin's cottage. As he pondered, and turned the name over in his mind, one of his lads shouted out, "By th' mon, feyther, it's 'Owd Mahogany,' Aw think he's code (called) Scwofil, an' he lives i'th garden at th' botham o'th bonk, by th' waytur side." It was generally agreed that this was the place, so I parted with my friends and went towards it. The old man came out without his hat, a short distance, to set me right. After bidding me a hearty "good neet," he turned round as he walked away, and shouted out, "Neaw tay care yo coan, th' next time yo com'n thiz gate, an' wi'n have a gradely do."

About twenty yards from the west end of the little stone bridge that spans the river, a lane leads, between the ends of the dwelling houses, down to the water side. There, still sweetly secluded, stands the quaint, substantial cottage of John Collier, in its old garden by the edge of the Beal, which, flowing through the fields in front, towards the cottage, is there dammed up into a reservoir for the use of the mill close by, and then tumbling over in a noisy little fall under the garden edge, goes shouting and frolicking along the north-east side of it, over water-worn rocks, and under the bridge,

[8] *Lathein'*—inviting.

[9] John Leach, of Wardle, was a notable man among the early Methodists, and was one of Wesley's first preachers. He was my grandmother's uncle. In Southey's Life of Wesley, I find the following note respecting him, under the head, "Outcry against Methodism. Violence of Mobs, and Misconduct of Magistrates:" When John Leach was pelted, near Rochdale, in those riotous days, and saw his brother wounded in the forehead by a stone, he was mad enough to tell the rabble that not one of them could hit him, if he were to stand preaching there till midnight. Just then the mob began to quarrel among themselves, and, therefore, left off pelting. But the anecdote has been related by his brethren for his praise.

till the cadence dies away in a low murmur, beyond, where the bed of the stream gets smoother. Lifting the latch, I walked through the garden, to the cottage, where I found "Owd Mahogany" and his maiden sister, two plain, clean, substantial working-people, who were sitting in the low-roofed, but otherwise roomy apartment in front, used as a kitchen. They entered heartily into the purpose of my visit, and showed me everything about the house with a genial pride. What made the matter more interesting was the fact, that "Owd Mahogany" had been, when a lad, a pupil of Collier's. The house was built expressly for Tim, by his father-in-law; and the uncommon thickness of the walls, the number and arrangement of the rooms, and the remains of a fine old oak staircase, showed that more than usual care and expense had been bestowed upon it. As we went through the rooms on the ground-floor, my ancient guide gave me a good deal of anecdote connected with each. Pointing to a clean, cold, whitewashed cell, with a great flag table in it, and a grid-window at one end, he said, "This wur his buttery, wheer he kept pullen,[10] an gam, an sich like; for thir no mon i' Rachdaw parish liv't betther nor Owd Tim, nor moor like a gentleman; nor one at had moor friends, gentle an simple. Th' Teawnlo's took'n to him fearfully, an thir'n olez comin' to see him; or sendin' him presents o' some mak'." He next showed me the parlour where he used to write and receive company. A little oblong room, low in the roof, and dimly lighted by a small window from the garden. Tim used to keep this retiring sanctum tastefully adorned with the flowers of each season, and one might have eaten his dinner off the floor in his time. In the garden he pointed out the corner where Tim had a roomy green arbor, with a smooth stone table in the middle, on which lay his books, his flute, or his meals, as he was in the mood. He would stretch himself out here, and muse for hours together. The lads used to bring their tasks from the school behind the house, to this arbor, for Tim to examine. He had a green shaded walk from the school into his garden. When in the school, or about the house, he wore a silk velvet skull-cap. The famous radical, William Cobbett, used to wear a similar one, occasionally; and I have heard those who have seen both in this trim, say that the likeness of the two men was then singularly striking. "Owd Mahogany" having now shown and told me many interesting things respecting Tim's house and habits, entered into a hearty eulogy upon his character as a man and a schoolmaster. "He're a fine, straight-forrud mon, wi' no maffle abeawt him; for o' his quare, cranky ways." As an author, he thought him "Th' fine'st writer at Englan' bred, at that time o' th' day." Of his caligraphy, too, he seemed particularly proud, for he declared that "Tim could write a clear print hond, as smo' as smithy smudge," He finished by saying, that he saw him carried out of the door-way we were standing in, to his grave.

At the edge of dark, I bade adieu to Tim's cottage, and the comfortable old couple that live in it. As I looked back from the garden-gate, the house wore a plaintive aspect, in my imagination; as if it was thinking of its fine old tenant. Having heard that there was something uncommon to be learnt of him at the Tim Bobbin Inn, I went there again. It is the largest and most respectable public-house in the village, kept in a fine state of homely comfort by a motherly old widow. I found that she could tell me something of the quaint schoolmaster and his wife "Mary," who, as she said, "helped to bring her into th' world." She brought out a folio volume of engravings from designs by Tim, with many pieces of prose and verse of his, in engraved fac-simile of his hand-writing. The book was bound in dark morocco, with the author's name on the side, in gold. I turned it over with pleasure, for there were things in it not found in any edition of his works. The landlady shows this book with some pride to Tim's admirers; by some she had been offered large sums of money for it; and once a party of curious visitors had well-nigh carried it off by stealth in their carriage, after making fruitless offers of purchase; but the plan was detected in time, and the treasure restored to its proper custody. I read in it one of his addresses to his subscribers, in which he says of himself: "He's Lancashire born; and, by the by, all his acquaintance agree, his wife not excepted, that he's an odd-fellow.... In the reign of Queen Anne he was a boy, and one of the nine children of a poor

[10] *Pullen*—poultry.

curate in Lancashire, whose stipend never amounted to thirty pounds a-year, and consequently the family must feel the iron teeth of penury with a witness. These indeed were sometimes blunted by the charitable disposition of the good rector (the Rev. Mr. H.–, of W– n): so this T. B. lived as some other boys did, content with water-pottage, buttermilk, and jannock, till he was between thirteen and fourteen years of age, when Providence began to smile on him in his advancement to a pair of Dutch looms, when he met with treacle to his pottage, and sometimes a little in his buttermilk, or spread on his jannock. However, the reflections of his father's circumstances (which now and then start up and still edge his teeth) make him believe that Pluralists are no good Christians; that he who will accept of two or more places of one hundred a-year, would not say *I have enough*, though he was Pope Clement, Urban, or Boniface,—could affirm himself infallible, and offer his toe to kings: that the unequal distribution of Church emoluments is as great a grievance in the ecclesiastic, as undeserved pensions and places are in the state; both of which, he presumes to prophesy, will prove canker-worms at the roots of those succulent plants, and in a few years cause leaf and branch to shrivel up, and dry them to tinder." The spirit of this passage seems the natural growth, in such a mind as his, of the curriculum of study in the hard college of Tim's early days. In the thrifty home of the poor Lancashire curate, though harrowed by "the iron teeth of penury," Tim inherited riches that wealth cannot buy. Under the tuition of a good father, who could study his reflective and susceptible mind, and teach him many excellent things; together with that hard struggle to keep the wolf from the door of his childhood, which pressed upon his thoughts, he grew up contemplative, self-reliant, and manly, on oatmeal porridge, and jannock, with a little treacle for a god-send. His feelings were deepened, and his natural love of independence strengthened there, with that hatred of all kinds of injustice, which flashes through the rich humour and genial kindness of his nature,—for nature was strong in him, and he relished her realities. Poverty is not pleasant, yet the world has more to thank poverty for than it dreams of. With honourable pride he fought his way to a pair of Dutch looms, where he learned to win his jannock and treacle by honest weaving. Subsequently he endeavoured to support himself honourably, by pursuits no less useful, but more congenial to the bias of his faculties; but, to the last, his heart's desire was less to live in external plenty and precedence among men, than to live conscientiously, in the sweet relations of honourable independence in the world. This feeling was strong in him, and gives dignity to his character. As a politician, John Collier was considerably ahead of the time he lived in, and especially of the simple, slow-minded race of people dwelling, then, in that remote nook of Lancashire, at the foot of Blackstone Edge. Among such people, and in such a time, he spoke and wrote things, which few men dared to write and speak. He spoke, too, in a way which was as independent and pithy as it was quaintly-expressive. His words, like his actions, stood upon their own feet, and looked up. Perhaps, if he had been a man of a drier nature,—of less genial and attractive genius than he was,—he might have had to suffer more for the enunciation of truths, and the recognition of principles which were unfashionable in those days. But Collier was not only a man of considerable valour and insight, with a manly mind and temper, but he was also genial and humourous, as he was earnest and honest. He was an eminently human-hearted man, who abhorred all kinds of cant and seeming. His life was a greater honour to him even than his quaint pencil, or his pen; and the memory of his sayings and doings will be long and affectionately cherished, at least, by Lancashire men.

Eh: Whoo-who-whoo! What wofo wark!
He's laft um aw, to lie i' th' dark.

The following brief memoir, written by his friend and patron, Richard Townley, Esq., of Belfield Hall, near Milnrow, for insertion in Dr. Aiken's "History of the Environs of Manchester," contains the best and completest account of his life and character, which has yet appeared:—

Mr. John Collier, *alias* Tim Bobbin, was born near Warrington, in Lancashire; his father, a clergyman of the Established Church, had a small curacy, and for several years taught a school. With the joint income of those, he managed so as to maintain a wife and several children decently, and also to give them a tolerable share of useful learning, until a dreadful calamity befel him, about his fortieth year—the total loss of sight. His former intentions of bringing up his son, John—of whose abilities he had conceived a favourable opinion—to the church, were then over, and he placed him out an apprentice to a Dutch loom-weaver, at which business he worked more than a year; but such a sedentary employment not at all according with his volatile spirits and eccentric genius, he prevailed upon his master to release him from the remainder of his servitude. Though then very young, he soon commenced itinerant schoolmaster, going about the country from one small town to another, to teach reading, writing, and accounts; and generally having a night-school (as well as a day one), for the sake of those whose necessary employments would not allow their attendance at the usual school hours.

In one of his adjournments to the small but populous town of Oldham, he had an intimation that the Rev. Mr. Pearson, curate and schoolmaster, of Milnrow, near Rochdale, wanted an assistant in the school. To that gentleman he applied, and after a short examination, was taken in by him to the school, and he divided his salary, twenty pounds a year, with him. This Tim considered as a material advance in the world, as he still could have a night-school, which answered very well in that populous neighbourhood, and was considered by Tim, too, as a state of independency; a favourite idea, ever afterwards, with his high spirits. Mr. Pearson, not very long afterwards, falling a martyr to the gout, my honoured father gave Mr. Collier the school, which not only made him happy in the thought of being more independent, but made him consider himself as a rich man.

Having now more leisure hours by dropping his night-school there, though he continued to teach at Oldham, and some other places, during the vacations of Whitsuntide and Christmas, he began to instruct himself in music and drawing, and soon was such a proficient in both as to be able to instruct others very well in those amusing arts.

The hautboy and common flute were his chief instruments, and upon the former he very much excelled; the fine modulations that have since been acquired, or introduced upon that noble instrument, being then unknown in England. He drew landscapes in good taste, understanding the rules of perspective, and attempted some heads in profile, with very decent success: but it did not hit his humour, for I have heard him say, when urged to go on in that line, that "drawing heads and faces was as dry and insipid as leading a life without frolic and fun, unless he was allowed to steal in some leers of comic humour, or to give them a good dash of the caricature." Very early in life he discovered some poetic talents, or rather an easy habit for humourous rhyme, by several anonymous squibs he sent about in ridicule of some notoriously absurd, or eccentric characters; these were fathered upon him very justly, which created him some enemies, but more friends. I had once in my possession some humourous relations in tolerable rhyme, of his own frolic and fun with persons he met with, of the like description, in his hours of festive humour, which was sure to take place when released for any time from school duty, and not too much engaged in his lucrative employment of painting. The first regular poetic composition which he published, was "The Blackbird," containing some spirited ridicule upon a Lancashire Justice, more renowned for political zeal and ill-timed loyalty than good sense and

discretion. In point of easy, regular versification, perhaps this was his best specimen, and it also exhibited some strokes of humour.

About this period of life he fell seriously in love with a handsome young woman, a daughter of Mr. Clay, of Flockton, near Huddersfield, and soon after took her unto him for a wife, or, as he used to style her, his crooked rib, who, in proper time, increased his family, and proved to be a virtuous, discreet, sensible, and prudent woman, a good wife, and an excellent mother. His family continuing to increase nearly every year, the hautboy, flute, and amusing pencil were pretty much discarded, and the brush and pallet taken up seriously. He was chiefly engaged for some time in painting altar-pieces for chapels and signs for publicans, which pretty well rewarded the labours of his vacant hours from school attendance; but after some time, family expenses increasing more with his family, he devised, or luckily hit upon, a more lucrative employment for his leisure hours:—this was copying Dame Nature in some of her humourous performances, and grotesque sportings with the human face (especially where the visage had the greatest share in those sportings), into which his pencil contrived to throw some pointed features of grotesque humour, such as were best adapted to excite risibility, as long as such strange objects had the advantage of novelty to recommend them. These pieces he worked off with uncommon celerity: a single portrait in the leisure hours of two days, at least, and a group of three or four in a week. As soon as finished, he was wont to carry them to the first-rate inns at Rochdale and Littleborough, in the great road to Yorkshire, with the lowest prices fixed upon them, the innkeepers willingly becoming Tim's agents. The droll humour, as well as singularity of style of those pieces, procured him a most ready sale, from riders out, and travellers of other descriptions, who had heard of Tim's character. These whimsical productions soon began to be in such general repute, that he had large orders for them, especially from merchants in Liverpool, who sent them, upon speculation, into the West Indies and America. He used, at that time, to say, that "if Providence had ever meant him to be a rich man, that would have been the proper time, especially if she had kindly bestowed upon him two pair of hands instead of one;" but when cash came in readily, it was sure to go merrily: a cheerful glass with a joyous companion was so much in unison with his own disposition, that a temptation of that kind could never be resisted by poor Tim; so the season to grow rich never arrived, but Tim remained poor Tim to the end of the chapter.

Collier had been for many years collecting, not only from the rustics in his own neighbourhood, but also wherever he made excursions, all the awkward, vulgar, obsolete words, and local expressions, which ever occurred to him in conversation amongst the lower classes. A very retentive memory brought them safe back for insertion in his vocabulary, or glossary, and from thence he formed and executed the plan of his "Lancashire Dialect," which he exhibited to public cognizance in the "Adventures of a Lancashire Clown," formed from some rustic sports and gambols, and also some whimsical modes of circulating fun at the expense of silly, credulous boobies amongst the then cheery gentlemen of that peculiar neighbourhood. This publication, from its novelty, together with some real strokes of comic humour interlarded into it, took very much with the middle and lower class of people in the northern counties (and I believe everywhere in the South, too, where it had the chance of being noticed), so that a new edition was soon necessary. This was a matter of exultation to Tim, but not of very long duration, for the rapid sale of the second edition soon brought forth two or three pirated editions, which made the honest,

unsuspecting owner to exclaim with great vehemence, "that he did not believe there was one honest printer in Lancashire;" and afterwards to lash some of the most culpable of those insidious offenders with his keen, sarcastic pen, when engaged in drawing up a preface to a future publication. The above-named performances, with his pencil, his brush, and his pen, made Tim's name and repute for whimsical archness pretty generally known, not only within his native county, but also through the adjoining counties of Yorkshire and Cheshire: and his repute for a peculiar species of pleasantry in his hours of frolic, often induced persons of much higher rank to send for him to an inn (when in the neighbourhood of his residence), to have a personal specimen of his uncommon drollery. Tim was seldom backward in obeying a summons to good cheer, and seldom, I believe, disappointed the expectations of his generous host, for he had a wonderful flow of spirits, with an inexhaustible fund of humour, and that, too, of a very peculiar character.

Blest with a clear and masculine understanding, and a keen discernment into the humours and foibles of others, he knew how to take the best advantage of those occasional interviews in order to promote trade, as he was wont to call it, though his natural temper was very far from being of a mercenary cast; it was often rather too free and generous; more so than prudence, with respect to his family, would advise, for he would sooner have had a lenten day or two at home, than done a shabby and mean thing abroad.

Amongst other persons of good fortune, who often called upon him at Milnrow, or sent for him to spend a few hours with him at Rochdale, was a Mr. Richard Hill, of Kibroid and Halifax, in Yorkshire, then one of the greatest cloth merchants, and also one of the most considerable manufacturers of baizes and shalloons in the north of England. This gentleman was not only fond of his humourous conversation, but also had taken up an opinion that he would be highly useful to him as his head clerk, in business, from his being very ready at accounts, and writing a most beautiful small hand, in any kind of type, but especially in imitation of printed characters After several fruitless attempts, he at last, by offers of an extravagant salary, prevailed upon Mr. Collier to enter into articles of service for three years, certain, and to take his family to Kibroid. After signing and sealing, he called upon me to give notice that he must resign the school, and to thank me for my long-continued friendship to him. At taking leave, he, like the honest Moor—

> Albeit, unused to the melting mood,
> Dropped tears as fast as the Arabian tree,
> Their medicinal gum.

And, in faltering accents, entreated me not to be too hasty in filling up the vacancy in that school, where he had lived so many years contented and happy: for he had already some forebodings that he should never relish his new situation and new occupation. I granted his request, but hoped he would soon reconcile himself to his new situation, as it promised to be so advantageous both to himself and family. He replied, that "it was for the sake of his wife and children, that he was at last induced to accept Mr. Hill's very tempting offers, no other consideration whatever could have made him give up Milnrow school, and independency."

About two months afterwards, some business of his master's bringing him to Rochdale market, he took that opportunity of returning by Belfield. I instantly

perceived a wonderful change in his looks: that countenance which used ever to be gay, serene, or smiling, was then covered, or disguised with a pensive, settled gloom. On asking him how he liked his new situation at Kibroid, he replied, "Not at all;" then, enumerating several causes for discontent, concluded with an observation, that "he never could abide the ways of that country, for they neither kept red-letter days themselves nor allowed their servants to keep any." Before he left me, he passionately entreated that I would not give away the school, for he should never be happy again until he was seated in the crazy old elbow chair within his school. I granted his request, being less anxious to fill up the vacancy, as there were two other free schools for the same uses within the same townships, which have decent salaries annexed to them.

Some weeks afterwards I received a letter from Tim, that he had some hopes of getting released from his vassalage; for, that the father having found out what very high wages his son had agreed to give him, was exceedingly angry with him for being so extravagant in his allowance to a clerk; that a violent quarrel betwixt them had been the consequence; and from that circumstance he meant—at least hoped—to derive some advantage in the way of regaining his liberty, which he lingered after, and panted for, as much as any galley-slave upon earth.

Another letter announced that his master perceived that he was dejected, and had lost his wonted spirits and cheerfulness; had hinted to him, that if he disliked his present situation, he should be released at the end of the year; concluding his letter with a most earnest imploring that I would not dispose of the school before that time. By the interposition of the old gentleman, and some others, he got the agreement cancelled a considerable time before the year expired; and the evening of the day when the liberation took place, he hired a large Yorkshire cart to bring away bag and baggage by six o'clock next morning, to his own house, at Milnrow. When he arrived upon the west side of Blackstone Edge, he thought himself once more a Free Man; and his heart was as light as a feather. The next morning he came up to Belfield, to know if he might take possession of his school again; which being readily consented to, tears of gratitude instantly streamed down his cheeks, and such a suffusion of joy illumined his countenance, as plainly bespoke the heart being in unison with his looks. He then declared his unalterable resolution never more to quit the humble village of Milnrow; that it was not in the power of kings, nor their prime ministers, to make him any offers, if so disposed, that would allure him from his tottering elbow chair, from humble fare, with liberty and contentment. A hint was thrown out that he must work hard with his pencil, his brush, and his pen, to make up the deficiency in income to his family; that he promised to do, and was as good as his promise, for he used double diligence, so that the inns at Rochdale and Littleborough were soon ornamented, more than ever, with ugly grinning old fellows, and mambling old women on broomsticks, &c., &c.

Tim's last literary productions, as I recollect, were "Remarks upon the Rev. Mr. Whittaker's History of Manchester, in two parts:" the "Remarks" will speak for themselves. There appears rather too much seasoning and salt in some of them, mixed with a degree of acerbity for which he was rather blamed.

Mr. Collier died in possession of his faculties, with his mental powers but little impaired, at nearly eighty years of age, and his eyesight was not so much injured as might have been expected from such a severe use of it, during so long a space of time. His wife died a few years before him, but he left three sons and two daughters behind him.

In a sketch like this, it is not easy to select such examples from Collier's writings as will give an adequate idea of their manner and significance. His inimitable story, called "Tummus and Meary," will bear no mutilation. Of his rhymes, perhaps the best is the one called "The Blackbird." The following extract from Tim's preface to the third edition of his works, in the form of a dialogue between the author and his book, though far from the best thing he has written, contains some very characteristic touches:—

Tim. Well, boh we'n had enough o' this foisty matter; let's talk o' summat elze; an furst tell me heaw thea went on eh thi last jaunt.

Book. Gu on! Beladay, aw could ha' gwon on wheantly, an' bin awhoam again wi' th' crap eh meh slop in a snift, iv id na met, at oytch nook, thoose basthartly whelps sent eawt be *Stuart*, *Finch*, an *Schofield*.

Tim. Pooh! I dunnot meeon heaw folk harbort'nt an cutternt o'er tho; boh what thoose fause Lunnoners said'n abeawt te jump, at's new o'er-bodyt.

Book. Oh, oh! Neaw aw ha't! Yo meeon'n thoose lung-seeted folk at glooar'n a second time at books; an whooa awr fyert would rent meh jump to chatters.

Tim. Reet mon, reet; that's it,—

Book. Whau then, to tello true, awr breeod wi' a gorse waggin'; for they took'n mo i'th reet leet to a yure.

Tim. Heaw's tat, eh Gods'num!

Book. Whau, at yoad'n donned mo o' thiss'n, like a meawntebank's foo, for th' wonst, to mey th' rabblement fun.

Tim. Eh, law! An did'n th' awvish shap, an th' peckl't jump pan, said'n they?

Book. Aye, aye: primely i'faith!—for they glooarn't sooar at mo; turn't mo reawnd like a tayliur, when he mezzurs folk; chuckt mo under th' chin; ga' mo a honey butter-cake, an said oppenly, they ne'er saigh an awkert look, a quare shap, an a peckl't jump gee better eh their live.

Tim. Neaw, e'en fair fa' um, say aw! These wur'n th' boggarts at flayd'n tho! But aw'd olez a notion at tear'n no gonnor-yeds.

Book. Gonner-yeds! Naw, naw, not te marry! Boh, aw carry 't mysel' meety meeverly too-to, an did as o bidd'n mo.

Tim. Then theaw towd um th' tale, an said th' rimes an aw, did to?

Book. Th' tale an th' rimes! 'Sflesh, aw believe eh did; boh aw know no moor on um neaw than a seawkin' pig.

Tim. 'Od rottle the; what says to? Has to foryeat'n th' tayliur findin' th' urchon; an th' rimes?

Book. Quite, quite; as eh hope to chieve!

Tim. Neaw e'en the dule steawnd to, say aw! What a fuss mun aw have to teytch um tho again!

Book. Come, come; dunna fly up in a frap; a body conno carry oytch mander o' think eh their nob.

Tim. Whau boh, mind neaw, theaw gawmblin' tyke, at to can tell th' tale an say th' rimes be rot tightly.

Book. "Fear me na," said Doton; begin.

Tim. A tayliur, eh Crummil's time, wur thrunk pooin' turmits in his pingot, an fund an urchon i'th hadloont reean.[11] He glendurt at't lung, boh could may nowt on't. He whoav't hi whisket o'ert, runs whoam, an tells his neighbours he thowt in his guts at he'd fund a think at God ne'er made eawt, for it'd nother yed nor tale, nor hont

[11] *Hadloont reean*—headland gutter.

nor hough, nor midst nor eend! Loath t' believe this, hauve a dozen on um would gu t' see iv they could'n may shift t' gawm it; boh it capt um aw; for they newer a one on um e'er saigh th' like afore. Then theyd'n a keawncil, an th' eend on't wur at teyd'n fotch a lawm, fause owd felly, het[12] an elder, at could tell oytch think,—for they look'nt on him as th' hamil-scoance, an thowt him fuller o' leet than a glow-worm's a—se. When they'n towd him th' case, he stroke't his beeart; sowght; an order't th' wheelbarrow wi' spon-new trindle t' be fotcht. 'Twur dun; an they beawln't him away to th' urchon in a crack. He glooart at't a good while; dried his beeart deawn, an wawtud it o'er with his crutch. "Wheel me abeawt again, o'th tother side," said he, "for it sturs, an by that, it should be wick." Then he dons his spectacles, stare't at't again, an sowghin', said, "Breether, its summat: boh feyther Adam nother did, nor could kersun it. Wheel mo whoam again!"

Book. Aw remember it neaw, weel enough: boh iv these viewers could gawm it oytch body couldna; for aw find neaw at yo compare'n me to a urchon, ut has nother yed nor tale; 'sflesh, is not it like running mo deawn, an a bit to bobbersome.

Tim. Naw, naw, not it; for meeny o' folk would gawm th' rimes, boh very lite would underston th' tayliur an his urchon.

Book. Th' rimes;—hum,—lemme see. 'Sblid, aw foryeat'n thoose, too, aw deawt!

Tim. Whoo-who whoo! What a dozening jobberknow art teaw!

Book. Good lorjus o' me; a body conna do moor thin they con, con they? Boh iv in teytch mo again, an aw foryeat um again, e'en raddle meh hoyd tightly, say aw.

Tim. Mind te hits, then!

> Some write to show their wit and parts,
> Some show you whig, some tory hearts,
> Some flatter *knaves*, some *fops*, some *fools*,
> And some are ministerial tools.

Book. Eigh, marry; oytch body says so; an gonnor-yeds they are for their labbor.

> *Tim.* Some few in virtue's cause do write,
> But these, alas! get little by't.

Book. Indeed, aw can believe o! Weel rime't, heawe'er: gu on.

> *Tim.* Some turn out maggots from their head,
> Which die before their author's dead.

Book. Zuns! Aw Englanshire 'll think at yo'r glentin' at toose fratchin', byzen, craddlinly tykes as write'n sich papers as th' *Test*, an sich cawve-tales as *Cornish Peter*, at fund a new ward, snyin' wi glums an gawries.

> *Tim.* Some write such sense in prose and rhyme,

[12] *Het*—hight, called

Their works will wrestle hard with Time.

Book. That'll be prime wrostlin', i'faith; for aw've yerd um say, time conquers aw things.

Tim. Some few print *truth*, but many *lies*
On *spirits*, down to *butterflies*.

Book. Reet abeawt boggarts; an th' tother ward; and th' mon i'th moon, an sich like gear: get eendway; it's prime, i'faith.

Tim. Some write to *please*, some do't for *spite*,
But want of money makes me write.

Book. By th' mass, th' owd story again! Boh aw think eh me guts at it's true. It'll do; yo need'n rime no moor, for it's better t'in lickly. Whewt[13] on Tummus an Mary.

To a liberal and observant stranger, one of the richest results of a visit to this quarter will arise from contemplation of the well-defined character of the people that live in it. The whole population is distinguished by a fine, strong, natural character, which would do honour to the refinements of education. A genteel stranger, who cannot read the heart of this people through their blunt manners, will, perhaps, think them a little boorish. But though they have not much bend in the neck, and their rough dialect is little blest with the set phrases of courtesy, there are no braver men in the world, and under their uncouth demeanour lives the spirit of true chivalry. They have a favourite proverb, that "fair play's a jewel," and are generally careful, in all their dealings, to act upon it. They feel a generous pride in the man who can prove himself their master in anything. Unfortunately, little has yet been done for them in the way of book-education, except what has been diffused by the Sunday-schools, since the times of their great apostle, John Wesley, who, in person, as well as by his enthusiastic early preachers, laboured much and earnestly among them, in many parts of South Lancashire. Yet nature has blest them with a fine vein of mother-wit, and has drilled some useful pages of her horn-book into them in the loom, the mine, and the farm, for they are naturally hard workers, and proud of honest labour. They are keen critics of character, too, and have a sharp eye to the nooks and corners of a stranger's attire, to see that, at least, whether rich or poor, it be sound, and, as they say, "bothomly cleeon," for they are jealous of dirty folk. They are accustomed to a frank expression of what is in them, and like the open countenance, where the time of day may be read in the dial, naturally abhorring "hudd'n wark, an' meawse-neeses." Among the many anecdotes illustrative of the character of this people, there is one which, though simple, bears a strong stamp of native truth upon it. A stalwart young fellow, who had long been employed as carter for a firm in this neighbourhood, had an irresistible propensity to fighting, which was constantly leading him into scrapes. He was an excellent servant in every other respect, but no admonition could cure him of this; and at length he was discharged, in hope to work the desired change. Dressing himself in his best, he applied to an eminent native merchant for a similar situation. After other necessary questions, the merchant asked whether he had brought his character with him. "My character!" replied our hero, "Naw, aw'm a damned deeol better beawt it!" This anecdote conveys a very true idea of the rough vigour and candour of the Lancashire country population. They dislike dandyism and the shabby-genteel, and the mere bandbox exquisite would think them a hopeless generation. Yet, little as they are tinctured

[13] *Whewt*—whistle.

with literature, a few remarkable books are very common among them. I could almost venture to prophesy before going into any substantial farmhouse, or any humble cottage in this quarter, that some of the following books might be found there: the Bible, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, the Book of Common Prayer, and often Wesley's Hymn-book, Barclay's Dictionary, Culpepper's Herbal; and, sometimes, Thomas à Kempis, or a few old puritan sermons. One of their chief delights is the practice of sacred music; and I have heard the works of Haydn, Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven executed with remarkable correctness and taste, in the lonely farmhouses and cottages of South Lancashire. In no other part of England does such an intense love of sacred music pervade the poorer classes. It is not uncommon for them to come from the farthest extremity of South Lancashire, and even over the "Edge" from Huddersfield, and other towns of the West Riding of Yorkshire, to hear an oratorio at the Free Trade Hall, returning home again, sometimes a distance of thirty miles, in the morning.

I will now suppose that the traveller has seen Tim Bobbin's grave, and has strolled up by Silver Hills, through the scenery of Butterworth, and, having partly contemplated the character of this genuine specimen of a South Lancashire village, is again standing on the little stone bridge which spans the pretty river Beal. Let him turn his back to the Rochdale road a little while; we have not done with him yet. Across the space there, used as a fair ground at "Rushbearing time," stands an old-fashioned stone ale-house, called "Th' Stump and Pie Lad," commemorating, by its scabbed and weather-beaten sign, one of the triumphs of a noted Milnrow foot-racer, on Doncaster race-course. Milnrow is still famous for its foot-racers, as Lancashire, generally, is more particularly famous for foot-racers than any other county in the kingdom. In that building the ancient lords of Rochdale manor used to hold their court-leets. Now, the dry-throated "lads o' th' fowd" meet there nightly, to grumble at bad warps and low wages; and to "fettle th' nation," over pitchers of cold ale. And now, if the traveller loves to climb "the slopes of old renown," and worships old heraldries and rusty suits of mail, let him go to the other end of the village. I will go with him, if, like me, while he venerates old chronicles, whether of stone, metal, or parchment, because the spirit of the bygone sometimes streams upon us through them, he still believes in the proverb, that "every man is the son of his own works;" I will play the finger-post to him with right good will. There is something at the other end of Milnrow worth his notice.

Milnrow lies on the ground not unlike a tall tree laid lengthwise, in a valley, by a river side. At the bridge, its roots spread themselves in clots and fibrous shoots, in all directions; while the almost branchless trunk runs up, with a little bend, above half a mile, towards Oldham, where it again spreads itself out in an umbrageous way, at the little fold called "Butterworth Hall." In walking through the village, he who has seen a tolerably-built wooden mill will find no wonders of the architectural art at all. The houses are almost entirely inhabited by working people, and marked by a certain rough, comfortable solidity—not a bad reflex of the character of the inhabitants. At the eastern extremity, a road leads on the left hand to the cluster of houses called "Butterworth Hall." This old fold is worth notice, both for what it is, and what it has been. It is a suggestive spot. It is near the site once occupied by one of the homesteads of the Byrons, barons of Rochdale, the last baron of which family was Lord Byron, the poet. A gentleman in this township, who is well acquainted with the history and archæology of the whole county, lately met with a licence from the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, dated A.D. 1400, granting to Sir John Byron and his wife leave to have divine service performed within their oratories at Clayton and Butterworth, in the county of Lancashire. (Lane. MSS., vol. xxxii., p. 184.) This was doubtless the old *wooden chapel* which traditionally is said to have existed at Butterworth Hall, and which is still pointed out by the names of two small fields, called "Chapel Yard" and "Chapel Meadow." These names occur in deeds at Pike House (the residence of the Halliwell family, about two miles off), in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and are known to this day. It is probable that the Byrons never lived at Butterworth Hall after the Wars of the Roses. They quitted Clayton, as a permanent residence, on acquiring Newstead, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, although "young

Sir John," as he was called, lived at Royton Hall, near Oldham, another seat of the family, between 1592 and 1608.

At Butterworth Hall, the little river Beal, flowing down fresh from the heathery mountains, which throw their shadows upon the valley where it runs, divides the fold; and upon a green plot, close to the northern margin of its water, stands an old-fashioned stone hall, hard by the site of the ancient residence of the Byrons. After spending an hour at the other end of the village, with the rugged and comfortable generation dwelling there, among the memorials of "Tim Bobbin"—that quaint old schoolmaster, of the last century—who was "the observed of all observers," there, in his day, and who will be remembered long after some of the monumental brasses and sculptured effigies of his contemporaries are passed by with, incurious eyes—one thinks it will not be uninteresting, nor profitless, to come and muse a little upon the spot where the Byrons once lived in feudal state. But let not any contemplative visitor here lose his thoughts too far among antiquarian dreams, and shadows of the past, for there are factory-bells close by. However large the discourse of his mind may be, let him never forget that there is a strong and important present in the social life around him. And wherever he sets his foot, in South Lancashire, he will now find that there are shuttles flying where once was the council chamber of a baron; and that the people of these days are drying warps in the "shooting-butts" and tilt-yards of the olden time!

The following information respecting the Byron family, Barons of Rochdale, copied from an article in the *Manchester Guardian*, by the eminent antiquarian contributor to that journal, will not be uninteresting to some people:—

> The Byrons, of Clayton and Rochdale, Lancashire, and Newstead Abbey, Notts, are descended from Ralph de Buron, who, at the time of the Conquest, and of the Doomsday Survey, held divers manors in Notts and Derbyshire. Hugo de Buron, grandson of Ralph, and feudal Baron of Horsetan, retiring *temp.* Henry III. from secular affairs, professed himself a monk, and held the hermitage of Kirsale or Kersal, under the priory of Lenton. His son was Sir Roger de Buron. Robert de Byron, son of Sir Roger de Buron, in the John 1st [1199-1200], married Cecilia, daughter and heiress of Richard Clayton, of Clayton, and thus obtained the manor and estates of Clayton. Failsworth and the township of Droylsden were soon after added to their Lancashire estates. Their son, Robert de Byron, lord of Clayton, was witness to a grant of Plying Hay in this country, to the monks of Cockersand, for the souls of Henry II. and Richard I. And his son, John de Byron, who was seated at Clayton, 28th Edward I. [1299-30], was governor of York, and had all his lands in Rochdale, with his wife Joan, by gift of her father, Sir Baldwin Teutonicus, or Thies, or de Tyas, who was conservator of the peace in Lancashire, 10th Edward [1281-82]. Her first husband was Sir Robert Holland, secretary of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster. Their son was Sir John de Byron, knight, lord of Clayton, who was one of the witnesses to the charter granted to the burgesses of Manchester, by Thomas Grelle, lord of that manor, in 1301. The two first witnesses to that document were "Sirs John Byron, Richard Byron, knights." These were father and son. Sir John married Alice, cousin and heir of Robert Bonastre, of Hindley, in this county. Their son, Sir Richard, lord of Cadenay and Clifton, had grant of free warren in his demesne lands in Clayton, Butterworth, and Royton, on the 28th June, 1303; he served in parliament for Lincolnshire, and died before 21st Edward III. [1347-8]. His son was Sir James de Byron, who died before 24th Edward III. [1350-51]. His son and heir was Sir John de Byron, who was knighted by Edward III. at the siege of Calais [1346-7], and dying without issue, was succeeded by his brother, Sir Richard, before 4th Richard II. [1380-81]. Sir Richard died in 1398, and was succeeded by his son, Sir John *le* Byron, who received knighthood before 3rd Henry V. [1415-16], and

as one of the knights of the shire, 7th Henry VI. [1428-9]. He married Margery, daughter of John Booth, of Barton. His eldest son, Richard le Byron, dying in his father's lifetime, and Richard's son, James, dying without issue, the estate passed to Richard's brother, Sir Nicholas, of Clayton, who married Alice, daughter of Sir John Boteler, of Beausey or Bewsey, near Warrington. Their son and heir was Sir John, who was constable of Nottingham Castle, and Sheriff of Lancaster, in 1441 and 1442. Sir John fought in the Battle of Bosworth Field, on the side of Henry VII., and was knighted on the field. Dying without issue in 1488, he was succeeded by his brother (then 30), Sir Nicholas, Sheriff of Lancaster, in 1459, who was made Knight of the Bath in 1501, and died in January, 1503-4. This son and heir, Sir John Byron (the one named in the above document), was steward of the manors of Manchester and Rochdale, and, on the dissolution of the monasteries, he had a grant of the priory of Newstead, 28th May, 1540. From that time the family made Newstead their principal seat, instead of Clayton. This will explain, to some extent, the transfer of Clayton, in 1547, from this same Sir John Byron to John Arderon or Arderne. Either this Sir John or his son, of the same name, in the year 1560, inclosed 260 acres of land on Beurdsell Moor, near Rochdale. His three eldest sons dying without issue (and we may just note that Kuerden preserves a copy of claim, without date, of Nicholas, the eldest, to the serjeanty of the king's free court of Rochdale, and to have the execution of all attachments and distresses, and all other things which belong to the king's bailiff there), Sir John was succeeded by his youngest son, Sir John, whom Baines states to have been knighted in 1759—probably a transposition of the figures 1579. This Sir John, in the 39th Elizabeth [1596-7], styles himself "Farmer of the Manor of Rochdale," and makes an annual payment to the Crown, being a fee farm rent to the honour of Rochdale. In the 1st Charles I. [1625-6], the manor of Rochdale passed from the Byrons; but in 1638 it was reconveyed to them; and, though confiscated during the commonwealth, Richard, Lord Byron, held the manor in 1660. Sir John's eldest son, Sir Nicholas, distinguished himself in the wars in the Low Countries, and at the battle of Edgehill (23rd October, 1642). He was general of Cheshire and Shropshire. His younger brother, Sir John, was made K.B. at the coronation of James I. and a baronet in 1603. Owing to the failure of the elder line, this Sir John became ancestor of the Lords Byron. Sir Nicholas was succeeded by his son, Sir John, who was made K.B. at the coronation of Charles I.; was appointed by that king Lieutenant of the Tower, in 1642, contrary to the wish of parliament; commanded the body of reserve at Edgehill; and was created Lord Byron of Rochdale, 24th October, 1643. In consequence of his devotion to the royal cause (for he fought against Oliver Cromwell at the battle of Preston, in August, 1648), his manor of Rochdale was sequestered, and held for several years by Sir Thomas Alcock, who held courts there in 1654, two years after Lord Byron's death. So great was his lordship's royalist zeal, that he was one of the seven specially exempted from the clemency of the government in the "Act of Oblivion," passed by parliament on the execution of Charles I. Dying at Paris, in 1652, without issue, he was succeeded by his cousin, Richard (son of Sir John, the baronet just mentioned), who became second Lord Byron, and died 4th October, 1679, aged 74. He was succeeded by his eldest son, William, who died 13th November, 1695, and was succeeded by his fourth son, William, who died August 8th, 1736, and was succeeded by a younger son, William, fifth Lord Byron, born in November, 1722, killed William Chaworth, Esq., in a duel, in January, 1765, and died 19th May, 1798. He was succeeded by his great nephew, George Gordon, the poet, sixth Lord

> Byron, who was born 22nd January, 1788, and died at Missolonghi, in April, 1824. In 1823, he sold Newstead Abbey to James Dearden, Esq., of Rochdale; and in the same year, he sold the manor and estate of Rochdale to the same gentleman, by whose son and heir they are now possessed. The manorial rights of Rochdale are reputed (says Baines) to extend over 32,000 statute acres of land, with the privileges of court baron and court leet in all the townships of the parish, including that portion of Saddleworth which lies within the parish of Rochdale; but excepting such districts as Robert de Lacy gave to the abbots of Whalley, with right to inclose the same.

The article goes on to say that the manor of Rochdale was anciently held by the Ellands of Elland, and the Savilles, and that on the death of Sir Henry Saville, it appears to have merged in the possession of the Duchy of Lancaster; and Queen Elizabeth, in right of her duchy possessions, demised that manor to Sir John Byron, by letters patent, dated May 12th, 27th year of her reign (1585), from Lady-day, 1585, to the end of thirty-one years.

The eye having now satisfied itself with what was notable in and about Milnrow, I took my way home, with a mind more at liberty to reflect on what I had seen. The history of Lancashire passed in review before me; especially its latest history. I saw the country that was once thick with trees that canopied herds of wild animals, and thinnest of people, now bare of trees, and thickest of population; the land which was of least account of any in the kingdom in the last century, now most sought after; and those rude elements which were looked upon as "the riddlings of creation," more productive of riches than all the Sacramento's gold, and ministers to a spirit which is destined to change the social aspect of Britain. I saw the spade sinking in old hunting grounds, and old parks now trampled by the fast-increasing press of new feet. The hard cold soil is now made to grow food for man and beast. Masses of stone and flag are shaken from their sleep in the beds of the hills, and dragged forth to build mills and houses with. Streams which have frolicked and sung in undisturbed limpidity thousands of years, are dammed up, and made to wash and scour, and generate steam. Fathoms below the feet of the traveller, the miner is painfully worming his way in labyrinthine tunnels; and the earth is belching coals at a thousand mouths. The region teems with coal, stone, and water, and a people able to subdue them all to their purposes. These elements quietly bide their time, century after century, till the grand plot is ripe, and the mysterious signal given. Anon, when a thoughtful barber sets certain wheels spinning, and a contemplative lad takes a fine hint from his mother's tea-kettle, these slumbering powers start into astonishing activity, like an army of warriors roused to battle by the trumpet. Cloth is woven for the world, and the world buys it, and wears it. Commerce shoots up from a poor pedlar with his pack on a mule, to a giant merchant, stepping from continent to continent, over the ocean, to make his bargains. Railways are invented, and the land is ribbed with iron, for iron messengers to run upon, through mountains and over valleys, on business commissions; the very lightning turns errand-boy. A great fusion of thought and sentiment springs up, and Old England is in hysterics about its ancient opinions. A new aristocracy rises from the prudent, persevering working-people of the district, and threatens to push the old one from its stool. What is to be the upshot of it all? The senses are stunned by the din of toil, and the view obscured by the dust of bargain-making. But, through an opening in the clouds, hope's stars are shining still in the blue heaven that over-spans us. Take heart, ye toiling millions! The spirits of your heroic forefathers are watching to see what sort of England you leave to your sons!

The Birthplace of Tim Bobbin

CHAPTER I

A merrier man,
Within the limits of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal:
His eye begets occasion for his wit:
For every object that the one doth catch,
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest:
Which his fair tongue (conceit's expositor)
Delivers in such apt and gracious words,
That aged ears play truant to his tales.

—Love's Labour Lost.

There is a quiet tract of country on the eastern border of Lancashire, lying in a corner, formed by the junction of the rivers Mersey and Irwell, and having but little intercourse with those great towns of the county which boil with the industry of these days, a few miles off, to the north and eastward. It is the green selvedge of our toilful district, in that direction; and the winding waters of the Mersey lace its meadows, lengthwise, until that river joins the more soiled and sullen Irwell, on the northern boundary of the parish. In all the landscape there are no hills to break the view; and, considering the extent of land, trees are but sparsely scattered over it. It is singular, also, that the oak will not flourish in this particular spot; although there are some fine specimens of the other trees common to the English soil. But the country is generally fertile, and prettily undulated in some places; and it is a pleasant scene in hay-time, "when leaves are large and long," and the birds are singing with full-throated gladness in the green shade, while the dewy swathe is falling to the mower's stroke, in the sunlight of a June morning. Looking eastward, across the Mersey, the park-like plains and rustling woods of Cheshire stretch away, in unbroken beauty, as far as the eye can see. Indeed, the whole of this secluded tract, upon the Lancashire side of the river, may be naturally reckoned part of that fruitful Cheshire district which has, not inappropriately, been called "the market-garden of Manchester." The parish of Flixton occupies nearly the whole of this border nook of Lancashire; and the scattered hamlet of Urmston, in this parish, lays claim to the honour of being the birthplace of our earliest and most popular native humourist, the celebrated John Collier, better known by his self-chosen name of "Tim Bobbin,"—

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.