

WALTER WHITE

A MONTH IN
YORKSHIRE

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Walter White

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“Know most of the rooms of thy native country, before thou goest over the threshold thereof; especially, seeing England presents thee with so many observables.”— Fuller.

FOREWORD TO THE FOURTH EDITION

The first two editions of this work had not long been published when I was pelted with animadversions for the “scandalous misrepresentation” conveyed in my report of a conversation held with a villager at Burnsall; which conversation may be read in the twenty-second chapter. My reply was, that I had set down less than was spoken—that I had brought no accusation, not having even mentioned the “innocent-looking country town” as situate in any one of the three Ridings—that what I had seen, however, in some of the large towns, led me to infer that the imputation (if such it were) would hardly fail to apply; and, moreover, if the Yorkshire conscience felt uneasy, was I to be held responsible?

My explanation that the town in question was not in Yorkshire, was treated as of none effect, and my censors rejoined in legal phrase, that I had no case. So I went about for awhile under a kind of suspicion, or as an unintentional martyr, until one day there met me two gentlemen from Leeds, one of whom declared that he and others, jealous of their county’s reputation, and doubting not to convict me of error, had made diligent inquiry and found to their discomfiture, that the assemblages implied in the villager’s remark, did actually take place within Yorkshire itself. The discovery is not one to be proud of; but, having been made, let

the county strive to free itself from at least that reproach.

Another censurable matter was my word of warning against certain inns which had given me demonstration that their entertainment, regulated by a sliding scale, went up on the arrival of a stranger. Yorkshire wrote a flat denial of the implication to my publishers, and inclosed a copy of what he called "his tariff," by way of proof, which would have been an effectual justification had my grievance been an invention; but, as it happened, the tariff presented testimony in my favour, by the difference between its prices and those which I had been required to pay.

I only notice this incident because of the general question, in which all who travel are more or less interested. Why should an Englishman, accustomed to equitable dealings while staying at home, be required to submit so frequently to the reverse when journeying in his own country? Shopkeepers are ready to sell socks, or saddles, or soap without an increase of price on the plea that they may never see you again, and without expecting you to fee their servants for placing the article before you; and why should innkeepers claim a privilege to do otherwise? The numerous complaints which every season's experience calls forth from tourists, imply a want of harmony between "travelling facilities" and the practice of licensed victuallers; and if English folk are to be persuaded to travel in their own country, the sooner the required harmony is established, the better. It would be very easy to exhibit a table of charges and fees by which a tourist might

ascertain cost beforehand, and choose accordingly. Holland is a notoriously dear and highly-taxed country, yet fivepence a day is all the charge that Dutch innkeepers make for "attendance."

In one instance the discussion took a humorous turn:—the name of a certain jovial host, with whom I had a talk in Swaledale, appeared subscribed to a letter in the *Richmond Chronicle*, and as it furnishes us with a fresh specimen of local dialect, I take leave to quote a few passages therefrom. After expostulating with the editor for "prentan" a letter which somebody had written in his "neame," the writer says, "but between ye an' me, I believe this chap's been readin' a buke put out by yan White, 'at was trailin' about t' Deales iv hay-time, an' afoare he set off to gang by t' butter-tubs to t' Hawes, he ast me what publick-house he was to gang te, an' I tell't him t' White Hart; an' becoz he mebby fand t' shot rayther bigger than a lik'd, he's gi'en t' landlord a wipe iv his buke about t' length of his bill, an' me about t' girth o' me body—pity but he'd summat better to rite aboot; but nivver heed, it nobbut shows 'at my meat agrees wi' me, an' 'at t' yal 'at I brew 's naythur sour ner wake, an' 'at I drink my shar' on't mysel: but if I leet on him, or can mak' oot t' chap 'at sent ye t' letter, I'll gi' 'em an on-be-thinkin'."

Sheffield, too, has not yet ceased to reprove me for having published the obvious fact, that the town is frightfully smoky, and unclean in appearance and in its talk. If I were to make any alteration in this particular, it would be to give emphasis, not to lighten the description. A town which permits its trade to be

coerced by ignorance, and where the ultimate argument of the working-classes is gunpowder or a knock on the head, should show that the best means have been taken to purify morals as well as the atmosphere and streets, before it claims to be “nothing like so bad as is represented.” But, the proverb which declares that “people who eat garlic are always sure it doesn’t smell,” will perhaps never cease to be true.

Of the £14,000,000 worth of woollen and worsted goods exported in 1859, Yorkshire supplied the largest portion; and still maintains its reputation for “crafty wit and shrinking cloth,” as shewn by the increase in the manufacture of shoddy. One of the manufacturers at Batley has made known in a printed pamphlet, that 50,000,000 pounds of rags are at the present time annually converted into various kinds of so-called woollen goods. We walk on shoddy as it covers our floors; and we wear shoddy in our stockings and under-garments, as well as in capes and overcoats. Turning to mineral products, we find that in 1859, Yorkshire raised 1,695,842 tons of ironstone, and 8,247,000 tons of coal, worth in round numbers £3,573,000. And with all this there is an increase in the means and results of education, and an abatement of pauperism: in 1820, the poor’s-rate in Hull was seven shillings and eightpence in the pound, in 1860, not more than eightpence.

And to mention facts of another kind:—by the digging of a drain on Marston Moor, a heap of twenty-five or thirty skeletons was discovered, around which the clay retained the form of the bodies, like a mould; a bullet fell from one of the skulls,

and in some the teeth were perfectly sound, 213 years after the battle. At Malton, during a recent excavation of the main street, one hundred yards of the Roman highway leading from Derby to York were laid bare, three feet below the present surface. Scarborough is building new batteries on her castled cliff, and replacing old guns by new ones; and Hull is about to add to its resources by the construction of a new dock. The much-needed harbour of refuge is, however, not yet begun, as wrecks along the coast after easterly storms lamentably testify.

This *Month in Yorkshire* was the second of my books of home-travel; and it was while rambling along the cliffs and over the hills of the famous county, that I conceived it possible to interest others as well as myself in the Past and the Present, in the delightful natural aspects and the wonderful industry of our native country to a yet wider extent; and therein I have not been disappointed. To the objection that my works are useless as guide-books, I answer, that no intelligent reader will find it difficult to follow my route: distances are mentioned with sufficient accuracy, the length of my longest day's walk is recorded, whereby any one, who knows his own strength, may easily plan each day's journey in anticipation. By aid of the map which accompanies the present volume either planning or reference will now be facilitated.

Next to ourselves, there is perhaps nothing so interesting to us as our own country, which may be taken as a good reason why a book about England finds favour with readers. For my part let

me repeat a passage from the foreword to the second edition:—"I know that I have an earnest love for my subject; feeling proud of the name of Englishman, and the freedom of thought, speech, and action therein involved; loving our fields and lanes, our hills and moorlands, and the shores of our sea, and delighting much to wander among them. Happy shall I be if I can inspire the reader with the like emotions."

W. W

London, March, 1861.

CHAPTER I.

A SHORT CHAPTER TO BEGIN WITH

I had cheerful recollections of Yorkshire. My first lessons in self-reliance and long walks were learned in that county. I could not forget how, fresh from the south, I had been as much astonished at the tall, stalwart forms of the men, their strange rustic dialect and rough manners, as by their hearty hospitality. Nor could I fail to remember the contrast between the bleak outside of certain farm-houses and the rude homely comfort inside, where a ruddy turf fire glowed on the hearth, and mutton hams, and oaten bread, and store of victual burdened the racks of the kitchen ceiling. Nor the generous entertainment of more than one old hostess in little roadside public-houses, who, when I arrived at nightfall, weary with travel, would have me sit at the end of the high-backed settle nearest the fire, or in the 'neukin' under the great chimney, and bustle about with motherly kindness to get tea ready; who, before I had eaten the first pile of cakes, would bring a second, with earnest assurance that a "growing lad" could never eat too much; who talked so sympathisingly during the evening—I being at times the only guest—wondering much that I should be so far away from home: had I no friends? where was I going? and the like; who charged

me only eighteenpence for tea, bed, and breakfast, and once slyly thrust into my pocket, at parting, a couple of cakes, which I did not discover till half way across a snow-drifted moor, where no house was in sight for many miles. All this, and much more which one does not willingly forget, haunted my memory.

The wild scenery of the fells, the tame agricultural region, and the smoky wapentakes, where commerce erects more steeples than religion, were traversed during my rambles. While wandering in the neighbourhood of Keighley, I had seen Charlotte Brontë's birthplace, long before any one dreamed that she would one day flash as a meteor upon the gaze of the "reading public." Rosebury Topping had become familiar to me in the landscapes of Cleveland, and now a desire possessed me to get on the top of that magnificent cone. In the villages round about its base I had shared the pepper-cake of Christmas-tide; and falling in with the ancient custom prevalent along the eastern coast from Humber to Tyne, had eaten fried peas on Carlin Sunday—Mid-Lent of the calendar—ere the discovery of that mineral wealth, now known to exist in such astonishing abundance, that whether the British coal-fields will last long enough or not to smelt all the ironstone of Cleveland, is no longer a question with a chief of geologists. I had mused in the ruin where Richard the Second was cruelly murdered, at Pontefract; had looked with proper surprise at the Dropping Well, at Knaresborough, and into St. Robert's Cave, the depository of Eugene Aram's terrible secret; had walked into Wakefield, having scarcely outlived the fond

belief that there the Vicar once dwelt with his family; and when the guard pointed out the summits as the coach rolled past on the way from Skipton to Kirkby Lonsdale, had no misgivings as to the truth of the saying:

“Penigent, Whernside, and Ingleborough,
Are the three highest hills all England thorough.”

Unawares, in some instances, I had walked across battlefields, memorable alike in the history of the county, and of the kingdom; where marauding Scots, dissolute Hainaulters, Plantagenets and Tudors, Cavalier and Roundhead had rushed to the onslaught. Marston Moor awoke the proudest emotions, notwithstanding my schoolboy recollections of what David Hume had written thereupon; while Towton was something to wonder at, as imagination flew back to the time when

“Palm Sunday chimes were chiming
All gladsome thro’ the air,
And village churls and maidens
Knelt in the church at pray’r;
When the Red Rose and the White Rose
In furious battle reel’d;
And yeomen fought like barons,
And barons died ere yield.
When mingling with the snow-storm,
The storm of arrows flew;
And York against proud Lancaster

His ranks of spearmen threw.
When thunder-like the uproar
Outshook from either side,
As hand to hand they battled
From morn to eventide.
When the river ran all gory,
And in hillocks lay the dead,
And seven and thirty thousand
Fell for the White and Red.

When o'er the Bar of Micklegate
They changed each ghastly head,
Set Lancaster upon the spikes
Where York had bleached and bled.

There still wild roses growing—
Frail tokens of the fray—
And the hedgerow green bear witness
Of Towton field that day.”

Did the decrepit old shambles, roofed with paving-flags, still encumber the spacious market-place at Thirsk? Did the sexton at Ripon Minster still deliver his anatomical lecture in the grim bone-house, and did the morality of that sedate town still accord with the venerable adage, “as true steel as Ripon rowels?” Was York still famous for muffins, or Northallerton for quoits, cricket, and spell-and-nurr? and was its beer as good as when Bacchus held a court somewhere within sight of the three

Ridings, and asked one of his attendants where that new drink, “strong and mellow,” was to be found? and

“The boon good fellow answered, ‘I can tell North-Allerton, in Yorkshire, doth excel All England, nay, all Europe, for strong ale; If thither we adjourn we shall not fail To taste such humming stuff, as I dare say Your Highness never tasted to this day.’”

Hence, when the summer sun revived my migratory instinct, I inclined to ramble once more in Yorkshire. There would be no lack of the freshness of new scenes, for my former wanderings had not led me to the coast, nor to the finest of the old abbeys—those ruins of wondrous beauty, nor to the remote dales where crowding hills abound with the picturesque. Here was novelty enough, to say nothing of the people and their ways, and the manifold appliances and results of industry which so eminently distinguish the county, and the grand historical associations of the metropolitan city, once the “other Rome,” of which the old rhymester says—

“Let London still the just precedence claim,
York ever shall be proud to be the next in fame.”

I was curious, moreover, to observe whether the peculiar dialect or the old habits were dying out quite so rapidly as some

social and political economists would have us believe.

Quaint old Fuller, among the many nuggets imbedded in his pages, has one which implies that Yorkshire being the biggest is therefore the best county in England. You may take six from the other thirty-nine counties, and put them together, and not make a territory so large as Yorkshire. The population of the county numbers nearly two millions. When within it you find the distances great from one extremity to the other, and become aware of the importance involved in mere dimensions. In no county have Briton, Roman, and Dane left more evident traces, or history more interesting waymarks. Speed says of it: "She is much bound to the singular love and motherly care of Nature, in placing her under so temperate a clime, that in every measure she is indifferently fruitful. If one part of her be stone, and a sandy barren ground, another is fertile and richly adorned with corn-fields. If you here find it naked and destitute of woods, you shall see it there shadowed with forests full of trees, that have very thick bodies, sending forth many fruitful and profitable branches. If one place of it be moorish, miry, and unpleasant, another makes a free tender of delight, and presents itself to the eye full of beauty and contentive variety."

Considering, furthermore, that for two years in succession I had seen the peasantry in parts of the north and south of Europe, and had come to the conclusion (under correction, for my travel is brief) that the English labourer, with his weekly wages, his cottage and garden, is better off than the peasant proprietor of

Germany and Tyrol,—considering this, I wished to prove my conclusion, and therefore started hopefully for Yorkshire.

And again, does not Emerson say, “a wise traveller will naturally choose to visit the best of actual nations.”

CHAPTER II

Estuary of the Humber—Sunk Island—Land *versus* Water—Dutch Phenomena—Cleathorpes—Grimsby—Paul—River Freaks—Mud—Stukeley and Drayton—Fluvial Parliament—Hull—The Thieves' Litany—Docks and Drainage—More Dutch Phenomena—The High Church—Thousands of Piles—The Citadel—The Cemetery—A Countryman's Voyage to China—An Aid to Macadam.

As the *Vivid* steamed past the Spurn lighthouse, I looked curiously at the low sandy spit on which the tall red tower stands, scarcely as it seems above the level of the water, thinking that my first walk would perhaps lead thither. At sight of the Pharos, and of the broad estuary alive with vessels standing in, the Yorkshiremen on board felt their patriotism revive, and one might have fancied there was a richer twang in their speech than had been perceptible in the latitude of London. A few who rubbed their hands and tried to look hearty, vowed that their future travels should not be on the sea. The *Vivid* is not a very sprightly boat, but enjoys or not, as the case may be, a reputation for safety, and for sleeping-cabins narrower and more stifling than any I ever crept into. But one must not expect too much when the charge for a voyage of twenty-six hours is only six and sixpence in the chief cabin.

Not without reason does old Camden remark of the Humber, "it is a common rendezvous for the greatest part of the rivers hereabouts," for it is a noble estuary, notwithstanding that water and shore are alike muddy. It is nearly forty miles long, with a width of more than two miles down to about three leagues from the lighthouse, where it widens to six or seven miles, offering a capacious entrance to the sea. The water has somewhat of an unctuous appearance, as if overcharged with contributions of the very fattest alluvium from all parts of Yorkshire. The results may be seen on the right, as we ascend. There spreads the broad level of Sunk Island, a noteworthy example of dry land produced by the co-operation of natural causes and human industry. The date of its first appearance above the water is not accurately known; but in the reign of Charles II. it was described as three thousand five hundred acres of "drowned ground," of which seven acres were enclosed by embankments; and was let at five pounds a year. A hundred years later fifteen hundred acres were under cultivation, producing a yearly rental of seven hundred pounds to the lessee; but he, it is said, made but little profit, because of the waste and loss occasioned by failure of the banks and irruptions of the tides. In 1802 the island reverted to the Crown, and was re-let on condition that all the salt marsh—nearly three thousand acres—which was "ripe for embankment," should be taken in, and that a church and proper houses should be built, to replace the little chapel and five cottages which ministered as little to the edification as to the comfort of the occupants. In

1833 the lease once more fell in, and the Woods and Forests, wisely ignoring the middlemen, let the lands directly to the 'Sunk farmers,' as they are called in the neighbourhood, and took upon themselves the construction and maintenance of the banks. A good road was made, and bridges were built to connect the Island with the main, and as the accumulations of alluvium still went on, another 'intake' became possible in 1851, and now there are nearly 7000 acres, comprising twenty-three farms, besides a few small holdings, worth more than 12,000*l.* of annual rent. It forms a parish of itself, and not a neglected one; for moral reclamation is cared for as well as territorial. The clergyman has a sufficient stipend; the parishioners supplemented the grants made by Government and the Council of Education, and have now a good schoolhouse and a competent schoolmaster.

The Island will continue to increase in extent and value as long as the same causes continue to operate; and who shall set limits to them? Already the area is greater than that described in the last report of the Woods and Forests, which comprehends only the portion protected by banks. The land when reclaimed is singularly fertile, and free from stones, and proves its quality in the course of three or four years, by producing spontaneously a rich crop of white clover. Another fact, interesting to naturalists, was mentioned by Mr. Oldham in a report read before the British Association, at their meeting in Hull. "When the land, or rather mud-bank, has nearly reached the usual surface elevation, the first vegetable life it exhibits is that of samphire, then of a very

thin wiry grass, and after this some other varieties of marine grass; and when the surface is thus covered with vegetation, the land may at once be embanked; but if it is enclosed from the tide before it obtains a green carpet, it may be for twenty years of but little value to agriculture, for scarcely anything will grow upon it.”

This is not the only place on the eastern coast where we may see artificial land, and banks, dikes, and other defences against the water such as are commonly supposed to be peculiar to the Netherlands.

The windows of Cleathorpes twinkling afar in the morning sun, reveal the situation of a watering-place on the opposite shore much frequented by Lincolnshire folk. Beyond rises the tall and graceful tower of Grimsby Docks, serving at once as signal tower and reservoir of the water-power by which the cranes and other apparatus are worked, and ships laden and unladen with marvellous celerity. These docks cover a hundred acres of what a few years ago was a great mud-flat, and are a favourable specimen of what can be accomplished by the overhasty enterprise of the present day. Grimsby on her side of the river now rivals Hull on the other, with the advantage of being nearer the sea, whereby some miles of navigation are avoided.

Turning to the right again we pass Foul Holme Sand, a long narrow spit, covered at half-tide, which some day may become reclaimable. A little farther and there is the church of Paghill or Paul, standing on a low hill so completely isolated from the

broken village to which it belongs, that the distich runs:

“High Paul, and Low Paul, Paul, and Paul Holme,
There was never a fair maid married in Paul town.”

The vessel urges her way onwards across swirls and eddies innumerable which betray the presence of shoals and the vigorous strife of opposing currents. The spring tides rise twenty-two feet, and rush in with a stream at five miles an hour, noisy and at times dangerous, churning the mud and shifting it from one place to another, to the provocation of pilots. It is mostly above Hull that the changes take place, and there they are so sudden and rapid that a pilot may find the channel by which he had descended shifted to another part of the river on his return a few days afterwards. There also islands appear and disappear in a manner truly surprising, and in the alternate loss or gain of the shores may be witnessed the most capricious of phenomena. Let one example suffice: a field of fourteen acres, above Ferriby, was reduced to less than four acres in twenty years, although the farmer during that time had constructed seven new banks for the defence of his land.

Some notion of the enormous quantity of mud which enters the great river may be formed from the fact that fifty thousand tons of mud have been dredged in one year from the docks and basins at Hull. The steam-dredge employed in the work lifts fifty tons of mud in an hour, pours it into lighters, which

when laden drop down with the tide, and discharge their slimy burden in certain parts of the stream, where, as is said, it cannot accumulate.

Stukely, who crossed the estuary during one of his itineraries, remarks: "Well may the Humber take its name from the noise it makes. My landlord, who is a sailor, says in a high wind 'tis incredibly great and terrible, like the crash and dashing together of ships." The learned antiquary alludes probably to the bore, or *ager* as it is called, which rushes up the stream with so loud a *hum* that the popular mind seeks no other derivation for Humber. Professor Phillips, in his admirable book on Yorkshire, cites the Gaelic word *Comar*, a confluence of two or more waters, as the origin; and Dr. Latham suggests that Humber may be the modified form of *Aber* or *Inver*. Drayton, in *Polyolbion*, chants of a tragical derivation; and as I take it for granted, amicable reader, that you do not wish to travel in a hurry, we will pause for a few minutes to listen to the debate of the rivers, wherein "thus mighty Humber speaks:"

"My brave West Riding brooks, your king you need not scorn,
Proud Naiades neither ye, North Riders that are born,
My yellow-sanded Your, and thou my sister Swale
That dancing come to Ouse, thro' many a dainty dale,
Do greatly me enrich, clear Derwent driving down
From Cleveland; and thou Hull, that highly dost renown,
Th' East Riding by thy rise, do homage to your king,
And let the sea-nymphs thus of mighty Humber sing;

That full an hundred floods my wat'ry court maintain
Which either of themselves, or in their greater's train
Their tribute pay to me; and for my princely name,
From Humber king of Hunns, as anciently it came,
So still I stick to him: for from that Eastern king
Once in me drown'd, as I my pedigree do bring:
So his great name receives no prejudice thereby;
For as he was a king, so know ye all that I
Am king of all the floods, that North of Trent do flow;
Then let the idle world no more such cost bestow,
Nor of the muddy Nile so great a wonder make,
Though with her bellowing fall, she violently take
The neighbouring people deaf; nor Ganges so much praise,
That where he narrowest is, eight miles in broadness lays
His bosom; nor so much hereafter shall be spoke
Of that (but lately found) Guianian Oronoque,
Whose cataract a noise so horrible doth keep
That it even Neptune frights: what flood comes to the deep,
Than Humber that is heard more horribly to roar?
For when my Higre comes, I make my either shore
Even tremble with the sound, that I afar do send."

The view of Hull seen from the water is much more smoky than picturesque. Coming nearer we see the *Cornwallis* anchored off the citadel, looking as trim and earnest as one fancies an English seventy-four ought to look, and quite in keeping with the embrasured walls through which guns are peeping on shore. The quay and landing-places exhibit multifarious signs of life,

especially if your arrival occur when the great railway steam-ferry-boat is about to start. There is, however, something about Hull which inspires a feeling of melancholy. This was my third visit, and still the first impression prevailed. It may be the dead level, or the sleepy architecture, or the sombre colour, or a combination of the three, that touches the dismal key. “Memorable for mud and train oil” was what Etty always said of the town in which he served an apprenticeship of seven weary years; yet in his time there remained certain picturesque features which have since disappeared with the large fleet of Greenland whale-ships whereof the town was once so proud:—now migrated to Peterhead. However, we must not forget that Hull is the third port in the kingdom; that nearly a hundred steamers arrive and depart at regular intervals from over sea, or coastwise, or from up the rivers; that of the 4000 tons of German yeast now annually imported, worth nearly £200,000, it receives more than two-thirds; that it was one of the first places to demonstrate the propulsion of vessels by the power of steam. Nor will we forget that we are in one of the towns formerly held in wholesome dread by evil-doers when recommendation to mercy was seldom heard of, as is testified by the thieves’ litany of the olden time, thus irreverently phrased:

“From Hull, Hell, and Halifax,
Good Lord deliver us.”

Halifax, however, stood pre-eminent for sharp practice; a thief in that parish had no chance of stealing twice, for if he stole to the value of thirteence halfpenny, he was forthwith beheaded.

Andrew Marvell need not have been so severe upon the Dutch, considering how much there was in his native county similar in character and aspect to that which he satirised. You soon discover that this character still prevails. Is not the southern landing place of the steam-ferry named New Holland? and here in Hull, whichever way you look, you see masts, and are stopped by water or a bridge half open, or just going to open, whichever way you walk. It is somewhat puzzling at first; but a few minutes' survey from the top of the High Church affords an explanation.

Following the line once occupied by the old fortifications—the walls by which Parliament baffled the king—the docks form a continuous water-communication from the river Hull on one side to the Humber on the other, so that a considerable portion of the town has become an island, and the sight of masts and pennons in all directions, some slowly moving, is accounted for. At the opening of the Junction Dock in 1829, whereby the desired connection was established, the celebration included circumnavigation of the insular portion by a gaily decorated steamer.

The amphibious Dutch-looking physiognomy thus produced is further assisted by the presence of numerous windmills in the outskirts, and the levelness of the surrounding country. A hundred years ago, and the view across what is now cultivated

fields would have comprehended as much water as land, if not more. Should a certain popular authoress ever publish her autobiography, she will, perhaps, tell us how Mr. Stickney, her father, used when a boy to skate three or four miles to school over unreclaimed flats within sight of this church tower of Hull, now rich in grass and grain. Only by a system of drainage and embankment on a great scale, and a careful maintenance, has the reclamation of this and other parts of Holderness been accomplished. Taylor, the water-poet, who was here in 1632, records,

“It yearly costs five hundred pounds besides
To fence the towne from Hull and Humber’s tydes,
For stakes, for bavins, timber, stones, and piles,
All which are brought by water many miles;
For workmen’s labour, and a world of things,
Which on the towne excessive charges brings.”

British liberty owes something to this superabundance of water. Hull was the first town in the kingdom to shut its gates against the king and declare for the people, and was in consequence besieged by Charles. In this strait, Sir John Hotham, the governor, caused the dikes to be cut and sluices drawn, and laid the whole neighbourhood under water, and kept the besiegers completely at bay. The Royalists, to retaliate, dug trenches to divert the stream of fresh water that supplied the town,—a means of annoyance to which Hull, from its situation, was always liable.

In the good old times, when the neighbouring villagers had any cause of quarrel with the townsfolk, they used to throw carrion and other abominations into the channel, or let in the salt-water, nor would they desist until warned by a certain Pope in an admonitory letter.

The church itself, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, is a handsome specimen of florid Gothic, dating from the reign of Edward II. You will perhaps wish that the effect of the light tall columns, rising to the blue panelled roof, were not weakened by the somewhat cold and bare aspect of the interior. If you are curious about bells, there are inscriptions to be deciphered on some of those that hang in the tower; and in the belfry you may see mysterious tables hanging on the wall of 'grandsire bobs,' and 'grandsire tripples;' things in which the ringers take pride, but as unintelligible to the uninitiated as Babylonish writing. There, too, hangs the ringers' code of laws, and a queer code it is! One of the articles runs:—"Every Person who shall Ring any Bell with his Hat or Spurs on, shall Forfeit and Pay Sixpence, for the Use of the Ringers." And the same fine is levied from "any Person who shall have Read Any of these Orders with his Hat upon his Head;" from which, and the characteristic touches in the other "orders," you will very likely come to some strange conclusions respecting the fraternity of ringers.

The market-place is in the main street, where a gilt equestrian statue of William III. looks down on stalls of fruit, fish, and seaweed, and the moving crowd of townsfolk and sailors. By the

side of the Humber dock rises the Wilberforce monument, a tall column, bearing on its capital a statue of the renowned advocate of the negroes. And when you have looked at these and at the hospital, and walked through the garrison, you will have visited nearly all that is monumental in Hull.

At low water, the little river Hull is a perfect representation of a very muddy ditch. While crossing the ferry to the citadel, the old boatman told me he could remember when every high tide flowed up into the streets of the town, but the new works for the docks now keep the water out. Hundreds of piles were driven into the sandy bank to establish a firm foundation for the massive walls, quays, and abutments. At the time when timber rose to an enormous price in consequence of Napoleon's continental blockade, the piles of the coffer-dam which had been buried seven years, were pulled up and sold for more than their original cost. Government gave the site of some old military works and 10,000*l.* towards the formation of the first dock, on condition that it should be made deep enough to receive ships of fifty guns.

In records of the reign of Henry VIII. there appears—"Item: the Kinges Ma'tes house to be made to serve as a Sitidell and a speciall kepe of the hole town." The present citadel has an antiquated look, and quiet withal, for the whole garrison, at the time I walked through it, numbered only twenty-five artillerymen. Judging from my own experience, one part of the sergeant's duty is to shout at inquisitive strangers who get up on the battery to look through an embrasure, and the more

vehemently as they feign not to hear till their curiosity is satisfied. There is room in the magazines for twenty thousand stand of arms, and ordnance stores for a dozen ships of the line. A ditch fed from the Hull completely separates the fortifications from the neighbouring ship-yards.

Half a day's exploration led me to the conclusion that the most cheerful quarter of Hull is the cemetery. I was sitting there on a grassy bank enjoying the breeze, when a countryman came up who perhaps felt lonely, for he sat down by my side, and in less than a minute became autobiographical. He was a village carpenter, "came forty mile out of Lincolnshire" for the benefit of his health; had been waiting three days for his brother's ship, in which he meant to take a voyage to China, and feeling dull walked every day to the cemetery; for, he said, "It's the pleasantest place I can find about the town." I suggested reading as a relief; but he "couldn't make much out o' readin'—'ud rather work the jack-plane all day than read." The long voyage to China appeared to offer so good an opportunity for improving himself in this particular that I urged him to take a few books on board, and gave an assurance that one hour's study every day would enable him to read with pleasure by the time he returned.

"Oh, but we be on'y three days a-going," he answered.

I had played the part of an adviser to no purpose, for it appeared, on further questioning, that his brother's ship was a small sloop trading to some port beyond the North Sea about three days distant; he did not know where it was, but was sure his

brother called it China. I mentioned the names of all the ports I could think of to discover the real one if possible, but in vain; nor have I yet found one that has the sound of China.

One thing I saw on my way back to the town, which London—so apt to be self-conceited—might adopt with signal advantage. It was a huge iron roller drawn by horses up and down a newly macadamised road. Under the treatment of the ponderous cylinder, the broken stone, combined with a sprinkling of asphalté, is reduced to a firm and level surface, over which vehicles travel without any of that distressing labour and loss of time and temper so often witnessed in the metropolis, where a thousand pair of wheels produce less solidity in a week than the roller would in a day; especially on the spongy roads presided over by St. Pancras.

Late in the evening, while walking about the streets, even in the principal thoroughfares, I saw evidences enough of—to use a mild adjective—an unpolished population. The northern characteristics were strongly marked.

CHAPTER III

A Railway Trip—More Land Reclamation—Hedon—Historical Recollections—Burstwick—The Earls of Albemarle—Keyingham—The Duke of York—Winestead—Andrew Marvell's Birthplace—A Glimpse of the Patriot—Patrington—A Church to be proud of—The Hildyard Arms—Feminine Paper-hangers—Walk to Spurn—Talk with a Painter—Welwick—Yellow Ochre and Cleanliness—Skeffling—Humber Bank—Miles of Mud—Kilnsea—Burstall Garth—The Greedy Sea—The Sandbank—A Lost Town, Ravenser Odd—A Reminiscence from Shakspeare—The Spurn Lighthouse—Withernsea—Owthorne—Sister Churches—The Ghastly Churchyard—A Retort for a Fool—A Word for Philologists.

By the first train on the morrow I started for Patrington. The windmills on the outskirts of the town were soon left behind, and away we went between the thick hedgerows and across the teeming fields, which, intersected by broad deep drains, and grazed by sleek cattle, exhibit at once to your eye the peculiarities of Holderness. All along between the railway and the river there are thousands of acres, formerly called the 'out-marshes,' which have been reclaimed, and now yield wonderful crops of oats. After the principal bank has been constructed, the tide is let in under proper control to a depth of from three to five feet, and is

left undisturbed until all the mud held in suspension is deposited. The impoverished flood is then discharged through the sluices, and in due time, after the first has stiffened, a fresh flow is admitted. By this process of 'warping,' as it is called, three or four feet of mud will be thrown down in three years, covering the original coarse, sour surface with one abounding in the elements of fertility. Far inland, even up the Trent, and around the head of the Humber within reach of the tide, the farmers have recourse to warping, and not unfrequently prefer a fresh layer of mud to all other fertilisers.

About every two miles we stop at a station, and at each there is something to be noted and remembered. Hedon, a dull decayed town, now two miles from the river, once the commercial rival of Hull, has something still to be proud of in its noble church, "the pride of Holderness." Here, too, within a fence, stands the ancient cross, which, after several removals, as the sea devoured its original site—a royal adventurer's landing-place—found here a permanent station. At Burstwick, two miles farther, lay the estates, the *caput baroniæ*, of the renowned Earls of Albemarle. A few minutes more and another stop reminds us of Keyingham bridge, where a party of the men of Holderness opposed the passage of Edward IV. with his three hundred Flemings, some carrying strange fire-weapons, until he replied to their resolute question that he had only come to claim his dukedom of York. A "dukedom large enough" for a wise man. And, as tradition tells, Keyingham church was the scene of a miracle in 1392,

when all the doors were split by a lightning-stroke, and the tomb of Master Philip Ingleberd, formerly rector, sweated a sweetly-scented oil, perhaps out of gratitude to the patron saint for the escape of thirteen men who fell all at once with the ladder while seeking to put out the fire in the steeple, and came to no harm. Then Winestead, which was, if the parish-register may be believed, the birthplace of Andrew Marvell—not Hull, as is commonly reported of the incorruptible Yorkshire man. His father was rector here, but removed to Hull during the poet's infancy, which may account for the error. The font in which he was christened having fallen into neglect, was used as a horse-trough, until some good antiquary removed it into the grounds of Mr. Owst, at Keyingham, where it remains safe among other relics. Andrew represented Hull in parliament for twenty years, and was the last member who, according to old usage, received payment for his services. One's thought kindles in thinking of him here at this quiet village, as a friend of Milton, like him using his gifts manfully and successfully in defence of the Englishman's birthright. What a happy little glimpse we get of him in the lines

“Climb at court for me that will—
Tottering favour's pinnacle;
All I seek is to lie still,
Settled in some secret nest,
In calm leisure let me rest,
And far off the public stage,

Pass away my silent age.
Thus, when without noise, unknown,
I have lived out all my span,
I shall die without a groan,
An old honest countryman.”

Then Patrington—erst Patrick’s town—one of those simple-looking places which contrast agreeably with towns sophisticated by the clamour and bustle of trade; and although a few gas-lamps tell of innovation, a market not more than once a fortnight upholds the authority of ancient usage. You see nearly the whole of the town at once; a long, wide, quiet street, terminated by a graceful spire, so graceful, indeed, that it will allure you at once to the church from which it springs; and what a feast for the eye awaits you! Truly the “pride of Holderness” is not monopolised by Hedon. The style is that which prevailed in the reign of Edward II., and is harmonious throughout, from weathercock to door-sill. You will walk round it again and again, admiring the beauty of its design and proportion, pausing oft to contemplate the curious carvings, and the octagonal spire springing lightly from flying buttresses to a height of one hundred and ninety feet. The gargoyles exhibit strange conceits; chiselled to represent a fiddler—a bagpiper—a man holding a pig—a fiend griping a terrified sinner—a lion thrusting his tongue out—and others equally incongruous. How I wished the architect would come to life for an hour to tell me what he meant by them, and by certain full-length figures carved on the buttresses, which accord

so little with our modern sense of decency, much less with the character of a religious house! Inside you find a corresponding lightness and gracefulness, and similarly relieved by a sprinkling of monsters. The east or 'Ladye aisle' contains three chantry chapels; the 'Easter sepulchre' is a rare specimen of the sculptor's art, and the font hewn from a single block of granite displays touches of a master hand. St. Patrick's church at Patrington is an edifice to linger in; an example of beauty in architecture in itself worth a journey to Yorkshire.

There are relics, too, of an earlier age: embankments discovered some feet below the present surface, fragments of buildings, an altar, and other objects of especial interest to the antiquary, for they mark Patrington as the site of a Roman station. An important station, if the supposition be correct that this was the Prætorium of Antoninus—the place where some of the legions disembarked to subjugate the Brigantes.

To eat breakfast under the sign of the *Hildyard Arms*—a name, by the way, which preserves in a modified form the old Saxon *Hildegarde*—seemed like connecting one's-self with remote antiquity. The ancestors of the Hildyards were here before the Conquest. One of the family, Sir Christopher, is commemorated by a handsome monument in Winestead church. The landlord, willing to entertain in more ways than one, talked of the improvements that had taken place within his remembrance. The railway was not one of them, for it took away trade from the town, and deadened the market. Visitors were but

few, and most of those who came wondered at seeing so beautiful a church in such an out-of-the-way place. He could show me a garden near the churchyard which was said to be the spot where the building-stone was landed from boats; but the water had sunk away hundreds of years ago. Patrington haven—a creek running up from the Humber—had retreated from the town, and since the reclamation of Sunk Island, required frequent dredging to clear it of mud. The farmers in the neighbourhood were very well content with the harvests now yielded by the land. In 1854 some of them reaped “most wonderful crops.”

I had seen a woman painting her door-posts, and asked him whether that was recognised as women’s work in Patrington. “Sure,” he answered, “all over the country too. Women do the whitewashing, and painting, ay, and the paper-hanging. Look at this room, now! My daughter put that up.”

I did look, and saw that the pattern on the walls sloped two or three inches from the perpendicular, whereby opposite sides of the room appeared to be leaning in contrary directions. However, I said nothing to disparage the damsel’s merits.

From Patrington to Spurn the distance is thirteen miles. Hoping to walk thither and back in the day, I snapped the thread of the landlord’s talk, and set out for the lighthouse. Presently I overtook a man, and we had not walked half a mile together before I knew that he was a master-painter in a small way at Patrington, now going to paper a room at Skeffling, a village five miles off. To hear that he would get only sixpence a piece for the

hanging surprised me, for I thought that nowhere out of London would any one be silly enough to hang paper for a halfpenny a yard.

“You see,” he rejoined, “there’s three in the trade at Patrington, and then ’tis only the bettermost rooms that we gets to do. The women does all the rest, and the painting besides. That’s where it is. But ’taint such a very bad job as I be going to. They finds their own paste, and there’s nine pieces to hang: that’ll give me four and sixpence; and then I shall get my dinner, and my tea too, if I don’t finish too soon. So it’ll be a pretty fair day’s work.” And yet the chances were that he would have to wait six months for payment.

We passed through Welwick—place of wells—a small, clean village, with a small, squat church, with carvings sadly mutilated on the outside, and inside, a handsome tomb. At Plowland, near this, lived the Wrights, confederates in the Gunpowder Plot. Nearly all the cottages are models of cleanliness; the door-sill and step washed with yellow ochre, and here and there you see through the open door that the walls of the room inside are papered, and the little pictures and simple ornaments all in keeping. You will take pleasure in these indications, and perhaps believe them to be the result of an affection for cleanliness. The walls of some of the houses and farm-yards are built of pebbles—‘sea-cobbles,’ as they are called—placed zigzag-wise, with a novel and pretty effect: and the examples multiply as we get nearer the sea, where they may be seen in the walls of the

churches.

At Skeffling the painter turned into a farm-house which looked comfortably hospitable enough to put him at ease regarding his dinner, and as if it had little need to take six months' credit for four and sixpence, while I turned from the high-road into a track leading past the church—which, by the way, has architectural features worthy examination—to the coarse and swarthy flats where the distant view is hidden by a great embankment that runs along their margin for miles. Once on the top of this 'Humber-bank,' I met a lusty breeze sweeping in from the sea, and had before me a singular prospect—the bank itself stretching far as the eye can see in a straight line to the east and west, covered with coarse grass and patches of gray, thistle-like, sea-holly—*Eryngo maritima*. Its outer sloop is loose sand falling away to the damp line left by the tide, beyond which all is mud—a great brown expanse outspread for miles. The tide being at its lowest, only the tops of the masts of small vessels are to be seen, moving, as it seems, mysteriously: the river itself is hardly discernible. In places the mud lies smooth and slimy; in others thickly rippled, or tossed into billows, as if the water had stamped thereon an impression of all its moods. Fishermen wade across it in huge boots from their boats to the firm beach, and dig down through it two or three feet to find stiff holding-ground for their anchors.

Yonder rises the lighthouse, surprisingly far, as it seems, to seaward, at times half hidden by a thin, creeping haze. And from

Spurn to Sunk Island this whole northern shore is of the same brown, monotonous aspect: a desert, where the only living things are a few sea-birds, wheeling and darting rapidly, their white wings flashing by contrast with the sad-coloured shore.

I walked along the top of the bank to Kilnsea, deceived continually in my estimate of distance by the long dead level. Here and there a drain pierces the bank, and reappears on the outer side as a raised sewer, with its outlet beyond high-water mark; and these constructions, as well as the waifs and strays—old baskets and dead seagulls—cheat the eye strangely as to their magnitude when first seen. At times, after a lashing storm has swept off a few acres of the mud, the soil beneath is found to be a mixture of peat and gravel, in which animal and vegetable remains and curious antiquities are imbedded. Now and then the relics are washed out, and show by their character that they once belonged to Burstall Priory, a religious house, despoiled by the sea before King Harry began his Reformation. Burstall Garth, one of the pastures traversed by the bank, preserves its name: the building itself has utterly disappeared.

Suddenly a gap occurs in the bank, showing where the unruly tide has broken through. For some reason the mischief was not repaired, but a new bank was constructed of chalk and big pebbles, about a stone's throw to the rear. A green, slimy pool still lies in a hollow between the two.

The entertainment at the *Crown and Anchor* at Kilnsea by no means equals the expectations of a stranger who reads the

host's aristocratic name—*Metforth Tennison*—over the door. I found the bread poor; the cheese poorer; the beer poorest; yet was content therewith, knowing that vicissitude is good for a man. The place itself has a special interest, telling, so to speak, its own history—a history of desolation. The wife, pointing to the road passing between the house and the beach, told me she remembered Kilnsea church standing at the seaward end of the village, with as broad a road between it and the edge of the cliff. But year by year, as from time immemorial the sea advanced, the road, fields, pastures, and cottages were undermined and melted away. Still the church stood, and though it trembled as the roaring waves smote the cliff beneath, and the wind howled around its unsheltered walls, service was held within it up to 1823. In that year it began to yield, the walls cracked, the floor sank, the windows broke; sea-birds flew in and out, shrieking in the storm, until, in 1826, one-half of the edifice tumbled into the sea, and the other half followed in 1831. The chief portion of the village stands on and near the cliff, but as the waste appears to be greater there than elsewhere, houses are abandoned year by year. In 1847, the *Blue Bell Inn* was five hundred and thirty-four yards from the shore; of this quantity forty-three yards were lost in the next six years. Kilnsea exists, therefore, only as a diminished and diminishing parish, and in the few scattered cottages near the bank of the Humber. The old font was carried away from the church to Skeffling, where it is preserved in the garden of the parsonage.

Her reminiscences ended, the good woman talked of the rough walking that lay before me. It was a wild place out there, not often visited by strangers; but sometimes “wagon loads o’ coontra foak cam’ to see t’ loights.” At one time, as I have heard, a stage-coach used to do the journey for the gratification of the curious.

A short distance beyond the *Crown and Anchor* stands a small lone cottage built of sea-cobbles, with a sandy garden and potato-plot in front, and a sandy field, in which a thin, stunted crop of rye was making believe to grow. Once past this cottage, and all is a wild waste of sand, covered here and there with reedy grass, among which you now and then see a dusty pink convolvulus, struggling, as it were, to keep alive a speck of beauty amid the barrenness. Here, as old chronicles tell, the king once had ‘coningers,’ or rabbit-warrens, and rabbits still burrow in the hillocks. Presently, there is the wide open sea on your left, and you can mark the waves rushing up on either side, hissing and thundering against the low bank that keeps them apart.

“A broad long sand in the shape of a spoon,” is the description given of Spurn in a petition presented to parliament nearly two hundred years ago; and, if we suppose the spoon turned upside down, it still answers. It narrows and sinks as it projects from the main shore for about two miles, and this part being the weakest and most easily shifted by the rapid currents, is strengthened every few yards by rows of stakes driven deeply in, and hurdle work. You see the effect in the smooth drifts accumulated in the space between the barriers, which only require to be planted with

grass to become fixed. As it is, the walking is laborious: you sink ankle-deep and slide back at every step, unless you accept the alternative of walking within the wash of the advancing wave. For a long while the lighthouse appears to be as far off as ever.

A little farther, and we are on a rugged embankment of chalk: the ground is low on each side, and a large pond rests in the hollow between us and the sea on the left, marking the spot where, a few years ago, the sea broke through and made a clean sweep all across the bank. Every tide washed it wider and deeper, until at last the fishing-vessels used it as a short cut in entering or departing from the river. The effect of the breach would, in time, had a low-water channel been established, have seriously endangered the shore of the estuary, besides threatening destruction to the site of the lighthouse. As speedily, therefore, as wind and weather would permit, piles and stakes were driven in, and the gap was filled up with big lumps of chalk brought from the quarry at Barton, forming an embankment sloped on both sides, to render the shock of the waves as harmless as possible. The trucks, rails, and sleepers with which the work had been accomplished were still lying on the sand, awaiting removal. Henceforth measures of precaution will be taken in time, for a conservator of the river has been appointed.

The depth of the bay formed by the spoon appears to increase more and more each time you look back. How vast is the curve between this bank of chalk and the point where we struck the shore from Skeffling! The far-spreading sands—or rather mud

—are known as the Trinity Dry Sands. At this moment they are disappearing beneath the rising tide, and you can easily see what thousands of acres might be reclaimed were a barrier erected to keep out the water. “Government have been talkin’ o’ doing it for years,” said a fisherman to whom I talked at Kilnsea, “but ’tain’t begun yet.”

Desolate as is now the scene, it was once enlivened by the dwellings of men and the stir of commerce. Off the spot where we stand, there lay, five hundred years ago, a low islet, accessible by a flat ridge of sand and yellow pebbles, known as Ravenser Odd, or Ravensrode, as some write it. “Situatè at the entry to the sea,” it was a port regarded with envy and fear by the merchants of Grimsby and Hull, for its pilots were skilful, and its traders enterprising. For a time it flourished; but while the rival Roses wasted the realm, the sea crept nearer, and at length, after an existence of a century and a half, distinctly traceable in ancient records and old books, a high tide, enraged by a storm, ended the history of Ravenser Odd with a fearful catastrophe. A gravelly bank, running outwards, still discoverable by excavation, is believed to be the foundation of the low, flat ridge of sand and yellow pebbles along which the folk of the little town passed daily to and fro; among them at times strange seamen and merchants from far-away lands, and cowled monks and friars pacing meekly on errands of the Church.

And yonder, near the bottom of the curve, stood the town variously described as Ravenser, Ravenspurne, and Ravenspurg

—a town that sent members to parliament in the reigns of the first two Edwards, and was considered of sufficient importance to be invited to take part in the great councils held in London, when the “kinge’s majestie” desired to know the naval forces of the kingdom. Now, twice a day, the tide rolls in triumphantly over its site.

“The banish’d Bolingbroke repeals himself,
And with uplifted arms is safe arriv’d
At Ravenspurgh,”

writes Shakspeare, perpetuating alike the name of the place and the memory of the Duke of Lancaster’s adventure,—an adventure brought before us in an invective by the fiery Hotspur, which I may, perhaps, be pardoned for introducing here:

“My father, my uncle, and myself,
Did give him that same royalty he wears:
And,—when he was not six and twenty strong,
Sick in the world’s regard, wretched and low,
A poor unminded outlaw, sneaking home,—
My father gave him welcome to the shore:
And,—when he heard him swear a vow to God,
He came but to be Duke of Lancaster,
To sue his livery, and beg his peace;
With tears of innocency and terms of zeal,—
My father, in kind heart and pity mov’d,
Swore him assistance, and performed it too.

Now, when the lords and barons of the realm
Perceived Northumberland did lean to him,
The more and less came in with cap and knee;
Met him in boroughs, cities, villages;
Attended him on bridges, stood in lanes,
Laid gifts before him, proffered him their oaths,
Gave him their heirs; as pages follow'd him,
Even at the heels, in golden multitudes.
He presently,—as greatness knows itself,—
Steps me a little higher than his vow
Made to my father, while his blood was poor,
Upon the naked shore at Ravenspurgh.”

The cross set up to commemorate the landing was shifted from place to place when endangered by the sea, and lastly to Hedon, where it still remains, as already mentioned. It was at the same port that Edward IV. landed, with an excuse plausible as that of the duke whose exploit he imitated.

Though it be “naked” still, and toilsome to walk on, the shore is by no means barren of interest. By-and-by we come to firm ground, mostly covered with thickly-matted grass; a great irregular, oval mound, which represents the bowl of the spoon reversed. Near its centre is a fenced garden and a row of cottages—the residence of the life-boat crew. A little farther, on the summit of the ridge, stands the lighthouse, built by Smeaton, in 1776, and at the water’s edge, on the inner side, the lower light. The principal tower is ninety feet in height, and from the

gallery at the top you get an excellent bird's-eye view over sea and land. Most remarkable is the tongue of sand along which we have walked, now visible in its whole extent and outline. It is lowest where the breach was made, and now that the tide has risen higher, the chalk embankment seems scarcely above the level of the water. Beyond that it broadens away to the shore of the estuary on one side, and the coast of Holderness on the other—low, sweeping lines which your eye follows for miles. By the waste of that coast the Spurn is maintained, and the Trinity Sands are daily enlarged, and the meadows fattened along Ouse and Trent. First the lighter particles of the falling cliffs drift round by the set of the current, and gradually the heavier portions and pebbles follow, and the supply being inexhaustible, a phenomenon is produced similar to that of the Chesil Bank, on the coast of Dorsetshire, except that here the pebbles are for the most part masked by sand.

I looked northwards for Flamborough Head, but Dimlington Hill, which lies between, though not half the height, hides it completely. Beyond Dimlington lies Withernsea, a small watering-place, the terminus of the Hull and Holderness Railway, to which the natives of the melancholy town betake themselves for health and recreation, tempted by a quadrille band and cheap season-tickets. Adjoining Withernsea is all that remains of Owthorne, a village which has shared the doom of Kilnsea. The churches at the two places were known as 'sister churches;' that at Withernsea yet stands in ruins; but Owthorne

church was swept into the sea within the memory of persons now living. The story runs that two sisters living there, each on her manor, in the good old times, began to build a church for the glory of God and the good of their own souls, and the work went on prosperously until a quarrel arose between them on the question of spire or tower. Neither would yield. At length a holy monk suggested that each sister should build a church on her own manor; the suggestion was approved, and for long years the Sister Churches resounded with the voice of prayer and praise, and offered a fair day-mark to the mariner.

But, as of old, the devouring sea rushed higher and higher upon the land, and the cliff, sapped and undermined, fell, and with it the church of Owthorne. In 1786, the edge of the burial-ground first began to fail; the church itself was not touched till thirty years later. It was a mournful sight to see the riven churchyard, and skeletons and broken coffins sticking out from the new cliff, and bones, skulls, and fragments of long-buried wood strewn on the beach. One of the coffins washed out from a vault under the east end of the church contained an embalmed corpse, the back of the scalp still bearing the gray hairs of one who had been the village pastor. The eyes of the villagers were shocked by these ghastly relics of mortality tossed rudely forth to the light of day; and aged folk who tottered down to see the havoc, wept as by some remembered token they recognised a relative or friend of bygone years, whom they had followed to the grave—the resting place of the dead, as they trusted, till the

end of time. In some places bodies still clad in naval attire, with bright-coloured silk kerchiefs round the neck, were unearthed, as if the sea were eager to reclaim the shipwrecked sailors whom it had in former time flung dead upon the shore.

But, to return to the lighthouse. According to Smeaton's survey this extremity of the spoon comprehends ninety-eight acres. It slopes gently to the sea, and is somewhat altered in outline by every gale. At the time of my visit, rows of piles were being driven in, and barriers of chalk erected, to secure the ground on the outer side between the tower and the sea; and a new row of cottages for the life-boat crew, built nearer to the side where most wrecks occur than the old row, was nearly finished. Beyond, towards the point, stands a public-house, in what seems a dangerous situation, close to the water. There was once a garden between it and the sea; now the spray dashes into the rear of the house; for the wall and one-half of the hindermost room have disappeared along with the garden, and the hostess contents herself with the rooms in front, fondly hoping they will last her time. She has but few guests now, and talks with regret of the change since the digging of ballast was forbidden on the Spurn. Then trade was good, for the diggers were numerous and thirsty. That ballast-digging should ever have been permitted in so unstable a spot argues a great want of forethought somewhere.

The paved enclosure around the tower is kept scrupulously clean, for the rain which falls thereon and flows into the cistern beneath is the only drinkable water to be had. "It never fails," said

the keeper, "but in some seasons acquires a stale flavour." He was formerly at Flamborough, and although appointment to the Spurn was promotion, he did not like it so well. It was so lonesome; the rough, trackless way between, made the nearest village seem far off; now and then a boat came across with visitors from Cleathorpes, a seven miles' trip; there had been one that morning, but not often enough to break the monotony. And he could not get much diversion in reading, for the Trinity Board, he knew not why, had ceased to circulate the lighthouse library.

The lesser tower stands at the foot of the inner slope, where its base is covered by every tide. Its height is fifty feet, and the entrance, approached by a long wooden bridge, is far above reach of the water. This is the third tower erected on the same spot; the two which preceded it suffered so much damage from the sea that they had to be rebuilt.

About the time that ambitious Bolingbroke landed, a good hermit, moved with pity by the number of wrecks, and the dangers that beset the mouth of the estuary, set up a light somewhere near Ravenser. But finding himself too poor to maintain it, he addressed a petition to the "wyse Commons of Parliament," for succour, and not in vain. The mayor of Hull, with other citizens, were empowered "to make a toure to be up on daylight and a redy bekyn wheryn shall be light gevyng by nyght to alle the vesselx that comyn into the seid ryver of Humbre."

In the seventeenth century, Mr. Justinian Angell, of London, obtained a license to build a lighthouse on the Spurn. It was an

octagonal tower of brick, displaying an open coal fire on the top, which in stormy weather was frequently blown quite out, when most wanted. Wrecks were continually taking place; and it is only since Smeaton completed his tower, and the floating-light was established in the offing, and the channel was properly buoyed, that vessels can approach the Humber with safety by night as well as by day.

It was full tide when I returned along the chalky embankment, and the light spray from the breakers sprinkled my cheek, giving me a playful intimation of what might be expected in a storm.

I was passing a tilery near Welwick, when a beery fellow, who sat in the little office with a jug before him and a pipe in his mouth, threw up the window and asked, in a gruff, insolent tone, "A say, guvner, did ye meet Father Mathew?"

"Yes."

"What did he say to ye?"

"He told me I should see a fool at the tileworks."

Down went the window with a hearty slam, and before I was fifty yards away, the same voice rushed into the road and challenged me to go back and fight. And when the owner of the voice saw that the stranger took no heed thereof, he cried, till hidden by a bend in the road, "Yer nothin' but t' scam o' t' yerth! —yer nothin' but t' scam o' t' yerth!"

Thinking *scram* might be the Yorkshire for *scum*, I made a note of it for the benefit of philologists, and kept on to Patrington, where I arrived in time for the last train to Hull, quite content

with six-and-twenty miles for my first day's walk.

CHAPTER IV

Northern Manners—Cottingham—The Romance of Baynard Castle—Beverley—Yorkshire Dialect—The Farmers' Breakfast—Glimpses of the Town—Antiquities and Constables—The Minster—Yellow Ochre—The Percy Shrine—The Murdered Earl—The Costly Funeral—The Sister's Tomb—Rhyming Legend—The Fridstool—The Belfry.

Journeying from Hull to Beverley by 'market-train' on the morrow, I had ample proof, in the noisy talk of the crowded passengers, that Yorkshire dialect and its peculiar idioms are not "rapidly disappearing before the facilities for travel afforded by railways." Nor could I fail to notice what has before struck me, that taken class for class, the people north of Coventry exhibit a rudeness, not to say coarseness of manners, which is rarely seen south of that ancient city. In Staffordshire, within twenty miles of Birmingham, there are districts where baptism, marriage, and other moral and religious observances considered as essentials of Christianity, are as completely disregarded as among the heathen. In some parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire similar characteristics prevail; but rude manners do not necessarily imply loose morality. Generally speaking the rudeness is a safety-valve that lets off the faults or seeming faults of character; and I for one prefer rudeness to that over-refinement prevalent in Middlesex,

where you may not call things by their right names, and where, as a consequence, the sense of what is fraudulent, and criminal, and wicked, has become weakened, because of the very mild and innocent words in which 'good society' requires that dishonesty and sin should be spoken of.

If we alight at Cottingham and take a walk in the neighbourhood we may discover the scene of a romantic incident. There stood Baynard Castle, a grand old feudal structure, the residence of Lord Wake. When Henry VIII. lay at Hull, he sent a messenger to announce a royal visit to the castle, anticipating, no doubt, a loyal reception; but the lord instead of pride felt only alarm, for his wife, whom he loved truly, was very beautiful, and he feared for the consequences should the amorous monarch set eyes on her beauty. He resolved on a stratagem: gave instructions to his confidential steward; departed at dead of night with his wife; and before morning nothing of the castle remained but a heap of smoking ruins. The king, on hearing of the fire, little suspecting the cause, generously sent a gift of two thousand pounds, with friendly words, to mitigate the loss; but the wary lord having evaded the visit, refused also to receive the money. And now, after lapse of centuries, there is nothing left but traces of a moat and rampart, to show the wayfarer where such an ardent sacrifice was made to true affection.

Even among the farmers, at whose table I took breakfast at the *Holderness Hotel*, at Beverley, there was evidence that broad Yorkshire is not bad Dutch, as the proverb says:

“Gooid brade, botter, and cheese,
Is gooid Yorkshire, and gooid Friese.”

The farmers talked about horses, and, to my surprise, they ate but daintily of the good things, the beef, ham, mutton, brawn, and other substantial fare that literally burdened the table. Not one played the part of a good trencherman, but trifled as if the victim of dinners fashionably late; and still more to my surprise, when the conversation took a turn, they all spoke disdainfully of walking. That sort of exercise was not at all to their liking. “I ha’n’t walked four mile I don’t know when,” said one; and his fellows avowed themselves similarly lazy. My intention to walk along the coast to the mouth of the Tees appeared to them a weakminded project.

Beverley has a staid, respectable aspect, as if aware of its claims to consideration. Many of the houses have an old-world look, and among them a searching eye will discover unmistakable bits of antiquity. A small columnar building in the market-place is called the market-cross; beyond it stands a rare old specimen of architecture, St. Mary’s church, the scene of the accident recorded by the ancient rhymer:—

“At Beverley a sudden chaunce did falle,
The parish chirche stepille it fell
At evynsonge tyme, the chaunce was thralle,
Ffourscore folke ther was slayn thay telle.”

Beyond the church, one of the old town gates, a heavy stone arch, bestrides the street. At the other end of the town, screened by an ancient brick wall, you may see the house of the Black Friars—more venerable than picturesque—besides little glimpses of the middle ages on your straggling saunter thither. Among these are not a few of that sort of endowments which give occasion for abuses, and perpetuate helplessness. And of noticeable peculiarities you will perhaps think that one might be beneficially imitated in other towns. A Constable Lives Here is a notification which you may read on sundry little boards, topped by a royal crown, nailed here and there over the doors.

But the minster is the great attraction, rich in historical associations and architectural beauty. The edifice, as it now appears, has all been built since the destruction by fire, in 1138, of an older church that stood on the same spot. The style is diverse, a not uncommon characteristic of ancient churches: Early English at the east end, Decorated in the nave, and Perpendicular in the west front and some minor portions. This western front is considered the master-work, for not one of its features is out of harmony with the others—a specimen of the Perpendicular, so Rickman signifies, not less admirable than the west front of York Minster of the Decorated. The effect, indeed, is singularly striking as you approach it from a quiet back street. I found a seat in a favourable point of view, and sat till my eye was satisfied with the sight of graceful forms, multiplied carvings,

the tracery and ornament from base to roof, and upwards, where the towers, two hundred feet in height, rise grandly against the bright blue sky.

However much you may admire yellow ochre on door-steps, door-posts, and in the passages and on the stairs of dwelling-houses, you will think it out of place when used to hide the natural colour of the masonry in a noble church. For me, the effect of the interior was marred by the yellow mask of the great pillars. The eye expects repose and harmony, and finds itself cheated. Apart from this, the lofty proportions, the perspective of the aisles, the soaring arches, the streaming lights and tinted shadows, fail not in their power to charm. Your architect is a mighty magician. All the windows, as is believed, were once filled with stained glass, for the large east window was glazed in 1733 with the numerous fragments that remained after the destroyers of ecclesiastical art had perpetrated their mischief. The colours show the true old tone; and the effect, after all, is not displeasing.

The Percy shrine on the north side of the choir is one of the monuments to which, after viewing the carved stalls and the altar screen, the sexton will call your special attention. It is a canopied tomb of exquisite workmanship, enriched with various carvings, figures of knights and angels, crockets and finials; marking the resting-place, as is supposed, of the Lady Idonea Clifford, wife of the second Lord Percy of Alnwick. The Percys played a conspicuous part in Yorkshire history. Another of the family,

grandson of Hotspur, reposes, as is said, under a tomb in the north transept. He was not a warrior, but a prebend of Beverley. Then, at the east end, the Percy chapel, which has lost its beauty through mutilation, commemorates Henry, the fourth Earl of Northumberland, who was massacred at his seat, Maiden Bower, near Topcliffe, in 1489. Authorized by Henry VII. to answer the appeal of the leading men of his neighbourhood against a tax which levied one-tenth of their property, by a declaration that not one penny would be abated, he delivered his message in terms so haughty and imperious, that the chiefs losing patience, brought up their retainers, sacked the house and murdered the earl. The corpse was buried here in the minster; and the funeral, which cost a sum equivalent to 10,000*l.* present value, is described as of surpassing magnificence. Among the numerous items set down in the bill of charges is twopence a piece for fourteen thousand "pore folk" at the burial.

In the south aisle of the nave stands another canopied tomb, an altar tomb of elegant form, covered by a slab of Purbeck marble, which appears never to have had a word of inscription to tell in whose memory it was erected. Neither trace nor record: nothing but tradition, and Venerable Bede. St. John of Beverley had only to send a cruse of water into which he had dipped his finger to a sick person to effect a cure. He once restored the wife of Earl Puch, who lived at Bishop Burton, a few miles distant. The lady drank a draught of holy water, and recovered forthwith from a grievous sickness. She had two daughters who, overawed by

the miracle, entered the nunnery at Beverley, where they won a reputation for holiness and good works. It was they who gave the two pastures on which freemen of the town still graze their cattle. The rest of their story is told in the ballad: it was Christmas-eve, says the rhymer, the customary service had been performed in the chapel; the abbess and her nuns slowly retired to pursue their devotions apart in their cells, all save two, who lingered and went forth hand in hand after the others. Whither went they? On the morrow they were missing; and

“The snow did melt, the Winter fled
Before the gladsome Spring,
And flowers did bud, the cuckoo piped,
And merry birds did sing:

“And Spring danced by, and crowned with boughs
Came lusty Summer on:
And the bells ring out, for ’tis the eve,
The eve of blessed St. John.

“But where bide they, the sisters twain?
Have the holy sisters fled?
And the abbess and all her nuns bewail’d
The sisters twain for dead.

“Then walk they forth in the eventide,
In the cool and dusky hour;
And the abbess goes up the stair of stone

High on the belfry tower,

“Now Christ thee save! thou sweet ladye,
For on the roof-tree there,
Like as in blessed trance y-rapt,
She sees the sisters fair.

“Whence come ye, daughters? long astray:
'Tis but an hour, they tell,
Since we did chant the vesper hymn,
And list the vesper bell.

“Nay, daughters, nay! 'tis months ago:
Sweet mother, an hour we ween;
But we have been in heaven each one,
And holy angels seen.”

A miracle! cries the rhymer; and he goes on to tell how that the nuns repair to the chapel and chant a hymn of praise, after which the two sisters, kneeling, entreat the abbess for her blessing, and no sooner has she pronounced *Vade in pace*, than drooping like two fair lilies, two pale corpses sink to the floor. Then the bells break into a chime wondrously sweet, rung by no earthly hand; and when the sisters are laid in the tomb, they suffer no decay. Years passed away, and still no change touched those lovely forms and angelic features:

“And pilgrims came from all the land,

And eke from oversea,
To pray at the shrine of the sisters twain,
And St. John of Beverley.”

Another noteworthy object is King Athelstan's *Fridstool*, or chair of peace; the centre of a sanctuary which extended a mile from the minster in all directions. Any fugitive who could once sit therein was safe, whatever his crime. When Richard II. encamped at Beverley, on his way to Scotland, his half-brother, Sir John Holland, having aided in the atrocious murder of Lord Ralph Stafford, fled to the *Fridstool*, nor would he leave it until assured of the king's pardon. "The Countess of Warwick is now out of Beverley sanctuary," says Sir John Paston, writing to his brother in June, 1473—the days of Edward IV. The chair, hewn from a single block of stone, is very primitive in form and appearance; and as devoid of beauty as some of the seats in the Soulages collection. Athelstan was a great benefactor to the church. You may see his effigy, and that of St. John, at the entrance to the choir and over a door in the south transept, where he is represented as handing a charter to the holy man, of which one of the privileges is recorded in old English characters:

Als Fre make I The
As hert may thynke or Egh may see.

Such a generous giver deserved to be held in honour, especially if the eye were to see from the height of the tower, to the top of which I now mounted by the narrow winding-stair.

While stopping to take breath in the belfry, you will perhaps be amused by a table of ringer's laws, and a record of marvellous peals, the same in purport as those exhibited at Hull. You can take your time in the ascent, for sextons eschew climbing, at least in all the churches I visited in Yorkshire.

CHAPTER V

A Scotchman's Observations—The Prospect—The Anatomy of Beverley—Historical Associations—The Brigantes—The Druids—Austin's Stone—The Saxons—Coifi and Paulinus—Down with Paganism—A Great Baptism—St. John of Beverley—Athelstan and Brunanburgh—The Sanctuary—The Conqueror—Archbishop Thurstan's Privileges—The Sacrilegious Mayor—Battle of the Standard—St. John's Miracles—Brigand Burgesses—Annual Football—Surrounding Sites—Watton and Meaux—Etymologies—King Athelstan's Charter.

“On my first coming to England I landed at Hull, whose scenery enraptured me. The extended flatness of surface—the tall trees loaded with foliage—the large fat cattle wading to the knees in rich pasture—all had the appearance of fairy-land fertility. I hastened to the top of the first steeple—thence to the summit of Beverley Minster, and wondered over the plain of verdure and rank luxury, without a heathy hill or barren rock, which lay before me. When, after being duly sated into dulness by the constant sight of this miserably flat country, I saw my old bare mountains again, my ravished mind struggled as if it would break through the prison of the body, and soar with the eagle to the summit of the Grampians. The Pentland, Lomond, and Ochil hills seemed to have grown to an amazing size in my absence, and

I remarked several peculiarities about them which I had never observed before.”

This passage occurs in the writings of the late James Gilchrist, an author to whom I am indebted for some part of my mental culture. I quote it as an example of the different mood of mind in which the view from the top of the tower may be regarded. To one fresh from a town it is delightful. As you step on the leads and gaze around on what was once called “the Lowths,” you are surprised by the apparently boundless expanse—a great champaign of verdure, far as eye can reach, except where, in the north-west, the wolds begin to upheave their purple undulations. The distance is forest-like: nearer the woods stand out as groves, belts, and clumps, with park-like openings between, and everywhere fields and hedgerows innumerable. How your eye feasts on the uninterrupted greenness, and follows the gleaming lines of road running off in all directions, and comes back at last to survey the town at the foot of the tower!

Few towns will bear inspection from above so well as Beverley. It is well built, and is as clean in the rear of the houses as in the streets. Looking from such a height, the yards and gardens appear diminished, and the trim flower-beds, and leafy arbours, and pebbled paths, and angular plots, and a prevailing neatness reveal much in favour of the domestic virtues of the inhabitants. And the effect is heightened by the green spaces among the bright red roofs, and woods which straggle in patches into the town, whereby it retains somewhat of the sylvan aspect for which it was

in former times especially remarkable.

Apart from its natural features, the region is rich in associations. The history of Beverley, an epitome of that of the whole county, tempts one to linger, if but for half an hour. It will not be time thrown away, for a glimpse of the past may beneficially influence our further wanderings.

Here the territory of the Brigantes, which even the Romans did not conquer till more than a hundred years after their landing in Kent, stretched across the island from sea to sea. Here, deep in the great forest, the Druids had one of their sacred groves, a temple of living oaks, for their mysterious worship and ruthless sacrifices. Hundreds of tumuli scattered over the country, entombing kysts, coffins, fragments of skeletons, and rude pottery, and not less the names of streets and places, supply interesting testimony of their existence. Drewton, a neighbouring village, marks, as is said, the site of Druid's-town, where a stone about twelve feet in height yet standing was so much venerated by the natives, that Augustine stood upon it to preach, and erected a cross thereupon that the worshipper might learn to associate it with a purer faith. It is still known as Austin's Stone.

The Saxon followed, and finding the territory hollow between the cliffs of the coast and the wolds, named it Höll-deira-ness, whence the present Holderness. It was in the forest of Deira that the conference was held in presence of Edwin and Ethelburga, between the missionary Paulinus and Coifi, the high-priest of Odin, on the contending claims of Christianity and Paganism.

The right prevailed; and Coifi, convinced by the arguments he had heard, seized a spear, and hurrying on horseback to the temple at Godmanham, cursed his deity, and hurled the spear at the image with such fury that it remained quivering in the wall of the sacred edifice. The multitude looked on in amazement, waiting for some sign of high displeasure at so outrageous a desecration. But no sign was given, and veering suddenly from dread to derision, they tore down the temple, and destroyed the sacred emblems. Edwin's timorous convictions were strengthened by the result, and so great was the throng of converts to the new faith, that, as is recorded, Paulinus baptized more than ten thousand in one day in the Swale. According to tradition, the present church at Godmanham, nine miles distant, a very ancient edifice, was built from the ruins of the Pagan temple.

St. John of Beverley was born at Harpham, a village near Driffeld—Deirafeld—in 640. Diligent in his calling, and eminently learned and conscientious, he became Archbishop of York. In 700 he founded here an establishment of monks, canons, and nuns, and rebuilt or beautified the church, which had been erected in the second century; and when, after thirty-three years of godly rule over his diocese, he laid aside the burden of authority, it was to the peaceful cloisters of Beverley that he retired. "He was educated," says Fuller, "under Theodorus the Grecian, and Archbishop of Canterbury, yet was he not so famous for his teacher as for his scholar, Venerable Bede, who

wrote this John's life, which he hath so spiced with miracles, that it is of the hottest for a discreet man to digest into his belief." He died in 721, and was buried in his favourite church, with a reputation for sanctity which eventually secured him a place in the calendar.

Was it not to St. John of Beverley that Athelstan owed the victory at Brunanburgh, which made him sole monarch of Northumbria? The fame of the "great battle" remains, while all knowledge of the site of Brunanburgh has utterly perished, unless, as is argued in the Proceedings of the Literary and Historical Society of Liverpool, it was fought near Burnley, in Lancashire. It was celebrated alike in Anglo-Saxon song and history. Greater carnage of people slain by the edge of the sword, says the ancient chronicle, had never been seen in this island, since Angles and Saxons, mighty war-smiths, crossed the broad seas to Britain. Athelstan, in fulfilment of his vow, laid up his sword at the shrine of St. John, and added largely to the revenues and privileges of the church. A stone cross, erected on each of the four roads, a mile from the minster, marked the limits of the sanctuary which he conferred. One of these yet remains, but in a sadly mutilated condition.

When the Conqueror came and laid the country waste from Humber to Tees, trampling it into a "horrible wilderness," he spared Beverley and the surrounding lands, yielding, as was believed, to the miraculous influence of the patron saint. One of his soldiers, who entered the town with hostile intent, became

suddenly paralysed, and smitten with incurable disease; and a captain falling, by accident, as it seemed, from his horse, his head was turned completely round by the shock. These were warnings not to be disregarded; and Beverley remained a scene of fertile beauty amid the desolation.

One of John's successors, Archbishop Thurstan, took pleasure also in fondling Beverley. He cut the canal, a mile in length, from the river Hull to the town: he gave to the inhabitants a charter of incorporation conferring similar privileges to those enjoyed by the citizens of York, whereby they were free from all fines and dues in England and Normandy; had the right to pontage—that is, a toll on all the barges and boats that passed under a bridge, as well as on the vehicles over it; and to worry debtors as rigorously as they chose, without fear of retaliation. In these anti-church-rate days it is surprising enough to read of the power exercised by an archbishop in the twelfth century. Thurstan had rule over the baronies of Beverley and five other places, with power to try and execute criminals, and punish thieves without appeal. In all the baronies the prisons were his; to him belonged the gibbet, pillory, and cucking-stool in the towns; the assize of bread and beer; waifs and wrecks of the sea; the right to 'prises' in the river Hull, diligently enforced by his watchful coroners; besides park and free warren, and all his land released from suit and service.

That taking of prises, by the way, was a standing cause of quarrel between the burghers of Hull and Beverley. The right to seize two casks of wine from every vessel of more than twenty

tons burthen that entered the river, one before, the other behind the mast, was a grievance too much akin to robbery to be borne with patience. The merchants, wise in their generation, tried to save their casks by discharging the cargoes into smaller vessels before entering the port; but the coroners detected the evasion, and took their prizes all the same. Hence bitter quarrels; in which the Beverley ships, dropping down the stream to pursue their voyage, were many times barred out of the Humber by the men of Hull. Once, when the archbishop appeared at the port to defend his right, the mayor, losing temper, snatched the crosier from the dignitary's hand, and, using it as a weapon, actually spilt blood with the sacred instrument.

Never was the saint's influence more triumphantly felt than when Thurstan's fiery eloquence roused the citizens of York to march against David of Scotland. The Scottish king, to support Maud's claim against Stephen, ravaged Northumbria with such ferocious devastation, that it seemed but a repetition of the Norman havoc, and provoked the Saxon part of the population to join in repelling the invader. After threatening York, David moved northwards, followed by the Yorkshire army, which had rendezvoused at the castle of Thirsk. To inspire their patriotism, a great pole, topped by a crucifix, and hung with the standards of St. John of Beverley, St. Peter of York, and St. Wilfred of Ripon, was mounted on wheels, and placed where every eye could behold it. The Scottish army was overtaken three miles beyond Northallerton, on the 22nd of August, 1138. The king,

seeing the threefold standard from afar, inquires of a deserter what it means; whereupon he replies, in the words of the ballad:

“A mast of a ship it is so high,
All bedeck'd with gold so gay;
And on its top is a Holy Cross,
That shines as bright as day.

“Around it hang the holy banners
Of many a blessed saint:
St Peter, and John of Beverley,
And St. Wilfrid there they paint.”

The king begins to have misgivings, and rejoins:

“Oh! had I but yon Holy Rood
That there so bright doth show,
I would not care for yon English host,
Nor the worst that they could do.”

But in vain: the Yorkshire blood was up, no quarter was given, and ten thousand Scotchmen bit the dust. So complete was the victory, that the oppressed Saxons boasted of it as an indemnity for their former sufferings; and the Battle of the Standard remains memorable among the greatest battles of Yorkshire, and the Standard Hill among her historical places.

Was it not the same St. John who afterwards appeared in full pontificals to Stephen, and warned him to stay his purpose of

building a castle at Beverley? and was it not again his banner, saved from the fire when the town and minster were burnt in 1186, which rendered Edward I. victorious in his invasion of Scotland? Did not his tomb sweat blood on that famous day of Agincourt, and the rumour thereof bring Henry V. and his lovely Kate hither on a pilgrimage?

Then the chronicler tells us that one while the provost and burgesses, resolving to enlarge and beautify the minster, brought together the best workmen from all parts of England; and later, that the corporation repaired the edifice with stones taken from the neighbouring abbey of Watton. And so bitter became the quarrels between Hull and Beverley, that some of the chief men encouraged the insurrectionary movements known as the *Rising of the North* and the *Pilgrimage of Grace*, with no other purpose than to damage their rivals. The burgesses of Beverley, not having the fear of the marshal before their eyes, were accused of unfair trading: of keeping two yard measures and two bushels: unlawfully long and big to buy with—unlawfully short and small to sell with. And when in process of time the trade of the town decayed, evil-minded persons looked on the change as a judgment. At present there is little of manufacture within it besides that of the implements which have made the name of Crosskill familiar to farmers.

Some old customs lingered here obstinately. The cucking-stool was not abolished until 1750, which some think was a hundred years too soon. Ducking-stool-lane preserves its

memory. And down to 1825, an annual match at football was played on the Sunday before the races, to which there gathered all the rabble of the town and adjacent villages, who for some years successfully resisted the putting down of what had become a nuisance. Instead of abolishing the game, it would have been better to change the day, and hold weekly football matches on the race-course.

From the tower-top the eye takes in the site of Leckonfield, where the Percys had a castle; of Watton Abbey, where an English Abelard and Heloise mourned and suffered; of the scanty remains of Meaux Abbey, founded about 1140, by William le Gros, Earl of Albemarle. Concerning this nobleman, we read that he had vowed a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but grew so fat as to be detained at home against his will. Feeling remorse, he consulted his confessor, who advised him to establish a convent of Cistercians. A monk from Fountains, eminent alike for piety and skill in architecture, was invited to choose a site. He selected a park-like tract commanding a view of the Humber. The earl, loving the place, bade him reconsider his choice; but the monk, striking his staff into the ground, replied, "This place shall in future be called the door of life, the vineyard of heaven, and shall for ever be consecrated to religion and the service of God." The abbey was built and tenanted by cowls from Fountains, and flourished until floods and high tides wasted the lands, and the Reformation destroyed the house.

But though one man may write a poem while "waiting on the

bridge at Coventry,” another may hardly, without presumption, write a long chapter on the top of a tower. Let me end, therefore, while descending, with a scrap of etymology. Beaver lake, that is, the lake of floating islands, sacred to the Druids, is said by one learned scribe to be the origin of the name Beverley. Another finds it in the beavers that colonized the river Hull, with *lea* for a suffix, and point to an ancient seal, which represents St. John seated, resting his feet on a beaver. Did not the wise men of Camelford set up the figure of a camel on the top of their steeple, as a weathercock, because their river winds very much, and camel is the aboriginal British word for crooked? Other scholars trace Beverley through Bevorlac, back to *Pedwarllech*—the four stones.

And here, by way of finish, are a few lines from Athelstan’s charter:

“Yat witen all yat ever been
Yat yis charter heren and seen
Yat I ye King Athelstan
Has yaten and given to St. John
Of Beverlike yat sai you
Tol and theam yat wit ye now
Sok and sake over al yat land
Yat is given into his hand.”

CHAPTER VI

The Great Drain—The Carrs—Submerged Forest—River Hull—Tickton—Routh—Tippling Rustics—A Cooler for Combatants—The Blind Fiddler—The Improvised Song—The Donkey Races—Specimens of Yorkshiremen—Good Wages—A Peep at Cottage Life—Ways and Means—A Paragraph for Bachelors—Hornsea Mere—The Abbots' Duel—Hornsea Church—The Marine Hotel.

About a mile from the town on the road to Hornsea, you cross one of the great Holderness drains, broad and deep enough for a canal, which, traversing the levels, falls into the sea at Barmston. It crosses the hollow lands known as 'the Carrs,' once an insalubrious region of swamp and water covering the remains of an ancient forest. So deep was the water, that boats went from Beverley to Frothingham, and some of the farmers found more profit in navigating to and fro with smuggled merchandise concealed under loads of hay and barley than in cultivating their farms. For years a large swannery existed among the islands, and the "king's swanner" used to come down and hold his periodical courts. The number of submerged trees was almost incredible: pines sixty feet in length, intermingled with yew, alder, and other kinds, some standing as they grew, but the most leaning in all directions, or lying flat. Six hundred trees were taken from one

field, and the labourers made good wages in digging them out at twopence a piece. Some of the wood was so sound that a speculator cut it up into walking sticks. Generally, the upper layer consists of about two feet of peat, and beneath this the trees were found densely packed to a depth of twenty feet, and below these traces were met with in places of a former surface: the bottom of the hollow formed by the slope from the coast on one side, from the wolds on the other, to which Holderness owes its name. The completion of the drainage works in 1835 produced a surprising change in the landscape; green fields succeeded to stagnant water; and the islands are now only discoverable by the 'holm' which terminates the name of some of the farms.

A little farther, and there is the river Hull, flowing clean and cheerful to the muddy Humber. Then comes Tickton, where, looking back from the swell in the road, you see a good sylvan picture—the towers of the minster rising grand and massy from what appears to be a great wood, backed by the dark undulations of the wolds.

In the public-house at Routh, where I stayed to dine on bread-and-cheese, the only fare procurable, I found a dozen rustics anticipating their tippling hours with noisy revelry. The one next whom I sat became immediately communicative and confidential, and, telling me they had had to turn out a quarrelsome companion, asked what was the best cure "for a lad as couldn't get a sup o' ale without wanting to fight." I replied, that a pail of cold water poured down the back was a certain remedy;

which so tickled his fancy that he rose and made it known to the others, with uproarious applause. For his own part he burst every minute into a wild laugh, repeating, with a chuckle, "A bucket o' water!"

There was one, however, of thoughtful and somewhat melancholy countenance, who only smiled quietly, and sat looking apparently on the floor. "What's the matter, Massey?" cried my neighbour.

"Nought. He's a fool that's no melancholy yance a day," came the reply, in the words of a Yorkshire proverb.

"That's you, Tom! Play us a tune, and I'll dance."

"Some folk never get the cradle straws off their breech," came the ready retort with another proverb.

"Just like 'n," said the other to me. "He's the wittiest man you ever see: always ready to answer, be 't squire or t' parson, as soon as look at 'n. He gave a taste to Sir Clifford hisself not long ago. He can make songs and sing 'em just whenever he likes. I shouldn't wunner if he's making one now. He's blind, ye see, and that makes 'n witty. We calls 'n Massey, but his name's Mercer—Tom Mercer. Sing us a song, Tom!"

True enough. Nature having denied sight to him of the melancholy visage, made it up with a rough and ready wit, and ability to improvise a song apt to the occasion. He took his fiddle from the bag and attempted to replace a broken string; but the knot having slipped two or three times, three or four of his companions offered their aid. The operation was, however, too

delicate for clumsy fingers swollen with beer and rum, and as they all failed, I stepped forward, took the fiddle in hand, and soon gave it back to the minstrel, who, after a few preliminary flourishes, interrupted by cries of "Now for 't!" struck up a song. With a voice not unmusical, rhythm good, and rhyme passable, he rattled out a lively ditty on the incidents of the hour, introducing all his acquaintances by name, and with stinging comments on their peculiarities and weaknesses. The effect was heightened by his own grave demeanour, and the fixed grim smile on his face, while the others were kicking up their heels, and rolling off their seats with frantic laughter.

"Didn't I tell ye so!" broke in my neighbour, as he winced a little under a shaft unusually keen from the singer's quiver.

I was quite ready to praise the song, which, indeed, was remarkable. The cleverest 'Ethiopian minstrel' could not chant his ditty more fluently than that blind fiddler caught up all the telling points of the hour. He touched upon the one who had been turned out, and on my hydropathic prescription, and sundry circumstances which could only be understood by one on the spot. Without pause or hesitation, he produced a dozen stanzas, of which the last two may serve as a specimen:

"Rebecca sits a shellin' peas, ye all may hear 'em pop:
She knows who's comin' with a cart: he won't forget to stop:
And Frank, and Jem, and lazy Mat, got past the time to think,
With ginger-beer and rum have gone and muddled all their
drink.

With a fol lol, riddle, liddle, lol, lol, lol!

“Here’s a genelman fro’ Lunnon; ’tis well that he cam’ doun;
If he’d no coom ye rantin’ lads would happen had no tune:
Ye fumbled at the fiddle-strings; he screwed ’em tight and
strong;
Success to Lunnon then I say, and so here ends my song.
With a fol lol, riddle, liddle, lol, lol, lol!”

Lusty acclamations and a drink from every man’s jug rewarded the fiddler, and a vigorous cry was set up for “The Donkey Races,” another of his songs, which, as lazy Mat told me, “had been printed and sold by hundreds.” The blind man, nothing loth, rattled off a lively prelude, and sang his song with telling effect. The race was supposed to be run by donkeys from all the towns and villages of the neighbourhood: from Patrington, Hedon, Hull, Driffield, Beverley, and others, each possessed of a certain local peculiarity, the mention of which threw the company into ecstasies of merriment. And when the “donkey from York” was introduced along with his “sire Gravelcart” and his “dam Work,” two of the guests flumped from their chairs to laugh more at ease on the floor. The fiddler seemed to enjoy the effect of his music; but his grim smile took no relief; the twinkle of the eye was wanting. He was now sure of his game, for the afternoon at least.

While looking round on the party, I had little difficulty in discerning among them the three principal varieties of

Yorkshiremen. There was the tall, broad-shouldered rustic, whose stalwart limbs, light gray or blue eyes, yellowish hair, and open features indicate the Saxon; there was the Scandinavian, less tall and big, with eyes, hair, and complexion dark, and an intention in the expression not perceptible in the Saxon face; and last, the Celt, short, swarthy, and Irish looking. The first two appeared to me most numerous in the East and North Ridings, the last in the West.

On the question of wages they were all content. Here and there a man got eighteen shillings a week; but the general rate was fifteen shillings, or “nine shill’n’s a week and our meat” (diet), as one expressed it. Whatever folk might do in the south, Yorkshire lads didn’t mean to work for nothing, or to put up with scanty food. “We get beef and mutton to eat,” said lazy Mat, “and plenty of it.”

The road continues between fat fields and pastures, skirts a park bordered by noble trees, or tall plantations, in which the breeze lingers to play with the branches: here and there a few cottages, or a hamlet, clean in-doors, and pretty out of doors, with gay little flower-gardens. Frequent thunder-showers fell, and I was glad to shelter from the heaviest under a roof. Always the same cleanliness and signs of thrift, and manifest pleasure in a brief talk with the stranger. And always the same report about wages, and plenty of work for men and boys; but a slowness to believe that sending a boy to school would be better than keeping him at work for five shillings a week. I got but few examples

of reading, and those far from promising, and could not help remembering how different my experiences had been the year before in Bohemia.

One of the cottages in which I took shelter stands lonely in a little wood. The tenant, a young labourer, who had just come home from work, “not a bit sorry,” as he said, “that ’twas Saturday afternoon,” entered willingly into conversation, and made no secret of his circumstances. His testimony was also favourable as regards wages. He earned fifteen shillings a week, and didn’t see any reason to complain of hard times, for he paid but three pounds a year for his cottage, which sum he recovered from his garden in vegetables and flowers, besides sundry little advantages which at times fall to the lot of rustics. He eat meat—beef or mutton—“pretty well every day,” and was fully persuaded that without enough of good food a man could not do a fair day’s work.

While we talked his wife was putting the finishing touch to the day’s cleaning by washing the brick floor, and without making herself unclean or untidy, as many do. Her husband had shown himself no bad judge of rustic beauty when he chose her as his helpmate, and her good looks were repeated in their little daughter, who ran playfully about the room. I suggested that the evening, when one wished to sit quiet and comfortable, was hardly the time to wet the floor. “I’d rather see it wet than mucky” (*mooky*, as he pronounced it), was the answer; and neither husband nor wife was ready to believe that the ill-health

too plainly observable among many cottagers' children arises from avoidable damp. To wash the floor in the morning, when no one had occasion to sit in the room, would be against all rule.

“Stay a bit longer,” said the young man, as I rose when the shower ceased; “I like to hear ye talk.”

And I liked to hear him talk, especially as he began to praise his wife. It was such a pleasure to come home when there was such a lass as that to make a man comfortable. Nobody could beat her at making a shirt or making bread, or cooking; and he opened the oven to show me how much room there was for the loaves. Scarcely a cottage but has a grate with iron oven attached, and in some places the overpowering heat reminded me of my friend's house in Ulrichsthal. Then we had a little discourse about books. He liked reading, and had a Bible for Sundays, and a few odd volumes which he read in the evenings, but not without difficulty; it was so hard to keep awake after a day out of doors.

Meanwhile I made enticing signs to the merry little lassie, and at last she sat without fear on my knee, and listened with a happy smile and wondering eyes to my chant of the pastoral legend of *Little Bopeep*. Such good friends did we become, that when at length I said “good-bye,” and shook hands, there was a general expression of regret, and a hope that I would call again. I certainly will the next time I visit Holderness.

Often since has this incident recurred to my mind, and most often when the discussion was going on in the newspapers concerning the impropriety of marriage on three hundred a year.

I wished that the writers, especially he who sneered at domestic life, could go down into Yorkshire, and see how much happiness may be had for less than fifty pounds a year. As if any selfish bachelor enjoyments, any of the talk of the clubs, were worth the prattle of infancy, the happy voices of childhood, the pleasures and duties that come with offspring! Sandeau deserved to be made *Académicien*, if only for having said that “un berceau est plus éloquent qu’une chaire, et rien n’enseigne mieux à l’homme les côtés sérieux de sa destinée.”

A mile or two farther and water gleams through the trees on the right. It is Hornsea Mere, nearly two miles in length, and soon, when the road skirts the margin, you see reedy shallows, the resort of wild-fowl, and swans floating around the wooded islands; and at the upper end the belts and masses of trees under which the visitors to Hornsea find pleasant walks while sauntering out to the sylvan scenery of Wassand and Siggleshorpe. The lake, said a passing villager, averages ten feet in depth, with perhaps as much more of mud, and swarms with fish, chiefly pike and perch. He added something about the great people of the neighbourhood, who would not let a poor fellow fish in the mere, and ordered the keeper to duck even little boys poaching with stick and string. And he recited with a gruff chuckle a rhyming epitaph which one of his neighbours had composed to the memory of a clergyman who had made himself particularly obnoxious. It did not flatter the deceased.

In Henry the Third’s reign, as may be read in the *Liber Melsæ*,

or Chronicle of the Abbey of Meaux, the Abbot of St. Mary's at York quarrelled with him of Meaux, about the right to fish in the mere, and not being able to decide the quarrel by argument, the pious churchmen had recourse to arms. Each party hired combatants, who met on the appointed day, and after a horse had been swum across the mere, and stakes had been planted to mark the Abbot of St. Mary's claim, they fought from morning until nightfall, and Meaux lost the battle, and with it his ancient right of fishery.

In Elizabeth's reign, the Countess of Warwick granted to Marmaduke Constable the right to fish and fowl for "the some of fyfthe and five pounds of lawful English money." This Marmaduke, who thus testified his love of fin and feather, was an ancestor of Sir Clifford Constable, the present "Lord Paramount," upon whom the blind fiddler exercised his wit.

Hornsea church stands on an eminence at the eastern end between the mere and the village. Its low square tower once bore a tall spire, on which, as is said, the builder had cut an inscription:

Hornsea steeple, when I built thee,
Thou was 10 miles off Burlington,
Ten miles off Beverley, and 10 miles off sea;

but it fell during a gale in 1773. The edifice is a specimen of fifteenth-century architecture, with portions of an earlier date. The crypt under the chancel was at one time a receptacle for

smuggled goods, and the clerk was down there doing unlawful work when the tempest smote the spire, and frightened him well-nigh to death. The memory of the last rector is preserved by an altar tomb of alabaster, and of William Day, gentleman, who “died” in 1616, by a curious epitaph:

If that man’s life be likened to a day,
One here interr’d in youth did lose a day
By death, and yet no loss to him at all,
For he a threefold day gain’d by his fall;
One day of rest in bliss celestial,
Two days on earth by gifts terrestriall—
Three pounds at Christmas, three at Easter Day,
Given to the poure until the world’s last day.
This was no cause to heaven; but, consequent,
Who thither will, must tread the steps he went.
For why? Faith, Hope, and Christian Charity,
Perfect the house framed for eternity.

Hornsea village is a homely-looking place, with two or three inns, a post-office, and little shops and houses furbished up till they look expectant of customers and lodgers. Many a pair of eyes took an observation of me as I passed along the street, and away up the hill, seeking for quarters with an open prospect. Half a mile farther, the ground always rising, and you come to the edge of a clay cliff, and a row of modern houses, and the *Marine Hotel* in full view of the sea.

Even at the first glance you note the waste of the land. As at Kilnsea, so here. A few miles to the south, between us and Owthorne, stands the village of Aldborough, far to the rear of the site once occupied by its church. The sea washed it away. That church was built by Ulf, a mighty thane, in the reign of Canute. A stone, a relic of the former edifice, bearing an inscription in Anglo-Saxon, which he caused to be cut, is preserved in the wall of the present church. This stone, and Ulf's horn, still to be seen in York Minster, are among the most venerable antiquities of the county.

Hornsea is a favourite resort of many Yorkshire folk who love quiet; hence a casual traveller is liable to be disappointed of a lodging on the shore. There was, however, a room to spare at the hotel—a top room, from which, later in the evening, I saw miles of ripples twinkling with moonlight, and heard their murmur on the sand through the open window till I fell asleep.

CHAPTER VII

Coast Scenery—A waning Mere, and wasting Cliffs—The Rain and the Sea—Encroachment prevented—Economy of the Hotel—A Start on the Sands—Pleasure of Walking—Cure for a bad Conscience—Phenomena of the Shore—Curious Forms in the Cliffs—Fossil Remains—Strange Boulders—A Villager's Etymology—Reminiscences of "Bonypart" and Paul Jones—The last House—Chalk and Clay—Bridlington—One of the Gipseys—Paul Jones again—The Sea-Fight—A Reminiscence of Montgomery.

I was out early the next morning for a stroll. The upper margin of the beach, covered only by the highest tides, is loose, heavy sand, strewn with hardened lumps of clay, fatiguing to walk upon; but grows firmer as you approach the water. The wheels of the bathing-machines have broad wooden tires to prevent their sinking. The cliffs are, as we saw near the Spurn, nothing but clay, very irregular in profile and elevation, resembling, for the most part, a great brown bank, varying in height from ten feet to forty. The hotel stands on a rise, which overtops the land on each side and juts out farther, commanding a view for miles, bounded on the north by that far-stretching promontory, Flamborough Head; and to the south by the pale line, where land and water meet the sky. The morning sun touching the many jutting points,

while the intervals lay in thin, hazy shadow, imparted something picturesque to the scene, which vanished as the hours drew on, and the stronger light revealed the monotonous colour and unclothed surface of the cliffs. Towards evening the picturesque reappears with the lights falling in the opposite direction.

A short distance south of the hotel, a stream runs from the mere to the sea. The land is low here, so low that unusually high tides have forced their way up the channel of the stream to the lake, and flooded the grounds on both sides; and the effect will be, as Professor Phillips says, the entire drainage of the mere, and production of phenomena similar to those which may be seen on the other parts of the coast of Holderness: a depression in the cliffs exposing a section of deposits such as are only formed under a large surface of standing water. The result is a mere question of time; and if it be true that Hornsea church once stood ten miles from the sea, within the historical period, the scant half-mile, which is now all that separates it from the hungry waves, has no very lengthened term of existence before it. More than a mile in breadth along the whole coast from Bridlington to Spurn has been devoured since the Battle of the Standard was fought.

An old man of eighty who lives in the village says there are no such high tides now as when he was a boy; and if he be not a romancer, the low ground from the sea to the mere must, at least once, have presented the appearance of a great lake. But the wasting process is carried on by other means than the sea. I saw

threads of water running down the cliffs, produced by yesterday's rain, and not without astonishment at the great quantities of mud they deposit at the base, forming in places a narrow viscous stream, creeping in a raised channel across the sand, or confused pasty heaps dotted with pools of liquid ochre. Mr. Coniton, the proprietor of the hotel, told me that he believed the rain had more influence than the sea in causing the waste of land, and he showed me the means he employed to protect his territory from one and the other. To prevent the loss by rain, which he estimates, where no precautions are taken, at a foot a year, he at first sloped his cliff at such an angle that the water runs easily down and with scarcely appreciable mischief. Then, to protect the base, he has driven rows of piles through the sand into the clay beneath, and these, checking the natural drift of the sand to the southward, preserve the under stratum. Where no such barrier exists, the waves in a winter storm sweep all the sand clean off, and lay bare the clay, and tumbling upon it with mighty shocks, sometimes wear it down a foot in the course of a tide. By this lowering of the base, the saturated soil above, deprived of support, topples over, leaving a huge gap, which only facilitates further encroachments; and in the course of a few tides the fallen mass is drifted away to enlarge the shoals in the estuary of the Humber.

Mr. Coniton entered into possession fifteen years ago, and in all that time, so effectual are the safeguards, has lost none of his land. The edge, he says, has not receded, and, to show what might be, he points to his neighbour's field, which has shrunk

away some yards to the rear.

The space between the hotel and the edge of the cliff is laid out as a lawn, which, sheltered by a bank on the north, forms an agreeable outlook and lounging-place, while gravelled paths lead to an easy descent to the sands at each extremity of the premises. The house is well arranged; there is no noise, no slackness in the service; and families may live as privately as in a private residence. The charge for adults is four shillings a day; for young children, half a guinea a week, without stint as to the number of meals: to which must be added the cost of rooms and attendance. The charges to casual guests are as reasonable as could be desired, contrasting favourably in this particular with my experiences at Hull and in certain of the inland towns and villages. Ninepence a day for service and boots is charged in the bill; hence you can depart without being troubled to “remember” anybody. An omnibus arrives every day from Beverley during the season—May to November. The distance is thirteen miles.

The falling tide had left a breadth of comparatively firm sand by the time I was ready to start, and along that I took my way to Bridlington: another stage of thirteen miles. The morning was bounteous in elements of enjoyment: a bright sun, great white clouds sailing high across the blue, a south-westerly breeze, which made the sea playful and murmurous: all gratifying to the desire of a wayfarer’s heart. I could not help pitying those farmers at Beverley, who saw no pleasure in walking. No pleasure in the surest promotion of health and exercise! No

pleasure in the steady progressive motion which satisfies our love of change without hindering observation! No pleasure in walking, that strengthens the limbs and invigorates the lungs! No pleasure in arming the sling against the giant! No pleasure in the occasion of cheerful thoughts and manifold suggestions which bring contentment to the heart! Walking is an exercise which in our days might replace, more commonly than it does, the rude out-door recreations of former times; and if but a few of the many hundreds who put on their Sunday clothes to lounge the hours away at the corner of a street, would but take a ten miles' walk out to the country lanes or breezy moorlands, they would find benefit alike to their manhood and morals. If I remember rightly, it is one of the old Greeks who says that walking will almost cure a bad conscience; and, for my part, I am never so ready to obey the precept of neighbourly love as when my sentiments are harmonized by walks of seven or eight leagues a day.

The sands are of varying consistency. In some places you leave deep footprints; and nowhere is the firmness equal to that we shall find farther north, except on the wet border from which the wave has just retired. Mile after mile it stretches before you, a broad slope of sand, sparsely roughened here and there by pebble drifts. At times you see numerous rounded lumps lying about of many sizes, which at a distance resemble sleeping turtles, and on a nearer view prove to be nothing but masses of hardened clay, water-worn, and as full of pebbles as a canon's pudding is

of plums. These are portions of the bottoms of lakes overrun by the sea; stubborn vestiges, which yield but slowly. At times the shortest route takes you through watery flats, or broad shallow streams, where little rivers are well-nigh swallowed by the sand as they run across to the sea. A little farther and you come to a low bank, everywhere cut up by glistening ripple-marks, or to a bare patch of clay, which feels like india-rubber under your foot.

And the cliffs taken thus furlong by furlong offer a greater variety than appears at first sight. Here, the clay is cracked in such a way as to resemble nothing so much as a pile of huge brown loaves; now it falls away into a broken hollow patched with rough grass; now it juts again so full of perpendicular cracks that you liken it to a mass of starch; now it is grooved by a deep gully; now a buttress terminates in a crumbling pyramid—umber mottled with yellow; now it is a rude stair, six great steps only to the summit; now a point, of which you would say the extremity has been shaped by turf-cutters; now a wall of pebbles, hundreds of thousands of all sizes, the largest equal in bigness to a child's head; now a shattered ruin fallen in a confused heap. Such are some of the appearances left by the waves in their never-ending aggressions.

In one hollow the disposition of the clay was so singular, and apparently artificial, and unlike anything which I had ever seen, that I could only imagine it to be a recess in which a party of Assyrian brickmakers had been at work and left great piles of their bricks in different degrees of finish. It was easier to imagine

that than to believe such effects could be produced by the dash of the sea.

The greatest elevation occurs about Atwick and Skirlington, places interesting to the palæontologist, on account of fossils—an elephant's tusk, and the head and horns of the great Irish elk—found in the cliffs. Farther on the cliff sinks to a mere bank, six feet in height, but, whether high or low, you need not fear a surprise by the rising tide, for you can scramble up anywhere out of reach of the water. Looking inland from these points you see always the same character of scenery, and where a path zigzags up you will notice large trays used for carrying up the heaps of pebbles there accumulated, for the construction of drains, fences, and walls. Among remarkable curiosities are two large boulders—one of a slaty rock, the other of granite half embedded in the sand. From what part of the country were they drifted to their present position?

Here and there I fell in with a villager taking a quiet walk on the beach, and leading two or three little children. One of them told me that the Stricklands, a well-known family in Holderness, derived their name from Strikeland; that is, they were the first to *strike* the *land* when they came over. Collectors of folk-lore will perhaps make a note of this rustic etymology. He remembered hearing his father talk of the alarm that prevailed all along the coast when there was talk of "Bonypart's" invasion; and how that Paul Jones never sailed past without firing a ball at Rolleston Hall, that stood on a slope in sight of the sea, where dwelt Mr.

Brough, who, as Marshal to the Court of Admiralty, had to direct the proceedings on the trial of Admiral Byng.

Here and there are parties of country lads bathing; or trying which can take the longest jump on the smooth sand; or squatting in soft places idly watching the waves, and exasperating their dogs into a fight.

After passing Skipsea, and the northern end of the Barmston drain, the lone house in the distance catches your eye; the last house of Auburn, a village devoured by the sea. The distance is deceptive along the level shore; but when at length you come to the spot, you see a poor weather-beaten cottage on the top of the cliff, and so close to the edge that the eastern wall forms but one perpendicular line with the cliff itself. You can hardly help fancying that it will fall at any moment, even while you are looking; but so it has stood for many years; a fact the more remarkable, as in this place the cliff projects as if in defiance of the ruthless waters. Look at the old maps, and you will read: "Here Auburn washed away by the sea;" and the lone house remains a melancholy yet suggestive monument of geological change.

Now Bridlington comes in sight, and immediately beyond you see a change in the aspect of the cliffs. The chalk formation which stretches across England from Hampshire to Yorkshire, makes its appearance here as a thin white band under the clay, becoming thicker and thicker, till at length the whole cliff is chalk from base to summit, and the great promontory, of snowy

whiteness, gleams afar in the sunlight along the shores and across the sea. The chalk opposes a barrier, which, though far less stubborn than the volcanic rocks of Cornwall, is yet more enduring than the clay: hence the land rushes proudly out on the domain of ocean. Nearness, however, while it shows you the mouths of caverns and gullies, like dark shades in the chalk, markedly shortens the headland to the eye.

The last mile of cliff, as you approach Bridlington is diversified by a pale chalky stratum, about four feet thick along the top. It dips down in places basin-like, and contrasts strangely with the clay.

Bridlington Quay, as the seaward part of the town is named, though situated at the very rear of the Head, is, as I saw on turning the last point, not safe from the sap and shock of the breakers. The cliff, sunken in places, exhibits the effect of landslips in rough slopes and ugly heaps. Two legs of the seat fixed at the corner overhang the edge and rest upon nothing, and you see that the remainder are doomed to follow, notwithstanding the numerous piles driven in for protection.

The two arms of the pier enclose a small harbour, one of the few places of refuge for vessels caught by easterly gales on the Yorkshire coast—a coast deficient in good and easily-accessible harbours. A chalybeate spring bursts from the cliff on the northern side; and near the middle of the port an artesian well throws up a constant stream, varying with the rise and fall of the tide. The noisy brook which you cross, on entering the principal

street, has its sources in those remarkable springs which, known as 'the Gipseys,' gush out from the foot of the wolds.

Bridlington attracts numbers of that class of visitors for whom Hornsea is too quiet and Scarborough too gay. In fine weather, steamers arrive with pleasure parties from Hull and Whitby, Flamborough Head being the great attraction. The boatmen ask fifteen shillings a day for a boat to sail round the Head, and give you opportunity to peer into caverns, or to shoot seafowl should your desire be for "sport." And besides their pay, the tough old fellows like to have a voice in provisioning the boat, resolute to demonstrate how much your pleasure depends on "laying in plenty of bottled porter."

The church, situate in the town about half a mile from the Quay, was at one time as large and handsome as the minster of Beverley; but of late years the visitor has only been able to see the remains of beauty through grievous dilapidations, in which the hand of man was more implicated than the weather. Paul Jones is still held responsible for some of the mischief. Now, however, the work of restoration is commenced, and ere long the admirable details and proportions of the edifice will reappear.

Here it was that, attended by a convoy of seven Dutch vessels of war, commanded by Van Tromp, Queen Henrietta Maria landed in 1643; and there are people yet living who remember the terror inspired by the redoubtable privateer aforementioned, while the North-American colonies were battling for their liberties. On the 20th of September, 1779, a messenger came

in hot haste from Scarborough to Bridlington with news that an enemy had been espied off the coast, and in the evening of the same day the Yankee squadron was in sight from Flamborough Head. Preparations were at once made to send the women and children into the interior; money and valuables were hastily packed, and some of the inhabitants, panic-stricken, actually fled. The drum beat to arms; the Northumberland militia, then quartered in the neighbourhood, were called out; and all the coasting-vessels bore up for Bridlington Bay, and crowded for protection into the little harbour. Scarcely a town or village on the Yorkshire coast but has its story of alarms and unwelcome visitations from the American privateers.

On the 24th the timid population witnessed a sea-fight from the cliffs. Jones, with the *Bonhomme Richard*, and the *Pallas* and *Alliance* frigates, intercepted the *Serapis*, of forty-four, and *Countess of Scarbro'*, of twenty-two guns, convoying a fleet of merchant-vessels, and at once commenced action. The two largest ships grappled, and fired into each other for two hours, the two frigates meanwhile sailing round, and doing their best to cripple the Englishman. The American at length struck; but only as a feint, for when the crew of the *Serapis* boarded, they fell into an ambush prepared for them, and suffered so much loss, that the *Serapis* hauled down her colours, and the *Countess of Scarbro'* was taken by the *Pallas*. The victory, however, was dearly won: the *Bonhomme Richard* lost three hundred men in killed and wounded, and was so grievously cut up in her hull,

that the next day she went to the bottom. Captain Pearson, of the *Serapis*, in his despatch to the Admiralty announcing the capture of his ship, had good reason to write, "I flatter myself with the hopes that their lordships will be convinced that she has not been given away."

The scene of three of Montgomery's sonnets is laid at Bridlington. Turn to the volume and read them, before you go farther.

CHAPTER VIII

What the Boarding-House thought—Landslips—Yarborough House—The Dane's Dike—Higher Cliffs—The South Landing—The Flamborough Fleet—Ida, the Flamebearer—A Storm—A talk in a Limekiln—Flamborough Fishermen—Coffee before Rum—No Drunkards—A Landlord's Experiences—Old-fashioned Honesty.

The party—four gentlemen and one lady—at the boarding-house where I tarried to dine, agreed unanimously that to pass a whole Sunday morning in walking, was especially blameworthy. Besides being wrong in itself, it was “setting such a bad example;” nor would they hear reason on the question. With them, indeed, it was no question: they quoted the fourth commandment, and that settled it. Any departure from that was decidedly wrong, if not sinful. And then, perhaps out of a benevolent desire for my spiritual welfare, they urged me to stay till the morrow, when I might join them in a boat-trip to the Head and help to fire guns at the sea-fowl. It surprised me somewhat to hear them discuss their project with as much animation as if they had not just administered a homily to me, or the day had not been Sunday. The possibilities of weather, the merits of cold pies, sandwiches, and lively bottled drinks, powder and shot moreover, and tidal contingencies, were talked about in a way that led me

to infer there was nothing at all wrong in consuming the holy day with anticipations of pleasure to come in the days reckoned unholy. Then one of the party set off to walk to a village three miles distant; and presently, when I started for Flamborough, the other three accompanied me as far as the path along the cliff was easy to the foot. So I could only infer again that there is nothing wrong in short walks on a Sunday. It is simply the distance that constitutes the difference between good and evil. Some folk appear to believe that if they only sit under a pulpit in the morning, they have earned a dispensation for the rest of the day.

The cliffs now are sixty feet in height, broken by frequent slips in the upper stratum of clay, and numerous cracks running along the path marks the limits of future falls. One of the slips appeared to be but a few hours old, and the lumps, of all dimensions, with patches of grass and weeds sticking out here and there, lying in a great confused slope, suggested the idea of an avalanche of clay. Ere long you come to Yarborough House, a stately mansion standing embowered by trees about a furlong from the shore. Holding that an Englishman has an inherent right of way along the edge of his own country, I gave no heed to the usual wooden warning to trespassers, erected where the path strikes inland at the skirt of the grounds, and kept along the pathless margin of the cliff. Nothing appeared to be disturbed by my presence except a few rabbits, that darted as if in terror to their burrows. Once past the grounds you come into large fields, where the grain grows

so close to the brink of the precipice, that you wonder alike at the thrift of the Yorkshire farmers, and the skill with which they drive their ploughs in critical situations.

As you proceed, the cliffs rise higher, interrupted in places by narrow gullies, one of which is so deep and the farther bank so high as to appear truly formidable, and shut out all prospect to the east. After a difficult scramble down, and a more difficult scramble up, you find yourself on the top of a ridge, which, stretching all across the base of the headland from sea to sea, along the margin of a natural ravine, remains a monument, miles in length, of the days

“When Denmark’s Raven soar’d on high,
Triumphant through Northumbrian sky.”

It is the “Dane’s Dike,” a barrier raised by our piratical Scandinavian forefathers to protect their settlements on the great promontory. With such a fence, they had always a refuge to fall back upon where they could hold their own, and command the landing-places till more ships and marauders arrived with succours. As the eye follows the straight line of the huge grass-grown embankment, you will feel something like admiration of the resolute industry by which it was raised, and perhaps think of the fierce battles which its now lonely slopes must have once witnessed.

Still the cliffs ascend. Farther on I came to a broader and

deeper ravine, at the mouth of which a few boats lay moored; and others hauled up on the beach, and coming nearer, I saw boat after boat lodged here and there on the slopes, even to the level ground above, where, judging from the number, the fleet found its rendezvous. It was curious to see so many keels out of their element, most of them gay with stripes of blue and red, and bearing the names of the wives and daughters of *Flambro*. The little bay, however, known as the South Landing, is one of the two ports of Flamborough: the other, as we shall see after passing the lighthouse, is similar in formation—a mere gap in the cliffs. They might be called providential landing-places, for without them the fishermen of Flamborough would have no access to the sea, except by ladders down the precipice. As it is, the declivity is very steep; and it is only by hauling them up to every available spot, that room is found for the numerous boats.

Here it was that Ida, the Flamebearer, is supposed to have landed, when he achieved the conquest of Northumbria; and here the galleys of the Sea-Kings found a precarious shelter while the daring Northmen leapt on shore to overrun the land in later centuries, when tradition alone preserved the remembrance of the former invaders and their warlike deeds.

I was prowling hither and thither in the ravine, entertained with the Present while imagining the Past, when the clouds, grown every minute blacker since noon, let fall their burden with something like tropical vehemence. For some time there was no perceptible pause in the lightning or thunder, and against

the accompanying rain an umbrella was but as gauze. I rushed into the arch of a neighbouring limekiln, and once in, was kept there two hours by the roaring storm. Presently two fishermen, speeding up from the landing, made for the same shelter, and of course, under the circumstances, we fraternised at once, and talked the time away.

Clean and well clad, they were favourable—and as I afterwards saw—not exceptional specimens of their class. In their opinion the Flamborough fishermen bear as good a character as any in Yorkshire—perhaps better. About seven years ago they all resolved to work but six days a week, and on no account to go to sea on Sundays. They held to their resolve, and, to the surprise of most, found themselves the better. They earn quite as much as before, if not more, and go to work with better spirit. During the herring season it is a common practice with them to put into Scarborough on Saturday evening, and journey home by rail for the Sunday, taking advantage of the very low fares at which return tickets are issued to fishermen. And as for diet, they take a good store of bread and meat, pies even, in their boats, seeing no reason why they should not live as well as their neighbours. A glass of rum was acceptable, especially in cold and blowing weather: but so far as they knew, there were very few fishermen who would not “choose hot coffee before rum any day.”

There was none of that drinking among fishermen now as there used to be formerly. You could find some in Flamborough

“as liked their glass,” but none to be called drunkards. There is a national school in the village; but not so well attended as it might be, and perhaps would be if they had a better schoolmaster. The people generally had pretty good health, which is possibly the occasion why the last two doctors, finding time hang heavy on their hands, drank themselves to death. There is, or rather was in July, 1857, an opening for a doctor in Flamborough.

The rain still fell heavily when we left our shelter, and it kept on till past midnight. Luckily the village was not a mile distant, and there I took a comfortable chair by the kitchen fire of *The Ship*. The landlord corroborated all that the fishermen had told me, with the reservation that he found it difficult to clear his room of tipplers on Saturday night, although none could be set down as drunkards. At times he put on his clock ten minutes, to ensure a clearance before the Sunday morning, resolutely refusing to refill the glasses after twelve. The guests would go away growling out a vow never to return to such an inhospitable house; but not one kept the vow more than a fortnight. When, nineteen years ago, he determined not to open his house on Sunday to any but strangers who might chance to arrive from a distance, the village thought itself scandalized, and the other public-houses predicted his ruin. They were, however, mistaken. *The Ship* still flourishes; and the host and his family “find themselves none the worse for going to a place of worship, and keeping the house quiet one day in seven.”

“Sometimes,” he ended, “we don’t think to fasten the front

door when we go to bed; but it's all the same; nobody comes to disturb us." Which may be taken as an indication that honesty has not yet abandoned Flamborough.

CHAPTER IX

Men's and Women's Wages—The Signal Tower—
The passing Fleet—The Lighthouse—The Inland View
—Cliff scenery—Outstretching Reefs—Selwick's Bay—
Down to the Beach—Aspect of the Cliffs—The Matron
—Lessons in Pools—Caverns—The King and Queen—
Arched Promontories—The North Landing—The Herring-
Fishers—Pleasure Parties—Robin Lyth's Hole—Kirk Hole
—View across little Denmark—Speeton—End of the
Chalk—Walk to Filey.

A fresh, bright morning succeeded the stormy night, and it was but a few hours old when, after a look at the old Danish tower at the west of the village, I walked across the fields to the lighthouse. A woman trudging in the same direction with a hoe on her shoulder said, after I had asked her a few questions, she wished she were a man, for then she would get nine shillings a week and her meat, instead of one shilling a day and feeding herself, as at present. However, 'twas better than nothing. Presently her daughter came up, a buxom maiden, wearing her bonnet in a way which saved her the affliction of shrugs and the trouble of tying. It was front behind: a fashion which leaves no part of the head exposed, shelters the poll, and looks picturesque withal. It prevails, as I afterwards noticed, among the rustic lasses everywhere.

As I passed the old stone tower near the coast-guard station, the signal-man was busy raising and lowering his flag, for a numerous fleet of coasting-vessels was running by to the southward, each telling its name as it came within signal distance. The man sends a daily list of the names to London for publication, whereby coal-merchants and others hear of cargoes on the way, and calculate the time of their arrival. It is a peculiarity of Flamborough Head, an enlivening one, that ships can keep so close in that the men on their decks are distinctly seen, and their voices heard by one standing on the cliff.

The lighthouse, a circular white tower, eighty-two feet in height, stands on the verge of the cliff, displaying inside and out all that admirable order and cleanliness characteristic of British lighthouses. There is no difficulty in obtaining admittance; you sign your name in a book, and are forthwith conducted up to the lantern by the chief or one of his aids. The light is revolving, alternately white and red, and can be seen at a distance of thirty miles. But here, elevated two hundred and fifty feet above the sea, you feel most interested in the prospect. No "shadowy pomp of woods" arrests the eye looking landwards, but a region bleak and bare in aspect rolling away to the distant wolds, the line of uplands which, sweeping round, approaches the coast about Scarborough. The village with its windmill, and the few farms that are in sight, look naked and comfortless: not an inviting territory for an invader given to the picturesque. But seawards, and along the rugged front of the cliffs, grandeur and variety

exert their charm. Here the up-piled chalk flings out a bold perpendicular buttress, solid from base to summit; there the jutting mass is isolated by yawning cracks and chasms, and underneath, as we shall presently see, is fretted into fantastic shapes, pierced through and through, or worn into caverns by the headlong billows. In places a broken slope of rocky hummocks and patches of grass, weeds, and gravel descends, more or less abruptly, to the beach, opening a view of the long weed-blackened reefs that, stretching out from the Head, afford a measure of the amazing encroachments of the sea. Northwards, the bluff crowned by Scarborough Castle, backed by higher elevations, closes the view; to the south you have the low, fading coast of Holderness; and all the while brigs, ships, and schooners are sailing past, more than a hundred in sight, some of them so near that you fancy they will hardly escape the lurking points of the dark reef. One small vessel, the keeper told me, had touched the day before, and lay fast and helpless till, the weather being calm, she floated off by the succeeding tide. You can look down into Selwicks Bay, and see men and boys quarrying chalk, and donkeys laden with heavy panniers of the lumps, toiling painfully up the steep winding road which forms the only approach. The farther horn of the little bay is arched and tunnelled, and, taken with the waterfall plunging down in its rear and the imposing features of the points beyond, invites to further exploration.

The residents at the lighthouse enjoy an abundant supply of water from a spring within their enclosure: their garden produces

cabbages and potatoes; the neighbours are friendly, and visitors numerous. Hence life is more cheerful to them than to the amphibious hermits who dwell at the Spurn.

While looking for a practicable descending-place, I noticed many tufts of thrift as thick with flowers as in an antiquated garden where the old favourites are still cherished.

“Even here hath Nature lavished hues, and scent,
And melody; born handmaids of the ocean:
The frowning crags, with moss and rock-flowers blent,
Dazzle the eyes with sunlight, while the motion
Of waves, the breezes fragrant from the sea,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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