

BARING-GOULD SABINE

**YORKSHIRE ODDITIES,
INCIDENTS AND
STRANGE EVENTS**

Sabine Baring-Gould

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Incidents and Strange Events**

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Baring-Gould S.

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S. Baring-Gould Yorkshire Oddities, Incidents and Strange Events

PREFACE

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

A friend, when he heard that I was collecting such material, exclaimed, "What are you about? Every other Yorkshireman is a character!" Such is the case. No other county produces so much originality – and that originality, when carried to excess, is eccentricity.

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

PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

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

Lew Trenchard, 12th April, 1890.

THE GHOST OF TRINITY CHURCH, YORK

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

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

I

"Easter Sunday Evening, 1869.

"Dear Mr. Baring-Gould.

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

"Mr. S — is going in a few Sundays to preach at the very church in York where this took place, and this bringing again before my mind the spectacle I then saw, caused me to apply to my friends for the account I gave them, and I now send it to you. I could, if you are interested, supply some minor details, but better by word of mouth, if ever we meet again. The only correction I should make is this: You will find that I relate a sequence of events, and I am not quite satisfied in my own mind that I have given the order of the incidents exactly as they occurred, and it is possible that I may have inverted them. At the time I was so startled that I was more intent on observing the figures than noting what was the succession in the scenes, if I may use the expression. Indeed, each reappearance was a surprise; and when I tried to recall each incident in the order in which it occurred, I found that though I could recall the appearance distinctly before my mind's eye, yet I could not swear to which scene preceded the other.

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

"I remain, yours very truly,

"A. B.

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

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

"While staying in York at this time last year (1865), or perhaps a little earlier, I first heard of the apparitions or ghosts supposed to be seen in Trinity Church, Micklegate. I felt curious to see a ghost, I confess, if such a thing is to be seen

without the usual concomitants of a dark night and a lone house. Accordingly I went to the church for morning service on a blazing hot Sunday morning in August last, with a girl about thirteen years old and her little brother.

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

"The peculiarity of the apparition is, that it is seen on the window itself, rather less than half-way from the bottom (as I saw it from the gallery), and has much the same effect as that of a slide drawn through a magic lantern when seen on the exhibiting sheet. The form seen – I am told invariably – is that of a figure dressed in white walking across the window, and gives the idea of some one passing in the churchyard in a surplice. I say a figure, for the number is generally limited to one, and I was told that only on Trinity Sunday did more than one appear, and that then there were three.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Usually they appeared during the musical portions of the service, and especially during one long eight-line hymn, when – for the only occasion without the child – the two women rushed on (in stage phrase), and remained during the whole

hymn, making the most frantic gestures of despair. Indeed, the louder the music in that hymn, the more carried away with their grief did they seem to be.

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

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

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

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

"A. B."

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

II

*South Parade, York,
March 22nd, 1871.*

"Dear Mr. Baring-Gould,

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

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

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

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

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

"Yours very truly,

"R. T."

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

III

"Having heard from several people of the ghost at the Church of the Holy Trinity, Micklegate, York, on Sunday, at the end of September, 1869, a friend and myself made up our minds to go and see if we also could be favoured with a sight of this wonderful apparition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IV

York, March 28th, 1874.

"Sir,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"L. S."

V

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

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

"The gallery is situated at the extreme west end of the building, and faces the east window, from which it is distant some 50 feet or so. It is said that in the aisle and body of the church nothing is ever seen. The gallery was full, but no one seemed to have come there especially for the ghost, and though many of them afterwards

said they saw it, they were not in the least affected by the apparition, treating it as a matter of course, to which they were well accustomed.

"I kept my eyes fixed upon the east window for nearly the whole of the hour and a half during which the service lasted, but was not favoured with a sight of the phenomenon; although others saw it cross the window and return, and my friend, who knows it well, called my attention to the fact, at the moment, yet I could not perceive nothing. I therefore left the place as unbelieving as ever, and supposed that either I was the victim of a hoax, or that it required a great stretch of imagination to fancy that a passing shadow was the desired object. However, not liking to discredit the statements of many friends who were used to seeing it almost every Sunday, I consented on Easter Day to go to the same place and pew. The seat I occupied was not an advantageous one, a large brass chandelier being between me and the lower panes of the window. In the middle of the service my eyes, which had hardly once moved from the left or north side of the window, were attracted by a bright light formed like a female robed and hooded passing from north to south with a rapid gliding motion outside the church apparently at some distance. The window is Gothic, and I fancy, from 20 to 25 feet high, by 12 to 15 feet wide at the base. The panes through which the ghost shines are about 5 feet high and about half-way between the top and bottom. There are four divisions in the window, all of stained glass, of no particular pattern, the outer on right and left being of lighter colour than the two centre panes, and at the edge of each runs a rim of plain transparent white glass, about two inches wide, and adjoining the stone work. Through this rim, especially, could be seen what looked like a form transparent, but yet thick, (if such a term can be used) with light. It did not resemble linen, for instance, but was far brighter, and would, no doubt, have been dazzling to a near observer. The robe was long, and trailed. The figure was of course not visible when it had crossed the window and passed behind the wall. My friend whispered to me that it would return, must return, and at the end of five minutes or so, the same figure glided back from right to left, having turned round while out of sight. About half an hour later it again passed across from north to south, and having remained about ten seconds only, returned with what I believe to have been the figure of a young child, and stopped at the last pane but one, where both vanished. I did not see the child again, but a few seconds afterwards the woman reappeared, and completed the passage, behind the last pane, very rapidly. Nothing more was seen during the service, and no other opportunity presented itself to me for making observations. During each time, the chandelier prevented me from obtaining a complete view but there could be no doubt as to the shape, a certain amount of indistinctness, however, being caused by the stained glass. On the reappearance for the last time, I saw the head, which was, I believe, that of the child, move up and down distinctly, as if nodding. The figure shone with dazzling brightness, and appeared to be at a considerable distance, say thirty yards or so, though at the same time as distinct as possible, considering the obstruction of coloured glass. Each time the level upon which it glided was precisely the same, and afterwards, on carrying a straight line from the spot in the gallery where I sat, through the part of the glass where the feet of the figure shone, and continuing that line (in my mind's eye, with all the objects before me, except the ghost, whose position I had taken good notice of), I found that it would traverse a thick holly tree eight or nine feet high at about four feet from the ground, and at two or three feet from the ground a low wall about four feet high, and would reach the ground itself in the middle of a gravel yard belonging to the back premises of the

house, called the vicarage, at a distance of twelve or fifteen yards from the window. Any person walking between the window and the holly tree would barely be seen at all, much less be seen in the place which the apparition occupies; and any one on the further side of the tree would be almost if not quite invisible on account of the holly and other bushes and the dead wall. Any one about there at all can easily be seen from the many houses on all sides.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Whatever may have been the circumstances under which the ghost (if it is one, which it is hard to believe in these matter-of-fact days) commenced its peculiar promenade, I would recommend those who have the chance to go to Holy Trinity Church, York, and see for themselves, though an audience of the apparition cannot always be assured. A ghost in broad daylight does no harm, frightens no one, and ought to interest everybody. – I am, &c.,

"H. G. F. T."

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

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

This letter called forth a sharp animadversion from another correspondent who signed himself "Novocastrensis," to which H. G. F. T. replied: – "I have read Mr. Gould's accounts since I saw the 'ghost,' and find that though they differ considerably in the details from my description, in the essential points they agree with and corroborate it. I should like to state here distinctly that the story was not adapted for my 'own' or any other's 'purpose' from 'Yorkshire Oddities,' but is an unprejudiced, and to the best of my belief, an unexaggerated and true account and description of what I myself saw. It is not my desire to raise a discussion, but the injustice implied in the letter is the excuse I urge for thus trespassing upon your space. – I am, &c.
"H. G. F. T.

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

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

"J. L.

"May 9th, 1876."

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

"R. H. H.

"*Newcastle-on-Tyne.*"

VI

"*M – Rectory, York,*

"*Aug. 11th, 1875.*

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

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

"As we used to teach at the Sunday School which was held in a large room jutting out from the parsonage towards the church, we often noticed the women and children of the house going across the yard to the ash-pits; and it struck us that this might be the ghost. So we went into the church directly the doors were opened and went up into the gallery while another of us walked across the churchyard in front

of the east window. Curiously enough, at the same time we saw him going across the window near the bottom, the ghost went across higher up. This goes a good way to proving my supposition, as is drawn in the following diagram.

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

– "

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

PETER PRIESTLY, THE WAKEFIELD PARISH CLERK

In the middle of last century there lived in Wakefield a certain Peter Priestly, who for many years was sexton of the parish church of All Saints. The then vicar was Michael Bacon, D.D., a tall, portly man, of a commanding presence, who wore a large bushy wig, as was the wont of many old divines of that date. He was a man of rather a warm temperament, and was apt at times, when matters did not flow quite according to his will, to grow a little irritable, and whilst in that condition his habit was frequently to thrust his right hand in a testy, impetuous way under his wig. This habit destroyed the symmetry of that capital ornament, and made it protrude considerably on the right side; and this protrusion grew greater the longer the wig was worn.

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

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

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

Now, according to the story, on S. Mark's Eve a train of all those who are to die before the ensuing S. Mark's Eve come into the church through one of the doors in their winding-sheets, each carrying a corpse-candle. A ghostly priest precedes the weird procession, and dolefully intones the burial service.

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

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

Peter was not a nervous man, or at least he did not think himself so, and he began his work, whistling a psalm tune. He was engaged on a large grave-stone on which he had already completed about half the inscription. It was standing raised upon tressels to the required height; and at this he

worked diligently for a long while, with his face towards the east and the folding-doors, and every now and then he stole to the doors and peeped through into the nave. All was perfectly dark and silent. He returned to his work with lighter heart after each glance into the great dark church. He had taken the candle out of his lantern, and had put it into an old rusty candlestick, which he kept there for the purpose, in order that he might have a better light.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PROPHET WROE

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

He was brought up to follow his father's employment, which was that of worsted manufacturer, combined with farming and the proprietorship of a coal-pit. In course of time his father gave him a share in his business, and articles of partnership were drawn up, but were never signed. John's natural incapacity for application to business probably obliged his father to place his brother Joseph in his room as partner, and John afterwards often complained of being hardly treated by his father and brothers. It is evident, however, that this treatment he brought on himself, and that his father acted with judgment in not entrusting the conduct of business into his hands.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In 1819 John Wroe was attacked by fever, and was pronounced in danger. Dr. Field, who attended him, advised Mrs. Wroe to prevail on him to settle his affairs. The thought of death so moved and alarmed Wroe that he entreated that some Methodist preacher might be brought to visit and pray with him; but they refused, although his wife sent to four of them. She then asked him if she had better not send for his parish priest, or some of the clergymen of the Church; but he declined, saying it was too late, and he begged her to read to him some chapters from the Bible; "and," said he, "I will see what I can do for myself."

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

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

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

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

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

On the 29th of November following he had another epileptic fit accompanied with visions; and on the 14th of December "I was again struck blind at about ten o'clock in the forenoon, and remained more like a corpse than a living man for twenty-four hours, when I came to myself by degrees, but continued blind for five days. After many things, the angel said to me, 'Thou shalt be blind for six days, and on the seventh day thy father shall come to thee, and many people with him; he shall lay his right thumb on thy right eye, and his fourth finger on thy left, as a token that he remembers his former sins and wickedness; and if not, it will be a witness against him at the Day of Judgment, and thou shalt receive thy sight.' During the six days that I was blind my wife at one time was reading a hymn for me; when she had read it I desired her to read it again; but before she had done so I fainted, and saw the elements separated, and there appeared before me a large open square; I saw our Saviour nailed on the cross and the tears trickling down his face, and at that time I thought he was weeping for the wicked people upon the earth. An angel then appeared holding a man by a single hair of his head, who had a very large sword in his hand, which he waved backward and forward. I then saw a pair of large scales let down to the earth, and a great bundle, which was placed in one side of it, which I thought was the sins of the people, and then saw a great number of weights placed in the other; but the bundle was so much heavier that the weights bounced out, and the scales were drawn up into heaven. Then the man that was held by the hair of his head by the angel brandished his sword six or seven times, as formerly, and disappeared. I afterwards saw Moses and Aaron, accompanied by a great number of people, attended by angels, and I heard such delightful music as it would be impossible to describe. There was darkness over the place soon after, and I lost sight of all in a moment."

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

only imperfectly, and this he attributed to some one having three days before endeavoured to force the eyelids open.

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

Samuel Muff, a spectator, says: "During the twenty-four hours that John Wroe was in his trance reports of the circumstance frequently reached my house, adding that he was likely to die. I accordingly went to see him, and he came to himself when I was in the house, but was entirely blind. On hearing my voice, he communicated many things to me which I cannot at present recollect; but I remember his having said that he was blind, but that he would yet see. He wrote me a few lines in the course of his six days' blindness, desiring that I would come and see him at the time his eyes were opened, and which he asserted would be at the end of the six days; the letter was sent to me by one of my neighbours, who declared he saw him write it; and stone blind as he then was, it is the best piece of his writing I ever saw. I complied with his desire, and actually saw his eyes open in the manner already related. After his father had placed his thumb and finger on his eyes, he appeared to me for some time as if he were dead. He afterwards came to himself, sat up in the chair, and his eyes instantly opened. He and I were brought up within a quarter of a mile of each other, and were schoolfellows, but the master who instructed us never could teach him to spell or read, nor even to speak plainly."

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

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

and testify to the Jews. Afterwards he conceived himself to be commanded to testify in England for three years, "with his hat on his head," and at the expiration of that time to join the Jews.

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

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

In the spring of 1821 the cousin of John Wroe, who employed him as a wool-comber, refused to engage him or have any more of his badly-executed work, telling him he was more fit to be a preacher than a wool-comber. Thereupon John fell back in a fit against a bale of wool, and when he recovered called all to witness what he said – "Take notice of that young man," said he, pointing to the son of his employer, who had been foremost in his complaints and abuse; "he will never more do any work; he will never again pay any man wages." The young man was immediately taken ill and died. In this case the lad was no doubt killed by fright.

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

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

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

Accordingly, Wroe attended a meeting of the Society at Bradford on August 25th, 1822, and he announced: "You are expecting Shiloh to appear and be amongst you on a certain day; but I tell you He will not; and many of the believers will fall off, not merely one or two in a society, but whole

societies will fall away. Yet I do not doubt that the visitation to George Turner is of God; and as a testimony of which, I will give in my name among you."

On the following Sunday evening he had one of his epileptic fits in the meeting, and lay as if dead. On recovering he announced that he had seen an angel, who had commissioned him to act as prophet. But only two persons at the meeting believed in him, and the whole of the Society at Bradford never thoroughly accepted him. He then went to Almondbury, where was a meeting of the Southcottites, where also he met with indifferent success.

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

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

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

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

After having visited Jews at Liverpool and London without success, on April 27th he embarked in the brig *Doris* at Liverpool for Gibraltar, in company of Robert Harling, of Thornhill, and reached there on the 20th of May. But there Harling's heart failed, whether at the sight of the "abominable idolatries" of the people, or because his faith was shaken in Wroe, does not transpire. On the day following their landing Harling returned to England in a vessel that was ready to sail; but John, having visited and converted the local Methodist preacher, remained with him two months. This preacher, Cooke, was greatly exercised in spirit on the arrival of the Prophet; but having prayed earnestly to the Lord, as he tells us, "The Lord opened my eyes to see," and he became an enthusiastic believer.

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

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

hounds chase a fox, until I utterly destroy them, and the remnant that is left shall slay your king, and they shall know that I have sent this unto them by my servant."

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

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

From Paris he and his companion, William Lees, went to Strasburg, where they "attended the meeting of the Jews in their synagogue. These Jews, not understanding English, conducted them to the house of the Rabbi, who was not at home. His daughter could speak some English, but not sufficient to admit of her understanding the whole of what John and William wished to communicate. The Jews therefore requested to have the purport of the message given to them in writing, which was accordingly done. They behaved very well. On the following day, Sunday, John was so ill that he was confined to the house, and sent William to the Hebrews to receive their answer to his letter. William found a man who could speak English. He said 'he had read the letter to the Rabbi, who was very angry, and said he had power to imprison them for two years, but had pity on them, thinking they were deranged.'"

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

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

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

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

On reaching London, Wroe visited some of the Believers, and prepared the way for a future visit, when he would meet George Turner face to face. He assembled the Friends at Gravesend and Chatham, and prophesied before them, and William Lees at the former place saw the enchanting

Cordelia Chenne, whom he afterwards married, thus fulfilling the prediction of Wroe in the billy-boat. The following year was an eventful one.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He then proceeded to Bradford, and on Sunday the 26th addressed a large congregation which crowded into the chapel to hear him. It ended in a riot. "John left the room, accompanied by Elizabeth Elsworth and Mary Brear, with whom he walked about two hundred yards, when one of the females received a blow and was pushed aside. John was also forced along for some distance. However, they reached the New Inn, where there were two horses in readiness for John and his friend. Many of the people were about to enter, but were prevented by the landlord. Some persons already in the house said the two females were 'John's women,' and that he was picking poor people's pockets. The horses being got ready, the people in the house rushed out, crying to their persecuting companions, 'Now, lads, he's going!' on which they closed the yard gate. John, however, escaped by another passage. Having succeeded in getting on the road leading to Great Horton, a cry was raised, 'Kill him! kill him!' He was then pursued by the mob, amounting to thousands, some crying out, 'That's the devil who says he's been living on hips and haws, wheat and nuts, for fourteen days!' He was surrounded, and prevented from proceeding. By being preceded by Joseph Brear, he soon after succeeded in clearing his way, and proceeding a little further. But he was stopped, the mob pulling his horse and tearing his clothes. Joseph again succeeded in clearing the way a little, but was presently knocked off his horse by a stone; when remounted, they proceeded a short distance. John then turned and said something to the people. John and his horse were then pulled down and struck; the bridle and girth were broken in pieces. He at length succeeded in getting on the causeway, and resumed his journey on foot; stones and other missiles were showered against him in all directions. Some of his companions entertained fears that he never would reach Horton with life."

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

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

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

Now Tozer was the right-hand man of Lindsay – his faithful witness, who wrote down the oracles that dropped from his lips. He was, in fact, to Lindsay what William Lees was to John Wroe. It was to this Tozer that Wroe bore the message given above, which was a speech wrapped up in the most flattering and complimentary language, but a snub for all that. Mr. Tozer was wont to designate himself, "The man clothed in linen, with the writer's inkhorn," and believed himself, or endeavoured to induce others to believe, that he was the person spoken of by the Prophet Ezekiel (ix., 2); and when Mr. Lees appeared on the scene with a white surplice on and an ink-bottle at his left side it was a distinct throwing down of the gauntlet, and was likely to lead to unpleasant results. Foreseeing which, Wroe wrestled in prayer before the congregation that "Satan might be rebuked within *them* walls that day." Then Wroe stood up and said with a loud voice, "Thus saith the Lord, There are in this place those whose places shall be taken by others who have mocked and despised them. None shall enter but such as are circumcised or married." Lindsay turned red, trembled, and knocked over his inkstand. Tozer got up and said, "Friends, what must be my feelings at this time? This day of the month, this day of the week, eleven years ago, I addressed 1500 people in this city, and since

that time the visitation has been trodden under foot. Eleven days were spoken of by the Woman – take them to mean years – (see the book, and find it). God grant that this may be the beginning of the Gathering." The people answered "Amen." It is evident he was overawed by Wroe and Lee in his white surplice and ink-pot.

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

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

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

This Living Skeleton was Claude Ambroise Seurat, born in 1797, who was exhibited in London in 1825. His flesh had wasted completely away, and when he had attained his full height he presented the extraordinary spectacle of a skeleton covered with skin, alive and able to move and converse. A portion of Mr. Hones' description of him must be quoted here: – "He seemed another 'Lazarus come forth,' without his grave-clothes, and for a moment I was too consternated to observe more than his general appearance. My eye then first caught the arm as the most remarkable limb; from the shoulder to the elbow it is like an ivory German flute, somewhat deepened in colour by age; it is not larger, and the skin is of that hue, and not having a trace of muscle, it is as perfect a cylinder as a writing-rule. Amazed by the wasted limbs, I was still more amazed by the extraordinary depression of the chest. Its indentation is similar to that which an over-careful mother makes in the pillowed surface of an infant's bed for its repose. Nature has here inverted her own order, and turned the convex inwards, while nobler organs, obedient to her will, maintain life by the gentle exercise of their wonted functions in a lower region. If the integument of the bowels can be called flesh, it is the only flesh on the body; for it seems to have wholly shrunk from the limbs, and where the muscles that have not wholly disappeared remain, they are also shrunk."

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

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

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

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

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

Lindsay was silent, but presently tried to create a diversion by setting Wroe and his follower Lees at variance, for he pointed to the latter and said, "Thus saith the Lord, This man shall shave, and shall prophesy against his master." "When will he shave off his beard?" asked Wroe indignantly.

"When thine is plucked up by the roots," answered Lindsay. The scene was becoming undignified. The prophets seemed to be aware of it, and that it was necessary to patch the matter up; so Lindsay said, "You see the spirits seem to differ a little; it is we who do not understand how they work and move."

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

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

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

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

With difficulty he persuaded Lees to get into a cab with him and drive to Manchester to the public-house. The two men went in, opened the door into a back parlour, and found the Prophet sitting by the fire, in his low-crowned brown hat and long coat, between two low women, drinking hot whiskey and water with them. The landlord informed them that Wroe had been there several days. Lees went home, burned his white robe, destroyed all his books and tracts belonging to the Society, shaved off his beard, and next Sunday was in the parish church, which he had been in the habit of attending before he fell under the influence of Wroe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Subscription-books were issued to all the sanctuaries. Every member's contribution was to be entered separately, and no man was to know what his neighbour gave. The poorest workman was to contribute not less than 10 per cent, of his earnings.⁴ All extra gifts were to be sent to John Wroe at Wrenthorpe, near Wakefield, and those who did not wish to pay to the local treasurers might send their subscriptions direct to the Prophet.

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

The female members of the Society were to furnish the mansion. They were not to tell their husbands how much they gave; and many put down their names for sums which they really could not pay, and had to sell goods and borrow cash to keep up their payments to the end of 1856.⁵

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

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

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

Wroe found he could not get on without an architect, and therefore employed Mr. Thorpe, of Wakefield, and worried him out of all endurance. Wroe visited Australia in 1850, 1854, 1859, and 1862. He was in America in 1840, 1848, 1853, and 1859. His wife died May 16th, 1853, aged seventy-four years, a fortnight after he left for America. He is said to have treated her badly. On his travels he assumed different names; sometimes he called himself Johanan Asrael, sometimes Yokkow or Yockaman.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On the day of his death, which occurred at Fitzroy, in Australia, he had been out walking as usual, and seemed in his wonted health. On his return from a walk he seated himself in his chair, and suddenly fell forward on the floor, and was taken up a corpse. He had been collecting money in Australia; and directly it was rumoured that Wroe was dead, all the members in Melbourne demanded back their money, and threatened to roughly handle Benjamin Eddow, Wroe's companion and secretary, unless he restored the subscriptions. He was obliged to surrender some of the cash, and to conceal himself. He got away the following day, and remained hidden in a blacksmith's shop till he could find a ship on which to get back to England. He brought with him between six and seven hundred pounds. The Melbourne Society complained that Wroe had not kept faith with them, for he had promised them he would never die!

BISHOP-DYKE POND. ⁶

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When he went to bed he told his wife everything, and the poor woman was dreadfully alarmed. She implored her husband next day to go to Selby and see Richard Harrison, at whose house Barwick had said his wife was staying. He promised to do so, and on the morning early saddled his horse

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

and rode to Selby. His nearest road was by York, Cawood, and Wiston; but he had no mind to meet William Barwick, and he therefore took the high road from York by Escrick, Riccal, and Barlby.

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

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

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

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

"Thomas Lofthouse.

"Jurat die et anno super dicto coram me. "S. Dawson, Mayor."

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

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

"William Barwick.

"Exam. capt. die et anno super dict. coram me. "S. Dawson, Mayor."

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

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

"William Barwick.

"Exam. capt. die et anno super dict. coram me. "S. Dawson, Mayor."

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

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

"That on Easter Tuesday last, about half an hour after twelve of the clock in the daytime, he was watering quickwood, and as he was going for the second pail there appeared, walking before him, an apparition in the shape of a woman. Soon after, she sat down over against the pond, on a green hill; he walked by her as he went to the pond, and as he came with the pail of water from the pond, looking sideways to see if she sat in the same place, which he saw she did; and had on her lap something like a white bag, a-dandling of it (as he thought), which he did not observe before. After he had emptied his pail of water, he stood in his yard to see if he could see her again, but could not. He says her apparel was brown cloathes, waistcoat and petticoat, a white hood, such as his wife's sister usually wore, and her face looked extream pale, her teeth in sight, no gums appearing, her visage being like his wife's sister, and wife to William Barwick.

(Signed) "Thomas Lofthouse."

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

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

SNOWDEN DUNHILL, THE CONVICT

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

"I was born at a small village on the Wolds in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The earliest circumstance of which I have any remembrance is that of following bare-headed and on foot, a waggon containing furniture belonging to a farmer who was removing to the village of Spaldington, near Howden. Of my parents I have but an indistinct remembrance, for I never returned to them, but continued to reside in the village of my adoption, and principally in the house of the family I had accompanied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁷ "The Life of Snowden Dunhill, written by Himself." Howden, 1833.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"As I had formerly lived in the service of a near relation of the old lady to whom the house belonged (I had forgotten to say it was a widow lady's house we took the liberty with), I found no difficulty in laying my hands upon the tinder-box, candles, and everything else. It was an exceedingly stormy night, or I think we must have been heard, for we carried a chest of drawers out of the house

and actually beat them to pieces, not being able to open them. I knew that she had a considerable sum of money, and I hoped we had found it, but it turned out to be a box of farthings; and I was afterwards exceedingly provoked on learning that we had missed three hundred guineas in gold which the old lady had in her lodging room. I also learned that she had a presentiment that she would be robbed, and made an observation to that effect the day before – one of those curious anticipating feelings for which I know not how to account, but which have in several instances happened to myself when coming events, as it were, cast their shadows before.

"But to return to our adventure. After helping ourselves to such things as we thought of most value, and such as could be most easily conveyed away on our horses, and drinking the good old lady's health in some excellent homemade wine, we mounted our horses, with four sacks filled with many things of value. We took a route so as to avoid the toll-bars and public roads, and reached my house just as the sun was beginning to chase away the darkness which had proved so propitious to us. Having instantly buried all the things, my companions departed, and all was soon ready for the reception of any of those enemies of my profession, the constables, should they pay us a visit. However, none came, and though I was generally supposed to be the person who did the deed, no steps were taken to make it out against me. This is one of the very few exploits of the kind I was ever engaged in, and as to highway robberies, I never dreamed of committing one.

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

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

"We had already been up to the granary once with our horses, having taken them loaded away, and secreted several sacks of wheat in a wood a little from the turnpike road, and about three miles from the house. We had filled our sacks a second time, and got them upon the horses, having previously placed everything in the granary as we found it, or as nearly so as we could. I had just thrown my legs over my horse, then standing near the steps of the granary, I being the last of the party, when I heard the gentleman's voice, which I at once knew, for neither his early habit of rising nor the tone of his voice were unknown to me. It was quite dark, and I proceeded with great care on the way towards the high road till I reached a gate about seventy or eighty yards from his house. By some mismanagement on my part, I had no sooner passed through the gate than I fell back into its place with considerable noise. I again heard his voice, but I made the best of my way with my load, and I felt no little relief when I found myself in the Market-Weighton turnpike road. Though I had no very great opinion of the gentleman's courage, I felt quite sure he would have used every endeavour to make out the charge against me had his suspicions of what had taken place been once roused. As

to his following me alone at that moment I had not the most distant fear, for I knew well the care he always took of himself. However, the whole affair passed over. I never heard that he missed what we took away, and the reason probably was, that he at that very time had a large stock of wheat on hand for the purpose of speculation, as I afterwards learned. I remember this wheat was of such singularly good quality that I sold it for the great sum of one guinea and ninepence the bushel, a price I scarcely ever remember to have equalled.

"The next thing that occurs to me worthy of remark, and which I had good cause to remember, nearly terminated fatally for myself. I expected a good booty from the information I had previously received. This was an attack upon the property of two bachelors who resided in the same house, in a village about a mile and a half from Howden. The house was very near the river Ouse, and we had prepared a boat to carry the gains of the night down the river as far as Swinefleet, this being considered, for many reasons, the readiest mode of moving it from the premises, and I had some friends in that place in whom I placed the greatest confidence. Between one and two o'clock we arrived at the house, and were preparing all things in readiness for the business in hand. I was crossing from the bank of the river over a garden, and so on to the back of the premises. In my way I came to a piece of dead fence, over which I was passing, and which gave a crackling sound under my tread. At that moment I heard a dog bark, and instantly after a shot was fired from the upper part of the eastern end of the house. I had my face at the time rather turned away from the place whence the shot proceeded, and I received the whole of the contents in my back and shoulders. I instantly fell; and I well remember that I thought all was over with me, as I lay for some time with my head in the ditch and my feet upon the dead thorns over which I had just passed, and to which I attributed my mishap; for the night was so dark I could not be seen, and the shot must have been directed by the noise I made in getting over the fence. As I lay there I could distinctly hear a whispering from a small door in the end of the house, and I greatly feared lest the inmates should sally forth and take me in my defenceless state. With my head laid upon the ground, the sensation produced upon me by the striking of two o'clock by the church of Howden, I well remember. All was now calm, quiet, and dark; and I actually felt the earth vibrate under my ear as the hollow bell threw over the land its sullen sound. I have understood, since I came here, that the savages in America always resort to this mode of listening for the approach of a friend or an enemy. But to return to myself again.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"On this information I felt considerable relief, conscious of my innocence; but my wife became perfectly outrageous when the constable refused to take her word that I had never stirred over my

threshold since six o'clock of the preceding evening. She, poor woman, swore she would take the law of them threatened writs, indictments, justices, and I know not what; and I verily believed she would have inflicted summary vengeance on the head of the constable with the poker, so furious had she become, from a consciousness that the accusation was without foundation.

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

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

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

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

Snowden Dunhill continues in his Autobiography: —

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

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

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

"The indictment was read over to me, and I was called upon to hold up my hand and plead guilty or not guilty; though I uttered the latter with a loud voice, it was with a full conviction that my

doom was sealed. I felt – and I suppose all persons similarly circumstanced feel the same – that not only the assembled people, but that the whole world had combined to destroy me.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"During her trial she made a moving appeal to the barristers present, stating that she had always found them her best friends; that their ingenuity had often assisted her in the hour of need, and she yet reposed faith in their kindness, and proudly left her honesty and honour in their keeping. The Recorder, startled into momentary confusion at the nature of this appeal, speedily recovered his dignity, and inflicted on her the doom of the law. She was at this time residing at Hull, and had come over to Beverley fair that morning for the purpose of depredation. For this offence she was transported for seven years. She had three husbands, named James Stanhope, William Rhodes, and James Crossland, all of whom were severally transported, one after the other.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It was a cold, bleak morning when I was put upon the coach in the court-yard of the prison, before daylight, with the rain and sleet falling in abundance. The coach remained half-an-hour or more in the yard of the prison till all was in readiness, when the gates were thrown open and we commenced our inauspicious journey. I cannot at all describe the feelings of loneliness and of heartrending distress which came over me at this moment, in which I felt that I was rushing from certain misery to

something that might be even still worse, and yet in my despair I felt a clinging to existence. I have never met with – nay, I have never heard of – a bad man who could look death unflinchingly in the face. On ascending the first rise of the ground in our journey towards London a breeze from the north suddenly sprung up, which scattered the loaded clouds, and the sun burst forth in all its glory. There appeared before me, as if a veil had been taken off the earth by magic power, a wide-spread picture. The Humber, glorying in its Scythian name, rolling to the ocean its mass of waters; and in the distance the winding Trent and Ouse, stealing onward like two wily serpents; and I could just discover the broad expanse where they became united.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is a strange irony in facts. Sally Dunhill, who had been unable to rear one of her own children in morality and honesty, so impressed on the people of Hobart Town that she was a saintly woman by her vociferous prayers and familiarity with Holy Scripture, that she was employed in teaching at a day-school, and was entrusted with the education of children in those paths she had never

trodden herself. The residue of her time was spent in making penny pies, which Snowden hawked about the town.

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

JAMES NAYLOR, THE QUAKER.⁸

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

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

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

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

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

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

Naylor wore a broad-brimmed hat and a long sad-coloured mantle. He was of a moderate height, ruddy complexion, had a slightly arched nose, large brown eyes, was a remarkably handsome man, and was thought by many to resemble the traditional type of face attributed to our Lord. Martha

⁸ Authorities: – "The Grand Imposter Examined; or, the Life, Trial, and Examination of James Naylor, London, 1656," reprinted in the Harleian Misc., vi., 424. Johannis Lussenii "Hist. u. Schriftt-mässige Erörterung der vor wenig Zeit in Engelland entstandenen secte der Quäcker," in "Quäcker Grueuel," published by authority of the magistrates of Hamburg, 1702. "The Recantation of James Naylor," in "Somers' Tracts," vi., 22, pub. 1659. "Naylor's Writings Collected," 8vo, 1716. Sewell's "Hist. of the Quakers," 1714. Sewell was personally acquainted with Hannah Stranger, one of Naylor's followers. "The Journals of the House of Commons," vi., p. 448-59. Blome's "Fanatick History." J. Whiting's "Account."

Symonds was the wife of Thomas Symonds, bookbinder of London; and Hannah Stranger was the wife of John Stranger, combmaker in London. The two other women accompanying Naylor were Dorcas Erbury, whom he had raised from the dead, and her mother.

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

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

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

Examination of James Naylor

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"James Naylor,

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

"And I am,

"Hannah Stranger.

"The Postscript

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

"John Stranger."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q. "By whom were you sent?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

A. "No carnal creature."

Q. "Who, then?"

He returned no answer.

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

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

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

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

Q. "Do any kiss thy feet?"

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

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

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

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

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

Q. "Where were you born?"

A. "At Arderslow, in Yorkshire."

Q. "Where lives thy wife?"

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

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

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

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

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

Q. "Who then?"

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

Q. "What wentest thou for to Exeter?"

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

Q. "What estate hast thou?"

A. "Take no care for that."

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

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

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

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

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

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

Martha Symonds' Examination

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

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

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

Q. "Whether didst thou kneel before him?"

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

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

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

Q. "Hast thou a husband?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q. "Where dost thou live?"

A. "With Margaret Thomas."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A. "He raised me."

Q. "In what manner?"

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

Q. "Where did he this?"

A. "At the gaol in Exeter."

Q. "What witness hast thou for this?"

A. "My mother, who was present."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sentence was pronounced by the Speaker, Sir Thomas Widdrington. Naylor on hearing it said, "I pray God He may not lay it to your charge." On December 20th, 1656, Naylor suffered a part of his sentence, standing two hours in the pillory, and receiving at the cart's tail three hundred and ten stripes. "The executioner gave him three hundred and ten stripes," says Sewell, "and would have given him one more, as he confessed to the Sheriff, but his foot slipping, the stroke fell upon his own hand, which hurt him much. Naylor was hurt with the horses treading on his feet, whereon the

prints of the nails were seen. His wounds were washed by R. Travers, who certified, 'there was not the space of a man's nail free from stripes and blood, from his shoulders near to his waist; his right arm sorely striped; his hands much hurt by the cords that they bled and were swelled: the blood and wounds of his back did very little appear at first sight, by reason of abundance of dirt that covered them, till it was washed off.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two hours before he died he uttered the touching and eloquent speech: – "There is a spirit which I feel that delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to

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

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

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

"OLD THREE LAPS."

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

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

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

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

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

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

His father by his will made provision for the temporal wants of his eccentric son, and so secured him a constant attendant. He ate his meals regularly when brought to him, and latterly in a very singular manner, for in process of time his legs became contracted and drawn towards his body, and when about to eat his food he used to roll himself over and take his meals in a kneeling posture. He was generally cleanly in his habits. During the whole period of his self-imposed confinement he never had any serious illness, the only case of indisposition those connected with him could remember being a slight loss of appetite, caused apparently by indigestion, for two or three days – and this,

notwithstanding that he ate on an average as much as any farm labourer. He certainly, physically speaking, did credit to his food, for though arrived at the age of seventy-nine years, his flesh was firm, fair and unwrinkled, save with fat, and he weighed about 240 lbs. He showed great repugnance to being seen, and whenever a stranger entered his den he immediately buried his head in the bed-clothes. About a week before his death his appetite began to fail; his limbs became partially benumbed, so that he could not roll himself over to take his food in his accustomed posture.

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

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

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

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

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

"If you chance to go a-skating 'to the Tarn,' and want a fine bracing walk, keep on the Sutton road about a mile, and you will come to an avenue of larch, not in a very thriving state, but sufficient to indicate that some one had an idea of the picturesque who planted the trees, although the house at the top of the avenue has not a very attractive appearance. You have now reached 'World's End,' and save here and there a solitary farm, with its cold stone buildings and treeless fields, there are few signs of life between you and the wide and boundless moors of Yorkshire and Lancashire. On the opposite hill, right up in the clouds, is 'Tewett Hall,' the residence of a Bradford Town Councillor. He alone, in this part, seems to follow Three Laps' ancestors' plan of planting, and in a few years we may expect to see a fine belt of timber on the verge of the horizon, a sight that will cheer the heart of some future Dr. Syntax when in search of the picturesque. At this place Three Laps 'took his bed,' and in a little parlour, with a northern light, the sill of which is level with the field, the floor cold and damp, and meanly furnished, it was my privilege to see Three Laps some twenty-five years ago. To gain admission we had some difficulty; but with the assistance of the farmer and a tin of tobacco to the nurse, who was an inveterate smoker, we were shown into his bedroom. As soon as he heard strangers, he pulled the bed-clothes over his head, which the nurse with considerable force removed, and uncovered his body, which was devoid of every vestige of body-linen. A more startling and sickening sight I never saw. Nebuchadnezzar rushed into my mind. Three Laps covered his face with his hands, his fingers being like birds' claws, while, with his legs drawn under his body, he had the appearance of a huge beast. He had white hair, and a very handsome head, well set on a strong chest. His body and all about him was scrupulously clean, and his condition healthy, as his nurse proudly pointed out, digging her fist furiously into his ribs. He gave no signs of joy or pain, but lay like a mass of inanimate matter. It struck me at the time that his limbs were stiff; but a neighbour of his, who after his dinner stole a peep into his bedroom window, told me that he found him playing with his plate in the manner of a Chinese juggler, and with considerable ability. On my informant tapping the window, he vanished under the bed-clothes.

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