How William Walsham

Lighter Moments from the Notebook of Bishop Walsham How

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How W.

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Содержание

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PREFACE

On Christmas Day, 1891, my father presented me with his collection of "Ecclesiastical Jottings," as he called them, having previously had them handsomely bound in red leather. When he put them into my hands he expressed a hope that I should some day make a little book of them. Up to the time of his death he made frequent additions to the collection, and I have now gathered most of his stories together in "a little book," according to his wishes.

To *read* them is to lose so much; yet that is all that one can do now. Half their humour seems to have gone with the sound of his voice, the merry twinkle of his eye, and his own delight in them.

I cannot help hoping that they may serve to brighten the odd minutes of some other lives spent, as his was, in many labours.

There are some people to whom apologies seem due.

First, to those to whom a large number of these stories are already familiar. May I ask them to realise that the contents of this volume have been so familiar to me that it has been almost impossible for me to know which to throw away as chestnuts?

Secondly, I apologise to those whose appreciation of my father's goodness and piety is so great that they shrink from the contemplation of any other characteristics. To them I would, with great deference, suggest that they are putting on one side a large and important part of my father's character. No man, as I believe, walked more closely with his God, but his influence owed much of its power to the fact that he also walked in closest sympathy with men – sympathy not only with their tears but with their laughter – sympathy which begot, as it generally does, a keen sense of humour.

Thirdly, there are those who, possessing no sense of humour themselves, are fearful lest it should appear derogatory to their stupendous intellects to appreciate that gift in others. I was going to apologise to these also – but, on the whole, I think I won't.

F. D. H.
February 1900.

LIGHTER MOMENTS

Bishop Walsham How was the happy possessor of a nature essentially sunny. Deeply pious from his childhood onwards, his piety was neither of that morose, narrow, gloomy description met with among some people, nor was it of that gushing, uncertain, hysterical kind occasionally found among others. He was happy because he was good. His simple joyous life was a song of praise to his Creator, like that of a bright spring day. He rejoiced in the Lord alway. No one who knew him could fail to be struck with this all-pervading note in his character. No matter what the anxiety, no matter what the trouble, he was always ready to turn his face to the Sun and be gladdened by the Light.

A quality on a slightly lower level, but having its own part in helping to sustain his sunniness of disposition, was his keen sense of humour. He never could help seeing the funny side of things. A visit to some dreary and neglected parish in East London would sadden him, but the ready answer of a street boy, or the good story told him by a fellow traveller in train or tram, would not fail to be appreciated, and would give him something cheery to talk about when he got home.

Surely this sense of humour is in some way closely allied with the power of sympathy. This is apparently true in the case of *men*. *Women* must be considered from a different point of view, for, while the world would be but a poor place bereft of their sympathy, they have for the most part but little sense of humour. Occasionally one meets with a supposed exception, but even then one is liable to be deceived. It is natural to all women to wish to please, and sometimes an apparently humorous disposition is the result of consummate acting. A lady was staying with a large house party at a country house, and gained a great reputation by her power of telling amusing stories with a vast appreciation of their fun. It was noticed that other people's stories were received by her with remarkable gravity, and seldom called forth her laughter. This was ascribed by some to jealousy, by others to a limited sense of humour. At last the true explanation was forthcoming. An accident revealed the fact that every story she heard was carefully noted, and entered afterwards in a book, with the place and date where it was told. Hence the grave attention with which she listened. It was not the fun that attracted her, but the opportunity of adding to a store of anecdotes from which a selection was carefully rehearsed day by day in her bedroom, to be let off like a number of little set pieces for the amusement of the company and her own glorification.

Bishop Walsham How entered most of the amusing incidents and stories he met with in a notebook, but his sense of humour was very different from that of the lady mentioned above. There was no lack of spontaneity. It was part and parcel of himself, and he would never have been the man he was, or had the influence he possessed, without it.

Although far more men than women seem to have this sense, yet every one must be familiar with some few of those unfortunate people in whom it is lacking. Let a man think of his schooldays. There were masters who *understood*– who saw the joke underlying a breach of discipline; who punished, indeed, but who did it with a twinkle in the eye which helped to cure the smart. These were the men whom the boys trusted, just because they felt that they were sure of sympathy. But there was probably one at least among the staff, ponderous, dull, and worthy, well-meaning, but a failure simply by reason of an entire lack of the sense of humour. By dint of dogged perseverance he got certain facts into the heads of his class, but he never succeeded in interesting them in their work. He took boys out for a solemn walk, but never gained a confidence. What was the good of talking to him? He never had been a boy: he could not understand.

It is just the same in other professions. The clergyman with pale and heavy features, who sees no fun in anything, may just as well stop at home as go round from house to house with his awkward unsympathetic questions. The children run away from him, their parents are simply bored. The doctor or the lawyer loses touch with his clients when he is unfortunate enough to be set down as a man who cannot see a joke.

In fact, the sense of humour is a real part of the power of conveying a sense of sympathy. The sympathy *may* be there in the dullest and heaviest of men, but he has not the power of conveying it. One of Bishop Walsham How's great delights was to share with others the amusement he gleaned from day to day, and it was his wish that after his death some of the stories that he collected should be published. Many of them he frequently told, and they have been repeated from mouth to mouth till they are well known, others were perhaps well known when he first heard them. The following selection has been made with the hope of including all the more original anecdotes, and it is hoped that they may have some small share in keeping alive the memory of one whose sense of humour helped to increase his wide-hearted sympathy for his fellow creatures.

Many of the stories told by Bishop Walsham How centre round Whittington, the Shropshire parish of which he was Rector from 1851 to 1879. In the early days of his residence there superstition was exceedingly rife. There is a note by the Bishop to this effect:

The prevalence of superstition in these enlightened days (as we call them: how our great-grandchildren will laugh at us!) is most marvellous. The following are in this parish generally approved and seriously recommended remedies for the whooping-cough, popularly called the "chin-cough": To be swung nine times under a donkey. To pass the patient three times under and over a briar growing from a hedge, saying, "Over the briar and under the briar, and leave the chin-cough behind."[1] Anything recommended by a seventh son. (One woman cured several people, she tells me, by sending them to meet a boatman who is a seventh son, and to ask him what would cure them.) Anything recommended by a man on a piebald horse. (I have been told of cures being thus effected by gin, honey, cold water, and an ounce of tea taken wholly.)

Soon after I came here [Whittington] an old neighbour, Kitty Williams, was ill, and my wife was ill at the same time. In speaking of the latter fact to an old woman who lived at the hamlet of Babies' Wood, she said she hoped we were good to old Kitty, for she had an evil eye and might have caused Mrs. How's illness. She then told me the following story: When Kitty was young she lived in service near Whittington, but was sent away for some misconduct, and after a time married Jonathan Williams and came to live where I knew her. From the time she left her place nothing prospered there. Cows died, horses went lame, and all went wrong. So they consulted a wise woman, who told them to get a pair of black horses with long tails and to drive them about till they stopped of themselves, and then to give the first woman they saw whatever she asked for. They did so; the horses stopped opposite Kitty's cottage close by Whittington Rectory. Kitty came out, and they greeted their old servant and asked what they should give her. She chose a shawl, so they went to Oswestry and bought her one, after which all things prospered with them. This was told me with the seriousness of profound belief.[2]

Scarcely less curious were many of the phrases and sayings which he came across in visiting the old inhabitants of the parish. Here are a few which found a place in his notebook:

A woman from whom I was making some inquiry concerning a neighbour answered me, "I really can't tell you, sir, for I've not much confection of cheerfulness with my neighbours."

Another woman, who had been ill, described herself to me as being "as thin as a halfpenny herring."

A poor woman in the parish, speaking to me of the wonders of the heavens, expressed her astonishment at the sun rising in the east, whereas it set in the west. "I suppose," she said, "it gets back in the night when it is dark."

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[1] This process I can remember undergoing at the hands of my nurse in the garden of Whittington Rectory. – Ed.

[2] The following facts may throw some light on the horses stopping at that exact spot. First, they were probably hearse horses; secondly, there is a public-house on the other side of the road. – Ed.

The following words are given verbatim as spoken by an old woman in the parish on the occasion of my first visit soon after I became Rector. "The old man and me never go to bed, sir, without singing the Evening Hymn. Not that I've got any voice left, for I haven't; and as for him, he's like a bee in a bottle; and then he don't humour the tune, for he don't rightly know one tune from another, and he can't remember the words neither; so when he leaves out a word I puts it in, and when I can't sing I dances, and so we gets through it somehow."

Queer letters, too, find a place among the other curiosities of Whittington. Mrs. How received the following remarkable epistle about a poor woman who had been sent to a lady in Oswestry. There is not a stop in the letter from beginning to end:

I am sorry to send to you Ellen Morris which her his heavy afflicted with the favor on the brain which her is not fit to get her living and her did go to Mrs. G – and I did write a note to go to her and her said if her had a note from a clergyman her would give her 2 6 [two-and-six] what does it matter who write a note for a person when they are in distress people that can write a note and tell the truth which her has got a pair of boots in a shoemaker's shop which her cannot get them out without two shilling and her his very near barefoot and I hope you will bestow your charity this once for my sake and yours what we give to the poor we never shall want which I do give her what I can give her and God will bless us all that will give with a good free willing heart my dear Mrs. How which I hope you will bestow you are a very good to the poor and it his a great charity to give to this poor woman yours truly Mrs. D – which her does beg her living from one or another and her does do very well considering.

The above is the complete letter, no date, and no other word of any sort. Vicarious begging letters are not unknown to the police of our big towns, but the scribe who could not do better than the above would have small chance of employment. A modern London begging letter is often a work of fine art.

A further note on a curious letter tells how, in December 1875, a good widow in the village received a proposal from a man she had never spoken to, couched in the following terms:

Dear Friend, I am a widower with two little girls, and I want some one to take care of them. I think we could live very comfortably together in this world, & afterwards we could rejoin those we have loved who have gone before. If you accept this, please write & say so on the other side of this sheet. If not, please return this letter, & dont make it public.[3]

The famous and eccentric Jack Mytton lived at Halston, a country house in the parish of Whittington, not very long before Bishop Walsham How went there as Rector. Some of the old servants from that house were still living in the village, and wonderful were the stories that they told. One would relate how he was compelled to go out on a snowy night and crawl over the ice to shoot wild ducks with his master, *dressed only in his nightshirt*. Another told how, after Jack Mytton's famous roasting match against a professional roaster in Shrewsbury, his master called for him in his carriage on his way home, and drove him up to Halston that he might *scrape* him where he was burnt. Happily such days were over before 1850, and no doubt the stories of these old servants lost nothing in the telling. One of the last to survive was the subject of the following passage in the notebook:

Mrs. J – , formerly housekeeper at Halston in Mr. Mytton's time, has long been a sufferer from asthma. She lost a sister, and in speaking of arrangements for the funeral told me she had a vault made

[3] Proposal declined. – Ed

for four, in which three, including her own husband, had been already buried, and that she wished her sister to have the fourth place. When I said, "Surely, that is meant for yourself," she answered, "No, I never could breathe in a vault. I must have fresh air. She shall have it, and I'll be buried in the open ground, if you please."

While speaking of Halston a good story may find a place concerning the gentleman who owned the property in Bishop Walsham How's time.

One of my curates, in walking down from Frankton, fell in with a man who startled him by saying what a pity it was that the owner of Halston was not a better man. On being asked what he meant, the man said that no good man would do as was being done on that property, and build cottages in pairs or close together. My curate asked why not, and the man said, "Because it is written 'Thou shalt not add house to house'"; and, on my curate explaining the true meaning to him, he repudiated it entirely, and said he had no doubt the thing was condemned in the Bible because next-door neighbours always quarrel.

Here is an account of a curious interview the Rector had with a local stonemason. Probably the spread of education would make such a thing impossible to-day.

A stonemason one day brought a stone to put into the churchyard, with a verse on it in which occurred the line – Till life's brief span be ended.

I had given no permission for this, and make a rule of refusing to allow poetical effusions upon tombstones. However, the mason had omitted the 's' after "life," so I was able to remonstrate with him, and told him that if he had sent me his epitaph beforehand I could at least have saved him from making ridiculous mistakes. He was quite incredulous, and asked me to point out the mistake. When I did so he put his head on one side, and, after contemplating the stone for some moments, said, "Now *I* should say, if you were to put an 's' in that line, it would come in better after 'brief.'"

Some anecdotes relating to pastoral visits occur here and there in the notebooks. The following story is interesting as illustrating the fact that it does not always do to trust to first impressions.

I was visiting on his death bed an old man in the village called John Richards, and one day found a very rough-looking fellow sitting by the head of his bed with his hands in his pockets, and his legs stretched out, so I asked him if he was the old man's son, to which he answered with a rough "Yes." I then asked him where he lived, and he answered in the same insolent tone, "Manchester." So, thinking he was not a pleasant specimen of Manchester manners, I took no further notice of him, but read and prayed with his father as if he were not there, he sitting in the same irreverent attitude all the time. Just as I was going he said abruptly, "I'll tell ye something." "Well," I said, "what is it?" "I had a mate once," he said, "down with the small-pox, uncommon bad, black as your hat. 'John,' he says to me, 'fetch me a minister.' So I went for one of these Chapel ministers, and I says to him, 'Come along o' me, I've got a mate bad.' So he came. So when we got to the house, before we went up, I says, 'You don't know what's the matter with him?' and he says, 'No, what is it?' 'Small-pox,' I said, 'as black as your hat.' And what do you think he did?" "I don't know," I said. "Why, run away!" he said, breaking into a loud laugh. I thought this was the end of the story, and that it was meant as a hit at all ministers, but he went on, "I warn't to be done that way, so next I goes for a Church minister, and I says to him, 'Come along o' me, I've got a mate bad.' And *he* came. Well, when we got to the foot of the stairs I says to him just like t'other one, 'You don't know what's the matter with him?' and he says, 'No, what is it?' So I says again, 'Small-pox as black as your hat.' Well, what do you think this chap did?" "Not run away, I hope," I answered. "No," he shouted in the most defiant way, "No, he walked straight up to the bedside and prayed with him just like you've done with my father." So

I found that my rough and defiant friend was all the time paying me a compliment. But it was the most pugnacious bit of friendship I ever encountered.

No one who knew the Bishop and his wide-hearted sympathy would think for a moment that he told this story to contrast the ministers of various denominations. That was not the point. The fun lay in the man's manner. Might it not be fair to suggest that possibly the one minister had been vaccinated while the other was a "conscientious objector" arrived before his time? Here is another story of pastoral visitation:

A woman in a small Welsh farmhouse [Whittington is on the border of Wales] being taken very ill, a neighbour went for the clergyman, who said he would come directly. The neighbour going back to the farmhouse said they had better get out a Bible, as the parson might ask for one. The farmer thereupon told the woman she would find one, he thought, at the bottom of an old chest, "for thank goodness," he added, "we have had no occasion for them sort of books for many a long year – never since the old cow was so bad."

Talking of family Bibles, when Bishop Walsham How was Rector of Whittington he copied the following list from the entries in the family Bible of some people called Turner. The names are those of the twelve children of the family:

1. Turnerina de Margaret.
2. Turnerannah de Mary Elizabeth.
3. Alfred Fitz Cawley de Walker.
4. Bernard de Belton.
5. Cornelius la Compston.
6. Turnerica Henrica Ulrica da Gloria de Lavinia Rebekah.
7. John de Hillgreave.
8. Eignah de George Turner Jones.
9. Fighonghangal o Temardugh Hope de Hindley.
10. Turnwell William ap Owen de Pringle.
11. Turnerietta de Johannah Jane de Faith.
12. Faithful Thomas.

Surely the father who invented these names was a born humorist! It must have been the father, for no mother would have permitted her children to be thus bedizened with absurd appellations if it had not been that her lack of humour failed to see the fun of her husband's gorgeous caricature of the "upper ten."

It has often been said that the power of recognising an object when represented in a picture is not natural but acquired. The following story of one of the "Old Men's Dinners" at Whittington Rectory goes to show that in the early days of photography the rustic population had difficulty in discerning the portraits somewhat dimly shadowed forth on the old-fashioned glass and metal plates.

I always have a dinner of from twenty to thirty of the oldest men of the parish on New Year's day, and on one of these occasions I was displaying to my guests a photograph of two old men who had long worked at the Rectory, and who were taken in their working clothes, one with a spade, and the other holding a little tree as if about to plant it. A very deaf old man, Richard Jones, took it in his hand, and looking at it said, "Beautiful! Beautiful!" So I shouted, "Who are they, Richard?" "Why," he said, "it's Abraham offering up Isaac, to be sure!" I tried to undeceive him, and, as the old men who had been photographed were sitting opposite to him, I said, "You'll see them before you if you will look up." But all I could get was a serene smile, "Yes, yes, I sees 'em before me – by faith."

The Rector of Whittington was blessed with a succession of valuable curates, who for the most part became his close personal friends, and he was also on the most friendly terms with the clergy of the neighbouring parishes. Concerning his curates or his neighbours, he would now and then note an amusing incident, some of which must find a place here while we are dealing with his Whittington career.

When the curacy of Whittington was vacant on one occasion I had an application from a young clergyman who sent me a sermon on Baptism, which he had preached in his last parish, thinking that I should like to see what his doctrine was. However, his opinion on every controverted point was studiously concealed. I have, nevertheless, preserved one passage, the doctrine of which is interesting. It ran as follows: "In the East baptism was frequently practised by immersion, but in a cold climate like ours, where we apply water only to the face and hands, such a practice would be injurious to the health."

A very shy, nervous curate of mine had to take the service alone here one Sunday morning soon after his ordination. There were banns of marriage for two couples to give out, the first being for the third time of asking, and the second for the first. After reading out the four names he paused, turned very red, and astounded the congregation by adding, "The first are last and the last first."

When the house, in which a curate of mine lodged, changed hands, the new landlady agreed to pay the old one £10 for the curate. He complained to us that, having been paid for, he could not leave, however uncomfortable he might be. Shortly afterwards the new landlady told him that she had not paid the £10 and could not do so, so he paid it for her, thus paying his own valuation!

A neighbour of mine, a clergyman, who had a great dislike of discouraging little children, was one day examining a class, and asked how many sons Noah had. "Four," a little girl answered. "Ah! yes," he said, "perhaps, but one died young." He next asked what their names were. "Adam," suggested a small child. "Yes, my child," he said, "that would doubtless be the one that died young."

An Irish curate in Oswestry quoted in his sermon "the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears," and, being suddenly struck with the physical difficulties of the process, he paused a moment, and then proceeded. "How does she stop her ears? I suppose, my friends, she must clap one ear on the ground and stick her tail in the other." Curiously enough I see that Brunetto Latini, in his "Booke of Beastes," relates this as a fact in natural history. Latini was contemporary with Dante, and a great naturalist, but of the inventive sort.

The following story will be recognised by many, in spite of the absence of names. When we were children it was one of our greatest treats to be taken to see the clergyman in question, who was very kind to us and used to ask us to play drums and other instruments in his quaint sitting-room. The occasions of his visits to our house were also much looked forward to, as he was sure to do something original. He once came to a dinner party and brought two or three musical-boxes which he set off, all playing different tunes at the same time, during dinner. This is the story that occurs in the notebook:

The first time that Archdeacon Wickham visited this deanery as archdeacon I drove him to a parsonage where the incumbent insisted upon his inspecting everything. In the garden is a little pond, and over this pond we beheld a strange erection of posts and planks, with a sort of saddle-like seat on the top. On the Archdeacon asking the incumbent what it was, he explained with great delight that it was a capital contrivance by which you could take exercise and make yourself useful by pumping water up to the church, where he had just been building a transept. So, saying that he would show us, he clambered up, sat down on the saddle smiling, and began to work the treadles eagerly. Unfortunately, however, the work at the church having been just finished, the pipe which had conveyed the water to the workmen had been cut off just above the surface of the water. The consequence was that he immediately produced a jet of water which shot straight upwards and almost

lifted him off his seat, entirely upsetting the archidiaconal gravity. As we returned to the house the incumbent begged the Archdeacon to go into the back yard and smell the pump, which, he said, stank horribly. The Archdeacon protested that he had no authority over pumps, but he would take no denial, and when he got into the backyard he said, "Now, Mr. Archdeacon, if you will put your nose to the spout, I will pump." The Archdeacon was, however, quite equal to the occasion, and said, "No, I depute the Rural Dean to put his nose to the spout, and I will receive his report, and, if needed, pronounce an ecclesiastical censure."

Bishop Walsham How's love of botany took him frequently into the wilder and more mountainous parts of the neighbourhood, and in the course of these expeditions he made friends with the gentleman, since dead, of whom he tells the following story:

The Vicar of the little parish of Criggion, under the Breidden hills, asked me once to come there for a certain All Saints' Day, when he was going to have a meeting of choirs. I could not go, but seeing him a little while afterwards, I asked him how the choral festival had gone off. "Oh! very well," he said. "And how many choirs had you?" I asked "Oh, well, only two," he said; "L – 's from over the hill and my own." "And how many voices had you?" I next asked. "You should not be so inquisitive," he said, "but to tell the truth, there were only his Buttons and my own little maid!"

Before he went to Whittington, he had some experience of another quaint character among Shropshire clergymen, as is related in the following passage taken from the notebook:

Mr. C – was curate of a parish near Shrewsbury when I was curate of Holy Cross and St. Giles' in that town. He was very eccentric in all his ways. Among other peculiarities he, though very High Church in views, adopted a very secular style of dress. Archdeacon Allen undertook on one occasion to speak to him on the subject, and at a Visitation very kindly and pleasantly remarked that his dress was not quite what was usual on such occasions. Whereupon Mr. C – , taking hold of the Archdeacon's coat, said, "Well, Mr. Archdeacon, you know *this* is not quite the correct thing: I believe it is an old coat made to do!" The Archdeacon could not resist a good laugh, and acknowledged that he was quite right in his supposition.

One day my good fellow curate, the Rev. F. P. Johnson, was walking along the road when he saw Mr. C – approaching, a gaunt figure with long strides, in a striped waistcoat and blue muffetees, intoning at the top of his voice the prayer for the Queen's most excellent Majesty. He slackened pace, finished the prayer, duly sang the Amen, and then shook hands with a hearty "How do you do, old fellow?" On Johnson expressing astonishment at the performance, he said he was only saying Matins as in duty bound, and, since his rector would not have it in church and he had no time in his lodgings in Shrewsbury, he always said it as he came back from visiting the school in the morning. "If you had been a minute or two sooner," he added, "you would just have come in for the anthem. You know 'in choirs and places where they sing, here followeth the anthem.'" "And what anthem did you have to-day?" asked Johnson. "Oh," he replied, "I always have the same, for I only know one. When I come to that place I always sing 'God save the Queen.'"

Another time Mr. C – was spending a day with Mr. Peake, then curate of Ellesmere. At noon he went up to his room, and Mr. Peake heard him whistling very strangely on one note. He went up, knocked at his door, and asked him what he was doing. "Oh nothing," said Mr. C – . "But what are you whistling in that queer way for?" said Mr. Peake. "Oh, well, if you must know," he answered, "I was saying my prayers." "Saying your prayers!" said Mr. Peake, "why, you were whistling!" "Yes, I know," said Mr. C – ; "the fact is your maid was cleaning your room next to mine, and I thought she would think it odd perhaps if I intoned my sexts, as I generally do, so I thought I would whistle them to-day."

Several stories occur in connection with Oswestry, which was the market town for Whittington.

Extract from a sermon preached by a curate of Oswestry upon the scene between St. Paul and St. Peter at Antioch. The words were taken down at the time [N.B. —*Hibernice legendum*]: "So Paul seized the banner of the Gospel out of the hands of poor, weak, compromising Peter, and waved it in a flood of light and liberty over the head of the Galatian Church."

Again:

A certain Calvinistic curate of Oswestry met a neighbour who had unhappily seceded to Rome, and thus described the interview to his vicar. "I met – yesterday, and said to him, 'Not a day of my life passes that I do not pray for you.' And what do you think he said? Why, 'And not a day of *my* life passes that I do not pray for *you*.' The impudence of the fellow!"

Here is another:

A certain clergyman of this diocese, risen from the ranks, was preaching at Trinity Church, Oswestry, and found in the course of the service that he had forgotten his pocket-handkerchief. As he felt he should require one during the sermon, the weather being very warm, he asked a lady in a pew close to the pulpit, as he went up, to lend him hers, which he duly returned as he went down again!

Whittington being on the borders of Wales, Dissent was extremely prevalent, and the Church's action towards Dissenters was a burning subject. Hence the following story:

At a clerical meeting soon after I came into these parts the subject discussed was, "How to treat Dissenters." After most of those present had spoken, a neighbouring rector said, "I make it a principle never to speak to Dissenters about religious matters. But I have a very good garden with a southern slope, and I send them baskets of early vegetables, and by this means I have brought several over to the Church."

Next come two stories from the same neighbourhood of Oswestry, but of a more unclerical nature:

A relation of Sir Watkin Wynn was one day hunting with those hounds when his horse stumbled in a lane and fell with him. Whereupon Simpson, at that time Sir Watkin's second horseman, jumped off to help him, and thinking him dangerously hurt tried to comfort him with a text of Scripture, saying, "Ah, sir! naked we came out of our mother's womb and naked we shall return thither!"

Dr. B – , of Oswestry, has three horses which he has named "High Church," "Low Church," and "Broad Church." The reason he gives is that the first is always on his knees, the second never, and as for the third you never know what he will do next.

This last story leads on naturally to a number of good things on the subject of Ritualism. A High Churchman was practically an unknown quantity in those parts when Bishop Walsham How first went to be Rector of Whittington in 1851. The smallest innovation or improvement in a service, such as are generally accepted nowadays in Evangelical Churches, raised a storm of protest, and the ignorance displayed by newspapers as well as by private individuals is almost past belief in these days when we have been satiated with articles and correspondence on "advanced practices." For instance:

A Wellington paper, commenting severely on the supposed ritualistic practices at Welsh Hampton, spoke of the Vicar as "practising the most unblushing celibacy."

The same paper describing an evening service at St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, spoke of the vicar as walking in procession with his curate from the vestry and then entering the desk and beginning

the evening service, "or, as, borrowing the language of these gentlemen, we ought more correctly to say, evening matins."

A short time ago the Reverend James Hook, Vicar of Morton, was coming to see me by train. There were several women in the carriage, and one of them began to talk to the others about Whittington, asking them if they knew what shocking things were done in the church there. She then said she once went into Whittington Church and saw the host on the altar. There were great exclamations of horror, when Mr. Hook quietly looked up from his paper and said, "I beg your pardon, what did you see?" "The host on the altar, sir," she said. "Oh, and what was it like?" She hesitated and said she could not exactly describe it. He told her not to mind about being very exact, but would she tell him what sort of a thing it was? She then said she did not notice very carefully. So he then said he would tell her what it meant, and having done so, he told her how wicked it was to invent such stories. She was then frightened, and said with some alarm, "Well, sir, I am certain I saw two rows of candlesticks down the two sides of the church."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.