Notes on O.C.R. transcript.

The original text of 'TALES OF DERWENTDALE' is contained in a hard back volume published in 1902. It is an interesting mixture of fact, myth and legend. The list of Subscribers at the end of the book, together with many of the chapters dealing with named individuals will be of particular interest to Family Historians.

The page size of the original text is approximately 4½ inches x 7 inches. This transcript is based on an A5 page size. The original volume comprised 128 pages; the transcript contains the full text in 106 pages, due to the altered page size.

Some other minor changes have been made to the original layout in making the transcript.

- *The font is Times New Roman.*
- *The pages have been re-numbered to cater for the reduced number of pages and to include the list of Subscribers. These changes are reflected in the Contents page.*
- *Some typographical errors have been corrected, including the transposition of pages 51 and 52 in the original text.*

To find the various chapters you can either click on the appropriate bookmark on the left of the screen or click on the appropriate page number in the Contents.

P.Burns. July 2003.

TALES OF DERWENTDALE.

BY
J. W. FAWCETT,
AUTHOR OF "HISTORIC PLACES IN THE DERWENT VALLEY,"
" ANNALS OF THE CONSETT DISTRICT," &C., &C., &C.

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PREFACE

The Derwent Valley, one of the most picturesque in scenic beauty in the North of England, and which has been the theme of many a poetic effusion, is also rich in historical lore and traditional tales, in fact, history, legend, superstition, and tradition vie with each other throughout the length and breadth of the valley. Some of the old legends and traditions, which had only an oral permanency, have long since passed down the traditionary channel into the sea of oblivion, and become lost. Others with the march of common sense and a more enlightened age are rapidly passing out of remembrance, and will in the course of time become forgotten.

To give these a more enduring worth and to make them known to a new generation, who have become residents in the locality to which they are associated, has been the chief aim of the collector and compiler of these Tales of Derwentdale. In their collection he has delved into old volumes long since out of print, and has also been greatly beholden to the memories of old residents, in whose families some of the traditions had passed down from one generation to another.

They were first published in a serial form in the pages of the Consett Guardian in 1901, and an unanimous request for their republication in volume form has resulted in their present issue to subscribers, whose kindly appreciation is valued by the compiler, and his sincere wish is that the work may always prove interesting to its many readers, and that his feeble endeavours to preserve local stories of the past may at all times provide entertaining matter for readers, not only in “lovely Derwentside,” where they are of especial

value, but to those subscribers and readers in other parts of the "homeland," as well as to those natives, or at one time residents, who "in lands across the sea" have made homes for themselves, and into whose hands the work may fall.

J. W. FAWCETT.

Satley, Darlington.

June 14th, 1902.

TALES OF DERWENTDALE

THE BLANCHLAND BELLS.

“Their lives in Alba Landa’s holy dome,
  Flow’d sweetly, as in summer days, the stream
Meanders by the ruins of their home,
  Till those inured in plundering raids to roam -
I tell the story that tradition tells -
  Blent on these heights, malignant joy and foam,
And savage laughter with the chime of bells,
  That led them to their spoils athwart the realms of fells.

From wanderings wild and filled with foul and feud,
  And dripping shrines aglow with human gore,
To startle this supernal solitude.
  With damning deed they came! And o’er and o’er
The hills that, purple-blossom’d, base the shore,
  They roamed and nursed their ignominious will,
Till cursing loud the luck that held the oar,
  And lone and lost among the moorlands still,
The Convent bells rang out on wild Dead Friar’s Hill!

They came! the nameless, bloody men, they came
  Whose long-nursed vengeance stilled the voice of prayer;
Whose eyes red-gleaming with a frenzied flame,
  Glared, gloating round on treasures rich and rare;
Whose hands assigned to silence and despair,
  The plundered temple and the sainted dead
They came, and lo! the monks are lying there,

As heedless now of man's inhuman tread
As of these flowers that fling their fragrance o'er their bed."

Barrass - "The Derwent Valley."

In connection with the history of Blanchland Abbey there is a curious tradition, that on one occasion a party of marauding Scots, in one of their raiding expeditions across the borders, found themselves in the neighbourhood of the head of the Derwent, and hearing that there was an abbey at Blanchland on that river, resolved to pillage and plunder the monastery. On their way thither, however, they lost the track over the fells, in a thick mist, and were unable to find the place on account of its secluded situation. They wandered about for some time, in which they had either overlooked it, or passed it by at some distance, for having crossed the Derwent, either on the east or west side of the Abbey, they had reached a spot to the south of Blanchland, on the Durham side of the river, now called Dead Friar's Hill, when their attention was arrested by the distant sound of bells.

Whether this peal was a paean of joy rung by the monks for their supposed deliverance, or a call to vespers we are not told. If, and it is possible, that the monks had become aware of the presence of the marauders, and had been apprehensive of their intentions, and had watched them pass their house without noticing it, and had let them get as far south as they did, and then thinking that they could not celebrate their deliverance in a more fitting manner than by ringing the abbey bells, they made a mistake, for guided by the sound, the Scots made their way to the abbey, where they broke through the gate, and after slaughtering some of the imprudent brethren, set fire to the buildings, and retired with a vast amount of plunder. This raid is said to have taken place in the early part of the fourteenth century.

There is another tradition referring to the Blanchland Bells, which is said to have originated at a later date.

The great struggle of the Reformation in England from 1529 onwards broke, link by link, the chain which had so long bound England to Rome, and first one Parliament and then another passed acts which gradually widened the breach that commenced between the two powers. The divorce of Queen Catherine in 1533, increased the tension betwixt the King, Henry VIII, and the Pope, and the question arose, "Who was to be the head of the church in England-the King or the Pope ?" The Parliament of 1534 decided the point by declaring Henry " supreme head on earth, next under Christ, of the English church." The King's spiritual supremacy was enforced, and those who denied it were executed, or cast into prison. Then the papal thunders of excommunication were hurled at Henry, and the English monarch proceeded to reduce the strength of the pontiff by the dissolution of the religious houses. He gave orders that all the religious houses, or abbeys, monasteries, priories, etc., should be dissolved or suppressed. Thomas Cromwell, " the hammer of the monks," as he was called, was appointed Visitor General for the purpose of making the requisite inquiries. This was done in 1535-6, and in the latter year an Act of Parliament, based on Cromwell's report suppressed 376 houses whose income did not exceed £290 a year. This caused great dissatisfaction amongst a portion of the population, and was the cause of an insurrection called the Pilgrimage of Grace, in the northern counties. After a while it was suppressed and its leaders executed. As the, monks were suspected of having been the prime movers in this rebellion, Henry ordered a visitation of the larger monasteries to be made, and in 1539 and 1640 they were suppressed to the number of over 500.

The second tradition relating to the Blanchland Bells refers to the period of the dissolution of the larger monasteries in 1539-1540,

and is to the effect that the Commissioners appointed by King Henry VIII to make the general visitation of the large religious houses, missed their way to Blanchland, and were only directed to the place, after they had passed it unawares by the sound of the abbey bells.

This circumstance is referred to by John Carr, L.L.D., a native of the Derwent Valley, having been born at Watergate, near Castleside, in 1732, in his " Ode to the Derwent," as follows:-

"Hot Henry in choler decrees,
His fingers to snap at the Pope,
Alba Landa, embosom'd in trees
Had well-nigh eluded his hope.

Alba Landa's inquisitors made
Small progress in finding the place,
Till a bell the dread secret betray'd
Like a Lollard bereft of all grace.

Hall mynish'd their mete and their wyne,
As the guise of black chronicle saith,
But could the good father's repine,
While he stoutly defended the faith."

THE BLANCHLAND MURDER

On Thursday, January 1st, 1880, a farmer named Robert Snowball, 26 years of age, residing at Belmount, in the parish of Hunstanworth and the county of Durham, and about two miles from Blanchland, was barbarously murdered at that place. He was a single man and lived on the farm with his father - Robert Snowball - and a housekeeper named Jane Barron, and, besides the. occupation of a farmer, he occupied himself with joiner work, and had a room fitted up above a byre as a carpenter's shop with bench and tools.

On the afternoon of the day in question he left the house remarking that he was going to visit a neighbour, but he failed to return that night. On the following morning a quantity of blood was discovered in the byre, dropping from the ceiling, and on an examination being made the dead body of the unfortunate man was found in the room above, with a large wound in the back of his head, the jaw fractured, and a bruise on the breast. The wounds had been made with a large hammer similar to those used for breaking stones in roadmaking, and it was supposed that the murderer had approached from behind and struck the fatal blow whilst Mr. Snowball was looking in a closet, beside which his body was found.

Dr. Montgomery, of Blanchland, was sought, and after having seen the body and made some examination he telegraphed to

the Superintendent of the Police at Stanhope, who immediately took the matter up.

On Monday, January 5th. an inquest was opened before Coroner Graham in the house of Police Constable Ferguson, at Ramshaw about a mile-and-a-half from Belmount, the scene of the murder, at which, after hearing certain evidence, he gave orders for the burial of the body, and adjourned the inquest until the 21st.

The interment of the murdered man took place in Blanchland Churchyard on Tuesday, January 6th, at which there was a very large attendance of persons from many miles round the district. That same evening Jane Barron, the housekeeper, was arrested by Superintendent Thubron, and placed in the police cell at Ramshaw. Early the following morning she was taken to Stanhope, and brought before Mr. Valentine Rippon, J.P., charged with killing and, murdering Robert Snowball, at Belmount, on January lst, by striking him on the head with a hammer; and remanded.

The inquiry into the circumstances attending the murder of Robert Snowball, on New Year's Day, was re-opened on Wednesday, January 21st, before Coroner Graham, and resumed on the two following days. After the hearing of a vast amount of evidence, twelve of the thirteen jurymen returned a verdict of "Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown" - the foreman of the jury, the Rev P. C. Jones, Vicar of Hunstanworth, not signing the verdict.

On Tuesday, January 27th, Jane Barron was charged at Stanhope Police Court for the wilful murder of Robert Snowball, and committed for trial at the Durham Assizes, where, on Saturday, April 17th, she was indicted before Mr. Justice Stephen, and acquitted. The Belmount or, as it is more generally called, the Blanchland murder is yet an unsolved mystery, and is one of the, most mysterious in the history of this section of crime.

Over the grave of Robert Snowball, in Blanchland Churchyard, is a granite cross inscribed:-

ERECTED
IN AFFECTIONATE
REMEMBRANCE OF
ROBERT SNOWBALL,
OF BELMOUNT,
AGED 26 YEARS.
HE WAS CRUELLY MURDERED
AT THAT PLACE ON THE
1ST JANUARY, 1880.

THE DEVIL AT EDMUNDBYERS.

The fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries were eras when a belief in the supernatural was almost universal and numerous are the tales which exist of marvellous apparitions, wonderful miracles, and remarkable occurrences in various parts of England. The County of Durham, in common with the rest of the English shires, has its share of these tales and traditional accounts, and more than one belong to the Derwent Valley.

In the year 1641 there lived in the village of Edmundbyers, a yeoman named Stephen Hooper, who besides cultivating his own farm at that place, had also another one in his own hands at Hunstanworth. In November he was taken ill and not able to look after his farm, so one day he sent his wife, Margaret Hooper, to see how things were going on at Hunstanworth. She went, stayed a day, saw much that did not please her; and determined, that should her husband get well again, they should be reformed. On her return she found her husband much better, and told him what she had seen, and what should be done to put the place aright. A day or two later, however, Mrs. Hooper began to show signs of being deranged in her mind, or, as it was called in those days, of being bewitched, or haunted with an evil spirit. She talked at random told all kinds of idle tales concerning the farm at Hunstanworth, and also about an old groat, or fourpenny piece, which her little son had found a few days previously.

Her husband tried to pacify her, and got her to say a portion of the Lord's prayer after him, but this she would not finish, and demanded to see the old coin and her wedding ring, which she evidently did not wear on her finger. Her husband took no notice of her request, but prayed to God to send her a more quiet spirit. The

more he prayed, and begged her to do the same, the more she seemed to be troubled with an evil spirit. Suddenly she began to stare at him with a vacant and unnatural look which so frightened him, that he called in her sister and others. She then commenced to rave and foam at the mouth, and it was with difficulty that they could keep her in bed. Then in a somewhat strange manner both the bed and the room in which she was, commenced to move and shake, frightening her attendants, and half an hour later, when all was quiet she spoke and said that she had been in the town "to beat away a bear which had followed her into the yard, when she came from Hunstanworth." Her husband and friends persuaded her not to talk of such things telling her that her brain was light for want of rest; and got her to repeat the Lord's prayer after him.

This happened on Wednesday, and she remained quiet until the Saturday, when she again commenced to rave at times. She, however, quietened down again until Sunday night, when she suddenly roused her husband, by calling out that she saw a strange thing, like a snail, carrying fires. Her cries also roused her brothers and sisters, who were in the house, and on their bringing a lighted candle into her room, she got excited and called out, "Did you not see the Devil?" They tried to pacify her, but she got worse, and said, "If you see nothing now, you shall see something by and by." By the time she had finished, the whole party heard a great rumbling noise outside the house, like as if a number of carts were passing, and some of the party cried out, "Lord help us!"

After the rumbling was over her husband and those with him saw a strange beast, about half-a-yard in height, and half-a-yard in length, much like a bear, but without head or tail, coming to the bed, and Mr. Hooper immediately got up from his seat, and struck at it with a stool, and the stroke sounded as if he had hit a feather bed. The stroke did not harm the beast, which went up to the bed, struck

the woman on her feet three times, and then pulled her out of bed and rolled her on the floor, to the great amazement of those present who were too astonished to prevent anything. Then the beast, who is generally supposed to have been the devil, rolled the woman up like a hoop, feet and head together, and rolled it downstairs into the hall of the house, where it kept her for a quarter of an hour; the husband and friends being too much afraid to follow, on account of a most horrible smell and fiery flames which proceeded from the place where the beast and the woman were. After a while they heard the woman cry out, "Now, he is gone!" and the husband immediately answered, "Then, in the name of God, come up to me" The woman at once obeyed. When she reached the room, her friends put her to bed, and four of them kept down the bedclothes and prayed for her. But all of a sudden she got out of bed, and thrust her feet and legs out of the window, which opened of its own accord, and those in the room heard something knock at her feet, and flames of fire issued therefrom, from which proceeded a most " horrible stinke." Those in the room then invoked the aid of the Almighty to save the woman.

After prayer for some time, the candle in the room, which had hitherto burned so dimly that they could scarcely see one another, began to burn brightly, and on looking round they saw a creature like a little girl with a bright shining countenance. Then all the party fell flat on the ground and thanked the Lord who had so wonderfully answered their petitions, and the child vanished away. Then the woman was put into bed, and when she came to her proper senses, she asked forgiveness, at God's hands, and of all that she had offended, acknowledging that she was so sorely tormented by the evil spirit on account of her sins.

Such is the "most feareful and strange newes" of a marvellous apparition at "Edenbyres, neere the river Darwent" in "the Bishopprick of Durham," as told in an old pamphlet published

in London in 1641, and which is witnessed as being true by no less than six persons, residents of the place, named, Steeven Hooper, John Hooper, John Iley, Alexander Eagleston, Anthony Westgarth, and Alis Eaglestone. We are also told that the above-named Margaret Hooper had continued in good health, after the occurrence of this curious event, and that she had been visited by many godly and learned men from various parts of the country, anxious to ascertain particulars of the case.

THE MUGGLESWICK PARK CONSPIRACY.

During the brief reign of Presbytery and Independency under the Commonwealth and Protectorate, from 1649 to 1660, the bulk of the inhabitants of Muggleswick and the neighbourhood, seem to have abjured Episcopacy and Prelacy; and the Rev. Richard Bradley, Master of Arts and a High Churchman, who had been appointed to the Perpetual Curacy of Muggleswick, and the spiritual oversight of the parishioners, on the 20th of November, 1641, was expelled, or ousted from his living five years later. The Civil Wars which broke out in 1642 ended in the abolition of monarchy and the establishment of a Commonwealth in 1649. During this period every effort was made to desecrate the Established Church, and considerable damage was done to the ecclesiastical buildings, their monuments, and their parish registers, and all the established clergymen were driven from their livings.

In 1646 Episcopacy was abolished and the use of the Book of Common Prayer, whether in public or private, was prohibited;fines being inflicted for the first offence, and a year's imprisonment for the third. In the county of Durham the Bishop (Thomas Morton) was driven from his see, and his estates and property seized and ordered to be sold. All the Clergy in this diocese, as elsewhere, were thrust out of of their livings, and Puritan preachers, or intruders as they are generally called were put in their places. These intruders were not clergymen, but sectaries, thrust into the livings by the Parliament, or by Oliver Cromwell, after the Church and Crown had been overthrown by the rebel.

The name of the intruder into the living of Muggleswick was Thomas Roger, who, however, did not occupy the perpetual curacy

very long from the restoration of monarchy in the person of Charles II., in 1660 when everything that had been done in the Church and State during the interregnum was annulled, and when by the Act of Uniformity, all the Clergy were obliged to subscribe to the Thirty--nine Articles, and use the same form of worship and the same Book of Common Prayer, Mr Roger was, with about two thousand other Nonconformist ministers, deposed in their turn. Roger did not stay until the final ejection of Nonconformist ministers on Black Bartholomew's Day on the 24th of August, 1662.

This violent change was naturally distasteful to the Puritanical portion of the inhabitants of Muggleswick and the neighbourhood, who complained loudly, but in vain, that an unsuitable person was to be imposed upon them to guide and rule them in spiritual matters. They thereupon drew up a petition containing their grievances, which they gave to Mr. George Lilburne, one of the members for the county, to present to the House of Commons. It was signed by sixty-two persons, including women and children, whom the Rev. Richard Bradley had indicted for absenting themselves from Holy Communion.

A copy of this petition, which was printed, is amongst a series of pamphlets presented to the British Museum by King George III. (Folio. Sh. 1. No. 121) and is quoted by Robert Surtees in his History of Durham. It is as follows:

"A most lamentable information of Part of the Grievances of Muggleswikk Lordship, in the Bishopric of Durham, sent up by Master George Lilburne, Major, of Sunderland, to be communicated to the House of Commons.

"To all Christian people to whom these presents shall come, know that we are a people in that our parish of Muggleswicke, who have been destitute of a preaching Minister; yea, ever since any of us that are now breathing were borne, to

our soul's great griefe and dreadful hazard of destruction; neither is it our case alone, but also ten, yea or twelve parishes all adjoining are in like manner void of the means of salvation, whose case and condition is deeply to be deplored: And as for us in Muggleswicke, we have had neither good nor bad since Martinmas (November 11th) Anno Dom., 1640, but such as the Scottish Presbiterie furnished us withal (bemoaning our miserable estate) for hee who then supplied the place, departed this life the day of the date above mentioned; and we immediately after his death rode to one Master James, minister of Riton, being one of the prebends of Durham, entreating him with all earnestness, with an humble petition, because he then was in authorite, and no more of that sect left in the countre, but all fled because of the Scots, that this our poore parish of Muggleswicke might once at length have the fruition of a faithful minister, but hee answered that they (viz.) the prebends, had already appointed us a man, namely, one John Duery, whom we knew; then with all our soules we besought him that we might be exempted of that Duery, because we knew him to be no preacher, and his life and conversation scandalous, and had two places at that present; as we told him; and also that he publicly confessed in a pulpit before an open assembly, that he could not preach, and yet that aspiring prebend (whose lifeless conscience, we leave to your censure) replyed that they had once authorized him, and wee neither could nor should depose him; and he also told us in plaine tearmes, that if he could reade the prayer booke and an homily, it was nothing to us what kind of man he was ; so when things would be no better, it behooved us to come home with these cold comforts having heavy hearts that our soules should a longer season be inthralled to such a simple, yea (we dare say) sinful minister, who is ignorant of the very principles of religion;

yet our all sufficient God (seeing that we were but breeding and beginning in Christianitie) would let no more be laid upon us (than we were able to beare), and so seeing us unwilling to accept of him he gave over. Thus the place being voide for the space of a whole yeare, we ourselves betwixt grief and necessitie, went abroad to seeke, and it pleased our God to send such an one as our soules longed after, and no sooner found we one to whom our minds affected, but immediately those prebends (who whether they were friends or foes to Christ judge yee), that will not sticke to hazard their heads so they may hinder the truth, doe impose one Braidley upon us, a bird brought out of the nest of their bosomes who (we may say without sinne) is one of the most deboist amongst the sonnes of men, for hee will neitherpreach himself, nor yet permit others; but upon the Sabbath day he, took the locke from the Church doore, and fastened on one of his owne, so that the parishioners were forced for to stand in the church yard to discharge divine duties with their minister in cold, frost, and snow, to the, infinite dishonour of the Almightie, the great griefe of their minds, and the dreadful indangering of themselves in that stormy time of the yeare; other times before, he came into the church, whilst our minister was in his exhortation, and stood up beside him, reading with a loud voyce in a book to overtop the sound of his words ; afterwards pulled him by the coate when hee was in the pulpit; but when neither of these would cause him to desist from duty, he goes and rings the bell all aloud; neither is this all, but out of malice cals a communion and enters upon the sacred action without any prepartion sermon before the day."

Under the circumstances described in the terms of the petition, it was no wonder that the parishioners felt deeply aggrieved, and Surtees observes that "it was perhaps owing to the calmer

temper of the people and the. milder genius of the country rather than to the leniency of the Government, that the same scenes were not acted there which soon after occurred in Scotland, when the Covenanters were hunted into the wilderness, and found consolation in anathematising those persecutors amidst woods and water and waterfalls." The proceedings on the part of the clergyman at Muggleswick unquestionably in a great measure fomented the Anabaptist and Presbyterian plot hatched at that place. The local gentry and others of Muggleswick parish who had been imbued with this Puritanical spirit during the Commonwealth, were, after the Restoration, viewed with suspicion by the Royalists. In such a state of things every movement was liable to be misconstrued as treasonable ; whilst on the other hand thei proceedings of the Government were naturally thought tyrannical by those who had contended for the "good old cause."

Muggleswick Park at this period became the scene of several supposed seditious meetings, which an ill-judged display of force might very easily have converted into dangerous armed assemblies provided there had been some leader to inflame their godly zeal and to lead them forth to fight the battle of the Lord of Hosts. The "psalm singing rascals," as such individuals were called in those days, on the banks of the Derwent, however, were few in number and devoid of influence; and the gentry in the neighbourhood were almost to a man against them. The. actual state of matters may be inferred from the following affidavit (from the Harleian M.S.S. in the British Museum) sworn to by John Ellerington, of Blanchland, in the county Northumberland before Samuel Davison, Cuthbert Carr, Thomas Fetherstone, and Richard Neile, justices of the peace, on the 22nd March, 1662, at Durham.

This informant saith:-"That he hath known divers seditious meetings in Muggleswick park, within the last six month, sometimes

in the house of one John Ward, who is one of their chief preachers, sometimes at the house of John Readshaw, Robt. Blenkinsopp and Rowland Harrison, who were met together. The said John Ward, John Readshaw, Robert Blenkinsopp, and Rowland Harrison, together with Capt. George Gower, Robert Readshaw, son of the said John, Robert Taylor, Mark Taylor, both of Eddis Bridge, John March of the same, John Joplin of the Foxholes, John March of Ridley Mill, Cuthbert Newton of Flendsey, Richard Taylor of Cronkley, Henry Angus, Cuthbert Maughan of Birchenfields, George Readshaw of Edmondbyers, John Oliver of the same, Lewis Frost of South Sheales, Cuthbert Coatsworth and Michael Coatsworth of the same, Richard Ord and John Ord of Birchenhaugh, James Carr of Ardley, Nicholas Dalmer of Crawcrook, Rowland and Nicholas Harrison, sons of Rowland Harrison abovesaid, John Hopper of Carpsheales, Thomas Readshaw of Peddamack, Michael Ward of Shotley Field, Cuthbert Ward of Black Hedley, Ralph Iley of Edmundbyers, Richard Johnson of Sunderland, and ----- Foster of the same; where they did mutually take an oath of secrecy not to discover their design, which was to rise in rebellion against the present government, and to destroy the present Parliament, which had made a law against liberty of conscience, and to murder all bishops, deans, and chapters, and all ministers of the Church, and to break all organs in pieces, and to destroy the common prayer books and to pull down all churches; and farther, to kill the gentry that should either oppose them, or not join with them in their design. That they intended first to fall upon Durham, to seize any magazine that might be there, or money in any treasurer's hands, and to plunder the town. They did boast of many thousands of Anabaptists and Independents that were to join with them in the nation, with whom they had daily correspondence by letters and messengers, upon which employment the said informant had been divers times sent to divers persons ; and

he heard them lately say that some Papists were lately come in to their party, and they did not doubt of their real intention to join with them in their design; That they have already in their hands some provision of arms, and do expect great proportion both of arms and ammunition from Lewis Frost abovesaid, who hath undertaken to provide for them. And he further saith, that for divers months by past it was resolved amongst to rise on the 25th of this instant March, but they did lately agree to defer the execution of their design for a month longer, till they see what the Parliament would do concerning indulgence to tender consciences and toleration of the party, and withal by putting off their rising they would be much stronger by many that would come to their party daily. And this informant saith that he knows to depose what he hath said because he was one of their party, and was rebaptised by the above John Ward, and was with them at most of their meetings, and did take the abovesaid oath of secrecy, but being pricked in his conscience at the horror of such a, bloody design, he could have no rest nor quietness in his mind, till he had discovered the same."

In the second information Ellerington accused several gentlemen of considerable rank as participators in this crime of high treason. Amongst them were Sir Henry Witherington of Northumberland (who had been High Sheriff and also an M.P. for the country), Edward Fenwick of Stanton, Esq.; Timothy Whittingham of Holmside, Esq.; and Captain Ceorge Lilburne, of Sunderland. Witherington and Fenwick were probably Roman Catholics. Whittingham was a Presbyterian, and Lilburne whose name aforetime had been a terror was ominous, was an independent.

Whittingham and Lilburne were apprehended on the information of Ellerington, detained in custody three months, and then liberated for want of the slightest evidence to criminate them. Against Witherington and Fenwick there seems to have been less

suspicion, probably their hereditory adherence to the old faith rendered, it unlikely that they would ever make common cause with the Roundheads in an endeavour to upset Charles II's government and replace it by something to their mind far worse. In the Bishopric of Durham the seditious Derwentdale plot excited no little commotion, and to oppose the conspirators, Dr. Cosin, the Bishop, called out the trained bands of the Palatine, under Sir Thomas Davison, and the principal gentry and their retainers, embodied themselves in the different wards of the county, under Sir Nicholas Cole of Brancepeth Castle; Colonel Cuthbert Carr of Dunston; Colonel Byerley; and Henry Lambton, Esq.

After all the alarm proved to have been a "much ado about nothing," without solid foundation, resting simply on the evidence of the one rascally informer and infamous scoundrel - John Ellerington, of Blanchland, who, in order to gain himself favour, and finding his audience had itching ears, accused every Anabaptist, Independent, and Presbyterian, or whoever leaned to the presbytery, of participation in the alleged plot, and manufactured cock and bull stories to startle them and subserve their own vile purpose.

It is true, however, that in various parts of the Kingdom all the Dissenters showed symptoms of uneasiness under the Bartholomew Act of 1662 which demanded episcopal recognition, the use of the amended Book of Common Prayer and the adjuration of the league and covenant, and the Cavaliers could never forgive

"The psalm singing rascals who drubbed them so well."

Loyal addresses poured in, and armed associations formed in all quarters, and such a face of general resistence was displayed, that all the discontented residents shrunk from showing any unpleasantness.

The following is a copy of the text of one of these loyal addresses dated 14th January, 1663:-

"For-as-much as this county palatine of Durham together with others, the northern parts of the Kingdom, have been lately disturbed by many seditious plots and devices of disaffected persons, who in their frequent and secret designs in their unlawful designs, may much endanger the peace of his majesty, and of his loyal subjects we therefore as faithfully promise and undertake to be ready with our horses and arms, and with all the free assistance we can procure, to repare unto such place etc., and to oppose the designs either of Quakers or Anabaptists or other disaffected and disloyal persons, and to dissipate the dangerous assemblies and seditious conventials, etc., in the several and respective quarters of our habitations."

During 1663 several inquiries were held concerning the plot and various evidences taken.

In a letter written by Mr. Edward Arden to Mr. Stapylton, dated Auckland Castle, 27th March, 1663; we have the following:- "My Lord (the Bishop, Dr. Cosin) is now and was yesterday examining several Anabaptists, who have a witness come in against some of them that upon oath swears that they at their meetings entered into a solemn oath upon the Bible to destroy the Parliament, the Bishop, the Clergy, and the Gentry too if :they opposed them. We have now horse and foot, with no great number, heare in towne, and at Durham in readiness, &c."

In the month of December several witnesses were examined before Henry Widdrington, James Ogle, and Ralph Jennison. It is impossible however to give the whole of their evidence, but the following extracts will show what sort was adduced:-

George Proud, of Ebchester-bridge-end, Webster, on December 1st, 1663, stated that "Being in company with one John Suirtes, of Highfield, about five or six weeks since at a place called the Hollins, he heard the said Suirtes say that there was two troops of horse that were in

arms there;" and Proud also stated that two persons with broad swords came over the ford at Ebchester.

The same day Thomas Richardson deposed "that he told Thomas Marshal that John Wilkingson told him that Joseph Hopper was and had been abroad with his horse and armes, and that there were some men upon horseback with swords, seen ryding by over at Ebchester and Shotley Bridge, and John Wilkinson said that he feared Joseph Hopper was with them."

Joseph Hopper was then examined, and he stated that he had been "abroad five weeks in Ireland, to see some friends he had there" and that when he went "he would not acquaint his wife therewith, for he knew she would be unwilling to let him go."

After the most minute inquiries, conducted by parties by no means disposed to extenuate the case, it turned out that the terrific array of mounted Anabaptists whom the informer alleged to have been mustering by night on Muggleswick Common, and the two troops of horse seen near the Hollins, and the, same men who forded the Derwent with glittering broad swords was reduced to one man - Joseph Hopper - who had taken a jaunt to Ireland, and had reasons for not acquainting his wife, showing, indeed great want of gallantry, but nothing to intimidate the Cavaliers, and had come back again on horseback. As Ellerington had accused every person in the neighbourhood who favoured the presbytery and was opposed to prelacy, of participation in the alleged plot had there been a tittle of evidence against any of them they could not have escaped the severest punishment, such was the inflamed spirit of the time, and if such had been the case, of the fifteen hundred men then sent on an average to the Virginian colony in North America, Muggleswick would probably have provided a considerable instalment that year to labour as slaves in the tobacco plantations.

THE MUGGLESWICK GIANT.

"Once again behold the smiling miles
That spread their wealth of beauty on the view;
And we must wade their sunny maze of smiles
If we would learn the tale of Ward's romantic shoe."
Barrass.-"The Derwent Valley."

In Muggleswick churchyard are said to have been interred during the seventeenth century, the remains of Edward Ward, who is understood to have been a person of gigantic stature, and who on this account has sometimes been called the Muggleswick giant. This man was also like Nimrod, a mighty hunter in his day and tradition says that his limbs were so enormous that his favourite female hound littered in one of his shoes. This may be true or it may not, but there can be little doubt that the man was very much above the common size.

Unfortunately we know nothing more of him. The exact year of his death is not known, and even were it so, the parish registers, which might have given some information of him, have long since been destroyed, and there were no newspapers in those days to chronicle the chief events of his career or give the date of his death.

Some writers seem to think that Ward was probably one of the seditious associators, who, in Muggleswick park in 1662, banded themselves together, to overthrow the new state of things in Church and State, after the Restoration of Charles II, and from the enormity of his exploits obtained the name of a giant. This conjecture, however, has no verification, and can only be recognised as a suppositive tradition.

THE MOSSTROOPERS AND BORDER THIEVES.

"Hail! hail, where wild Mosstroopers roamed of yore!
We rove, enraptured, our engaging way,
To delve the mines of legendary lore,
Or sniff the scent of primrose patches gay;
For in these woods, and in that wilder day,
When lawless minds essayed no beaten track,
But loved adventure as they loved the prey
They hugged, transported, on their journey back,
Have planned their purpose fell full many a savage pack!

Ay! here they ran, the tameless and the wild,
The doughty and indomitable raid
Who looked on frowning danger till she smiled,
Or in their hearts a frenzied gladness made;
Or till their blind contempt of fear betrayed
And hurled them headlong into waiting gins;
Else Muggleswick, the hapless priest that said
The Litany o'er thy sorrows and thy sins,
Had not been huddled through this maze of leaves and whins!"

Barrass.-"The Derwent Valley."

Muggleswick, it would appear, was, in olden times, notable as the scene of some of those predatory excursions, commonly called mosstrooping. Its isolated position and the scattered condition of the farmsteads probably made it favourable for such-like adventures. Like many of the neighbouring districts, it had its share of the border raids. One, more than ordinary, of these happened in January, 1528,

when a, band of Border thieves, led by one William Charlton, or, as he was better and more generally known, Willie o' Shotlyngton, a place near Bellingham in Northumberland - a famous mosstrooper in his day - entered the county of Durham, and, after robbing a number of persons in the neighbourhood of Wolsingham, returned by way of Muggleswick, from whence they daringly captured the parson, one Robert Forrest, and carried him off with them as a prisoner. The inhabitants, however, rose in arms and pursued the mosstroopers, who fled for their lives towards the Tyne. When they reached that river they found it in flood, and were unable to get across. They then made their way to Haydon Bridge where, however, they found the bridge "barred, chayned, and lokked fast." Here their pursuers came upon them, and a skirmish ensued, in which some met their death, some were made prisoner, and others escaped. Charlton and James Noble, his chief coadjutor, were killed and two others named Roger Armstrong and Archibald Dodde, were captured, and afterwards executed. All their bodies were eventually hung in chains as a warning to others - Charlton at Hexham, Noble at Haydon Bridge, Armstrong near Newcastle, and Dodde at Alnwick. Of what became of the poor priest the historian gives us no intelligence. Evidently he escaped in the fight and returned to Muggleswick, where he continued to minister to the spiritual wants of his scattered parishioners for some years.

It was probably the frequency of these border raids which caused some of the inhabitants of Muggleswick to follow the example of the invaders, and to commit those depredations on their neighbours, which the Scots and others committed on them all, for we know that in later times the neighbourhood became a noted harbourage for mosstroopers, few of whom scruppled to commit "pillage and plunder" on their Weardale neighbours on the one hand, and their Tynedale neighbours on the other, as well as, when

occasion served, on the Scottish raiders themselves. Two of these famous (or infamous) mosstroopers and rievers - Rowland Harrison and Thomas Raw - have left behind them a more than ordinary fame.

ROWLEY HARRISON:
THE MOSSTROOPER.

"Where elate,
The doughty Rowley's blustering dame espied,
Her lord come home with Hodge's live estate,
And proudly, loudly 'Well done Rowley!' cried;
'When dost thou gang again?' Most avaricious bride."
Barrass.-"The Derwent Valley."

Rowland, or, as he was better known, Rowley Harrison was a famous mosstrooper in his day and many singular adventures are related of him. He lived at the close of the seventeenth century, and the beginning of the eighteenth century, and during the latter part of his career resided at a farm called the Shield near Muggleswick.

Harrison's hazardous occupation furnished his household with a good store of beef, the cattle which he captured on his freebooting excursions and brought home from time to time being slaughtered for family use, cut up, salted, and packed into what was locally known as the "flesh boat," or beef cask. His wife, who according to tradition had the blood of the Graemes, a famous Cumberland family of mosstroopers, in her veins, was considered almost as bad as, if not worse, than her husband, for though she did not go "foraging" herself she looked out that the family food box was never empty. Like a good many other housewives, not very deeply versed in domestic economy, she always took care to keep the choicest pieces of flesh meat uppermost in the tub; and on one occasion when her good man's exploratory raids into Weardale and Teesdale had not been as successful as they often had been, and no fresh supply of stolen beef had been got till the tub was nearly

empty, she roused him with the exclamation, "Ride Rowley, the hough's i' the pot." This remark is traditionally said to have been her favourite mode of ordering her plundering husband to go on a raid. On one occasion when the Fates bad been more propitious to him than usual, Harrison was returning home at break of day with eight cows and a bull, the result of his moonlight night's work, his wife, whose eye was never satisfied with seeing, greeted him with - "Well deyun, Rowley," and immediately added - "When dost thou gan ageyn."

Like everyone who followed the precarious profession of a mosstrooper, Harrison lived constantly from hand to mouth. It was successively feast and famine; one day, full and plenty and jovial festivity, the next an empty pantry and an empty stomach. If we are to judge from oral tradition and from the absence of his name in the criminal annals of those days, he does not seem to have ever come within the clutches of the law of the land, such as it then was. He however came under the ban of the church, which fulminated its then much dreaded edict against him by excommunicating him and refusing him Christian sepulture. He died September 24th, 1712, and according to tradition was buried outside the walls of Muggleswick Churchyard. His gravestone, however, now lies in the floor at the west end of Muggleswick Church, and is inscribed

HERE LIETH
ROWLAND HAR-
RISON OF MUG-
ELSWICK WHO
DEPARTED THIS
LIFE SEPR. XXIV
ANNO DOMINE 1712.

Another tradition states that when Muggleswick Church was rebuilt about 1728 the mosstrooper's last resting place was considered to be the best site, and it was in this way that his memorial stone came to be in the centre of the new, and present, building. This, however, is incorrect. The church, which was rebuilt in 1728, was erected on the site of the previous one, and in all probability the gravestone was removed, perhaps about then, to its present position by some kindly hand who wished to put it in a safer place, and keep it safe from destruction. The parish registers, which might have thrown some information on the career of the mosstrooper for the year 1712, and for many years later, were wilfully destroyed by the wife of one of the subcurates of Muggleswick during the system of pluralties, who was in the habit of tearing out the leaves to put her teacakes and spice wigs on, on baking days.

THE MUGGLESWICK MURDER.

On Sunday, May 7th, 1843, a barbarous murder was committed at a farm called Lamb Shield, sometimes, but erroneously, designed Lang Shield, on Muggleswick Common, about two-and-a-half miles north-west of Waskerley. The sufferer was the tenant of the farm, one William Lawson, and the culprit was his brother, Thomas.

William Lawson, the farmer in question, was a bachelor, and a man of some means, and resided on the farm with a housekeeper, one Elizabeth Patterson, a native of Rookhope. On Saturday, May 6th, his housekeeper went to Rookhope for the week-end, leaving her master alone. Early on the Sunday morning his brother, Thomas Lawson, a married man with a family, who resided on the farm called Cote House some three-quarters-of-a-mile distant from Lamb Shield, paid him a visit, and from what afterwards transpired, for there were no witnesses of the crime, they had some conversation relating to money matters, in which they quarrelled. In. the struggle which ensued, and which took place in the cowbyre, they both fell to the ground, William being on the underside, and whilst in this position Thomas took a stone and struck his brother three or four times on the head with it, fracturing his skull, but not killing him outright. He then left him and went on to the adjoining fell, or common, to see his sheep.

William then seems to have attempted to go for assistance, and weakened by the loss of blood, had to crawl on his hands and knees. That same night a couple of Lawson's neighbours, John Bainbridge, farmer, of Pedom's Oak, and William Ritson, farmer, of Calf Close, went to Lamb Shield to spend the evening with William Lawson, but on their arrival at the house they found the place

deserted, the kettle on the bar, the fire out, and Lawson nowhere to be seen. On proceeding to the cowbyre, they found the milk-cans standing empty. That same evening Thomas Lawson's children went to their uncle's house, but failed to see him, as did also Thomas Lawson himself, with a similar result. When they saw that William was missing they never seem to have troubled about looking for him.

Early on Monday morning John Bainbridge, the farmer who resided at Pedom's Oak, having an idea that something must be wrong, went again to Lamb Shield to see if William Lawson had returned home, and he found him on the fell, near to a slate quarry, about three hundred yards from his house, resting on his hands and knees, still alive, but unconscious, having laid out in the cold and wet for about twenty-seven hours without a jacket on. Bainbridge then went to Shotley Bridge and gave information to the police, and an Irishman who was draining at Edmundbyers was taken into custody on suspicion.

The policeman (Leybourne Wilson) afterwards went and questioned Thomas Lawson, about his missing brother, and he stated that he had been that morning at Waskerley looking for him and making enquiries about him. The policeman, however, doubted his word, and as the morning had been very wet, he examined Lawson's clothes and boots, and found them quite dry. He then made a search of the place and found a shirt stained with blood. He thereupon arrested him and took him to the Shotley Bridge lock-up - a temporary room in the Bridge End public-house.

Two days later, on May 10th, William Lawson, who had never recovered his senses or speech, died from his injuries. When his death was communicated to his brother in the lock-up Thomas enquired if he had spoken before he died, and on the constable replying in the affirmative, Lawson said, "It's all up with me now," and confessed the crime, stating that he did not kill him with a stick,

which the policeman at that moment was holding, but with a stone.

Soon after William Lawson's death an inquest was held at Edmundbyers, at which Thomas Lawson, the culprit, made the, following statement:- "I live at Cotehouse in the township of Muggleswick. I am a farmer and keep about four score of sheep and lambs. I am the brother of William Lawson, the person that is dead.

I went up to his house on Sunday morning, between six and seven o'clock. I had some talk with him in the house. He said he was going on the fell after he had milked. He then went into the cowbyre, and began telling me about a letter he had got, and said it was for me. It was an attorney's letter, about some money I owe to Harry Ritson; he told me it was 11/- in it. I wanted some money off Willy (his brother) - some mother had left me - and £2 5s he owed me for sheep that were sold of his and mine together. I asked him for the money, or to go and speak to Forster Raine to give me time to pay what I owed him. He refused to do so. This vexed me, and as he was beginning to milk, I took him by the neck and we had a struggle. He struck me with his foot, and hit me on the inside of the left thigh. It did not hurt me, but it raised me, and we went down together. There was a stone behind the byre door, and I hit him with it on the head three or four times. I thought I had done so much for him, and he nothing for me - that was what made me take hold of him.

When I went out of the byre he got up, and leaned upon a stick between the stalls behind the door. I then went on to the fell among the sheep, and fell in with Tommy Anderson, and a man looking for a galloway - I don't know who he was. I thought he would not be so bad so I did not tell anybody . My children went to his house, and I went afterwards, but he was not there. I saw Thomas Ritson and Willy Bainbridge. I have never told anybody anything before today.

Things being in such a bad state, and him doing nothing for

me, made me take told of him. One bad thing begot another. After he kicked me I got worse, and that made me do it. I would have helped him into the, house when my passion cooled, but I had not power or strength. I never told my wife; I only told her we had some words. When I say "things," I meant stock was so bad, and he would not give me anything. I have a family of two children, and five altogether of family, and my brother had no family, and being distressed for money made me apply to him."

Thomas Lawson was tried at the Mid-summer Assizes, at Durham, in 1843, found guilty of manslaughter, and sentenced to transportation for life. He died at the hulks about a couple of years later.

KING ARTHUR'S ENCHANTED CAVE.

"The scenes which, all enchanting, threw their spell
O'er old King Arthur, who in dreamy state,
Abides for ever caverned in this dell;
Or till the subtle hand that fixed his fate
Dispels the dear delusion!"

Barrass. - "The Derwent Valley".

"King Arthur's round table is near,
Though none has declared how it came;
He lifts up his head once a year,
The sceptre long lost to reclaim.
Enchantment its hold must forego,
Could any strange arm draw the sword,
The trumpet could any man blow,
That lie at the feet of their lord."

Carr. - "The Derwent," an Ode.

In the north-east side of Muggleswick, and on the north side of the Derwent is a tongue of elevated woodland, called the Sneep, round which the river, in other parts of its course generally impetuous, patiently and beautifully describes the form of a horse shoe. In the neighbourhood of this romantic headland - one of the prettiest pieces of landscape scenery in the Derwent Valley - tradition says is a certain deep cavern, inaccessible to common mortals, in which King Arthur - that mysterious British ruler whose career has furnished more excellent good matter for romantic writers than any other ancient British hero - is said, together with his Queen, and several of his gallant Knights, and their steeds, to be lying in a

trance, every one of the last equipped and ready at the King's command to march and assist him to regain his kingdom, when the time appointed shall arrive and the enchantment be broken.

Arthur was born A.D. 501 succeeded to the throne of his father in 516, and ruled until his death in 542. During his reign he is said to have gained several victories over the Saxons, and to have defeated them so severely that they were obliged to seek refuge for a while on the sea; to have defeated the Picts and Scots; and to have caused his name to be known to the uttermost parts of Ireland, Norway, Muscovy, and Gaul by his great victories. At last he was mortally wounded in a battle in Cornwall against his rebel nephew Modred, and was buried by the monks of Glastonbury in the isle of Avalon.

Tradition, however, states that his remains were spirited away to a spot which the hero himself had chosen during his lifetime. This feat was performed by his half-sister, who carried him off to Fairyland, there to be healed of his wounds. When this was accomplished the monarch was placed asleep, with the flower of his chivalry round him, in a subterranean hall, there to remain for a certain period of time. The traditional cave at the Sneep is, however, only one of the many in the North of England assigned as the scene of this slumber of ages. Its entrance is concealed by a wealth of foliage, and in the centre of the hall a flame of fire arises from the ground. Around the fire are placed two couches formed of many various kinds of herbs and wild flowers, which are said to send out a delicate odour like the purest balsam. On one of these couches reclines King Arthur; and on the other Guenhever, his Queen. Lying also around the fire are his pack of faithful bloodhounds. Upon the table lies his terrible sword - Excalibur - in its sheath, a garter, and a huge brazen horn or trumpet. On other couches in the same chamber also recline the King's faithful courtiers, all equipped, whilst near by

are their horses, all harnessed. All are in readiness to start, when the appointed hour comes for them to re-appear in our upper world, and accompany their King in his march to avenge his countrymen, and to reinstate himself in the sovereignty of Britain. To break the spell that has enchanted the King and his court, some one must penetrate the cave, take the sword and cut the garter, and blow the horn or trumpet. This action will restore all to life again. If this feat is not successfully performed - and it has been attempted more than once without success - the King will slowly rise from his couch, so it is said, open his eyes, and lift up his hands and exclaim: -

"O woe betide that evil day
On when the witless wight was born,
Who drew the sword, the garter cut,
But never blew the bugle horn!"

JANE FRIZZLE:
THE WITCH OF CROOKED OAK.

"Ghosts and witches come in for a share,
Though poor Frizzle has long breathed her last,
On broomsticks, who rode through the air,
And scattered her pins as she past."

Carr. - "The Derwent," an Ode.

To the north of the Sneep is the antiquated farm house of Crooked Oak, with its Jacobean windows indicative of the architecture of the period in which it was built, and the date 1684 and the initials T. and I. R. (the erectors of the house) over its ornamented doorway. The place probably received its name from some distorted oak tree that grew in the vicinity at a former period, and which has now long since disappeared. This place has the reputation of once being the home of more than one individual who during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries practised the "black art," as witchcraft was called.

One of these was Jane Frizzle, whom the verse at the head of this article commemorates, and this notorious witch is said to have been in the habit of traversing the Derwent Valley by night with a broomstick for her palfrey, and of practising strange spells upon men, maidens, and cattle. Little or nothing, that is definite, is known of her career, or of the approximate time of her death, except that she lived in the seventeenth century, when witches were common in this part of the Derwent Valley, and about the time when they burnt every old woman who had a wrinkled face

STIRLING OF STIRLING'S BRIDGE.

Between Healeyfield and Muggleswick the waters of the Hisehope and Horsleyhope Burns unite in a deep dene, near what is called Combe Bridges, and a short distance further on the combined streams join the river Derwent. A little above their confluence is the site of Stirling's Bridge, where, according to local tradition, a brave warrior of that name, defended the passage across the river, single handed, against a body of moss-troopers. The bridge in question was only a temporary affair of a couple of large trees laid side by side across the river, and afforded a useful means of passage for travellers on foot from one side of the river to the other and saved much time as the only permanent bridge in the district was at Alansford, further down the river.

These border thieves had successfully crossed the Derwent, and had pillaged and plundered many houses on the south side of the stream, burning the buildings and massacring some of the inhabitants. On their return with their spoil they were seen by Stirling, whose house was one of the many they had broken into and burnt, and he determined to prevent them from crossing the Derwent, and, if possible, to keep them at bay until some of the plundered farmers should be able to come up and attack them. The river was much flooded and was not fordable at the time, and this crossing was their nearest place to escape. He managed to keep them at bay for some time, but at length fearing that he might soon be overpowered and his help being long in coming, he commenced to break down the bridge, and managed after great exertions to dislodge the trees, and escape safe and sound to the northern side. Some of the

mosstroopers, seeing Stirling's action, set off to Alansford, and crossing the stone bridge took him in the rear, intending to kill him for his pains. In this, however, they were disappointed, for Stirling, seeing that his retreat was cut off, sooner than fall into their hands and be slain, jumped into the flooded river and was drowned.

THOMAS RAW:
THE MOSS-TROOPER.

"How rich the wood, how green the grassy mound,
Where sleeps the once indomitable Raw,
And where, asylumed safe, he gazed around,
And, toiling through the scenes surrounding, saw
The coming plunder, or the searching law!
What though unconsecrated memory
May hold a thousand feebler souls in awe ?
He slumbers there beneath his chosen tree,
And who wherever laid, may sleep more sound
than he?"

Barrass. - "The Derwent Valley".

Another famous moss-trooper was Thomas Raw, who lived on the farm at Wharnley Burn, on the south side of the Derwent, above Alansford, and a member of a family who had for several generations lived either at that place or in the neighbourhood. He was a contemporary of Rowley Harrison and they may have gone on freebooting excursions and thieving raids together, though both history and oral tradition are silent on this matter.

He appears to have been one of the last of the race of those desperadoes, who, during the troublous times of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the border counties, lived in contempt and defiance of the law. He managed either to evade the law, or amidst the romantic ravines and mountain retreats in the valley of the Derwent and its tributaries, in the neighbourhood, eluded his pursuers, until the latest day of his life, except that probably he suffered what would nowadays be called boycotting by his more

honest or less reckless neighbours. His dishonest occupation, however, brought him under the interdiction of the church, and he was publicly excommunicated, and the prohibition which expelled him from the communion of the church and the Christian fellowship, was read out in all the churches in the Derwent Valley between Hunstanworth and Blanchland, and Medomsley and Whittonstall, and in the district between Hexham and Slaley and Stanhope and Wolsingham, and also in the market places of Hexham, Stanhope, and Wolsingham. Being thus refused burial in consecrated ground, Raw, long before his death, chose a place under a tree in a field on the crest of the hill near his house, and there requested his friends to bury him on his death. This spot, which is on a beautiful promontory, commands a view of all the surrounding approaches, and is said to. have been the place where Raw spent much time in watching the approach of pursuers, or officers of the law, who could easily be detected at some considerable distance, and from whence he could take the best route to elude or evade them.

He died in January, 1714, and his remains were duly interred in the spot which he had chosen, and some time after a neat freestone slab was erected over the grave on which was inscribed, in script letters, the following inscription:

HERE LYETH THE BODY
OF THOMAS RAW OF
WHARNLEY BURN WHO
DEPARTED THIS LIFE JA
NUARY 30 ANNO.
1714.

The farmhouse at Wharnley Burn remained as an old thatched dwelling, just as it was when the moss-trooper occupied it,

until the sixth decade of the nineteenth century, when it underwent alterations and received a modern roof. There are three rooms on the ground floor, and the central one was the bedroom, or sleeping apartment, of the famous moss-trooper. When at home he slept in a beautifully carved box bed, made of oak, which stood against an oak partition, separating his room from the next apartment, where a doorway led to the outside. The door leading from Raw's room to the adjoining apartment was concealed by the bed referred to, and it is said that he used this secret door as a means of ecape from his pursuers. This interesting old bed afterwards came into the possession of Mr. W. J. Scott, of the Sycamores, Rowley, who sold it in the early 'eighties' to Messrs Rushworth and Sons, of Durham, who in turn converted it into a mantel-piece for one of the rooms of Fairthorn, Hampshire.

After the erection of the stone it was carefully preserved, and in later years an old woman named Nelly Wilkinson, who acted as housekeeper to George Raw, a descendant of the moss-trooper, was in the habit of crossing over to the burial place of ber master's ancestor, and scrubbing the grave cover every weekend. On this account the stone has yet a smooth polished appearance. In accordance with a wish of George Raw's will this old lady continued to occupy a room at the west end of the house at Wharnley Burn free of rent until her death.

Wharnley Burn, which was formerly the property of the Raw family, passed into the hands of John Emmerson, of Willow Green, near Frosterley, who eventually sold it to Annandale Town, Esq., of Alansford, and previous to parting with the place, he had the headstone removed to his farm at Steeley, near Satley, and inserted in the wall of the western gable of what was the old farm house, now the barn and cartshed, at that place, where it still remains, with the inscription as plain as ever, whilst below is appended, in Roman

capitals the record -

REMOVED FROM WHARNLEY BURN, 1866.

A few years before the removal of the stone to Satley, Mr. Frank Bell, at that time tenant of Wharnley Burn, and Mr. George Siddle, butcher, of Castleside, in order to satisfy themselves and others, that Raw was really buried there, opened the grave and found the skeleton, which was in a good state of preservation, probably owing to the dryness of the soil in which the body was deposited.

Thomas Raw's will is in the Probate Registry at Durham, and in it he directed his body to be buried according to the discretion of his executors - his brother Michael and John. To his wife he left an annuity of £4, a bed with the bedclothes, a press, a chest, and a cow; to his son Michael he left the farm of Wharnley Burn, and to his son John the farm of Todd Hills which at his death was to go to his son Thomas. To his nephew Thomas he left the farm of Hollin Hall which was leased from Dr. Oxley. Other legacies were left to his nephews, John and Joseph Marshall, and his neice Hannah Newton. By the inventory of his goods dated 27 June, 1715, his apparel was valued at £5, and the debts owing to him were returned as £114.

THE WITCHES OF THE DERWENT VALLEY.

The sixteenth, seventeeth, and eighteenth centuries were an age of superstition and a universal belief in the supernatural. Ghosts and goblins haunted every lonely spot and solitary locality, and their weird cries were heard in every storm; and witches and wizards rode through the land on most uncommon steeds, practising their black arts on men, maidens, and cattle, and holding their midnight meetings in the darker nooks of every secluded glen. The district around Alansford, at this time, seems to have been a famous rendezvous for witches. Perhaps it was that in its secluded position in the Derwent Valley, with its many glens, and vales, and haughs, all more or less remote, and almost free from common molestation of human beings, they had a suitable locality in which to live and practise all the arts which appertained to their profession.

Among many of the hidden arts practised by witches in bygone days may be enumerated:- (1) The entering into common communion with familiar spirits, by which they were said to be assisted in their wicked designs; (2) the use of frightful imprecations of wrath and malice towards the object of their hatred; (3) the being able to transform themselves into various animals, such as dogs, cats, hares, moles, rats, etc.; or into various birds, such as owls, swallows, etc., or into insects, such as bees, and in other forms visiting persons and bewitching them so as to cause them trouble, sickness, or death, etc.

Witchcraft in those days was a crime punishable by severe penalties, and those who were alleged to have practised some of the "black arts" as their offences were called, did not always escape being brought to justice. Some accounts of the midnight carousals

and weird meetings of witches in the Derwent Valley have been preserved, and from them we learn something of the curious superstitious beliefs which existed in the district a couple of centuries ago. At a trial of certain persons who were charged with the alleged crime of witchcraft, at the Sessions held at Morpeth, on April 9th, 1673, before Sir Thos. Horsley, and Sir Richard Stote, Knts., James Howard, Humphrey Mitford, Ralph Jennison, and John Salkeld, Esqrs., several women from the Derwent Valley district were present as witnesses, amongst whom were Ann Armstrong, of Buksnuke, spinster, who in the course of her evidence said that she attended a meeting of witches on the 3rd of April (1673), in a house at the Riding, and that among the number of persons there she saw "Mary Hunter, of Birkenside, widow, Dorothy Green, of Edmundbyers, in the County of Durham, widow, Elizabeth Pickering, of Whittingslaw, widow, Anthony Hunter, of Birkinside, yeoman, John Whitfield, of Edmundbyers, Annie Whitfield, of the same place, spinster, Christopher Dixon, of Muggleswick Park, and Alice his wife, Catherine Elliott, of Ebchester, Elizabeth Atchinson, of Ebchester, widow, and Isabell Andrew, of Crookedoke, widow," and she also swore that she had seen the same persons holding meetings at various places, and especially "upon Collop Monday last, being the tenth of February," at Alansford, to which she was [placed under enchantment and] "ridden upon by an enchanted bridle by Michael Aynsley and Margaret his wife," and on her arrival there the enchanted bridle was taken from her head, and she resumed her ordinary state of being, and she saw the persons aforenamed dancing, "some in the likenesse of haires, some in the likenesse of catts, and others in the likeness of bees, and some in their own likenesse." They made her sing while they danced, and every thirteenth of them had a "divil" with them in some varied shape, and at this meeting their particular "divell tooke them that did most evil and danced with them

first, and called every one of them to an account and those that did most evill he made most of" - a very natural thing for the Satanic being to do.

She then stated that she could remember the confession each made there and then to the devil, and amongst others were the following:-

Mary Hunter (of Birkenside) "confessed to the divill that she had wronged George Taylor, of Edgebriggs goods," and told her protector that "she had gotten the power of a fole (foal) of his, soe that it pined to death. And she had got power of the dam (mother) of the said fole, and that they had an intention the last Thursday at night to have taken away the power of the limbs of the said mare." She also confessed that "about Michaelmas last she did come to one John Marsh, of Edgebrigg, when he and his wife were riding from Bywell, and flew some times under his mare's belly, and some times before its breast in the likeness of a swallow, until she got the power of it, and it died within a week after."

Elizabeth Pickering "of Whittingstall, widdow, confessed that she had power of a neighbor's beast of her owne in Whittingstall, and that she had killed a child of the said neighbour's."

Anthony Hunter, of Birkenside, "confessed that he had power over Anne, wife of Thomas Richardson, of Crooked Oak, that he took away the power of her limbs, and asked the divill's assistance to take away her life."

At the same sessions, John March, of Edgebrigg [now Eddy's bridge], yeoman, the person just named, whose horse had been bewitched by Mary Hunter, gave evidence of the loss of his steed. He said "that about a month since he went to a place called Birkside Nook, and there Ann Armstrong hearing him named, began to speak to him, and asked him if he had not an ox, that had got the power of one of his limbs taken from him, and he telling her he had, and enquiring how she came to know, she

told him that she heard Mary Hunter of Birkenside, and another at a meeting amongst divers witches, confess to the divill that they had taken the power of that beast, and she not knowing her name, Sir James Clavering and Sir Richard Scott thought proper to carry her to 'Edenbyers', and there to cause the women to come to her there to the intent that she might challenge her, and she challenged one Dorothy Green, a widow, and said that she was the person that joined with Mary Hunter in the bewitching of the said ox. And the ox now continues lame and has no use of his far hinder legg, but pines away and likely to die."

He also said that "Ann Armstrong told him that the said persons (Mary Hunter and Dorothy Green) confessed before the divill that they had bewitched a grey mare of his, and he said that about a fortnight before Michaelmas last (Sept. 29) he and his wife were riding home from Bywell, one Sunday night, upon the saide mare about sunset; and there came a swallow which about forty times and more flew through the mare's belly, and crossed her way before her breast, and he struck at it with his rod about twenty times, and wished to hinder it to so continue, until it went away of it's own action. And the mare went very well home, and died within four days, and before she died was two days so mad that she was past holding, and was struck blind for twenty four hours before she died."

George Taylor, of Edgebrigg, yeoman, the person whose mare and foal had been bewitched by Mary Hunter, also gave similar evidence, as to the loss of his foal and also stated that since that time all his goods had not thrived like those of his neighbours, notwithstanding that he fed them as well as he could.

An amulet supposed to prevent witches taking horses out of the stable and riding them during the night was long preserved at Alansford.

THE DERWENT VALLEY GIANTS.

"Up! up with me and from this lofty ridge,
Behold the leagues of undulating shore,
And high o'er-gazing placid Shotley Bridge,
The haunts of whom in old time rivalled Thor
The hammer-wielding god in regions hoar,
Whose awful arm achieved such marvels vast,
And cracked the ribs of Polar gods galore! -
Prone down yon height was Con's huge hammer cast;
Behold, cried eld, behold the prowess of the past!"

Barrass. - "The Derwent Valley".

There were in the heroic ages of the Derwent Valley three brothers - all giants, "great men and tall, and strong beside," named Cor, Ben, and Con, who are said to have resided each in a cave, at Corbridge, in Northumberland, and Benfieldside and Consett, in Durham, respectively, and to have been the possessors, in common, of a large hammer, which each, at a whistle, could throw nine miles. When any of the brothers wanted this tool, this was the way it was conveyed to one another, and on one occasion when Con, who had become blind, in throwing it to his brother Cor, let it slip and it made a hollow dene, or hole in the ground, near Consett, which was afterwards called Howden, and which remains to this day. Con is supposed to have lived in a cave in Howen's Gill, and is generally believed to have been buried there on his death. Many and varied are the adventures which might be enumerated or told of these giants, the whole of which is plainly fabulous, and has a mixture of the more interesting and elegant classic mythology.

Dr. Carr, the first local poet in what is the first Ode to the Derwent, thus refers to these gigantic brothers:-

"In elder times giants uprear'd
Their heads, and affronted the skies;
Cor, Ben, Con, terriffic appear'd,
With names of anomalous size.
A hammer in common they had,
And the use of it easy to all;
Each whistled, each brother was glad
To throw it three leagues at his call.
When Con was approaching his end,
Deaf, blind, and beginning to rave,
With a ploughman he begg'd as a friend
To converse at the mouth of his cave.
This ploughman, as prudent men do,
Held his plough-share, himself to escape;
Blind Con pinch'd his plough-share in two
And pronounc'd it the arm of an ape."

There is another traditionary account of the Derwent Valley giants, differing from that already given. In it their names are given as Con, Ben, and Mug, and their names are perpetuated in the place names of Consett, Benfieldside, and Muggleswick. They are supposed to have lived about nine hundred years ago, and to have won great renown in the Palatinate of Durham. Laurence Goodchild, the blind scholar of Sunderland, has perpetuated some of the marvellous exploits and the violent deaths of these cruel giants in a ballad, called "Durham Giants," written many years ago. He thus sings of their eventful career:-

"The first was Con - from him Conside
Is named until this day,
His brother Ben to Benfieldside
Bequeathed his name for aye.
And Mug their mighty kinsman was
A swarthy wight and tall
The name gave he to Muggleswick Moor
Where stood his Castle wall.

Now when their holds these Giants built
They hammer had but one,
They heaved it round from man to man
When each his work had done.
Their size ye well may guess, when in
The boot that Mug did wear,
A greyhound bitch her sucking whelps
Did hide, as men declare.

Their eyes were like the burning coal,
They were bristled from head to heel,
No wight might stand their heavy hand
Though clad in coat of steel.
On Christian flesh they daily fed,
Their drink was Christian blood,
And the delicate limbs of a Christian child
To them was dainty food.

Their teeth stood out like tusks of boar
The bleeding prey to rend,
Their shaggy hair like Norway bear
Did down their back descend;

Their clubs were pine trees strong and straight
Uprooted by their might;
They wielded them, with mickle din,
In many a furious fight.

Whole scores of men, and women too,
By them for meat was slain,
Till Con was with an arrow broad
Shot through at Annfield Plain,
And Ben his brother, void of ruth-
By Launcelot's sword fell he,
Though he waged his fray, the live-long day
On the hill of Medomsley.

And Mug their kinsman, while to sin,
He wooed a beautious nun,
In wassail drowned fell fast asleep
And soon his race was run;
For like that lady in Holy Writ
Who the Paynim captain slew,
That nun with a spike of iron pierced
His temples through and through."

THE DEVIL AT BENFIELDSIDE

Benfieldside is famous amongst other things for one of the first Friends', or Quaker's, meeting houses in England. The Society of Friends, or Quakers, was founded by a George Fox, about 1647, and soon had adherents almost all over England. Within seven years of that date a branch had been formed at Benfieldside, and it was at a meeting of these members that what may be termed a terrible exhibition of fanaticism occurred. According to uncertain history and tradition, we are told that the Devil appeared at the meeting house in great wrath, and attempted to snatch away the key which was destined to imprison him for ever. Some of our country historians have briefly noticed the account, but they have misrepresented the object of his Satanic Majesty's visitation. Details of this strange and unusual apparition are given in at least three different works published shortly after the occurrence, and which are now very scarce. The authors, or writers of the different works, all vouch for the truth of the narrative, and give it as one of the many instances of the strange excitement which possessed the early followers of Fox in their worship. The sect was first called the Society of Friends, but on one occasion when Fox was sent to prison (and he was imprisoned many times) he bade the committing justice "tremble at the word of the Lord," whereupon that magnate applied to Fox and his friends the name of Quakers, by which they were afterwards best known and generally called, though the name was never adopted by the society. This name seems to have described the actions of many members of the sect in its early days, for one of the early writers states that "the monstrous distortions of their whole bodies are very dreadful to the beholders, and such loud and hideous yelling as sometimes

frightened dogs, swine, and cattle at a great distance, and set them arunning, howling, lowing, braying, etc."

The outbreak of Satan in the township of Benfieldside occurred on August 19th, 1654, when a grave minister named Thomas Tilham preached to the members of the Society of Friends in the house of one of their own sect. According to the three different narrators, who agree in their separate accounts, when the minister prayed to God, as a Creator, nothing occurred, but when he cried in the name of Christ as a mediator, the Devil "roared" in the souls of those present (about twenty) in a most strange and dreadful manner, causing some of them to howl, and others to shriek, some to yell, and others to roar, and not a few to make a humming, singing noise. "Such a representation of hell," says one of the eyewitnesses, "I never heard of, nothing but horror and confusion." Satan appears to have entered freely into them and caused then to talk as well, for one of the members asked the preacher if he had not come to torment them, and as they left the meeting house one of them cursed the preacher and wished that all the plagues of God might fall upon him. Tradition as well as history is silent as to what followed.

MAD MADDISON.

One of the most notorious characters who have lived in the Derwent Valley in the days gone by was "Mad Maddison". He was a member of a local family who for many centuries held lands in the valley and surrounding neighbourhood, and was one of those turbulent characters to whom the unsettled condition of the North of England for centuries previous to the union with Scotland had given birth. His proper name was Ralph Maddison, but as he was a most eccentric and wicked character, his Christian name was seldom given to him. In all the popular traditions concerning him he is called by the most anti-christian name of "Mad," because of its fitness to give some idea of his extremely insane and immoral conduct. Most of his mischievous actions and wicked pranks seem to have been played merely for the fun of the thing, though in many of them he played what can only be termed Satanic malevolence.

He lived immediately opposite the village of Shotley Bridge, on the left bank of the Derwent, in a good plain stone house which stood upon the site of the offices of the present mansion of Derwent Dene, and some venerable trees, which still form a lofty and sombre avenue, may have been planted in his time, perhaps by his own hand.

Maddison was the owner of considerable estates in the neighbourhood, and for some time officiated as a sort of warden of the district, and it may be that in his excursions against the border thieves and mosstroopers he acquired their predatory dispositions and learnt to practise their dexterous villanies. It is evident that a worse choice for the office of warden could scarcely have been made, for, on account of his continuous mischievous habits, he became the constant terror of young and old, male and female, who

were forced to go near his residence, or any place which he was accustomed to frequent. His end was quite in keeping with his life, for he died on the gallows in the city of Durham, as will be hereafter told.

Maddison's name has for generations been employed to frighten forward or quieten noisy children on the banks of the Derwent, and such exclamations as "Mad Madison, come and get the naughty bairn," "Mad Maddison will catch you," etc., are often heard on these occasions. His numerous mischievous actions and insane deeds, many of them really horrific, others simply amusing, used to be, and still are, often heard on winter evenings around the hearths in many of the homes and houses in the neighbouring hamlets and villages.

His whole career was so full of adventures that a volume of anecdotes, stories, and traditions concerning him might be collected and written, for as Alexander Barrass, "the Derwent Valley poet", says:-

" 'T would chill the heart the muse essays to cheer,
And add encumbrance to a gory verse,
To count the crimes that crimson'd his career
And stamp'd him as an impersonated curse;
That blasted all things with a breath perverse,
From mortals down to farmer's garner'd hay."

The following are accounts of some of the mischievous exploits of this notorious character –

"Who wrested frailty with ignoble force,
Pitched to the waves his unsuspecting prey,
And with a weird ha! ha! loud-mocking stalked away!"

On one occasion, when the river Derwent was very high and much swollen from excessive rains, and the fords near Shotley Bridge (for the bridge had not then been erected) impassable to any except on horseback, an old woman came to the river bank. She was anxious to get over the stream, but saw that it would be madness to attempt it by wading across. Whilst she was considering what was best to do Maddison rode up. She had heard of his mischievous pranks in the district - for they bad become famed far and wide - but did not know him personally.She told him of her anxiety to get over the river and after he had heard her story he volunteered to take her across behind him, if she dare trust herself on the back of his spirited horse. The woman was quite willing to do this, adding that she was very glad to have met with such a "canny man," as she was afraid of meeting the dreaded "Mad Maddison." Maddison took her up behind him on the crupper with a seeming good-will, and plunged his horse into the river; but when he reached the middle of the stream, he pushed her off into the flooded river, and heartily laughing at his mischievous action, left her to sink or swim. The poor woman after having been carried a long way down the river, providentially gained the shore, by the aid of persons who had witnessed the transaction, and with difficulty recovered from the effects of her unpleasant bath.

Maddison used to amuse himself by doing all kinds of mischief in the night-time, and was addicted to overturning the stacks of hay and corn of the neighbouring farmers, at such time as it was likely to rain, or if the wind blew very strongly. One old man whom he had often annoyed in this way, foiled his malevolence by building his haystack around the stump of an old ash tree in such a manner as to resist being capsized. Maddison, when out one dark night in the performance of such-like capers, went to "cowp ower" the old man's stack, unaware of the presence of the tree stump in the centre. After repeated attempts to over - turn the structure from

various sides, he found that it resisted his utmost strength. Dare-devil though Maddison was, he was, like the majority of the inhabitants of the district in those days, very superstitious, and finding that all his tries to turn the stack over were to no purpose, he ran away in great fear, declaring that there was a witch in the stack.

On another occasion, whilst in the village of Ebchester, he saw a couple of webs of linen laid out to bleach, and going deliberately and openly past the old woman who owned them, he picked up one piece, evidently intending to make it his own. As he was carrying it off the old woman protested against such an audacious robbery, saying, "You'll have to pay dearly for what you are doing, some day!" Upon this Maddison coolly returned and seized the other piece, saying, with an oath, "Then I will have both, for it is as well to hang for a hog as a halfpenny," and away he strode with them.

One day when Maddison and his son-in-law had been freely indulging themselves in the cup that inebriates in the Bridge-end public-house at Shotley Bridge, the latter, who had evidently the weaker stomach and head of the two for carrying strong drink, got unsteady on his legs and faltering in his speech. Maddison proposed that they should go home, and that he would himself walk, while the other should ride. This was agreed to, and ordering out his horse, "a wild but gallant dapple grey," of particularly high temper, and the swiftest ever known in the country round, he put his poor helpless son-in-law on the impatient animal's back, with his face to its tail, and placed a bunch of thorns where they caused the greatest irritation. Then the animal was let go, and the infuriated beast darted across the river, with its rider clinging like grim death instinctively to its back. Rushing onward at a most furious speed, it galloped right past Shotley Hall towards Black Hedley, near which place it threw and killed the unfortunate man.

Of this incident Barrass thus poetically writes:-

"Who may picture with what demon glee
He viewed his son's distraction on his steed,
When mad, unbridled, plunging o'er the lea,
The charger matched Mazeppa's lightning speed!
And when was stretched the rider on the mead,
No change came over his unaltered eye;
For his base heart, if heart he had, indeed,
Felt no fine thrill of sensibility:
The darker deed the deeper his abnormal joy!"

The widow, who is said to have been a most beautiful woman, of great talent, married again shortly afterwards, and her father, either because he did not approve of the match, or out of some sudden passionate freak, attempted the life of her second husband by shooting at him. Fortunately he missed his mark, or "Mad Maddison" might have come to an earlier end on the gallows.

Innumerable stories are told of the career of this notorious character, and if one-half of what is alleged against him be true, he must have been a consummate villain. In former times a thick wood extended along the north bank of the river Derwent from Espershields to Newbiggen, above Blanchland, but it is said to have been burnt down by Maddison, the owner.

Destruction of property by fire seems to have been a favourite practise of Maddison's. He burned Espershields to the ground, and it is said that when he did this he was in a quandary whether to burn it or Cronkley first. He also burnt a house in Benfieldside in March, 1678 belonging to one John Rawe, and about the same time destroyed by the same means the stable at Nun's House, near Iveston.

In 1661 he was prosecuted by his son-in-law, John Elrington, of Acton for arson and larceny, and was sentenced to be burnt in the hand for the first crime. This only increased the feud between Maddison and son-in-law, and at last Elrington was obliged to petition the Justices of Assizes at Newcastle for protection.

There was indeed no pause in Maddison's career of wickedness, and after innumerable escapades, his life was forfeited on the gallows for murder.

"'Twould seem that Typhon, Egypt's darkest god,
Whose baleful eye appalled the pagan Nile,
Had, housed in this wild heart, the Derwent trod,
To torture whom he could not render vile!
But she whose frown ne'er softened to a smile,
The avengeress whom no scheming guilt can shun,
Great Nemesis was on his track the while,
Who, when his ignominious course was run,
Brought to the holy dust the bad Mad Maddison !"

Barrass. - "The Derwent Valley."

On the 16th September, 1694, Maddison in a quarrel killed one Atkinson, who was Laird of Cannyside Wood, for which he was afterwards arrested, tried, and found guilty of murder, and hanged at Durham. Where and how the murder was committed, neither history nor tradition has preserved the story. Most likely it was committed under the influence of drink, and it may be that the scene of the catastrophe was the Bridge-end public-house, Shotley Bridge, Maddison's favourite restaurant. After the committal of the deed Maddison, dreading the result of his crime, fled from his residence near Shotley Bridge. As he had declared that he would shoot the first man who ventured to arrest him, it was found impossible to

apprehend him in the usual way. A troop of soldiers was therefore sent to protect the civil power. When they arrived in the neighbourhood, Maddison, saddling his famed grey horse, fled westward up the Derwent Valley, past Eddy's Bridge, evidently with the intention of making for the Cumberland wastes and wilds, where he might be safe. On entering Muggleswick Park, however, his favourite and long-tried steed, for the first time, refused to answer either spur or rein, and stood perfectly still. This action was afterwards construed by the country people as an instance of providential interposition, and a proof that the thread of his long ill-spent career was spun, and that the abhorred shears were opened to cut it. Finding that his horse refused to proceed, he dismounted and fled into the adjoining wood, where he hid himself. After a long search the soldiers found him concealed in the hollow trunk of a large old yew tree, from which they dragged him without ceremony and carried him off to Durham to pay the dread penalty of his atrocious crime. At the ensuing assizes, he was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death, which sentence was duly executed.

Jacob Bee, "the Durham Pepys" as he is called, entered the murder in his diary as follows:-

"Sept. 16th, 1694. Lord Atkinson, of Cannyside Wood, was killed by Ralph Maddison of Shotley Brigg, which after was hanged for the murther."

Bee was probably a witness of Maddison's execution, though he does not record it. He seems to have written the word Lord in mistake for Laird, the north country title of a proprietor of land, no matter how small his estate, or whatever its tenure. Cannyside has been thought by many etymologists and writers to be the same as Conside, now Consett, but there is no proof for such a supposition.

THE EBCHESTER MONEY CHEST.

Near the village of Ebchester, according to a singular traditional belief, there exists a cave in which is concealed a large iron chest full of Roman money, and to which a subterranean passage said to exist under the village is believed to lead. This money chest is supposed to have been left by the Romans when they quitted Britain, in the fifth century, and a large crow is said to be perched on its lid. In the third decade of the nineteenth century an old man who was resident in the village, and who profoundly believed the story, and used frequently to dream about this chest of money and the crow upon the lid, set himself to work, and sunk in different parts of Ebchester a couple of shafts, in which he laboured very hard for several weeks in order to force a passage to where the buried treasure lay. Success, however, did not crown his efforts, and he was obliged finally to abandon the work, more through exhaustion than failing faith in the money being buried somewhere within the, precincts of the Roman station.

Joshua Lax, our local poet, in his poem "Ebchester," thus refers to this singular legendary story: -

"Tradition tells, and I repeat the story,
That 'neath this village, in some cave, was hid,
When Rome had boundless wealth and too had glory,
A chest of money, and upon its lid
A crow was perched, and some old man to rid
His brain (whose nightly dreams oppressed him sore)
Of doubt regarding what the Romans did,

Worked hard for weeks the treasure to explore,
But neither gold nor crow to light could e'er restore."

How curiously the fancies of men compound different events and images! In all probability this tradition may have arisen from a belief that the Romans had hid treasures there which their successors, the Danes, whose ensign, by the way, was a raven, or black crow, had secured, but forgotten or left behind:-

"When Denmark's raven soared on high,
Triumphant through Northumbrian sky,
Till hovering near her fatal croak,
Bade Reged's Britons dread the yoke.
And the broad shadow of her wing,
Blackened each cataract and spring."

The discovery in 1727, of a part of the aqueduct that supplied the Roman baths at Ebchester, by Dr. Hunter (the eminent antiquary, who was a native of Medomsley), at the south-west corner of the Roman station, if it was not the origin of the supposed subterranean passage under the village, at least strengthened the popular belief in this singular tradition, for the olden associations of the place, like that of similar spots, readily give wings to the imagination.

THE BURNT ARM:
A TALE OF A BROKEN VOW.

"Once again the swift, encroaching night
Steals, lowering, o'er the hermit's home of bowers,
Black mantles spangled mead and shaggy height,
And darklings o'er this dear delight of ours:
Else had the muse sang through the coming bours,
The vow long-broken and the blazing arm."
Barass – "The Derwent Valley"

In the middle of the eighteenth century there lived at Ebchester Hill, a gentleman named Robert Johnson, whose son Cuthbert married without his consent. This action so offended the parent that he made a vow that he would leave nothing whatever to his son, and in the heat of passion he expressed a wish that his right arm might be burned off if he failed to keep that vow.

Circumstances arose, however, that the old man altered his mind and left everything to the son. Shortly after he had made his new will he died, and if we are to believe the superstitious belief and traditions of those days, the wish he had expressed years before was realised. Before the body had been coffined, observing a disagreeable smell, and finding the room full of smoke, the relatives examined the corpse, and found the right arm nearly burned off. The body was slowly smouldering, and the horrified relatives hastily put the remains into the coffin, and nailed it down, from whence immediately afterwards, a noise of burning and crackling was heard to proceed. The coffin was consequently hastily carried to Ebchester churchyard and there burried.

This extraordinary story of a remarkable circumstance of local interest, which has been preserved by oral tradition, is also noticed by the great founder of Methodism - John Wesley, in one of his published works. We know that he believed in ghosts and miracles, for there is abundant evidence in his writings of his being more or less imbued with the belief in the supernatural which prevailed, and was almost universal in the age in which he lived, and in his works he gives credence to very much which would not now-a-days bear investigation.

Wesley adds some minor details to those which are generally given as the tale is orally told, and he states that the body was buried near the steeple in "Abchester" churchyard, which fell down and nearly killed those who attended the funeral. They had observed the steeple to shake, and had luckily got out of the road, just two minutes before part of it fell.

The entries of the burial register at Ebchester for the year of Johnson's death are missing, and thus we have no chance of being able to learn whether anything of more than ordinary occurrence was recorded at the time of his burial.

THE HEDLEY KOW

"In joy-blest homes where calm content immures,
The untold wonder and the huge alarm,
That, whilom, Hedley Kow bore round from farm to farm."

Barrass.

The whole world has at one period or another been inhabited, according to superstitious belief, with supernatural beings of one sort or another. Some of them have been good, others bad, and many of them are supposed to have been able to appear at any time and in any place where they pleased, whilst some of these demons were found to inhabit a large area, others frequented only certain localities, and were never found beyond certain limits. Of the many supernatural demons, or sprites, who were believed to have inhabited the North of England, one of the more famous was the Hedley Kow, who is generally believed to have spent most of his time in and about the Derwent Valley. This boggle, to use a local word describing such like beings, was not a terrible creature like some of them, but was mischievous rather than malignant, never doing anybody any serious injury, and merely took a delight in frightening people. Like the Scottish Barquest he usually ended his frolic, and his pranks with a hoarse laugh at the astonishment or fear of those to whom he appeared or on whom he played some sorry trick.

Many are the stories of this mischievous goblin and visionary creature who is believed to have existed about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and who turned up when least expected, and in the most unlikely forms and places, and a volume of strange adventures of the village demon might be collected. Of the

many forms and shapes which he used to appear before the people one was that of a bundle of hay or straw, lying in the middle of the road, or in one's path.

One day as an old woman was gathering sticks by the hedge side, the Kow appeared in front of her as a bundle of straw on the road. Thinking she had made a lucky find the woman picked the bundle up, and carried it off towards her house. The further she went, however, the heavier her bundle got, until at last she was obliged to lay it down. No sooner had she done this than it began to move, to the great astonishment of the woman, who immediately saw and declared that it was bewitched. Then it stood upright, and began to move slowly away along the road in front of her, swinging first to one side and then to another. Every now and then it would set up a laugh, or give a shout, and finally vanished from sight with a sound like a rushing wind, and a loud farewell ha, ha, ha!

Another favourite prank of the Hedley Kow was to assume the form of some one's favourite cow, and, as he lived in the time when it was the common practise of the milkmaids to have to go into the fields to milk the cows, he often lead them a long chase around the field, before he would allow himself to be caught. When he did stop he would quietly let them come near, put on the tie, and sit down to milk. Then, when they were least expecting, he would begin kicking and "rowting" and perform all kinds of riotous gambols, ending with upsetting the milk-pail, slipping clear of the tie, and galloping away, tail on end, bellowing loudly all the while, and finally disappear, much to the alarm and surprise of the witnesses, and to the utter astonishment of the girl who at last found that she had been a victim of the extremely annoying and mischievous sport of the Kow. As this trick was so common it is the one from whence, by general opinion, he seems to have got his name, - Kow being only another form of cow.

Demon though he was the Hedley Kow was not quite destitute of some sympathetic feeling, and rarely if ever visited the house of mourning. The occasion of a birth, however, was marked for special pranks, and he was rarely absent either to the eye or to the ear. Indeed his appearance at those times became so common as scarcely to cause any alarm. The man who rode for the midwife on such occasions, was, however, teased by him. Sometimes he would take up his position in some lonely place on the messenger's road, and as he came by, cause his horse to take the "reist," or stand stock still in front of him, past whom neither whip nor spur would force the animal, though the rider saw nothing. At others be would allow the messenger to proceed to the house where the "howdie," or midwife, lived, get her safely mounted behind him on a well girt pillion, and return homewards so far with her unmolested. But as they were crossing some rough or lonely part of the road, he would appear and play some prank which caused the horse to kick and plunge in such a manner as to dismount his double load of messenger and midwife. If the Derwent, or some small burn or stream, was in the way, he would play the prank as they were crossing, and cause the riders to be kicked off into the water. Sometimes when the farmer's wife, impatient for the arrival of the midwife, was groaning in great pain, the Kow would approach close to the door or window of the house, and begin to mock her. The farmer, as often happened, would rush out with a thick stick to drive the demon away, but the weapon would be 'clicked' out of his hand before he was aware, by an invisible form, and lustily applied to his own shoulders. At other times after chasing the boggle round the farm yard, he would tumble over one of his own calves, or some other obstruction, laid in the way by the Kow, or perhaps into the 'midden,' and before he could regain his feet or get out of the 'sump,' the demon had disappeared.

The many mischievous pranks of the Hedley Kow caused

terror to the whole countryside, and many innocent people, themselves as much afraid as the rest, were often the cause of alarm to others, especially when out late at night, and many cases of mistaken identity with the mischievous spirit occurred. One of the most amusing is the following:- Late one night a farmer belonging to the north side of the Derwent was riding homeward from Newcastle, and as he approached a lonely part of the road where the Kow was known to play many of his tricks, he observed a person on horseback at a short distance in front of him. Wishing to have company in a part of the road where he did not like to be alone at night, he quickened the pace of his horse. The person whom he wished to overtake hearing the tramp of a horse rapidly advancing behind him, and fearing he was followed by some one with an evil intention, put spurs to his steed, and set off at a gallop; an example which was immediately followed by the horseman behind. At this rate they continued whipping and spurring, as if they rode for life and death, for nearly two miles; the man who was behind calling out with all his might, "Stop! stop!" The person who fled, finding that his pursuer was gaining upon him, and hearing a continued cry, the words of which he could not make out, began to think that he was pursued by some thing unearthly, as no one who had a design to rob him would be likely to make such a noise. Determined no longer to fly from his pursuer, he pulled up his horse, and thus adjured the supposed evil spirit:- "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, what art thou?" Instead of an evil spirit, a terrified neighbour at once answered, and repeated the question:- "Aa's Jemmy Broon o' the High Field, whe's thoo ?"

One night about the beginning of the eighteenth century, two young men belonging to Newlands, near Ebchester, went out to meet their sweethearts, and when they arrived at the appointed place they saw, as they supposed, the two girls walking at a short distance

before them. They immediately made towards them, but the girls continued to walk onward for two or three miles. The young men followed on without being able to overtake them. Then they made an endeavour to get up to them, and quickened their pace, but, still the girls kept before them. At last, having tried in vain for several miles to overtake the objects of their walk, they found themselves up to the knees in a boggy swamp, where the girls suddenly disappeared with a fiendish and most unfeminine laugh. The young men then found that they had been beguiled by the Hedley Kow who had succeeded in playing off one of his pranks. They then endeavoured to get out of the bog, and as soon as they got clear they ran homewards, as fast as their legs could carry them, with the Kow at their heels, hooting, and laughing, and shrieking, and frightening them as much as he possibly could. In crossing the Derwent between Ebchester and Blackhall Mill, the one who took the lead fell down into the water, and his companion who was close behind tumbled over him. In their great fright each mistook the other for the Kow, and they both screamed loud and lustily with terror as they rolled over each other in the stream . At last, however, they managed to get out, and after a good fright reached home separately, where they told a 'terrible' tale of having been chased and hardly pressed by the Hedley Kow, and of being nearly drowned by him in the Derwent.

Farmers were special victims of the Kow, and he never ceased to annoy them, by alluring them into the most ridiculous situations, by constantly mimicking either them or their servants, by assuming the form of some of their cattle, and pretending to be lame or ill, get them to go to a lot of useless expense and trouble; by playing all kinds of mischievous pranks with their implements or harness, mixing them up promiscuously, etc.

Early one morning a farmer of the name of Forster, who lived at Hedley by the Derwent, wishing to drive to Newcastle so as

to be there by the time the shops were opened, went out into the field and caught, as he supposed in the dim twilight, his own grey horse. After putting the harness on and yoking him to the cart, Forster got into the vehicle, and was about to drive away, when to his great astonishment and alarm, the horse, whose form had been assumed by the Kow, for the purpose of having a laugh at the expense of the farmer, disappeared from the shafts and harness, 'like a knotless thread,' and set up a great "nicker" as he flung up his heels, and cleared away 'like mad' out of the farmyard, revealing to the trembling farmer the mischievous Hedley Kow.

The mischievous demon was also a perfect plague to servant girls at farm houses, and played all kinds of pranks upon them. Sometimes he would call them out of their beds by imitating the voices of their sweethearts at the windows. At other times during their absence he would overturn the kail pot, open the milk house door and set the cat to the cream and milk, entangle their knitting by letting down the "loops," or ravelling the yarn, put their spinning wheel out of order, and causing disorder in the farm houses.

The Hedley Kow in the performance of his mischievous pranks assumed all kinds of forms and shapes - like many other European goblins - whether human or animal, as best suited his intentions. As man or woman, horse, cow, ass, sheep, pig, dog, cat, hare, rabbit, and other living forms he could appear, and allure his victim on to be the subject of an annoying but harmless joke or prank.

In 1749 one Thomas Stevenson, of Framwellgate, Durham, made and signed a declaration before Mr. Justice Burdess, that on the 17th of August, 1729, between eight and nine o'clock at night, as he was returning form Hedley, in Northumberland, to Durham, he saw an apparition that looked sometimes in the shape of a foal, and sometimes of a man, which took the bridle from off his horse, and

beat him till he was sore, and took his horse from him and misled him on foot three miles to Coalbourne; and a guide he had with him was beat in the same manner; and that the apparition vanished not until daybreak; and then, being on foot, he felt the stripes of the bridle on his body, and found it bound round his waist; and his horse he found where he first saw the apparition by the Green Bank top; and he said that it was commonly reported by the neighbourhhood that a spirit called the "Hedley Kow" did haunt the spot.

THE LOWD FARM MONEY POT.

At the commencement of the nineteenth century the farmer who lived at the Lowd or Laud farm, near Catchgate, was named John Taylor. John and his wife Ann, or as they were best known, Jackie and Nannie, were a hard working couple, toiling early and late to earn the necessities of life for themselves and their large family, and to make both ends meets. The farm being a large one a couple of men servants were kept to assist in the work.

One day one spring, at the period above mentioned, having sent the servant men to Running Waters near Coxhoe for lime, Jackie went to take up "furs," i.e., furrows in a tillage field. The land being wet, necessitated his having to place one of the draught horses before the other, tandem fashion, and to have some one to lead the fore, or first, horse. His wife Nannie consented to do the latter task, and as they were going up one furrow the plough caught hold of something in the bottom, which stopped the progress somewhat suddenly

In the exertion of the horses to pull the plough through the obstacle, it tore off the cover of some kind of vessel, and exposed its contents, at which Jackie called out, "Ho'd, Nannie, ho'd, she's a' here," i.e., Hold, Nannie, hold, she's all here. The trove proved to be a hidden treasure in the shape of an old kail-pot filled with guineas. The discovery was kept a secret in the neighbourhood, and Jackie having some trusty friends in London, sent the old guineas to him, and he getting them changed into the current coin of the realm, returned the same to the finder. After this Jackie Taylor and Nannie are said to have "nivver leuked ahint them," i.e., to have always done well.

Shortly after the discovery they left the Lowd Farm and went to reside at Morrowfield, a farm near Holmside, and from thence to Holmside, where they died, Jackie in 1828, and Nannie in 1861, and are buried at Lanchester.

With a portion of the money obtained from the treasure trove Jackie made himself a landed proprietor, purchasing a couple of farms in the neighbourhood of Cornsay, one North Low Row and the other Hill Top, besides some other property, which passed to his offspring, and have since been sold to different parties.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE OF FRIARSIDE.

In a pasture field not far from the farm house of Friarside, about a mile south-west of Rowland's Gill, and visible from the Consett branch of the North-Eastern Railway between Lintz Green and Rowland's Gill Stations, stands the roofless, ruined chapel of Friarside of ancient date and interesting architecture.

Previous to the formation of the Newcastle and Shotley Bridge turnpike in 1836, and the opening of the Derwent Valley Railway in 1867, this chapel stood in a most secluded and romantic spot, and it became the seat of wonderful mystery. Many are the legends and traditions of untold wealth said to be buried in its vicinity, and more than one attempt has been made to find the same.

In the middle of the nineteenth century a man of the name of John Heppell, belonging to Winlaton Mill, a person of a most inquisitive disposition, and a curious enquiring and somewhat poetical temperament, frequently dreamt about the old chapel, and of an immense treasure buried within its walls. When he first dreamt this dream, he thought nothing more about it, but after it had been repeated more than once, he came to the conclusion that it must be true, and he determined to ascertain the reality.

Unfortunately he could not keep his secret to himself. He confided his dream to a trusty friend, who doubtless was to have a share of the result, and together they proceeded to the chapel one dark night, and commenced to dig a large hole in the western portion of this ruin. Their reason for performing this work at night was the double one of not being disturbed by inquisitive and irreverent spectators, who would probably have smiled at their faith in the supernatural revelation, but who would have expected, and perhaps demanded, a share of the proceeds.

They laboured all night, without finding anything, and at dawn left the place with the intention of returning to their work when night again came round. Unhappily, as they were leaving the vicinity of the chapel, with their tools, they met a person who knew them, and he made the result of their night's work known.

A story immediately spread abroad of a large grave having been dug inside Friarside Chapel for the reception of the body of some intended victim, and of how the would-be culprits had been disturbed before they had conmpleted their work, and the day after the discovery the place was visited by numbers of people all anxious to see the grave and the work of some supposed murderer. The story of the grave found its way into the pages not only of the local press, but even into some of the London journals.

The unfortunate meeting with the third individual put a stop to any further search on Hepple's part for the supposed treasure, and the hole was eventually levelled up.

THE BURNOPFIELD MURDER.

On the 1st of November, 1855, Mr. Robert Stirling, a young surgeon, twenty-six years of age, assistant to Dr. William Watson, of Burnopfield, was brutally murdered at mid-day, in a lonely road called Smailes Lane, about a mile north of the village of Burnopfield, and in the parish of Wintaton.

He had only been a short while in Dr. Watson's service, having arrived at Burnopfield from Scotland on the 20th of the preceding mouth. At nine o'clock on the morning of his death he set out to visit various patients, and amongst the rest were some in the village of Spen, and before leaving Burnopfield borrowed from another assistant in Dr. Watson's employ, a silver watch, to which he attached his own guard. In the course of the morning he visited several patients at the Spen, and as he was returning he was shot by some persons lurking near Smailes Lane, the road he travelled, his throat cut, and his head and face frightfully injured, apparently by the butt end of a gun. His watch, money, and lancets were taken from his pockets, and his body dragged through a fence on the south side of the road, and deposited among the bushes in a plantation which Covered a steep incline to the river Derwent.

The non-return of Mr. Stirling caused the greatest anxiety to Dr. Watson, as that gentleman had once heard him express a wish to join a Turkish contingent in the Crimea, and he thought it extraordinary behaviour if he had departed for that purpose, without giving any previous warning or notice. He wrote, however, to his father in Scotland, and informed him of his son's absence. A search

was made, and on the 6th of November, five days after the murder, the mutilated body of the young surgeon was discovered in the wood as mentioned by Mr. Thomas Holmes, one of a search party of three, including the murdered man's father.

A considerable sensation was excited throughout the counties of Durham and Northumberland, and a thrill of horror was sent throughout the whole country by the atrocious deed, and large rewards were offered for the discovery of the perpetrators. At last, two men, John Cain, better known as "Whiskey Jack," described as a labourer, but known as the proprietor of an illicit whiskey still in the vicinity of Smailes Lane, and Richard Raine, a blacksmith, of Winlaton, were arrested on suspicion, charged with the murder, and brought up at the Spring Assizes at Durham, but the evidence not being complete they were remanded to the Midsummer Assizes. There they were arraigned on the 25th of July, 1856, before Mr. Justice Willis, and pleaded not guilty of the murder.

The trial extended over two days, and created the greatest interest. The prosecution was conducted by Mr. Overend, and the defence by Mr. (afterwards Hon.) J. R. Davison. To this particular trial the latter gentleman, afterwards Q.C., M.P., and Judge Advocate-General, was indebted for his subsequent remarkable success both as a *nisi prius* and criminal lawyer.

The trial rested upon purely circumstantial evidence, and though the weight of testimony pointed but one way, it failed to bring the crime home to the two prisoners.

The principal witness at the, trial was a Cumberland drover named Ralph Stobart, who from the evidence given, was the only person, other than the culprits, who met Mr. Stirling near the scene of his murder. Stobart proved that he had been visiting his sister for a few days, and that on the 1st of November, the date of the murder, he was returning home. His sister set him as far as Derwent Bridge at

Rowland's Gill. On reaching an angle of the road he saw a couple of men about two yards from the angle, and not liking their appearance, he passed quickly by, noticing, however, that one of them had either a stick or a gun by his side. Further along the lane be met a young man, afterwards kuown to be Dr. Stirling, with whom he passed the compliments of the day, and noticing that when he answered, he spoke with a strong Scotch accent. He then went on to the Shotley Bridge road and after getting a short distance along it he heard a shot go off. Stobart upon being pressed by the prisoner's counsel, would not swear positively that the prisoners in the dock were the men he met near the angle of the lane.

Some time after the murder the prisoner Raine was proved to have visited Durham, and to have offered a silver watch to a Mrs Raine, pawnbroker, who would not, however, advance anything on it. Had she done so, an important, link would have been added to the chain of testimony. It was also well known that at and before the time when Raine went to Durham, Cain was seen in that city by several persons who knew him, but this was not deposed to in the evidence. What became of the watch will never be known. After the trial it was more than once stated that it was thrown over one of the bridges in Durham into the river Wear.

The missing link in the chain of evidence in this trial seems to have led the jury, after a deliberation of two-and-a-half hours, to return a verdict of "Not guilty" against the two prisoners, who, each, by the smallest possible chance, escaped the scaffold. At the trial it was never attempted to set up any other motive than that of robbery, as proved by the watch having been taken from the murdered man; but it was well known in the district, both before and after the murder, that both Cain and Raine were lounging about Smailes Lane for an unlawful purpose. The 1st of November - the day of the murder - was also the rent day of the tenants of the Gibside Estate,

then belonging to William Hutt, Esq., M.P. and one of the tenants on his way to Gibside had to pass the plantation in which Mr. Stirling's body was afterwards found. It was generally supposed that the murderers were lying in wait for this man, to whom Whiskey Jack owed a grudge, as he had once laid information against him to the Revenue Officer, who escaped by the timely warning of a dream. It appears that the previous night he had a dream, which he told to his wife the next morning, the purport of which was that something would happen to him on his journey to pay his rent. It had been his custom to start from home at a particular hour on the rent day, but that morning he left earlier and probably escaped the fate of the doctor.

Another curious and remarkable incident transpired during the progress of the trial, which was much talked about and commented on at the time. Dr. Stirling's mother had a dream after the murder, in which she saw the murderer of her son. On it being told to some of her friends, it was decided to apply to the Governor of the gaol at Durham, then Mr. W. Green, for admission to the prison in order to test her with regard to the murderer she had seen. This was granted and on a fixed day, a number of prisoners all clad in the same garb, were brought into one of the prison yards, when Mrs. Stirling pointed to Cain, who was amongst them, as the man she had seen in her dream.

Whether Cain and Raine did certainly commit this diabolical outrage must for ever remain a mystery, and the Burnopfield murder, as it is generally called, one of the most cold blooded, dastardly, and foulest murders recorded in our criminal annals must remain as an unpunished crime.

Dr. Stirling's remains were interred in Tanfield Churchyard, where on the south side of the chancel, and on the east of the south entrance, there is a headstone inscribed:-

SACRED
TO
THE MEMORY OF
ROBERT STIRLING,
SURGEON, BURNOPFIELD,
WHO WAS BARBAROUSLY MURDERED
IN THE SMAILE'S LANE
NEAR ROWLANDS GILL GATE
BETWEEN ONE AND TWO O'CLOCK P.M.
ON THE FIRST DAY OF NOVEMBER
A.D. 1855 AGED 25 YEARS.
HE WAS A NATIVE OF KIRKINTILLOCK
DUMBARTONSHIRE
BELOVED FOR HIS VIRTUES, ADMIRED
FOR HIS TALENTS, AND RESPECTED FOR
HIS UNTIRING INDUSTRY
HIS UNTIMELY END WAS DEEPLY
LAMENTED BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM.
THIS STONE IS ERECTED BY HIS
BEREAVED PARENTS
WHO SORROW INDEED YET NOT AS
THOSE WHO HAVE NO HOPE.

The following somewhat ungrammatical and unrythmetical "Line on the late Mr. Robert Stirling, M.D., who was murdered near Burnopfield, Nov. 1st., 1855," were widely circulated just after the occurrence, in leaflet form, and were often sung by chapmen in the streets of Durham, Newcastle, and other towns on market days:-

"Sad was thy fate, O hapless youth,
Cut down in beauty's bloom;
Who would have thought so fair a flower
Would be shorn down at noon.

He left his home and parents dear
His prospects bright and high
But fate had otherwise decreed,
For doomed he was to die.

'Twas not by foeman's lance he fell
In battle fierce and hot;
But by some prowling ruffians strong
The youth was basely shot.

All day they prowled about the wood
While the sun shone bright and high;
On murder they were wholly bent;
They doomed some one to die.

Crouched beneath a neighbouring hedge
The cringing villains lay;
Like tigers lurking in their lair,
In hopes of some to slay.

By luckless chance young Stirling passed,
His form erect and high;
Poor youth his sun was nearly set,
That hour he had to die.

The deadly gun uplifted was
One moment and no more,
The noble youth, shot in the groin,
Fell down to rise no more.

Then sprang from whence they bad been hid,
Like vultures on their prey;
And with the butt-end of the gun,

They finished him straight-way.

Then from the road the villains dragged
Him to a neighbouring wood;
His manly face was battered sore,
And covered o'er with blood.

O God! where was Thy thunderbolts,
Lord, doth Thy vengeance sleep;
When virtue's trampled in the dust,
And friends are left to weep.

O, who can paint a father's grief,
When he found his only joy,
A blackened and disfigured corpse,
And wildly cried - 'My boy.

'Twas not for this you left your home
Your fortune for to try;
For in a lonely stranger's grave
Your body now must lie.'

Now, two men are taken for the crime,
And what more can we say;
Than they who did no mercy show,
Can scarce for mercy pray."

STONEY BOWES
THE FORTUNE HUNTER,

One of the most notorious adventurers and fortune hunters was an Irishman named Andrew Robinson Stoney, best known by the additional surname of Bowes, which he afterwards assumed. He was born in Ireland in 1745, and was a younger son of a respectable family. Entering the army, he became an Ensign of the 4th Regiment of Foot, and in 1768 accompanied his regiment to Newcastle-on-Tyne. Whilst there he became acquainted with a Miss Newton, who lived in Westgate Street, the only daughter of a coal merchant named William Newton, who also had a residence at Burnopfield, to whom he proposed marriage. Tradition states that Mr. Stoney persuaded Miss Newton to elope from her father's residence at Burnopfield. This did not take place, however, for they were married at St. Andrew's Church, Newcastle, by the Rev. Nathaniel Ellison, on the 5th of November, 1768. In the "Newcastle Courant" of the period we read:- On November 5th was married at St. Andrew's Church by the Rev. Mr. Nathaniel Ellison, Andrew Robinson Stoney, Esq., an ensign in the 4th Regiment (Brudenell's) to Miss Newton, of Westgate Street, an heiress with a fortune of £20,000.

In 1770 Ensign Stoney was promoted to a lieutenancy in his regiment succeeding, according to the *Newcastle Chronicle* of January 27th, Mr. Forrest, who had been promoted to a captaincy, and after it was disbanded he retired on half-pay, to the seat of his wife's paternal ancestors, where his wife died, after suffering much cruel treatment at the hands of her husband, soon afterwards, leaving no issue. Not so very long after his wife's death, Mr. Stoney began to have designs on the hand of Mary Eleanor, Countess of Strathmore, a

most accomplished young widow, whose husband had died at Lisbon, on the 25th March, 1776, leaving her with five young children, and in possession of immense property and wealth. He commenced his attack on her heart and hand with the most consummate art. At that time the *Morning Post* was the fashionable society paper, and in its pages there appeared from time to time several articles intimating that the handsome young widow was not leading her life so innocently and circumspectly as to meet with the approval of the more rigorous moralists of the day. These articles led to others being sent defending the Countess and championing her cause. The correspondence led to a duel being fought between the editor of the paper - the Rev. Henry Bate (afterwards Sir Henry Bate-Dudley) - and Lieutenant Stoney, as the champion of the Countess, on the 13th of January, 1777. Four days later the gallantry of the Lieutenant was rewarded by the Countess marrying him, and in consequence of this marriage he assumed by his Majesty King George III's pleasure, the additional surname of Bowes, and became Andrew Robinson Stoney Bowes.

The marriage may seem very much as things should be, but when it is known that the whole thing was a sham, that Stoney himself had sent the articles to the newspaper reflecting on the character of the Countess, and had also written those defending her, that the duel was of a rather equivocal character, and that an understanding existed all the time between the duellists, it puts quite a different light on the affair, and shows what a consummate villain Stoney must have been. He secured his end, and became the husband of the wealthy Countess. Clever as Stoney Bowes had been, however, he found that his cleverest schemes had been outwitted. Soon after his marriage he found that the Countess, just a week before the ceremony took place, had got a deed drawn up and signed whereby she vested in trustees all her property for her sole benefit,

but with power to alter and amend the same. He also found that she was considerably in debt. Vexed at what he conceived to be the double dealing on the part of his wife he adopted means far from gentle, to get rid of the obnoxious deed. Whether by fair means or foul, he induced the Countess on the 1st of May, 1777 - less than four months after marriage - to execute another deed, revoking the former, and vesting the whole of her landed property in Mr. Stoney Bowes, who then joined her in a deed granting for the benefit of her creditors, annuities to the yearly sum of £3,000 for the Countess's life, by which measure a sum of £24,000 was raised. In order to secure the payment of these annuities, certain parts of the estates were vested in trustees, who were to receive the rents, pay the annuities, and hand over the residue, if any, to Bowes and the Countess. After their marriage they came to the North of England and took up their residence at Gibside, the paternal seat of the Countess of Strathmore, where they lived in style.

In the same year as he was married he offered himself as a representative of Newcastle-on-Tyne, in succession to Sir Walter Blackett, deceased, but was unsuccessful. His accomplished wife did all she could by an active canvass to promote his return. In 1780 he served the office of High Sheriff of Northumberland and entertained the judges with lavish hospitality. In September of the same year he was chosen a representative in Parliament for Newcastle-on-Tyne.

At Gibside Stoney Bowes commenced his ill-usage of his wife in a similar manner to that in which he treated his first wife, and which was carried on for several years, until the unfortunate Countess had to seek shelter in the Divorce Court. In 1782, owing to his expensive living, his horseracing, his insurances, the expenses of his shievalty, his election contests, his purchase of Benwell Tower, and other matters, Stoney Bowes was obliged to leave Gibside, which during his five years residence had been a scene of continual

feasting, extravagance and retreat, but not before he had cut down much of the valuable timber on the fine estate, to raise money, which, however no one would buy from him, and went to Paul's Warden in Northamptonshire, where the Countess was delivered of a son and heir on the 8th of March. This son, the only child the Countess bore him eventually entered the navy, where he died in his father's lifetime. The treatment he showed towards the Countess in the birth of the child was that of a veritable Bluebeard.

About this time Stoney Bowes also commenced a series of stratagems to obtain possession of the Countess's two daughters, by the Earl of Strathmore, who were wards in chancery, in order to obtain more influence over their mother. He did actually get hold of one of the daughters - Lady Anna Maria, who afterwards married Colonel James Jessop - and fled with her to Paris, but in November, 1784, the Court of Chancery brought her back to England, and placed her out of her stepfather's reach.

In the following year 1785, the Countess fled from Bowes's custody, where she had been little better than a prisoner, and began to institute proceedings for a divorce at the Ecclesiastical Court at Durham, on the plea of cruelty. In the evidence which was deduced it was found that Bowes was "a villain to the backbone." It appeared that from a short time after her marriage the Countess had been deprived of her liberty in every respect. The use of her carriage was denied her unless with Bowes's previous permission. Her own old servants were dismissed, and the new ones which took their places were ordered not to attend the ringing of her bell. She dared not send a letter, nor read one sent to her till he had first perused it. She was cursed and sworn at and otherwise treated with foul language. She was assaulted and chastised with blows from his hands and feet, and frequently had black eyes. She was driven from her own table, or forced to sit at it along with Bowes's mistresses and other loose

characters, whom he kept about him. At the same Court the manner in which he had obtained the hand of the Countess in marriage came to light.

While the suit for the divorce was pending, Bowes, by a deep laid conspiracy obtained possession of the person of the Countess, in London, and carried her off a prisoner to Streatlam Castle, where he endeavoured to persuade her to become reconciled to him. Hearing that he was pursued he hastily made off from Streatlam Castle, carrying the Countess with him, but was overtaken at Darlington, where the Countess was delivered out of his clutches, and escorted safely back to the Metropolis. Articles of peace were immediately exhibited against him and the Court of King's Bench made an order in the case to the effect that he should enter into security to keep the peace for fourteen years, under penalty of £20,000 - himself in £10,000 and two sureties of £5,000 each.

A charge for a conspiracy against the Countess of Strathmore to assault and imprison her was laid against Bowes and others, and they were tried in the Court of King's Bench on the 10th May, 1787, before Mr. Justice Buller. One of the Counsel for Bowes and his companions was Mr. Erskine, afterwards Lord Chancellor Erskine. Various instances of illusage were given, and Bowes was subsequently adjudged to pay a fine of £300 to his Majesty, to be confined in the King's Bench prison for three years, and at the expiration of that term to find security for fourteen years, himself in £10,000 and two sureties of £5,000 each. The other conspirators received lighter sentences.

About the same time a suit was instituted in the High Court of Chancery by the Countess against Bowes, charging him with various acts of cruelty and outrage, setting forth that an instrument of revocation was extorted from her by violence and compulsion, and praying the Court to restrain Bowes from recovering the rents of the

estates. The case was tried on the 19th May, 1788, in the Court of Common Pleas, before the Right Hon. Lord Loughborough (afterwards Earl of Rosslyn), on an issue directed out of the Court of Chancery. This trial resulted in Bowes being deprived of all the property, and the whole of the rents which he had received were ordered to be given up, and on the 3rd March, 1789, Lady Strathmore was restored to her property, and finally severed from the unfortunate connection she had formed.

As Bowes had spent the whole of the rents he had received, they were entered against him as a debt, and he was cast into prison. There be spent the most of his time in a constant state of intoxication. Whilst there the Countess wrote a very bitter, but just epitaph for him, which she sent to him in his confinement, and which was as follows:

Here Rests
Who never rested before,
The most ambitious of men; for he sought not
Virtue, Wisdom, nor Science,
Yet rose by deep hypocrisy, by the
Folly of some and the vice of others,
To honours which nature had forbade, and
Riches he wanted taste to enjoy.
He saw no faults in himself, nor any worth in others,
He was the very enemy of mankind;
Deceitful to his friends, ungrateful to his benefactors,
Cringing to his superiors and tyrannical to his dependents.
If interest obliged him to assist any fellow creature
He regretted the effect,
And thought every day lost in which he made none wretched.

His life was a continual series
Of injuries to society; and disobedience to his Maker;
And he only lamented in despair
That he could offend them no longer.
He rose by mean arts to unmerited honours,
Which expire before hmself.
Passenger! examine thy heart,
If in aught thou resemblest him;
And if thou dost -
Read, tremble, and reform!
So shall he, who living, was the pest of society,
When dead, be, against his will, once useful to
mankind.

In 1790 a sentence of excommunication decreed by the High Court of Delegates - then the supreme Court of Appeal in ecclesiastical causes - against Andrew Robinson Stoney Bowes, for contumacy and for not having paid the expenses of the said court, amounting to £553 8s 6d, in a cause instituted by Mary Eleanor Bowes, his wife, was read in the parish church of of St. Nicholas, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

About the year 1797 Bowes commenced a suit in the Court of Chancery, under the expectation that he was certain of success, but a delay occurred and he was disappointed.

On the 20th of April, 1800, the Countess of Strathmore died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, dressed in a superb bridal dress, and when this occurred Bowes moved out of the King's Bench prison, the demand of heavy bail having been withdrawn, through application to that Court. His affairs, through his long imprisonment, had become too much involved ever to be settled, so he remained a prisoner for debt. He was, however, granted the privilege of residing anywhere within the rules, chiefly on account, it is said, of his

commendable conduct in aiding the prison authorities in quelling the disturbance which occurred during a riot and conspiracy in May, 1791.

He afterwards removed to house in the London Road, St. George's Fields, to await the issue of the law suits, which dragged slowly along, but in 1807 a verdict having been found against him, he was again obliged to remove within the rules of the King's Bench prison, where he died on the 16th of January 1810, and his remains were buried seven days later, in the vault of St. George's Church in the Borough. Stoney Bowes was one of the most notorious characters of his day, and was a compound of baseness and hypocrisy, and his acts, even when in prison, were of the blackest dye. He left a number of descendants by a young lady whom he had seduced in prison, and whom he also treated with cruelty.

If the rooms of Gibside Hall could speak they would tell many tales of Stoney Bowes's cruelty towards the Countess of Strathmore during their residence there from 1777 to 1782, and tradition has not allowed many of these acts to be forgotten, for though a century has passed since the accomplished Countess was laid to rest in Poets Corner, Westminster Abbey, strange stories still linger in the neighbourhood of the violent treatment she received from his hands, of how he locked her up in a closet, and fed her with an egg and a biscuit a day; of how once when in a passion he threw her out of the window of an upper storey; of how she couldn't go into the garden or grounds without his leave; of how she had to take a second place when his mistresses were present, and become their menial; of black eyes, and bruised limbs, of ill-treatment and starvation, and of almost all the cruelties that a villain was capable of.

THE GIANTS OF HOLLINSIDE.

Situated on the edge of a steep brow in the midst of picturesque scenery on the south side of the River Derwent, about a quarter of a mile from the river, and within a mile to the east of Gibside, stands the old ruined manor house of Hollinside. It is an interesting place and possesses an interesting history. Standing on the verge of an almost precipitous slope overlooking the Derwent Valley, one hundred and fifty feet above the bed of the river, it occupies an almost impregnable position, its natural security being still further increased by a stretch of marshy ground below, which even after modern drainage affords an unsecure foothold.

Much of the ancient pile has yielded slowly to the destroying hand of time, but from what remains, some knowledge can be obtained of its ancient strength and importance in the days gone by. The walls are of immense thickness, from three feet upwards, and the building measures externally about fifty-two feet in length, and about forty-six in width, and has originally been three storeys in height. It is built in the form of two wings, standing north-east and south-west, separated on the south side by a space about ten feet in width, covered over by an arch, which reaches twenty-two feet from the ground, and on the top of which probably stood a tower or turret. From the water-lines preserved on this we can see that both the main building and the wings were covered by one enormous roof of considerable pitch. As there is no other entrance to the building from any other side this arch or recess has evidently served as an entrance porch, and it is still strong, even in its decay.

If the ruined walls are interesting, the rooms in the building are more so. From its appearance at the present time there appears to

have been about ten rooms in the house, of which five have been on the ground floor and the rest above. Appearances also point to the rooms in the basement having been used as store houses for the reception of goods, and, perhaps, of cattle, only, and the upper rooms as dwelling rooms.

When the building was erected and when it ceased to be a place of residence is not definitely known. Judging from its architecture it probably dates from the Thirteenth Century, and was evidently erected at a time when things were quite different from what they are now; when each one had to depend on his own strength and fortress for protection, and when Tynedale reivers, border moss-troopers, and other marauders were often in the field

It originally belonged to a family named Hollinside, who either gave their name to, or took their name from it, from whom it passed to the Bointons, and from them to the Burtons, and thence to the Redheughs, and from them to the Massams, from whom it passed to the Hardings, who after holding it for about three centuries conveyed it to the Bowes, to whose representatives it still belongs.

Like a great many other ruined remains the old Manor house has its traditional history. Local history says that the building, which is very often called "The Giants Castle," was built and inhabited by a family of giants, who, like the rest of their kind were the terror of the neighbourhood.

Tradition says it was built by a giant who wrought the stones in a quarry in Gibside Wood, about three-quarters of a mile from the house, which is still known as the "Giants Quarry", and carried them on his back to the place, and tradition also says that this giant made raids into the surrounding district for cattle and sheep, which he kept in the lowest rooms of his residence, and killed as he required them, and that his favourite place of resort was the roof of the tower, from whence he could view the country far up and down the Derwent

Valley, and see where spoils in the form of stock were to be found.

The same fickle historian also has it that this giant had an underground passage from his house to the Derwent, in which he stored his treasures, the value of which has never diminished by the telling. This last superstitious belief has under investigations proved to be fallacious.

The tradition of the giant however, has some support in the fact that the majority of the members of the Harding family were men "both tall and strong, and great beside," some of them even attaining to a height of nearer seven feet than six. During the middle of the nineteenth century, whilst some repairs were being made to the vault of the Harding family in Whickham churchyard, a thigh bone of extraordinary size was found, which had belonged to a man whose stature could not have been less than seven feet, and this "find" had at the time a great deal to do with supporting the traditional story of the Giant of Hollinside Castle.

SELBY'S GRAVE.

About half a mile north of Winlaton, at the Junction of Barlow turnpike with the road from Snook's Hill farm to Blaydon Burn, is a place called the "Nobbies" or "Nobbys," where there is a large stone quarry. In the corner of the field on the north side of the turnpike at this place is, tradition says, the grave of a suicide, and the site is known as "Selby's Grave."

Who Selby was is unknown, but he is believed to be identical with the "unknown gentleman," recorded by John Sykes in his Local Records, under the date 1660, as having committed suicide near Winlaton.

From him we learn that a gentleman went to reside at Winlaton in the spring of 1660. Who he was or what he was will not now be definitely known. He lived very privately, mixing or making friends with none of the local residents, but he seemed to be very anxious to learn all he could about the abolition of the Commonwealth, and the restoration of monarchy, and daily grew more and more inquisitive after news and every circumstance concerning the restoration of Charles II, which monarch was proclaimed King on May 8th, and entered London on the 29th of the same month. Upon learning of the passing of the Act of Indemnity in the following August, and of the exception of the murderers of King Charles I, he went into a wood adjoining Winlaton and hung himself. This action makes him to be one of the regicides, or one who had assisted in the downfall of Charles I.

According to tradition what is known as "Lands Wood" on the south side of Winlaton was the place where he committed suicide, and the body, being denied Christian burial, was conveyed to

the four cross-roads at the Nobbys, and buried at midnight. A stake or stob was then driven through his body, with the then popular double belief of getting rid of the corpse and the ghost. Each passer by, then, in token of abhorence threw a stone or stones, generally three, on the grave until, in time, a large pile existed. The stake or stop marking the place of burial - but whether the original or one erected at a later date - existed during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, but now all has disappeared. In days gone by a piece of wood from the stake marking a suicide's grave was considered an infallible remedy for toothache, and considerably more than one piece of the stake on Selby's grave made its way into the possession of local residents.

Whether Selby was the proper, or only an assumed name of the man will never be definitely known, for history has left no record of the circumstance, other than a mere note and the parish register of Ryton is also silent with regard to it.

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