

A RAMBLER'S NOTEBOOK  
AT THE ENGLISH LAKES





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation







*By the same Author*

# Literary Associations of the English Lakes

2nd Edition. Crown 8vo. 2 Vols. With 32 Illustrations.  
10s. net.

“Revision, correction, additions, and the reproduction of valuable photographs give to this new edition all the interest of a new book. The first volume is dominated by Southey, and deals with Cumberland and Keswick; the second is equally dominated by Wordsworth, and treats of Westmoreland and Windermere. . . . Canon Rawnsley's book is now a necessary companion to all histories of Lakeland, and its distinguished tenants and visitors.”—*Spectator*.

# Life and Nature at the English Lakes

2nd Edition. Crown 8vo. With 8 Illustrations. 5s. net.

# Memories of the Tennysons

2nd Impression. Crown 8vo. With 16 Illustrations.  
5s. net.

“The intimate friendship between the Tennyson and the Rawnsley families, extending over several generations, gives a peculiar interest to their impressions of the poet in the ‘old Lincolnshire days’ and long afterwards.”—*Daily News*.

# Ruskin and the English Lakes

Crown 8vo. With 10 Illustrations. 5s. net.

“A worthy tribute to the great man's memory.”—*Spectator*.

“The manner in which he encouraged home art industries in the district and sought in other practical ways to help the people is admirably described.”—*Standard*.

GLASGOW : JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS  
PUBLISHERS TO THE UNIVERSITY  
LONDON AND NEW YORK : MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD.

A RAMBLER'S NOTE-BOOK AT THE  
ENGLISH LAKES

PUBLISHED BY  
JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS, GLASGOW,  
Publishers to the University.

---

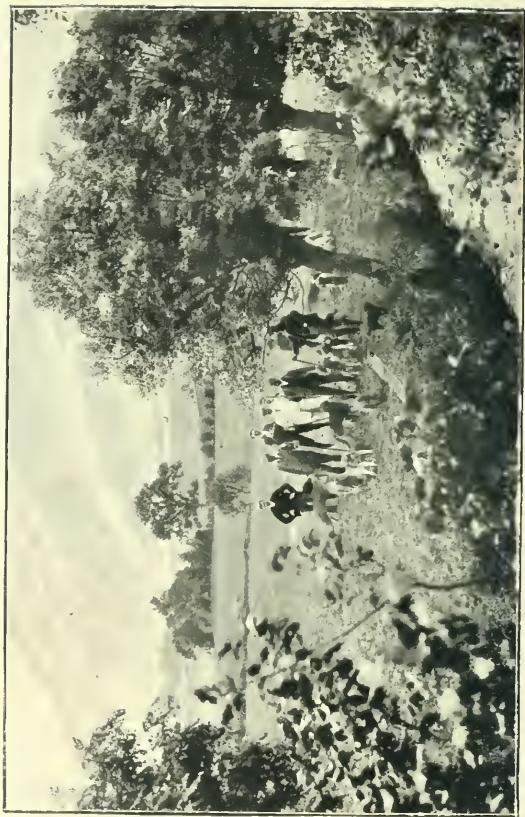
MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD., LONDON.  
*New York, - - The Macmillan Co.*  
*London, - - - Simpkin, Hamilton and Co.*  
*Cambridge, - - Macmillan and Bowes.*  
*Edinburgh, - - Douglas and Foulis.*

---

MCMII.







OUT OTTERING IN ST. JOHN'S VALE.

A Rambler's Note-Book  
at the  
English Lakes

By the Rev.

H. D. Rawnsley

Honorary Canon of Carlisle

Author of

"Literary Associations of  
the English Lakes."

Glasgow

James MacLehose and Sons

Publishers to the University

1902

GLASGOW: PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO.

TO THE  
REV. DR. HENRY VANDYKE  
AND TO ALL MY AMERICAN FRIENDS  
I DEDICATE  
THESE SHORT SKETCHES OF A  
LAND THEY DEARLY LOVE

“ For I have learned  
To look on Nature not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.”

*Tintern Abbey.*

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
DUDDON DAFFODILS, - - - - -	I
OUT OTTERING, - - - - -	13
MERRY MAY-TIME AT THE LAKES, - - - - -	33
THE GRASMERE RUSHBEARING, - - - - -	41
NOVEMBER GLORY AT THE LAKES, - - - - -	57
THE MAY QUEEN AT KESWICK, - - - - -	78
THE DIAMOND JUBILEE BONFIRES, - - - - -	81
A NORTH-COUNTRY FLOOD, - - - - -	109
A DAY WITH THE PICTS AND CELTS OF CUMBERLAND,	132
SNOW IN HARVEST, - - - - -	139
OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS DOINGS AT THE ENGLISH LAKES, - - - - -	145
THE TRUE STORY OF "D'VE KEN JOHN PEEL?" -	153

	PAGE
"THE OLD FOLKS' CHRISTMAS DO," AT KESWICK, -	187
A DAY ON FROZEN DERWENTWATER, - - - -	199
CUMBERLAND CHARACTER, - - - - -	205
THE LAST OF THE RYDAL DOROTHYS, - - -	220
PREHISTORIC AND MEDIAEVAL MAN AT PORTINSCALE,	240
THE TRIBUTE OF THE HILLS, - - - - -	252



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
OUT OTTERING IN ST. JOHN'S VALE, - -	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
NOVEMBER GLORY AT THE LAKES, - - - -	64
THE MAY QUEEN, - - - - -	80
A NORTH-COUNTRY FLOOD, - - - - -	112
THE DRUID CIRCLE ON CAST-RIGG FELL, - - -	136
JOHN PEEL, - - - - -	176
A DAY ON FROZEN DERWENTWATER, - - - -	200
THE LAST OF THE RYDAL DOROTHYS, - - -	232

## NOTE

The Publishers have to thank Mr. Rupert Potter for his kind permission to reproduce the first illustration ; Messrs. Green Brothers, Grasmere, for the second ; Mr. A. Pettitt, Keswick, for the third, fourth and fifth ; Mr. Thomas Dumble, Keswick, for the sixth ; and Mr. G. P. Abraham, Keswick, for the seventh illustration.

## DUDDON DAFFODILS.

THE Spring had been a late one, a fortnight late the farmers said, and the "daffodils that come before the swallow dares and take the winds with beauty," had shown an unaccustomed fearfulness. Though they shone indeed upon southern banks in Under-Skiddaw, and in the sheltered wood of the island of Derwentwater, it was not till the swallow was seen hawking along the Derwent on April 13th, and the cuckoo two days after was heard in the Crosthwaite valley, that I felt sure that the Duddon daffodils would be in full splendour, and determined to take the first opportunity for my annual sight of them.

Meanwhile the wind went round to the south, and a sense of midsummer suddenly possessed the air; so, taking an early train on Wednesday, the 17th April, I began a fifty mile pilgrimage for that vision of flowerland

glory which whoso sees thinks that not fifty, but five hundred miles were not too far a journey to obtain a memory of.

“Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In its first splendour, mountain, lake, and hill”

as passing by the coltsfoot-covered railway banks, and the amber-red plots of sweet gale, I dived through the primrose-scented woodland by the Bassenthwaite shore,—on by Wordsworth's birthplace,—on by the shining Derwent, to Workington, with its memories of Mary Queen of Scots, and that sight of ‘the glimmering western sea,’ which charmed Matthew Arnold. Criffel stood up in lilac haze across the Solway, the Isle of Man lay like a giant whale upon the waterflood. On by Whitehaven, or as it would be better called Blackhaven that Spenser may have seen and Shelley once knew; so by St. Bees with its tradition of the Abbess and her Irish broideresses, of Algrind, Spenser's friend, the brave and blind Elizabethan bishop,—on by the huts by the sea the Viking fishers knew, the Wastdale hills shining inland milky-white, with their rain-blached winter grasses shot with cobalt shadows from wandering clouds; so by Raven-glass where the Roman general built him a

lordly house and where the Britons of an earlier day buried their dead seafarers, by Irt, Mite, and Esk, and the harbour of King Averling's town we went, and the black-headed gulls sailed over us, and when we paused at little seaside stations the larks sang loud in our ears. Black Combe, russet red, shone down in solemn sunlit beauty; Whicham with its memory of Faber the poet over its grassy valley, Millom with its torches by the sea on the one hand, and its gibbet field and echo of feudal days on the other, were hurried by; we got a glimpse of the level meads and the shining sands of the Duddon Estuary, and at last Foxfield bade us change our train for the little line that leads to Broughton and Coniston. Doubtless the time to arrive at Broughton is not midday but eventide: then the long range of Black Combe stands like a solid amethyst against a saffron sky, then the gradual muster of the stars begins; one sees beyond the church and its dark yews, the range from Bleasby Bank that lifts gradually to the broken Dow Craggs to Walna Scar and the Coniston Old Man, in all variety of shadowy grey to purple hue, and far up in the folds of the hills shine white the pleasant fellside farms.

But I had come to see the daffodils, and making my way through the quaint little

street, with its 'Brown Cow' here and its 'Black Cock' there, I paused at the old 'King's Head' to renew my acquaintance with the comely dame, who, as the presiding genius, had in former years supplied me with rest and food. But the sun was out and the daffodils were calling, and I would not linger now, so after ordering an afternoon meal I strolled up the steep road to climb the hill which separates Broughton from the Duddon valley. A sturdy kindly dalesman, whose forbears had been on the soil for centuries stood at the cross roads at the top, and to refresh my memory with the names of the hills in the neighbourhood I fell to talk with him.

"Well, well," he said, "there was a bishop yance coom'd on your errand to see the daffies and axed me just sic-like questions, they caw'd him Selwyn, savages got at him and kilt him in some islands over sea. I was nowt but a young un then, and he axed me hoo far it was over fells to Whitehaven, and I tell't him I couldn't for certain tell, and he slapt his hand into his pocket and out wi' a shilling, and he said, 'That's for telling truth'; and I tell't him I couldn't help it—I was made that way."

I learnt that evening in Broughton that the

man was still called 'Honest John' throughout the village.

"Well," he said, gazing out south, "sea, so the ald folks say in t'ald daays coom'd reet up over midders to church. Well, well, yon fell beyon Keppelray they ca' Goatthwaite," and he pointed out to the moor beyond Eccleriggfell; and here in a single sentence one got a glimpse of medieval times when the monks at Furness Abbey said mass at the Chapel on the Church ridge, and the goat-herds drove their goats afield from morn till eventide. "Aye, aye," said the old fellow, "it's tied to be an ald plaace,—this Broughton of ours, there's a Norman tower they say in't middle of Broughton Hall, and there's a bit of a Roman road runs from Duddon Brig yonder down to Greety Gate."

I asked for particulars about Greety Gate. All he knew about it was that the boats used to come thither, and it is just possible that the good wives wept when the Broughton fishermen set forth, and gave them greeting when the tide brought nets and fishermen home. Then we turned our faces to the north and west, and the old fellow named the various ridges and hills all up the estuary to beyond Donnerdale Hill.

“Ridge at the back,” he said, “is Black Combe, ridge in front mostly what gets Barrow. Druids’ Temple is just over Barrow there, there’s a great sale on there to-day, best way is over the brig and up by the forge, it’s a grand circle of stones, girt plaace in Druid daays I suppoase.”

“What about the forge?” I said.

“Well,” he said, “it’s nowt but a ruin nowadaays, beyond Duddon Brig there, but in auld time there was a deal of smelting of this red ore with charcoal went on there.”

“And what’s that house,” I said, “above it.”

“Lower Duddon Hall,” he replied, “and t’other a mile up the Vale is Duddon Hall proper, and there’s daffies all the way between them.”

“What is that great conical fell,” I said, “that rises above Duddon Hall?”

“It mostly-what gets Pen” he said, “and Loggan beck comes down on left side of it, and there’s a lile hill much same mack behind it they call “Pen Jennet,” and big fell a back of baith is Hest Fell.”

How interesting it was! What memories were awakened of the British time long since passed away, and there across the Duddon dwelt the Cymri folk who went to their logan



stone beside the beck and climbed their pens for safety, or the Vikings who drove their horses on to the horse or 'Hest Fell,' and for all I know kept their mares on the enclosure of the 'little Pen.'

"Is there much water in the Duddon?" I said, "for I hear the Furness folk are going to drink it dry."

"At times," he answered, "it is window-high in yon cottage by the brig, but it runs off very sharp and scours a deal. Millom folks say that it'll make sad work for the shipping there if they prevent the scour, but I suppose Parliament-men will likely see to that job."

"What are those hills," I asked, "on the right-hand side of the Duddon mouth, with the cluster of cottages rising picturesquely against the wooden background?"

"They call it Bleasley Banks, and if you wad see sic a sight of primroses as nivver was, you mud coom back fra' daffies, cross th' brig, and up beyont houses, intil t' meadows beneath the plantings. Last year theer was acres of them, you might smell them for far enuff."

"Do many people come to see the daffodils?" I said.

"Noa, noa," he replied, "charabongs hasn't begun to run yet from Barrow, and though

when daffies goes, whole plaace is a sheet of bluebells, there mostly-what aw beneath grund agin before tourist folk cooms this waay, beside what, daffies is nowt but daffies efter aw."

I bade adieu to my friend, the truth speaker, and diving down into the "Lickle" valley, passed a road made beautiful on either side of it by the stately wands of the osier hedge, so reached the Lickle bridge which the Lancashire County Council had apparently renamed "Little" to judge by the inscription on the central parapet stone, and so gained the Duddon Bridge. There as I stood watching the water, crystal-clear, cast the shadows of its dimpling upon the grey blue shallows, I was suddenly attracted to a gleam of gold in the sparse woodland by the bank, and passing by the forge up the road through the open copse towards Duddon Hall, the scent, not of violets, but of garlic for the moment troubled me ; but I forgot all about the wild garlic in the beauty of the white anemones and the scentless grey blue violets which spangled the under growth, and after about a hundred yards I found myself at the beginning of such a woodland field of the cloth of gold as ever was laid for the coming of a May Queen, or the royal pageant of spring. I had no right to leave the road, but if all the

retinue of the laird of Donnerdale had come out against me, I feel I should have made a dash for it, for here, in the copse of grey ash shoots, and purpling birches, and glossy hazels, filled with the song of birds innumerable, with the sound of Duddon lispng among its pebbles and chiming merrily in my ear, were thousands upon tens of thousands of the bright-eyed daffodils growing in silent splendour unimaginable.

The children of countless years, they seemed to have possessed themselves of every square foot of the tender undergrowth, they found foothold on the runnel edges, they glowed within the shadow of the woodland trenches, they dazzled the sun itself from the rocky knolls, they shook with delight upon the river islands and nodded and moved to their own shadows in the quiet pools. "A poet could not but be gay in such a jocund company." One felt oneself smiling all over with pure gladness to think of the happiness of this vast multitude of April children, and one thanked the poet of the Duddon for having put into such simple verse his faith to make it the faith of others, namely, that "every flower enjoys the air it breathes." We strolled slowly on through the golden company. From Barrow, russet red with fern

above and russet brown with budding oak below, there came the sweet mellow cush of the wood-pigeon's note, that 'churring' of content that drives all care away, and the thrush hid in the tassels of the birch sang,

"Summer is coming, summer is coming,  
I know it, I know it, I know it."

True little poet indeed, for here was "light again, leaf again, light again, love again," in the valley of the golden daffodil.

Sunshine showered upon me as I passed along the Duddon, and the old disused mill-race. At my side, the shells of the wind-flower, opened so wide for delight, one felt they would not care to close again. Here and there like bits of lapis lazuli, the first bluebell was seen, and there in deepest gold, the marigold clusters shone. Lifting one's eyes from the daffodils for a moment, and looking up towards the copses on the opposite shore one saw, as my honest friend had told me, "sic sheets of primroses as nivver waur." They broidered the hedgerows, they sheeted the meadow lands and filled the cool interspace of shade and sun with tender light, and the blackbirds carolled with their deepest altos, the thrushes called with their highest trebles, and the chiffchaffs

quavered and thrilled from the fragrant larch tresses, and with the sound of water in my ears, and melody of birds filling the air, I passed to where nearer Duddon Hall the daffodil myriads shone in their royallest splendour. Here in their wanton love of wandering they had passed beyond the edges of the copse-land, and madcap revellers were tossing their heads in the open meadow-land with such sense of exuberance of joy as made one just sit down amongst them and let their golden frolic fill one's blood. The inexorable hours would not allow of one's remaining, or one might have been sitting there in daffodil delight now. Never did Duddon valley, with its blue distance, and its hanging woods by Osier and Donnerdale, its crystal river, and its blue grey shadows, seem more fair.

I passed back a happier man and leaned upon the Duddon Bridge; I was in good company, the Poet of the daffodil was at my side; it was for all I knew the last time I should be permitted to see so fair an April day, the river "gliding at its own sweet will" downward to the sea had glided thus, before the druids went a-worshipping beneath yonder hill, and if the Barrow Waterworks Company will permit, will go on gliding for ten thousand

years, with just such crystal clearness, just such sound. These daffodils that lay their golden light along the stream, and fill the woodland with their "stationary sunshine," so grew, and so lightened the copses, when the Britons clomb the Pen, or the Roman soldiers made their great coast road, or the Vikings grazed their horses on Hest Fell. Ten thousand years hence these daffodils shall shine for other eyes with just the same power to touch the human heart with tender gratitude and springtide joy. How could one help thinking that afterthought that possessed Wordsworth's mind, as years ago he leaned upon this bridge and thought of coming change and nature's changelessness :

"I thought of thee my partner and my guide  
As being passed away.—Vain sympathies !  
For, backward, Duddon ! as I cast my eyes,  
I see what was, and is, and will abide ;  
Still glides the stream, and shall for ever glide ;  
The form remains, the function never dies ;  
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,  
We men, who in our morn of youth defied  
The elements, must vanish ; be it so !  
Enough, if something from our hands have power  
To live, and act, and serve the future hour ;  
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,  
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,  
We feel that we are greater than we know."

## OUT OTTERING.

WHAT a long breath the blackbird must draw to be sure! Here am I doing my best to feel that I have not risen earlier than usual; trying to be as matter of fact as one can between the pauses of tea and toast. There is a calm in that slow, deep-chested alto of the blackbird that is beyond all words. And yet he is telling me, for all his own self-possession and May morning quiet, that there are for such inferior wingless animals as men certain helps to locomotion which can only come at certain times, and unless taken advantage of, speed off and leave us very much where we are; and I seem to hear in the oft-repeated, slow-drawn, blackbird's alto some such words as these: "Now sir—make haste—sir—or—you'll—miss—your train—sir."

One would not so much have minded what the blackbird out on the laurel had got to say

had one not looked at one's watch and found it close to seven o'clock, and realised that in less than thirty minutes, if one failed to catch the train, one would fail to join the pack of otter-hounds who were travelling from Cockermouth to Threlkeld by the said train, and miss the first of their morning hunts along the river Bure and up the valley of St. John's.

Just then a thrush in the lilac bush close by the breakfast-room window began to aid and abet my philosophic blackbird monitor.

"Going, going," it said, "be quick, be quick, be quick." This thrush must have come of a good French family, or else high-schools have been the rage in the thrush world also, for he immediately altered his tongue and called, "Vite, vite, vite," as plain as any Frenchman ever cried it.

"You must really, sir, make haste, sir. Now look sharp, now look sharp, look sharp, pray make haste, pray make haste, pray make haste—vite, vite, vite, be quick." The thrush's call was on my nerves; I could stand it no longer. Bolting the last mouthful of toast, pouring the cup of tea into a saucer and gurgling it down, I seized my stick, and away out of the house I ran to catch the train that



was conveying the otter-hound pack, and to go with them to the meet.

It is not so easy a matter to fall in with the otter-hounds as might be supposed. No meets are advertised, and except to an inner circle no meets are declared.

“You see, sir,” said a yeoman friend at the station, “it ’ud never deu to hev a vast o’ fowk come trailing oop beck sides and river banks at sic a time as thissen. Seed-corn already startit grawin’, and a lock of ley-gurse (meadow grass) to be kep’ quiet for the mowing. As it is, otter-hounds stops off for ley-gurse mowing.”

I did see, and confess that the comparative quiet gained by the fact that the chosen ones who followed the hunt were few, added not a little to the rich enjoyment of the morning.

“Theer’s anudder thing as maks for a sma’ hunt,” said a sportsman as we stood together on the platform. “Otters is few—excep’ for bloodin’ young dogs we’re not particular to killin’ them—and if there’s a gay lock o’ fowk oot t’ hunds, and there’s a drag, otter hesn’t a chance, ye kna.”

We were soon talking over otters’ ways and otter-hound characteristics with the huntsman. A dark-eyed man was he, dressed in blue cloth

with silver buttons whose sign was an otter, and who wore knee-breeches, and was evidently made for the 'running huntsman's' game. He was no salaried whip, but just a friend of the Master of the Hounds, who in the Master's absence took control.

I learned from him that both otters and otter-hounds were on the increase. There are now in the Lake District and its confines four packs—Kendal, Cockermouth, Carlisle, and Egremont.

As for the hounds, there are ten where there were two twenty years ago; and if only the rivers could be kept pure from poison, so that fish would multiply, there need never come the time when otters should be scarce.

Only a few weeks since otters had been seen at the mouth of the Keswick town sewer, and otters had been tracked by their 'prints' as the spoor is called, up the River Bure we were going to hunt to-day, and also on the sides of Thirlmere Lake, within the past few days.

"But what about the hounds and the size of the packs?"

"They vary. We," said my friend, "hunt with as few dogs as we can; six to eight couples are quite enough. If you have more the otter has too little chance. As to breed—well, there is the pure otter-hound first and

foremost, and then we have strains between fox-hounds and blood-hounds. I generally draft into the pack some of the older, slow-going, safe old fox-hounds from the neighbouring fox-hound pack. You will see all the varieties when we empty our horse-box at Threlkeld presently. As for terriers, we generally take with us an old British breed—a Dale breed, as it is called—the Ulpha and Patterdale rough-haired terrier is of the hardiest. No one seems to know its origin about here. Crib! Crib!” and up jumped from under the seat as good a specimen of an ancient Briton as might be seen among dogs.

Colour—a kind of American walnut; thicker set than most of the wire-haired English terriers I had seen.

“‘Crib’ is a caution,” said a gentleman beside my friend. “He houses with the doctor all the year, won’t look at me when I meet him any time between mid-August and now, but I send down for him the night before we throw off for the season. He knows all about it, and nothing will induce him to leave me till after hunting is done.”

“When is it done?” I asked.

“Oh, as soon as it gets too hot and water gets low—mid-August or September.”

“And when does it begin?”

“As soon as it gets warm enough for the dogs to face the water,” replied my friend. “This is an early start. We are often unable to go to the rivers till June, but this season is mild—no snow water in the rivers—and so we are going to our first meet now, in the second week of May.”

“But have you no close time for otters?”

“No; they don't need it. They have cubs at all seasons, so far as we can learn, and so that does not enter into our account.”

“What kind of state of water in the rivers do you like best for your hunting?”

“Oh, neither too low nor too high. We are oft-times forced to give up hunting in a dry season because of the shallows. An otter, unless he has depth beneath him, is at much disadvantage. And the fact is, that the otter is ‘game’ whose life is too valuable to us to be sacrificed easily, for otters never seem to have more than two cubs, and appear to breed only in alternate years.”

“What time,” I asked, “do you usually like to meet?”

“We used to meet at five, and half-past five, in the morning; but the scent is so tearing hot at that hour that we have found it best policy,

and for the sake of the otter's chances altogether better, to meet a couple of hours later, when the scent is colder."

As he said this the train drew up with a 'girr' at Threlkeld Station.

What a picture of a meeting-place it was! Here, where Thorold of old—whose mere the thirsty Manchester folk will never drink dry—pastured his flock, and drank of the 'keld,' or cold spring from the Blencathra's height; here, where in later time that shepherd lord grew up amongst Thorold's descendants and learned "love in the huts where poor men lie"—he "whose daily teachers were the woods and rills"—did not he, bethink you, on just such an exquisite morn of May, stroll, crook in hand, among the flowery meadows either side the Bure, startle the heron and flush the sand-piper, and watch with wonder the otter at his feast?

Yet, as one gazes from the vast buttresses of dark Blencathra—Blencathra "that many-bosomed hill," so the Greeks would have called it—to look south and east upon Helvellyn's side, one goes in thought on this our hunting morn, to the shepherd lords of an earlier day, to hunters of an older time. For there, up above the quarries below the ruddy

Wanthwaite Scree, there lie the remnants of the huts of primeval men, who, for aught we know, trained dogs of just such breed as to-day shall hunt for 'game' by the river banks they haunted and the river banks they loved.

Certainly about these otter-hounds there is a most primeval look, thought I, as with a yelp the motley pack came tumbling out of their horse-box. I expect these animated doormats, for so these otter-hounds seemed, were just the kind of cross between a stag-hound and a blood-hound that would be needed to press the game through a bethicketed England in the hunters' days of yore.

Gazing at the pack we set aside the old fox-hound stagers, and our eyes fell on what seemed to be blood-hounds. These blood-hound pups were in reality out of a pure otter-hound by a shaggy father, whose father had been crossed with a blood-hound, and had thrown back into the blood-hound strain. Yet the Master of the Hunt assured me that the same mother and father had presented the world with hirsute hounds, and he doubted not that in all but the rough coat these pups were otter-hounds indeed, and that their children would return to long-coated-dom.

We certainly got a good idea of the otter-hound build by seeing these smooth-haired

gentlemen, for the otter-hound in his long-haired suit defied eye-measurement. The otter-hound shaggy seemed a constant surprise to me. His heavy coat gave him a heavy look, which, however, belied him. Once in movement one saw his litheness.

Dark of muzzle, back and tail, his ears and haunches, belly and legs were ochrey yellow, and when, as was frequent during the hunt, a hound dashed up the bank and rolled upon the grass, one could hardly for the moment think that this yellow, brightly-shining beast was the dark-haired, sombre creature seen below in the shallows just now.

We threw off the eight couples and a half, and soon found that our field was a small one—not more than a dozen men at the outside. There was, of course, among these, the yeoman whose farm we had first entered, and the retired gamekeeper, who knew where the otter was last seen.

“Want-thet’s handkercher’s folding up,” said a man at my side; “it will fair yet.” And as he spoke a light veil of cloud on Wanthwaite’s crags seemed caught up by invisible hands and passed out of sight.

Now we gained the river what scents were in the air! The birches just putting into leaf were

fragrant as with paradisaal odours; the bird-cherries poured out their honey perfume; larks filled the air with song; cuckoos cried as it seemed from every naked ash and budding oak. And oh! the flowers. First over carpets of anemone, then through little strips of pearly wood-sorrel we went. At every bank primroses were sweet, and in the open meadows here and there in beautiful isolation orchids bloomed. Such marigolds, too, gleamed in the soughs! such cuckoo-flowers freckled the grass! such blackthorn blossom whitened the hedges! Shundra was passed; Hollin Farm, fairly veiled in plum and cherry blossom, was now upon our left.

The silent hounds cast up the bank, not keeping close to the water, but spreading over the grass within 60 or 100 yards, then making for the water again. At last there was a sound of music, and Ringwood, the shaggiest of the doormats on four legs, put his feet well upon a projecting bit of boulder-stone by the bank, and, lifting up his head, seemed baying to the sun.

In an instant the whole pack gathered and gave tongue, and then all was silent again.

“Cush, they’ve spokken till her,” said a man, “happen, and it ’ill be lang eneuf afore they spek agean.”



It was 'lang eneuf.'

But that note of music marvellously possessed us, and the fact of an otter's existence in this old valley of St. John's seemed to make the valley doubly interesting.

We scrambled down to the water's edge, and saw among the many 'footings' of the hounds who were not scouring away up stream a queer-looking footmark; a creature half-goose, half-cat, we would have said, had been there. It was the otter's 'print,' as it is called, and up stream we hurried.

Hilltop was passed, whitely shining on our left—such an ideal spot for a farm. Ah! here the weary Londoner might rejoice, thought we, to find the May dawn break above his head at such a valley homestead. Lowthwaite Farm, quite as enchanting, stood in its rustic loveliness beneath Helvellyn's side a little farther on. The hunters paused. For after crossing the road that leads up Naddle to St. John's School and Chapel, the River Bure runs into a noble horseshoe of liquid silver, and we watched the dogs cast and recast, speak and be silent from point to point all round the emerald meadow.

Music here and music there ;  
Music, music everywhere.

Yes, and music of a very different order floats wondrously upon the bird-cherry-scented fragrant moving air as the wind from the south drifts the sound of the bleating of the lambs from Naddle Fell. For there, as we cross another road and pass into the fields, where the vale seems to grow more narrow, and the river turns and glides west right under Naddle, some stepping-stones placed strongly in mid-current give to the river just the kind of natural harp the clear stream loves to twang.

But not with river melody nor the chiming of the hounds are our ears filled, for by a solemn yew tree, and overshadowed with tall dark pines and budding poplar trees, there stands beside the bank beneath the hill a very simple Cumberland cottage, 'four eyes, a nose, and a mouth' upon its white face in shape of dark windows, porch, and open door.

That cottage has sent forth songs that will not die—songs born of sympathy with simple men and solemn nature.

There, till lately, dwelt a kind of Isaac Walton among men—a village schoolmaster; one who himself was ever at school, learning what streams and winds and flowers in this beloved vale might tell him of high thought, and gathering from the words and faces of his yeoman

friends the deeper melodies that make our common life a psalm so that even angels desire to listen thereunto.

Truly, as long as men know what pathos is, they will, as they read Richardson's *Cumberland Tales and Other Poems*, be glad that the River Bure sang sweetly at yon humble threshold, and of these stepping-stones made so rich a harp for his hearing.

"I dunnet kna," said a yeoman friend, "much about potry and sec like, but I kenned many and many of the men as he put down in verse. You couldn't be off kennin' them. It was o' t' vara life, his mak' of potry; ye kna naw nonsense nor nowt, but just to t' life—to t' vara life. But what thar, dogs is at wark; otter ull happen be in one of the soughs twixt here and Fellside."

Away we went, splashing through the wet ground, leaping the soughs full of rich golden light from the thousand mary-buds that had inlaid them, till suddenly Ringwood laid nose to ground and broke away from the bank, and in a moment the dogs seemed to have forgotten all about the windings of the liquid Bure, and to have gone mad across the meadow towards Helvellyn's side.

"Didn't I tell ye sae?" said the gamekeeper, and after them we scurried.

Away across the meadows to the road beyond the wood and to the rocks. We had run the otter to earth—nay, we had run it to rocks; and such a 'beald' it was that all the 'Cribs' in the world could never have stirred his ottership from there.

So back we came, and up the stream we went through the meadow haze; the cushats cooed sadly from the 'Fornside' larch wood, the sandpipers flitted with sharp and piteous complaining hither and thither; but we were as light-hearted as boys, old men and grey though some of us were. Over the bridge we passed along under Naddle, through Low-Bridge-End Farm byre, and the men ran out and joined us, and the dogs barked and shrank back into the house. Presently the leading hound cast among huge boulders on our left, opposite the Manchester Waterworks gauge-house.

"Game's afoot," shouted a yeoman. "Didn't I tell ye sae?" said the gamekeeper; and all the hearts beat faster as upon the terrace path towards Smethwaite, or Smith-thwaite 'Brig' we went.

I doubt if Sir Walter Scott ever saw the Castle Rock he speaks of in the *Bridal of Triermain* in greater glory than to-day, in the pleasant May light, the chinks upon the

natural bastions emerald green, the castle walls gleaming as if the wandering sun had found that here was rest and peace at last. The little white houses of Legburthwaite, called "The Green," shone out as if they had gathered beneath the castle hold for sweet security, and could laugh in their peace and hearts' content. The moist fields between the Castle Rock and the Howe were just cloth-of-gold with the mary-buds; and as we neared the bridge all travellers know, we could see beneath the woods on the Howe, as yet not fully leaved, a veil of white anemone, woven, it seemed, into a lucent damask, and broidered with rich parsley fern.

Like a star upon the deep-brown amber of the stream (for there had been rain in the night and the pools were discoloured) flashed by a water-ousel, and settling on a stone, ducked and curtsied, and showed us her little white bib and tucker over and over again, as she bobbed and bobbed her salutation to us.

"Otter's noway n'ar if Bessie Doucker's about," said a yeoman. "Bessie's vara shy of much disturbance, whether of man or beast."

"Bessie Doucker!" I said. "What in the name of fortune is Bessie Doucker?"

"We ca' them dippers Bessies hereabout;

they git Bessie Doucker and nowt else," my friend replied.

"But whist! That's Ringwood, he's hit drag, he has howivver! and seest tha' he's gaaing reet across owr for Helvellyn Beck theeraway." The yeoman was right; we dashed down to the river bank, and how we got across the Bure is more than I mind. Soon we were knee-deep in marigolds, splashing away for the beck that flows down from Brour Cove Crag, and leaves the smithy beneath the Howe that Wordsworth's 'rosy-cheeked schoolboys' have made immortal, and makes a straight course by ash and sycamore tree to join the Bure just the low side of Smethwaite Bridge.

The otter had been too swift for the hounds. A splash down stream, a flash of a brown body that looked like a seal's cub, a cat, a beaver, and gigantic water-vole in one, was all I saw; and away the hunt—dog, man, otter-hound, terrier, yeoman, gamekeeper, huntsman, and whip—tore down the beck towards the river.

I made for the bridge—the most picturesque, but the worst bridge for its particular purpose between Keswick and Windermere. Who does not know that bridge?—how many hearts have leapt into how many mouths as to the cry of "Sit hard, gentlemen!" the coachy has dashed

at the narrow, crooked, low-parapeted viaduct, and gone with a crack of his whip at a hand gallop up the steep pitch beyond.<sup>1</sup>

Running round I stood on a kind of miniature escarpment beneath a long-tasselled flowery poplar, and saw the hounds dive into the dark pool, struggle up against the stream, then turn, and with their mouths full of water-stifled music, allow themselves to be swept back to the bank.

Then a fleck of silver whiteness rose under the bridge, and a cry of "Forrard on!" came through the archway, and the dogs dashed and swam on forward, and their melody died away. I stayed on the bridge, with good view of the river pools either side, and scarce had the hounds owned the drag in the meadow below Bridge-End House, and seemed to be going away beyond the stepping-stones and the tiny-arched upper bridge in the direction of Raven Crag and the Thirlmere thickets, than I noticed bubbles rise—'beaded bubbles,' not 'winking at the brim,' but breaking in long line across the still backwater of the current. Another moment, and a shadowy something that seemed

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written, a new bridge has been built at this spot, and travellers have gained security though they have lost the picturesque.

almost like a black fish—might have been a seal—shot through the pool, and a brown body, swift as light, hustled along under the overhanging brow of the bank, and with a flop dived into the pool higher up.

I confess I had no heart to halloo for the hounds; my sympathies were with the 'game.' It was, as one analysed one's feelings after, not the chance of being in at the death of an otter that had brought one out into the glories of a May dawn, but the chance of a sight of one of these ancient dwellers from primitive times in the old valley of St. John's.

And doubly serene did great Helvellyn seem, and the Naddle Fells shone out in sweeter beauty, as back by the rippling Bure and the otter's 'beald' among the rocks near Low Bridge we passed with certainty of that otter's safety. Thence we turned by Fornside and the Green, and went along under Castle Rock to the quaint old farm upon the fellside known as Stanah.

There, where the water leaps down from Helvellyn's shoulder in ceaseless cataract, and sends upward such rainbows that the miners, as they pass up the zigzag path hard by the ghyll to go to their work at Glenndding mines on the Monday morning, are more



than comforted, we too found comfort and guid cheer for a time.

As we sat and cracked on over our 'few poddish' in a cosy old kitchen, and enjoyed a downright good 'rust,' as the saying is, in the easy-chair, the farm lad came in to tell us that "dogs had spoken till anudder otter, and gone gaily weal intil middle o' lake efther it." But lack of boats on Thirlmere had frustrated the hunters' aims, and with some reluctance the hounds had been recalled by way of Dalehead Pasture, and were now going down road to Threlkeld. I sauntered out, and followed down the Vale of St. John's homewards and stationwards, "in silent thankfulness that still survives."

I confess the freshness of the morning and all the first excitement of the chase had passed away. The day was much more ordinary in its general appearance now. I had seen skies bend just as sweetly over Naddle Fell; Blencathra had seemed a hundred times before as full of witchery and shadow. Yes; there is a difference between the ways of sun and air at seven o'clock of a May morning and at noon for us slug-a-beds that words cannot describe.

But as home we trudged, with the pack twinkling along the dusty road before us, we

blessed the otter and the hounds for that sense of "all the beauty of a common dawn" they had been the means of giving us; blessed them for glimpses of dewy meadow-lands and May morning joy in an enchanted vale, and vowed to meet the huntsman at his favourite haunt, Oozebridge, below Lake Bassenthwaite, at the earliest hour of the earliest day the Master of the Hounds should next appoint.

## MERRY MAY-TIME AT THE LAKES.

WHEN will people understand that the times of the year to visit our English Lakes are spring and autumn? When will they remember that our hills are never so full of expression as when powdered with the first October snow, and that our dales are never so sweet with colour of copse and leafage as in the merry month of May? I have been walking to-day up the Newlands valley, with Wordsworth's poem in my mind, wondering at the comparative quiet of the streamlets, marvelling at the beauty of the fresh larch and the greening hedgerows, delighting in the patches of colour already visible in the gardens of the poor—if, indeed, it may be said that there are any poor amongst the happy republic of shepherds that people the Newlands valley,—but specially noting the exquisite colour of the grey-blue mountain heads as seen through the half-fledged boughs and delicate trceries of the trees that are dark

against them. With what inevitable eye did the poet, as he walked hither in 1826, see all this and more, when he wrote the last three verses of the poem which begins

“ Though many suns have risen and set  
Since thou, blithe May, were born—

“ Lo ! Streams that April could not check  
Are patient of thy rule,  
Gurgling in foamy water-break,  
Loitering in glassy pool.  
By thee, thee only, could be sent  
Such gentle mists as glide,  
Curling with unconfirmed intent,  
On that green mountain's side.

“ How delicate the leafy veil  
Through which yon house of God  
Gleams 'mid the peace of this deep dale,  
By few but shepherds trod !  
And lowly huts, near beaten ways,  
No sooner stand attired  
In thy fresh wreaths than they for praise  
Peep forth, and are admired.

“ Season of fancy and of hope,  
Permit not for one hour  
A blossom from thy crown to drop,  
Nor add to it a flower !  
Keep, lovely May, as if by touch  
Of self-restraining art,  
This modest charm of not too much,  
Part seen, imagined part !”

As one rambles down by the Newlands Beck, the wandering voice of the cuckoo—half distant bleat, half bell—is heard from the hillside. It is the 2nd of May, and there goes the first swift I have seen this year, screaming with delight as the dark arrow-head flies across the blue. That tiny voice, with its quavering treble that one hears in the larch, is the chiff-chaff; he has been here a fortnight, and every day seems to have added to his exultation. It is midday, and the only other voice I hear is the deep contented alto of the blackbird; the thrushes sang their hearts out at four o'clock this morning; we shall not hear them again in full song till the sky over the Wythop fells is charged with saffron and the long lingering twilight of the west fades into the green light which the first star loves to peep from. But what colour there is upon the hills; no longer blanched and white with the rains of April, no longer tawny as the great yellow-maned Helvellyn was tawny in February and March, but delicate lilac mixed with tenderest russet—such is the strange painting of May upon our Cumberland fell-sides. One seems to see her at her work; she has not mixed her colours to her mind; she seems uncertain whether to add more of cobalt or less of ochre to her mighty

palette ; only of one thing she is sure, that the rainbows of April should be immortalised, and as one gazes upon the sown fields in mid-valley, with their springing corn, one almost feels that these rainbows of April have sunk into the ground and become its permanent possession.

Still upon the far heights of Blencathra and Skiddaw lingers a wreath of snow ; and genial almost as midsummer as the air is, any shepherd you meet will shake his head and say, "Theer ull likely be mair til last bit o' snaw's awaay." But only a shepherd on such a day as this could dream that winter would return. "Summer is a-coming in, loudly sings cuckoo." The last daffodils are failing in their dance, and all the valley is filled with that tender humming of the bees which makes one assured that winter is over and gone. The skies above our heads are cloudless and azure pale ; the lake at our feet is still as a mirror.

The sun is westering now, and the poplars against the cobalt blue mountain-side stand up like towers of gold. In the woods the birches seem like fountains of emerald, and the wild cherry in silver beauty of flower gleams against the russet and amber of the budding oak. The sycamores shine in first leafage as if their

foliage were clear glass. Only the ash is sullenly leafless still, her bare branches white almost as giant sea corals. In the gardens the laurel is breaking into its feathers of flower, the wild clematis is tufting all its quaint dry woody growth with green, the last red tulip shells are cast away, the last red anemones are fading, but the forget-me-not and the wallflower are in full beauty, and the gardener is sweeping the daisies into a heap of scented snow. What seems to strike one most on this May day is the waywardness of the trees. Here as I sit, returned from my Newlands walk, I cannot see Glaramara for the leafy veil that one lime tree has hung between me and the distance, whilst through a neighbour lime tree the sun and shadow of Hindsgarth and Robinson are as fully revealed as they were on a winter's day. Across the road a horse-chestnut is in full fresh leafage, and its flower torches will soon be lit; but I know another horse-chestnut in the valley whose glumes are scarcely yet unsealed.

And now has come the enchanted hour when the May day at the English lakes seems most bewitching. The sun has dropped beneath the hills. It sends its glory from the bur-nished Solway sea to light the zenith and to cast reflected beauty upon the evening fells.

Helvellyn, pale lilac through the day, now glows like pink opal. The woods and meadows in the nearer foreground become grey purple and cobalt. Far off on the distant hills patches of sunlight seem to be a perpetual benison; these really are but the russet patches of fern lit by the after-glow. It will be some time before the stars appear, for there is no such long twilight as ours in May; but over Helvellyn, like a pale ghost, the full May moon is just risen, and she will have sailed well into middle-heaven before the golden glow has faded out of the west and star-time has begun. Here as one sits in the mellow light of coming eventide the last rooks caw and pass contented to their rest, a pigeon churrs from a neighbouring lime; all else, except for distant rumbling of a wheel and the far-off sound of Greta, is still. Now a bat wheels out, dark against the white grey sky, and suddenly, as if by premeditated concert, all the thrushes and all the blackbirds of the Vicarage hill begin their evening hymn. I know not what it is about that May-tide requiem, but one always feels put to shame for one's thanklessness, and thinks those birds are very near to Heaven. The old monkish saying "Ubi aves, ibi angeli," "Where the birds are, there are the angels," was probably the



result of just such feeling. The monks who went to vespers with unwilling feet were struck with the spontaneity of this outpouring of evening praise by the birds whose day, for all its joy, had been so laborious a one ; perhaps they too were ashamed at the contrast, and confessed that the feathered singers had a message for their souls. But the birds sing on, and as the twilight deepens it seems almost that their song becomes more exultant. To them the night-time is the time of fear. They know better than man how much the gift of sunshine and the dawn has been to them, and if they should never see another morning, never again pass forth for food and labour till the eventide, at least they will give great thanks to the Giver for the joy of this May-day, and bid all who hear them know that they are not ashamed to praise.

And now as suddenly as the chorus began, again as if by some mutual agreement, their voices cease. Purple dark now are the Borrowdale hills ; grey-white is the level of Derwentwater ; a veil of mist, unseen before, possesses all the woodland on Catbels ; the sound of Greta at the weir grows upon the quiet air, the faint thunder of the last train to the west passes away, a field gate closes with

tender sound of labour ended, an owl hoots from the neighbouring grove, and the first corncrake crakes from the meadows beneath, the strange little conjurer running from his own voice. How ceaselessly does this happy ventriloquist call for a mate! It is half-past nine; stars are not yet here, but the moon has begun to cast its shadows. Starlight or moonlight, what cares he?—he has but one desire, and that is fellowship; and all that one may hope for is that ere the dawn he shall hear another voice in another meadow, hear it and rejoice.

Glad as was the early morning when, from four to five o'clock, the air was shaken with the sound of birds delirious almost for the coming of the May-day sun, I am not sure but that the sweetest hour of the glad May-day is this hour of twilit eventide, when only the bat wheels and the owl hoots and the corncrake calls from the meadow.

## THE GRASMERE RUSHBEARING.

“Where is the stranger? Rushes, ladies, rushes,  
Rushes as green as Summer for the stranger!”

—Beaumont and Fletcher.

THE strangers were not very far to seek, they were gathered in a great multitude; and the rushes were close by in the old church of St. Oswald, for this was the Saturday in August within the octave of the Feast of St. Oswald to whom the Grasmere Church is dedicate.

There were rushes on the retable, rushes in the aisles, rushes and mountain heather garlanded the altar rails, rushes and moss hid from sight the ancient font, and the breath of roses and lilies and fern made sweet the air.

But I left the old church with its roof-rafters ‘intricately crossed,’ for the sound of the happy children, round the Maypole in the field hard by, called me, and the music of the quaint old country dances in the meadow touched the

stranger's heart. I had noticed that in the programme it was stated that at 5.50 p.m. there would be an adjournment for the 'Burden-bearing'; that at 6 there would be "Rush-bearings on the church wall." I was determined to see what it all meant. The games in the Rectory field ceased. Tea was the silencer of children voices, but the silence was not for long. At about 5.30 the young people came from the field, went off to their homes or to the school, and were soon seen bringing down to the church the 'Rushbearings' or 'Burdens,' of which the programme spoke. They came up; they placed one by one their flowery burdens on the wall, devices wonderfully wrought. Here stood a harp, there a cross; here a star of marigolds and oats, there another of yellow pansies with red flowers in the centre; there a shield of moss with a rich cross worked in geranium upon it; here a wreath of pure whiteness, there another of rose and heather. One hundred and forty-eight children and one hundred and forty-eight burdens, but the prettiest 'burden' of all was a child itself. For there in a little bassinette perambulator wreathed round with fern and lilies lay a mite of a babe. I think it was the local florist's little son, smiling and cooing and enjoying the

golden sunshine, and almost half conscious that no Rushbearing Festival could be complete without him. But one's archaeological mind was appealed to as well as the heart that we all have for happy childhood; for there by the churchyard wall an aged dame stood by the side of an ark of bulrushes in which lay a wooden doll. She seemed to speak almost with reproach in her tone that any stranger should be so foolish as not to know that this was "Moses in the bulrushes," "for she hed browt this burthen for forty year or mair to the church wall, and why, what she hed thowt ivvery body in Girmsere kenned Moses when they seed him in the Ark, as weel as th' sarpint in wilderness on the pole hard by. I'deed her Moses was a deel mair like Moses, than sarpint was like sarpint, as fwoks wi' two eyes cud see."

But there was no general movement. What was the procession waiting for. Waiting for? Why, for the most important feature of the whole Floralia to be sure. Away there beyond the wrestling field and across the meadows has the brass band gone to 'late' the "Rushes in the Sheet." And as my informant speaks I hear the sound of music, and up the road from the Wray comes as pretty a little group as I

have ever seen. Four village children clad in hand-spun linen frocks with green sashes, bearing between them a fair linen sheet, which is also be-ribanded at the corners, and in it a 'burden' of the sweet rushes, which is to take the place of honour in the procession, and lead us round the village to the Church of St. Oswald.

At 6.30 the whole village which had come to see, formed itself into a procession. Tall standards of rushes flanking the banner of St. Oswald headed the procession. The clergy followed, and behind them came the band. The children claiming each their 'burden' from the church wall took their places, and so to sound of the time-honoured local march, said to have been the invention of an old fiddler variously spoken of as Jimmy or Billy Dawson, the whole gay multitude moved off up to Bell's corner, round by the Red Lion, out again into the road, round by Dale Lodge, and so to Church. Then a halt was called, and at a sign from the village schoolmaster the whole procession broke into voice, and to such sweet sound as might well have wakened Wordsworth in his place of rest, the Rushbearing hymn floated out over the bridge and over the graves and down the river Rotha murmuring by, and I

could not but think of how many, now silent beneath the grass, had in the olden time taken part in this festal service and sung their festal song—for the hymn had been written for the Ambleside Rushbearing by Owen Lloyd, or as he was better known in his day hereabout, by “Lile priest Owey, him o’ Langdale,” in 1835.

The hymn ceased, and the children entered the church; each left the ‘burden’ in its appointed place, and an evensong began. I had written a simple little hymn for the service, which was sung with great heart. It runs as follows :

To-day we come from farm and fell,  
Wild flowers and rushes green we twine,  
We sing the hymn we love so well,  
And worship at S. Oswald’s shrine.

The Rotha streams, the roses blow,  
Though generations pass away,  
And still our old traditions flow  
From Pagan past and Roman day.

Beside the church the poets sleep,  
Their spirits mingle with our throng,  
They smile to see the children keep  
Our ancient feast with prayer and song.

For saintliest king and kingliest man  
To day our ‘burdens’ glad we bear,  
Who with the cross Christ’s war began  
And sealed his dying wish with prayer.

We too have foes in war to face,  
Not yet our land from sin is free,  
Lord, give us of Saint Oswald's grace  
To make us kings and saints to Thee.

Our garlands fall, our rushes fade,  
Man's day is but a passing flower ;  
Lord, of Thy mercy send us aid  
And grant Thy life's eternal dower.

After the short service the children filed out of church, and the last item of importance on the programme was gone through, the distribution of gingerbread. Somehow or other Grasmere Churchyard is associated with gingerbread, for hard by the northern lych gate stands the famous bakery whose chimney has for half a century been redolent of Mrs. Nelson's famous 'mak,' and from the oldest times wherein is record of Grasmere Rushbearing, the end of the Festival has been associated with distribution of gingerbread at St. Oswald's Church door.

"Rushes as green as summer for the stranger!" Ah, yes, this Grasmere Rushbearing has rushes that, in the memory of those who shall ever see it, will be evergreen. You sometimes say you don't care a rush, you will never say so again if you go to the Grasmere Rushbearing. There is wrestling to-night in



the Red Lion field. A revival of the old way of bringing the feast to an end. But you say you are a stranger and want to know about the origin of the custom. Lean, then, with me on the church bridge in the long lingering twilight of this quiet Saturday night, and I will tell you as much as I know of the history of this ancient village festival.

The custom of Rushbearing may or may not have been a relic of the Roman Floralia. It appears to have been at anyrate adopted by the early church as a village holiday, and when the dedication festival of the church fell in summer the Rushbearing was made a means not only of remembering the patron saint of the village but of renewing the very necessary floorcloth of the churches. The floors of many of our churches were in pre-Reformation times soil, and though wood or pavement was introduced after the Reformation it was not till intra-mural burial ceased that it became general.

Readers of Bishop Nicholson's *Miscellany Account of the Diocese of Carlisle* will note that he constantly alludes to the unevenness of the earth flooring of the churches owing to this craze for intra-mural sepulture. Take one instance. He is speaking of Crosthwaite Parish Church, under date September 15, 1703,

and he says: "The body of the church is very uneven in its pavement, occasioned by the frequent burying there, and the little (or no) care that's taken by those who break the ground to put the floor into the same order wherein they found it." A search in the registers will show that with an average of sixty burials per year, about thirty parishioners were buried annually within the four walls of that old church of St. Kentigern.

Rushes then were very necessary, not only for warmth to the feet of the worshipper, but for sweet scent for his nose, and thus we find that in olden time, as for example in the Norwich Cathedral, the rush that was sought after was the sweet-scented flag, 'Acorus Calamus,' which, when bruised, emits the fragrance of myrtle flower. It is remarkable to find that the custom of Rushbearing has remained to us longest in this diocese in association with some of our oldest church dedications. Thus, until a year or two ago, it was associated with the village church of St. Theobald, at Great Musgrave. It is found at St. Columba's Church at Warcop. It is found at St. Oswald's Church at Grasmere, and is associated with the name of St. Anne at Ambleside.

I cannot hear that Rushbearing exists at Hughill, Thwaites, or Grassgarth, where the name of St. Anne is had in honour. Nor can I discover why at Ambleside, originally a chapelry of St Oswald's, Grasmere, whose present church is dedicated to St. Mary, there should be, as there undoubtedly is, a determination to keep the Rushbearing on the Saturday nearest St. Anne's Day. As little is it possible to ascertain why at St. Oswald's, Grasmere, the Rushbearing should not have taken place on or near St. Oswald's Day until recently. Perhaps in pre-Reformation times it did so take place, but when, by Act of Convocation passed in Henry VIII.'s reign, in 1530, the feast of all church dedications was ordered to be kept on the first Sunday in October, it is possible the St. Oswald's Church Rushbearing was made an autumnal feast or kind of harvest-thanksgiving. In Clarke's time—the county historian, who gives us the earliest record of the Grasmere Rushbearing, 1780-1827—the Rushbearing is spoken of as taking place in the autumn. Then the rushes were carried to the church; after 1827 they were simply carted to the church. But when in 1840 the church was floored with wood the carting was discontinued, and only the 'burdens' were retained.

It is probable that the date of Rushbearing in Grasmere on the Saturday nearest the 20th of July governed the date of the Rushbearing at the Ambleside chapelry, which always took place on the Saturday following the last Saturday in July. It was not till 1885 that the Rushbearing at Grasmere was moved forward to a Saturday in August, within the octave of St. Oswald's Day; and while we wonder how it was that the 20th of July was fixed on, as in olden time in the Grasmere vale, as a day of honour, it is allowed us to conjecture either that it was fixed on the Saturday nearest to it because of some great tribal battle in olden time at the Raise, or some tradition of the Floralia which the Romans who made the 'street' to Pavement-end inaugurated; or, as is more probable, that the village festival was determined by the fact of the sheep-shearing and sheep-gathering having been completed, and the other quite as important fact that the shepherds would have breathing space to go to the fells and collect the 'sieves' or rushes for the purpose of the strewing of the church floor. Tradition tells us that one Daniel Mackereth, the church clerk, did go round to the yeomen and innkeepers in the week previous to the Saturday nearest July 20,

and severally remind them "that time hed coomed round agean for gethering of sieves for t'ald church, and that they mud ga off t' fells and late them before next Satterday as ivver war."

Be that as it may, the date of the Rushbearing took place, till 1885, on the Saturday nearest July 20th in the Grasmere valley, and now takes place on the Saturday within the octave of St. Oswald's Day, which, according to the Saints' Calendar, is August 5th.

The idea of the old village Rushbearing feast having some connection with the Latin Floralia as suggested above, gains a little colour from the fact that at Warton, in Yorkshire, according to Whittaker in his *Richmondshire*, the Rushbearing Festival seems to have always been associated with Maypole dancing; indeed, there in the olden time the people bore their rushes to the Church of St. Oswald on the Sunday nearest August 1, and, leaving their bundles of rushes decked with crowns of cut paper and flowers in the church, went off straight to the Maypole, and spent the rest of the day in dances about it. This by the way.

It would be a most interesting thing if the notices of payment for the Rushbearing in

the Churchwardens' Accounts at the several churches in the diocese could be collected. So far, I hear only of one such notice. It appears that at Kirkby-Lonsdale, Rushbearing was a particularly thirsty job, for in the Churchwardens' Accounts there, it is recorded that "3s. was paid for drink for the rushbearings"; this in 1680. At Grasmere, if the money went in liquor, the churchwardens, so far as I know, said nothing about it; but Mr. Fuller, the schoolmaster, who kindly searched the registers, has traced back payments to the Rushbearers to 1689. "Ye Rushbearers 2s. 6d." is the form the entry takes from 1689 to 1830. In 1830 it reads, "Gingerbread for Rushbearers, 6s. 8d.," or "Cakes for Rushbearers, 9s. 4d." This continues till 1857, when it is to be supposed that some very strict overhauling of churchwarden expenditure, or some very searching question at Easter vestry, put an end to a custom from time immemorial, and a voluntary ginger-bread fund has since been in vogue at Grasmere, as at Ambleside.

At Grasmere up till 1885 there was in addition to the two-pennyworth of gingerbread for each Rushbearer a donation of 6d., the gift for forty-seven years of Mr. Thomas Dawson, late of Allan Bank. At the time of

the change of date from the Saturday nearest the 20th July to the Saturday of the octave of St. Oswald this gift was replaced by a children's tea, and the gingerbread still holds its place of honour. There appears to have been a chance of the annual Rushbearing procession being discontinued also in 1879, but this, largely owing to the public spirit of one of the parishioners who undertook to collect the necessary funds for the band and gingerbread, was prevented. And so the village feast, known to be more than 200 years old in the Grasmere vale—perhaps as old as the building of the first wattle church in the seventh century—has been preserved to us.

In 1886 closer return to olden time was made, for this year the 'alleys' or aisles were strewn with rushes, a practice that had been discontinued in 1841.

There is in Hone's *Table-book*, Vol. II., p. 277, a very interesting account of the Rushbearing under date July 21, 1828. The villagers were then found strewing the Church with rushes, the children were preparing garlands for the evening procession, which commenced at nine o'clock; Grasmere kept late hours then. The girls, headed by the union band, went through the village bearing

garlands ; the three largest of these were placed upon the altar. In the procession were noted De Quincey, Wordsworth and his wife, Dorothy Wordsworth and Miss Wordsworth. "Wordsworth," says the writer, "is the chief supporter of these rustic ceremonies." There appears to have been no service in the Church, but all adjourned to Mr. Jonathan Bell's hayloft and finished out the evening by 'jigging,' dancing they called it; the visitor called it 'thumping.' Old Billy Dawson was the officiating minstrel at this post-processional dance, and had filled the office for the past 46 years. Peace to his ashes. The Grasmere folk still think of him, for though Anthony Hall succeeded him as fiddler, the tune we marched to round the village in the year of grace, 1890, on Rushbearing day was not Anthony Hall's, it was Billy Dawson's march.

The Rushbearing ball broke up just before midnight on Saturday, July 21, 1828, in the prettiest way, for the Vicar's livery-servant entered Jonathan Bell's hayloft and delivered the following message to Billy the fiddler, "Master's respects, and will thank you to lend him the fiddle-stick." Billy took the hint, and the Sabbath morn was ushered in decently and quietly ; when the village clock struck twelve



not a soul was to be seen outside their doors in Grasmere village.

But it seems that there is at Grasmere some remnant of the Miracle Play still clinging to the Rushbearing. Moses in the bulrushes, the Serpent on a pole, are still made of reeds and flowers, and carried in procession; perhaps a hint of Miriam or David comes in, in the harp that is also borne among the burdens. Of old time four girls carried a white sheet decorated with ribands and cut paper, and filled with rushes or flowers. This may have had allusion to the vision of the sheet let down from Heaven and the opening of the door to the Gentiles, who can tell?

It was almost with a sense of personal loss in 1891, for the first time Moses was not seen in his bulrush cradle. The good dame who had all the years been looked upon as having a kind of monopoly of the privilege of contributing this relic of the mystery play in the Grasmere vale did not put in an appearance. One rejoices, however, to think that through the kindness of the Lady of the Wray and her daughters the 'fair linen sheet' of flaxen homespun has been reintroduced, and one of the prettiest sights we see now at the Rushbearing is the sight of the four little maidens clad in their

handspun and handwoven frocks, who bring their sheet of rushes from the Wray, across the sunny meadow, to the sound of the brass band playing before them, and who then take their place in the village procession and lead the way behind St. Oswald's banner to the quaint old parish church.

## NOVEMBER GLORY.

IT was the first hoar-frost of the year ; and, as the sky above Helvellyn grew into daffodil colour for the coming of the day, the vale and mountain slopes were seen as if the spirits of the starry night had spread finest lawn for their over-covering. Then a faint red flush upon Stybarrow Dodd changed into what seemed some giant beacon-fire. Suddenly the beacon-fire paled before a huge far-glittering lamp of clear gold fire ; the arc of fire became a perfect orb, and the Day-star had uprisen. The sky was cloudless, the lake a steel-grey mirror of perfect calm. The hills seemed to move from grey to lilac, the woodland gleamed, and the level lawns showed like silver washed with gold. Far off beyond Grisedale to the west delicate cloudlets newly born, as if by magic took on rosy wings and floated upward ; the robin broke to song, the rooks cawed lustily,

the farmyard chanticleers answered each other's greeting right cheerily, and the sun as it sailed upward seemed to say—"How good a thing it is to be alive!" All that was upon lake or fell echoed the Sungod's voice, only the old half-moon at the zenith was silent as she was sad.

The lake now began to steam from end to end, and the spirits of the waterflood wove themselves into level companies of veil-like beauty, and hung at first motionless, then, so slowly as to seem moveless went upward. The leaves rustled down as if they felt a summons from another world. The truth was, the leaf-stalk fetters of ice were unbound, and the leaves weighted with the night's hoar-frost fell from sheer excess of burden, in green and yellow to the ground. It was no day for even a leaf to fall without regret. A day to forget all care, and feel, upon the quiet fells and in the golden woods, the joy of being.

I wandered through the little town of the Vikings. "Grand daay noo is this," said the folk as they passed, by way of greeting. "Nivver a betther sin' I can mind on, for time o' year." So away we went to the most enchanting of easy upland walks, the crag of Walla the Dane. Meanwhile the mist-veils rose, and as we passed Castle Crag the sun

sent showers of light, like Jacob's ladders, through the gleaming trees. Thence to that lovely little woodland path by 'Springs' farm we strolled, and there heard music that went with us all the day. There is no sweeter sound than a full runnel in a hazel copse when all the woods are still, and this 'Springs' farm stream that comes from Rakefoot and the fells beyond, now loitering in its crystal pools, now racing down its tiny waterfalls, is such a changeling, and has so many voices, that one could be content to spend one's day beside it, interpreting its pretty babble. The hazels half green, half gold, the wild raspberries with their silver under-leaves, the oak trees changing into russet were around us, but they were a silent company; the air was so still that even a falling acorn made one look backward, and all the while the stream talked and sang us on the upward way. We gained open ground beyond the wood, and gazed upon a view unparalleled for beauty—the whole stretch of Derwentwater and its islands, with Walla and its woods to 'far Glaramara,' and mist-hidden Scafell. These islands, now in their painted beauty, lay like gorgeous galleys anchored far below, the smoke wreaths of Keswick's morning meal had died away, the mist had lifted, and far

away across the valley, Grisedale and Wythop's kindling woods glittered in the sun.

Now beyond this fair upland meadow with memories of Viking camp to the left, beyond the stream, with thought of the Roman causeway underfoot that led to 'the ridge of the castrum' (Castrigg), farther ahead, we passed on, and gained the Rakefoot 'lonning'; so entered the Fell enclosure, and breasted the slope that leads to the summit of Walla Crag. Away to the south lay the puce-coloured sooty-patched moorland, well-known of old to the aborigines who had their high-pitched village camp on Bleabury. Eastward, grey-lilac, rose the long back of Helvellyn upshouldering a white clear sky that changed to delicatest blue at the zenith. There, in the break, lay pale and misty the Pennine Range, and Blencathra and Skiddaw loomed up close with such a misty wonder in the air all about them, that they hardly seemed substantial presences. Nearer, like a crowd of old giants at their prayers, we saw the dark sun-circle where the British worshipped and the Norsemen judged in their doom ring, and for a moment the 'far-off vanished races' came back to life and rejoiced with us beneath the mellow sun.

We climbed the stile in the wall, and, led by

sundry notice boards that told us we might go thus far and no farther, plunged through soft peaty places and mossy undergrowth till we stood at Walla's brow. Then such a scene presented itself as beggars description. The little grey town seemed like an island in an emerald sea, and on that emerald sea lay other islands of many coloured wood. But this green island appeared to float between white skies, and one of those skies was Derwentwater lake, so absolutely tranquil that the heron that flapped across it seemed to be beneath the enchanted waterflood, and all the islands and its promontories floated double—you knew not which was Heaven and which was earth. But the wonder of the woodland far below us kept our eyes from wandering across the mere to Barrow, Newlands, and Catbels. No richer carpet was ever wove on oriental loom. The great bossy and billowy mass of forest upon whose tree-tops we looked down seemed a compact inlay of colour of all shades of russet brown, gold and green melting imperceptibly into one another, while here and there, as if some of the warp threads had not yet felt the leafy shuttle of the autumn colourist, stood grey and purple the leafless ash-trees gauzy fair. From under this wondrous carpet came

the call of a pheasant, above it flew swift companies of doves with silver wings. And far off I heard a solitary voice. The hounds had met at Walla Crag at dawn, and had long since passed upon their way up Borrowdale, but one had remained and was inconsolable. A white road came from beneath the forest, sinuously, and with lines of beauty it gleamed to Castle hill, and beyond it was swallowed up by the town. A great green meadow, with curving bays and with dark changeless clumps of fir and spruce, filled the interspace to the north, between the woodland and the lake. White as the heifers of Clitumnus, cows moved and called to one another upon the emerald carpet, and sheep made moving bracelets of themselves, strung and unstrung queer beaded necklaces as they fed in single line.

Now it seemed as we gazed that all Keswick was breathing blue smoke into the air. The Town clock struck twelve, it was the dinner hour. At the same time the great guns of the Threlkeld quarry thundered, and we knew that there too the workers had rest and mid-day meal. That sound of the dreary blast seemed to take the sunshine out of all the air, and the peace from all the scene, the wild cherries in

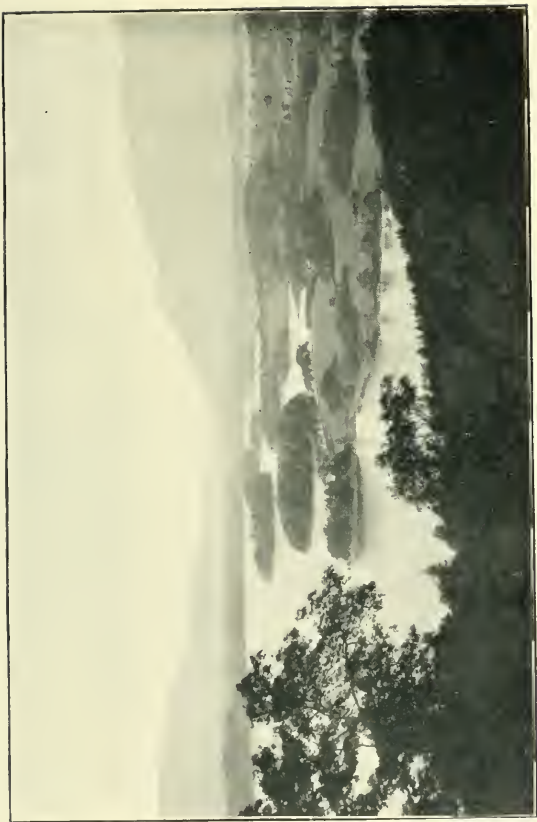


the great wood flushed as with blood, we heard behind the booming the sound of heavy guns away in the Transvaal, and we felt the sorrow and the horror of red war. Swiftly the deep peace of the landscape reasserted itself :

“ A day it was when I could bear  
Some fond regrets to entertain,  
With so much happiness to spare,  
I could not feel a pain.”

But we could not stay, and back over the wall into the open moorland we went, and the beauty of that carpet of wondrous tree-top foliage went with us. Out to the south the wonder of the fellside grew. Range behind range of delicate amethystine haze hills rose and faded into far depths of silvery distance. Gowder Crag, Ladder Brow, Grange Crag, Blea Crag, Glaramara, Great End, form beyond form, stood up in vaporous lustre of sun and shadow, while Derwent coiled from Castle Crag and Maiden Mawr to lose itself in placid Derwentwater. Near us the shoulders of Falcon Crag, all clad in russet, took the light, and gleamed against the grey purple of the upper moorland cliff. We might have turned and lazily descended by Cat Ghyll, and had talk in imagination there with Robert Southey and Sir Thomas More, but we were

anxious to get the view from above Falcon Crag of the great wood falling in rich curtain of splendour to the lake, so rounding the waterfall in its dark cleft that takes the song of all the fell round Lord's Seat away with it to the lake, I passed on to the white-blanchèd moorland at the back of Falcon Crag, and made for the one great holly tree that is left of that great company that one time shepherds cared so much for hereabout as green Christmas meat for their "holly muttuns." A buzzard circled like burning bronze between me and the sun, a raven croaked, all else was silence till crossing the boundary wall, and dropping down toward a yew tree by the Ashness stream, we stand once again in the tuneful presence of the garrulous child of mountain springs that there makes melody all the year. One sees in M'Whirter's sketches idealised pictures of "the lady of the woods," here hard by the talkative ghyll in all their autumn glory just such birches stood, and in such beauty of form as eyes, even in our birch-loving country, rarely behold. It seemed as if each gnarled silver stem had felt the weight of gold upon its branches, and with effort thrown itself backward and fell-ward and sun-ward to balance itself beneath its autumn load.



NOVEMBER GLORY AT THE LAKES.



We passed the stream, and climbing the grassy bank made straight for Ashness Farm. Down below us the road Mat. Arnold knew, and the bridge by which he sat when he mused on his poem, "Resignation," sloped from sun to the shadow of Barrow woods. There in the shimmering distance beyond the many-islanded Derwentwater lay

"far down,  
Capped with faint smoke the busy town,"

which when he wandered hither he had contrasted in his mind with the perfect calm and restfulness of the Armbboth Fells. Ashness Farm was passed, that white farm that always latest takes the light and gleams out like a burning jewel to the shepherds of the west—of Newlands and of Braithwaite—to tell them the sun still shines beyond their hills. It was to-day deserted, all the folk away in the potato field, but a cat lay on one side of the stone porch, and a dog on the other as guardians of the house, and the canariensis and the red and white fuchsias made as "there had been a lasting spring." To find these in full flower in November on the high fells makes one remember that, thanks to our neighbour the gulf-stream, the "isothermal" line that comes from

Plymouth Sound passes up through our Lake District, and dissipates at once all false notion of the severity of our winter climate at the lakes. The fact is, we have less snow and fog amongst our hills and valleys than in any part of England. The very day of our sunny walk the worst fog of the year perplexed London and troubled Manchester.

Now through meadows sweet with golden birch trees to a woodland full of all autumnal delight. The long-tailed tits whispered their way from larch to larch; the robins sang. A squirrel with his cheeks so crammed with acorns he could not scold or sputter at me leapt from bough to bough, and ever as we moved on, the rainbow lines of gossamer floated and were felt upon our faces. Notices warned us against leaving the high road under terrible penalties, but a footpath well-worn beckoned us off it to a seat which the proprietor of the wood had placed in days when no such warning was necessary. Thither, for it was luncheontide, we walked, but in an instant forgot all about luncheon in the feast for fancy and for soul that view point above the Barrow woods provided. Sheer down below us Derwent coiled backward, then ran forward, molten silver to the lake. About it almost flamed the sedges

and the reeds. Painted woods clothed the crags about Lodore, and the whole air was reverberent with the cheerful sound of the ceaseless waterfall. Right in front at our feet and abutting on the lake, but ringed with a fence of woodland gold, lay a green meadow, meadow famous in Viking history, for thither came Ketel the Dane, and there, by the spring that still bears his name, he, the first venturer—to whose coming we owe the name of Keswick to-day—made his home. What brought him hither, why did he leave his wyke by Friars' Crag and settle here? Was it not, think you, that his ears were full of homeland memories? The voice of the falling fosses or forces of his Norway firths called to him, and Lodore with friendly echo bade him stay.

Wood-pigeons made the live air sigh while they swept past or changed from grey to silver, as they fell like stones at sight of us. A heron clanged as he came across the lake in such company with his own shadow, you scarce could tell which was heron and which was shade, all else save for the humming of the waterfall was still. Across the lake beneath Catbels lay spread before us the beautiful woodland and falling meadows lately won for the nation's pleasure, the one only blot upon

the lovely scene were the gaunt and barren spoil heaps of the Brandelhow mine.

My friend asked me if nothing could be done to hide this nakedness, and my answer was that communications were at this moment being made with the Lord of the Manor, with a suggestion for such planting of it out as might be possible. But nothing can ever plant out the pain of heart that that disastrous mining at Brandelhow gave to dalesmen who risked their savings in the adventure. A monument of loss as well as utter disfigurement to the landscape Brandelhow must remain for many years to come.

Thence we fared forward, over a road made soft and hushed by the fallen tresses of the larch, and leaving the direct route for King Richard's Ville, "Istam Villam de Wat-end-de-land," which he willed away to Fountains Abbey three months before his death, we dropped down to our right hand outside the boundary wall of the wood, through fragrant scent of fading sweet-gale, and crossed the quiet pool whose waters flow over crysolite towards the leaping of the Lodore falls. Thence bending to the left beneath a bowery oak-tree shade, we passed out into sunlight under Blea Fell or Borrowdale Dodd, and began our descent to



that incomparable view of Derwentwater that shines between the aery gates of Ladder-brow and Lodore Crag. We had seen that view a hundred times before, but never in such a setting as to-day. Far off beyond the shining waters lay the sombre lilac mass of Skiddaw, melting as it descended to the Bassenthwaite plain into faint silvery mist, and out of the mist rose the woods of Wythop that grew in colour as they neared the hill of Grisedale and the group of Causey Pike. The little islands floated on the lake, the lake seemed floating upon a far flood of vaporous emerald. The fell-side, through the medium of the mist levels, seemed to float on this in turn. And all this unsubstantial wonderland was framed with burning gold of birch and larch inlaid radiantly upon a background of grey and silver and purple rock, that basked in fullest sun. A shepherd lay upon his back upon the warm heather-tufts as happy as a king, and now and then gave imperious command with wave of arm or staff to his dutiful subjects the dogs "latin'" sheep upon the further fell. "Hast a seen owt o't dogs," he cried, "they holed a fox at Whyfoot, a canny bit sen, I suppose." But we were hunting other things than foxes,—running the trail of many golden days at

Ladder-brow. We answered in the negative, dropped down by the zigzag into the Borrowdale road, and made the best of our way to Grange. Not without thought of the author of *Thorndale* could we so descend; beneath us lay the house wherein William Smith lived and loved till Death laid hands upon the passionate seeker of the truth.

As we approached the valley of the shadow, —for the sun had passed beyond Maiden Mawr and left the river like dull grey fluent steel to ripple onward through the double bridge—we marvelled at the contrast. There in the vale all was dark and dim; here, by light let through an intervening rift behind Grange Crag, the Combe, as it is called, or Troutbeck shone like dusky gold; while on the dusky gold, in exquisite amber, stood up the full-leaved birches rich and fair. The nasturtiums were still in full flower by the Grange cottage doors, as we turned from Keswick and home by Manisty and Brandelhow.

Suddenly the chiming of the mountain pack broke upon us. There was an intermittent cry, like creaking slate-cart wheels, mixed with the deep melodious baying as of a trumpet, and there was the pack in full chase. Dark figures of tiny men appeared against the sky line of

the Dodd, and down below, a little streak of foamy whiteness, the foxhounds raced after their quarry. Inaccessible it seemed to man or hound that hunting ground among the crags, but a whoop from a neighbouring height told us Reynard had been seen, and whoops from the far-off cottage doors assured us that the whole village of Grange was on the alert. Every dog at every farm gave tongue. The school children shouted lustily as they came tumbling out of school, and such music filled the air and echoed from crag to crag as can only be heard when the hounds are out in Borrowdale and the fox is in full view.

A long-legged 'leish' lad who had been out with the hounds from early morn, passed us, bent on rest and poddish at a neighbouring farm. "Have they killed?" we said. "Ay, ay, they swallered yan, a girt un an aw, sitting, as t' sayin' is, in t' Girt Wood this mornin', and they hev holed anudder at Whyfoot, but what its a terble strang bield, and now they're efter anudder on Dodd seemingly. Well, good daay, I'se fairly hungered to deeth. Good-daay. Eh, but it's been a grand huntin' daay, has this." He went ahead, and left us almost standing still, and so we won by Manisty to Brandelhow, and gazed upon that one-time

fairest view of Derwentwater from above the amphitheatre of common land, wherein the mine and its debris heaps lie desolate. From the non-mining industry point of view, and the view of the people whose chief bread-winning asset is the beauty of the scene, it is comforting to know that any mineral that exists lies hereabout only in pockets, with so much intervening unproductive matter between that it does not pay to lift it. Brandelhow, a very old mine, for it was worked before gunpowder was invented, is looked upon by miners as a wet mine. To keep the water under it is currently reported that it cost £800 a year. And what with water and labour of getting the ore, the mine which has ruined two companies in the past fifty years, is not likely to prove a floating bubble again. But what has pricked the bubble of Brandelhow for ever is the reduction in the price of the material. A mine that could not pay when its product was £15 a ton in the market, is still less likely to pay when its products are down to £7 10s. Meanwhile, said my friend, that blot upon the landscape ought certainly, in the public interest, to be planted out, and we agreed. Then stumbling down the debris slope to the old miner's foot-path and the ancient bridle road from Borrow-

dale to Keswick, we entered the National Trust Estate, and found ourselves in Paradise. A well-defined forest road took us through the heart of its golden-gleaming company of larch and young oak. Then branching downward we touched another path that led among bilberries and sweet-gale tufts by the lake shore, curving in and curving out, and giving us wonderful changes of view as we went. The sun was beyond Catbels, and the shadow of the old hill the Celts, perhaps the Phoenicians, knew, was blue-black upon the quiet waterflood. Meanwhile the light was rosy golden upon the woods of Barrow, and so clear was the reflection of these eastern woods in their autumnal tints that the whole of the lake, almost to the water's marge, was turned into opal and pearl of iridescent wonder; while close beside the Brandelhow shore, the clear white sky above the fells was reflected and gave a magic sense of some strange sudden freezing of the lake to whitest ice. We moved on, noting here the fiery gold of a young beech, there the blue green of a Scotch fir. Squirrels leapt beside us, a woodcock was flushed at our feet, a bracken rustled and became for the moment less fern than brother rabbit, then a jay's voice was heard, and then the clang of innumerable

cats' voices mingled with the screech of the jay. What in the name of all earth's voices was this? The secret was soon out. There upon a tuft of Scotch fir-bough sat a jay in intense excitement of flutter and speech, and opposite it, on another bough, a brown owl, full enough of screech for twenty, scolded the jay. We watched the talkative and quarrelsome pair, and left them hard at their conversational amenities. Onwards, till the woodland with all its bracken-beauty was passed, and we stood upon that fairest of fair meadows, so dear to the heart of Robert Southey, and sat down to rest and delight our eyes and hearts at May-pole point in Otterbiel Bay. The reeds were reflected in a delightful moving tangle of golden grey, the blue firs stood up darkly at the marge, behind these in every variety of colour rose up the trees that sloped toward Catbels, and the main road on its breast.

Deep gold burned the beeches, yellow-gold the larches, rich lemon shone the ash-tree, and deep lemon the waning sycamore, side by side with the russet oak were oaks still green as midsummer, and all this beauty had been doomed at the hand of the woodman to pass away. As we gazed across the reeds which led to the wooded slope, and our eyes went across

the hollow meadow to the fair falling pasture, that was, as it were, the lowest skirt of old Catbels, I did not wonder that in times of long ago men had felt the scene here so full of inspiration that hither they came to light their fires to the Sun-god, for whom to-day the hand of autumn lights the fires, and to whom the trees of Brandelhow do glorious sacrifice.

We rose to go, and at the same moment a little flotilla of 'golden-eye' ducks, lately come back to spend a happy winter at Derwentwater, rose also, and shaking the mighty mass of Skiddaw, whose reflection came right across the waterflood, into vibration with the ripple of their sudden uprising went off towards St. Herbert's Isle for their night's resting. Passing from Otterfield Bay and through the hollow meadow fringed with wood that keeps its privacy sacred, we left behind us the grey stone barn that stands sole relic to-day of the wayside public-house that once gave its welcome to the jingling pack-horse trains which went to Borrowdale and the 'Wad' mines at Base Brown, and once summoned on Sundays the farm folk of the dales to see "girstest cock-feighting as ivver was," and, by the ancient road now golden with the yellow leafage, we went beneath Hawes End to the thorn-tree meadows that lead us by

delightful grassy footway past Silver Hill to Lingholme and Fawe Park. The sunlight was fading now, but so deep red and fiery stood the Silver Hill woodland in the afterglow, so deep red and fiery glowed the bracken and the birches of the copse we passed through, that it seemed as if on this enchanted journey it never could be night. Pheasants chirrocked as they went to roost, and acorns fell pit patter to the ground. Except for the scold of a startled blackbird, these were the only sounds that disturbed the absolute tranquillity of approaching eventide. So we gained the wooded hill of Fawe, climbed beyond it and dropped down by a mossy leaf-strewn rocky path to the main road of Portinscale. Passing through the village, its cottage windows flickering with rosy firelight from within, we paused at the bridge with the cheery smithy hard by; there, to sound of anvil chime, we watched the last light from the west turn all old Derwent's waters into silver gold, and waited for the first white star of eventide. Already companies of river ghosts were peopling the Howrahs and the level meadows between Derwent and Greta; and as we entered Keswick a weather-wise yeoman said, "It's been a grand daay hooivver, but it's a borrered one, I doubt. There'll be a white shag frost to-neet,



and raain before morn, to-morrow, I'se warrant it ; noo mark my words."

We smiled and gave assent. We had had our day, and nothing could dispossess us of its November glory.

## THE MAY QUEEN AT KESWICK.

I HAVE just seen a glad sight for sore eyes. In perfect May weather with the schoolmasters of the elementary schools walking before them, came the volunteer band in their cheerful red coats down the Main Street of Keswick, and behind the band a white pony exquisitely harnessed with trappings of daisy chain and garland of primroses. The vicar led the palfrey and another parson was walking by his side. But I forgot all about schoolmasters and band and parsons and pony in the beauty of the little child in white who with a crown of narcissus upon her head and a wand of black-thorn blossom in her left hand, came riding at the head of all the little band-of-hoppers of the Church of England Temperance Societies, who followed with garlands on staves and banners of every colour their young May Queen for 1900. It chanced that the automobile cars in

their 1000 miles course had just reached Keswick. There, on the side of the way or in the market place, these evil-smelling things were panting or barking while queer people with huge arctic-winter coats and goggles smothered in dust and grime sat on their petrol steeds.

What a contrast it was! The Queen with her attendant maidens in their spotless white, the very embodiment of happy restfulness and holiday cheer, and there in the King's Highway beside them these savage-looking wild-with-haste and worn-with-work creatures, these automobilists, who looked as if they had never known the promise of May and really had no time to care to wait her coming.

It was a meeting of the old time and the new time with a vengeance. And my heart went out to the days of old. The May Queen's snow-white palfrey passed on, and then the grim and grimy petrol steeds went upon their way. But I should hope never to forget the one picture, and I should wish not to see the other again.

The Keswick May Queen with her happy procession went through sun and shadow to the Park. There, games went forward till tea summoned them from the sunny field. And the last picture I saw of Her Majesty was in

act of being crowned in the great hall of the Pavilion, to the sound of the cheering of her loyal subjects. Her proclamation, which was read as she took the throne, enjoined love and kindness to all creation, and I expect there will be fewer squirrels hunted in the Keswick woods and more care taken of the ferns and flowers in the Keswick lanes, by reason of Her Gracious Majesty's command. May Day at Keswick is certainly a happy institution.



THE MAY QUEEN.



## THE DIAMOND JUBILEE BONFIRES.

### A REMINISCENCE.

WHATEVER else the word bonfire means, it does not signify a good fire. Skeat tells us it owes its origin to the word bane or bone, and meant a fire of bones, a martyr fire ; others assert that the word takes us back to heathen mythology, and that in bone or bain or baen-fire we have the revival of some old Solar worship, of which the Beltain fire was the latest survival.

Be that as it may, it was a coincidence that in 1897, in honour of our Empress Queen, the hills of Great Britain were to blaze forth so near to Midsummer Eve, and the glad feast of St. John, and call us back to the time when the Sun god's festival was kept with such universal rejoicing.

The word bonfire, if it was originally a fire of sacrifice, certainly renewed its ancient meaning

on June 22. For never did British hearts build their hill bonfires at all cost of time and labour and self-sacrifice with greater gladness, or offer the sacrifice of love and loyal effort so willingly upon their altars of joyous flame.

While the critics are deciding for us whether the word bonfire is derived from ben or ban, meaning in Scotch and Welsh a hill fire, or from the Anglo-Saxon bone, a bone-fire, or from the Danish baun, which signifies a beacon fire, it will suffice us to remember that long before the Armada "roused all England with affright," we here in Britain had known, as the Jews of Beth-hacerem knew in Isaiah's time, how "to set up a sign of fire," and swift as the courier flame that told the Argive queen that Troy had fallen, fleet as the fire that flew from Susa to Ectabana in twenty-four hours to rouse the Persian kings, fast as the hill torches that told the Athenians of the enemy's approach in the days of Thucydides, the alarm of war had often been sent north and south through our island home, in troublous times of old. It will suffice us to recall that from the time of Richard III. the dwellers by our sea-coasts had been accustomed to the idea of beacons on all hill-tops adjacent to the sea. That from the reign of Edward II., who ordained 'bikenings' or beacons to be set



up that thereby the people might be roused, to Henry VII. who ordered that more along the coasts should be erected "where they stood too thin," our forefathers learned the use of the beacon flame, not only as a warning against foes, but as a friendly light of help to mariners. In the thirteenth year of Elizabeth (1565) this latter use was so well recognised that all such seaboard beacons were placed by Act of Parliament under the control of the Masters, Wardens, and Assistants of the Trinity House. But the lighthouse movement has long since dispossessed the coast of its 'flares', and not a word was said when the last of the beacons in the Isle of Wight was demolished to make way for the stately cross of granite that England and America raised on Tennyson's "noble Down" to the memory of our late Lord Laureate.

But not only, as Gay the poet sang, did

" Flaring beacons cast their blaze afar  
The dreadful presage of invasive war,"

for five out of the seven times that Shakespeare uses the word bonfire, it is spoken of as a sign of rejoicing. Like Bardolph's face, that seemed to Falstaff to be "a perpetual triumph, an everlasting fire," the lighting up of bonfires has been signal for public joyance from the

time when with the "tydynges of the notable victory of Agincourt knowen unto England . . . . bonfires and dances were ordained in every towne, citie, and borough;" and many a time since, as Shakespeare tells us, Richard the Plantagenet gave orders

" Ring bells aloud, burn bonfires clear and bright,  
To entertain great England's lawful king,"

our hill-tops and our village greens "have spread glad tidings with their tongues of flame."

It was in 1887, the Queen's Jubilee year, that the first organised attempt was made to light up the ancient beacons, and let the hills rejoice together in fiery festival. Then Colonel Milward, the member for Worcestershire, with the Malvern Beacon in his constituency, did what he could to stimulate the bonfire movement, and using the Malvern heights as a starting point sent the fiery-cross of rejoicing north, south, west, and east. At that time I was unaware of this general movement, and worked hard with a local committee to organise fires on the Lake Country hill tops, and to arrange for interchange of signals by rockets on the Cumberland hills. Mr. Cowper of Monk Coniston organised similar bonfires on the fells

of North Lancashire and Westmoreland, and Mr. Baddeley did likewise for the Westmoreland heights south of the Dunmail Raise. So beautiful was the effect of the one hundred and forty bonfires seen thus from Skiddaw top, a full account of which appeared in the *Cornhill* for August of that year, that we determined to do what was possible to assure a like celebration of fire for the Diamond Jubilee night. A letter that I wrote to the *Times* in the spring of the year, urging that a signal of fire should be flashed from the Land's End to John o' Groat's, called forth an answer of Colonel Milward, which showed that he too was of the same mind about the need of marking Jubilee night by bonfire organisation, and had already taken steps in the desired direction. At his kind invitation we foregathered. A conference was arranged with the Home Secretary, Sir Matthew White-Ridley, in which we found that the Queen was much interested in the movement, but could not for obvious reasons allow the signal for lighting of the fires to be made at any of the royal seats, and that much as it might be desired it would not be possible to obtain the services of any of the military or the engineers in the work of preparing or guarding the fires, but we must throw the work upon voluntary

effort and the co-operation of local committees. A meeting of friends was called at the House of Commons on April 8th, when it was unanimously resolved that the Lord-Lieutenants and Chairmen of County Councils should be asked to invite their counties to co-operate in a national scheme of bonfire illumination on 'Queen's night,' June 22. And it was determined that diagrams of bonfire-building and hints for their construction should be prepared, and that the press should be asked to circulate information.

Subsequently the Lord Mayors and Mayors of cities and cathedral authorities were also approached, and details of the scheme were given them also.

The Central Bonfire Committee consisted of the following: Viscount Cranborne, M.P., Chairman; Sir W. G. Anstruther, Sir George Baden Powell, M.P., Captain Joscelyne Bagot, M.P., Sir W. H. Bailey, Mr. Baldwin, M.P., Lord Battersea, Mr. Bemrose, M.P., Mr. H. M. Cadell, Mr. J. Cropper, Colonel Denny, M.P., Mr. H. D. Erskine, Chancellor Ferguson, Mr. James Fitzgerald, Mr. Helder, M.P., Sir John Hibbert, Mr. Henry C. Howard, Sir J. Kenaway, M.P., the Earl of Lauderdale, Lieut.-Col. the Hon. E. H. Legge, Mr. Lloyd George,

M.P., Mr. J. W. Lowther, M.P., Mr. G. H. Milward, Mr. Jasper More, M.P., Mr. E. Delmar Morgan, Lord Muncaster, Mr. A. W. Nicholson, Mr. J. T. Pierce, Mr. R. Purvis, M.P., Lord Tennyson, Col. R. Williams, M.P., Sir W. H. Wills, M.P., and the Earl of Winchelsea. Col. Milward, M.P., Major Rasch, M.P., and Canon Rawsley were appointed the hon. secretaries, and upon their shoulders, and the shoulders of their wives and daughters, fell the burden of the correspondence, which was not a light one.

The correspondents were not content generally with sending for instructions and diagrams of bonfire building, but very often expected to be advised as to the kind of material best suited, would often imagine that some subsidy of money could be granted from a central fund which did not exist, and seemed in some cases to look upon the organising secretaries as purveyors of fireworks and petroleum, creosoted sleepers, and brushwood faggots.

At a later meeting in the House of Commons it was decided that, owing to the difference in daylight, the Scotch hills north of the Border should light up half an hour later than the line for England, Wales, and Ireland, and emphasis was laid on the request that, at the moment of

lighting, rockets should be sent up and the National Anthem should be played or sung. Later still, precautions were urged against the lighting of any adjacent heather, or the standing too near to the leeward side of a bonfire at the moment of lighting, if it had just previously been drenched with paraffin, and caution in the handling of signal rockets was also given.

It may here be mentioned that a London fire syndicate offered to supply gratis 28 lbs. of their solid petroleum to any bonfire committee applying for it, to ensure ignition ; and the fire-work makers, Messrs. Brock & Pain, gave special discount on goods ordered before a certain date by any committee which was in connection with the Central Committee.

There can be no doubt that the sense of organisation was quickened by the fact that public lists of bonfires thus organised appeared through the agency of the committee in the public press from time to time. And though it is certain that a very large number of bonfires failed to report themselves to the Central Committee—as many, for example, as 50 in Cornwall, 30 in Kent, 50 in County Fermanagh, and a very large number, perhaps the majority, in Scotland—nevertheless when the secretaries issued their final report (which can

still be obtained from Messrs. King, of King Street, Westminster), they were able to enumerate 2548, of which there were 1981 in England, in Scotland 305, in Ireland 93, in Wales 162, in the Channel Islands 6, over in France 1, while as for the Orkneys they and Shetland were jewelled with lights, no less than 53 bonfires were thence reported. There was only one *contretemps* in bonfire preparations. This was at Cleeve Cloud. The story goes that a man was left to watch the fire and went to sleep, dreamed that Jubilee night had come, woke, and, finding his bonfire close beside him unlit, at once put match to it; but this needs confirmation. It cost the Cleeve Clouders £70 of labour and material; but their loyalty was equal to the occasion, and they rebuilt the pile, and did thus double honour to the Queen.

Speaking generally, the night in England was favourable; in Wales a good deal of mist hung about the hills. In Scotland the clouds were in some places a wet blanket, but the fire rejoicings went, speaking generally, well and merrily, and we did not hear of more than one fire that was postponed till a later night, owing to impossible atmospheric conditions; this was in the Isle of Man, and was lit on the Queen's

Coronation Day. It is no small satisfaction to remember that in no instance was any heather set on fire, and that in most instances, owing to careful building, to cross-draughts and central-flues, the bonfires burnt clearly and brightly. The absence of harm done to heather or to moor ought to encourage the few landowners, who this time refused to give permission, not to withhold it on any future occasion of national jubilee.

The largest number of fires counted from any point was from the Mendip Hills, where more than two hundred were noted. The fires in South Wales were especially beautiful. From Broadway in Worcestershire one hundred and forty-two were counted. From Malvern one hundred and thirty-two were seen, and from many points seventy to a hundred were observed.

The mist that lay like a flocculent cloud upon the Solway obscured the Scotch fires along the coast, where, in 1887, they bejewelled the whole shore. But the sight of the great littoral plain, with its flashing multitude of joyous bonfires, can never be forgotten. So clear was the air, after a day of cloud upon the hill tops that looked as if no fires could be lit in the lake country, that the variegated stars of the rockets on Helvellyn



and Scafell, ten and twelve miles away, were distinctly visible.

Those who wish to know how the lake country to the south looked that night should read the graphic account written by Mr. Charles Cropper of the view he got from the High Street Range above Kent Mere, which appeared in the *Spectator* of July 3. In the *Daily News* of June 25 I wrote a simple account of the view from Skiddaw.

The colour of the fells and the plains on that night seemed entirely to fit the diamonds of light they wore. The mountains had all put on their solemnest apparel, the purple puce of twilight, the plain beneath lay like a deep Prussian blue carpet; and it was a sight to remember, to see how, within a few minutes of the signal rockets' ascent from Skiddaw top, the blue expanse of the seaboard plain was jewelled with starry light. Nor can one ever forget how, through the meshes of the flocculent cloud that lay upon the Solway and obscured the Scotch hills from time to time, the festal fires twinkled into being and were again lost, again to reappear.

One of the best experiments of lighting up a mountain height without difficulty was the burning of a 'Lucal' oil flare, on Coniston Old

Man, which certainly gave an astonishingly bright flame, so bright and so steady that many believed it was an electric light.

Some of the bonfire rejoicings took the form of a pageant, notably the one at Bushy, which, under the direction of Mr. Herkomer, mirrored forth the procession of the British kings and queens to a wondering populace, and so passed on in pomp to the lighting of the fire. At Boxhill the bonfire boys organised a kind of medley and a torchlight procession, and used collecting boxes with right good will in aid of a local charity. Electric light was called into requisition, not only on the stately cathedral that crowns the Lincoln height, but on that fair fane of Ethelburga that was in olden times the lantern of the fens, Ely Cathedral. There was friendly rivalry among the counties as to the number of bonfires. The men of Yorkshire, with their larger acreage and their numberless heights, were well to the front; Somerset was close upon them; Sussex stood third upon the list; Northamptonshire made a good fourth, but the men of Devon were close behind them; while Staffordshire and Northumberland followed hard after.

One of the most beautiful sights imaginable was the way in which, from the summit of Bury

Hill, north-east of Arundel, from the Isle of Wight almost to the German Ocean, right over the Wold the long line of fires gleamed in an unbroken chain. Another vantage ground of great beauty was the Spurn Head bonfire, which the lifeboat men had built of old casks and wreckage of the deep. The way in which the whole coast line seemed to start into light, and men saw, as Macaulay puts it, "cape beyond cape," those twinkling points of fire, till far away down the Humber and into the land of Tennyson and the southern Wolds, Yorkshire sent the message to the men of merry Lincolnshire, was indeed a sight to see.

An Orkney islander assures me that the reflection of the bonfires in the sea around his coast was most memorable. A Kentish man who saw the fires from the Bell Harry Tower of Canterbury Cathedral is enthusiastic over the witchery of the sight. Colonel Milward, who watched from the tower of the Crystal Palace, says that the coming into being of light beyond light, star behind star, was most interesting as seen from his high vantage ground, east and west and north and south. Others speak of the beauty of the bonfires as seen from the Great Wheel at Earl's Court; though it is fair to say that from that point the

dome of St. Paul's under its electric light eclipsed all else.

But if I could not have been on Skiddaw or on the Nan Bield Pass or the Malvern Beacon that night, I think I should have tried to stand at Wills Neck, the highest point of the Quantock Hills, and, after watching the golden glow fade beyond the Glamorgan Hills, and Exmoor take upon itself its purple wine-dark colouring of the falling night, I should have watched the whole horizon tremble into flame, and seen how England flashed her joy to Wales, and Wales made loyal answer across the sleeping channel.

The thing that struck one about the lighting of the beacon fires was partly their simultaneous spontaneity, partly the quiet tenderness into which the flame flowers grew into being. The poet speaks of

“ East far anon  
Another fire rose glorious up : behind,  
Another and another,”

has given too much rein to his fancy.

But if the quiet tenderness of these Jubilee stars had seemed to have been shed from heaven upon earth struck one much, one could not help feeling that star was calling unto star, one needed not to hear the roaring of the flame or the cheering of the multitudes gathered about

the fires to feel that the sound of loyal jubilation had gone out into all our British land. Fire was talking unto fire, mountain spoke to plain of a throne and a queen and of a wondrous sixty years. It is this which Watson the poet has expressed when speaking of the lighting of the Westmoreland bonfires. He describes how:

“One by one the mountain peaks foreswore  
 Their vowed impassiveness, the mountain peaks  
 Confessed emotion, and I saw these kings  
 Doing perfervid homage to a queen.”

It was a happy thought that the committee urged, through the press, that if possible photography should put on record the Jubilee fires, their building and their lighting. Some committees had forestalled the suggestion, and we are able to know something of the loyal effort in process that went to the building of the Blackstone Edge bonfire. This bonfire, which owes its origin to Mr. Calder Clegg, the vice-chairman of the District Council of Littleborough and his committee and active secretary, Mr. W. H. Sutcliffe, stands high upon a peak of the moor overlooking Rochdale and Littleborough, and was planned by Messrs Shuttleworth and Strover. It consisted of a solid cone of sandstone with terraces round about it, on which 2000 empty casks were securely lashed

by iron rope. Its diameter was about 40 feet, its height 50, and it took thirty men and eight horses the better part of a fortnight to construct and bring the material together. So saturated was it with paraffin, that within three minutes of the lighting at the top the whole mass was in a blaze.

There were few better stations in Scotland for seeing bonfires from than the old beacon station of Cockle Roy, thence 120 bonfires were visible from the height of 800 feet, but there was no better or more scientifically-constructed bonfire in the "Land of the Thistle" than that constructed on Bonnytown or Erngath overlooking the Firth of Forth. On this point, whence ten counties are visible, Mr. Cadell built up a bonfire 45 feet high upon a foundation of three stones and heavy timbers, placed radially on the ground like the spokes of a wheel, and then piled up on them tarred sleepers in octagon form about an old pile-driving frame, which formed a kind of central base and chimney in one, a rope saturated with paraffin hung down from a mass of light brushwood and shavings at the top. This was lit at the lower end at 10.30. The flame ran up and fired the shavings and the small barrel of paraffin at the top, and suddenly the huge torch

of Bonnytown sent its blaze of triumph to the Kinneil foresters—who had built their lower pile of pine trees on the same hill from the Duke of Hamilton's woods—and sped on the cheering flame to the burghers of Linlithgow. The Bonnytown fire blazed downwards for three hours with constant brilliancy, while the huger bonfire on Arthur's Seat blazed but for a quarter of an hour, and collapsed for want of a central frame.

The Darwen bonfire, built by Alderman Cocker's committee, was of old timber, coal, and resin barrels, with a cone-shaped mass with a diameter of 50 feet and a height of 30. About seventy tons of material were given by various firms in the town and neighbourhood, and glad must have been the hearts of the weary carters when the last load with its four horses was carried. The bonfire mass was carefully constructed with a central flue and side draughts, and Mr. Councillor Cooper and the secretary, Mr. Smith Savile, were well rewarded for their pains by seeing the mass catch fire instantaneously, and illumine the neighbourhood for half a mile round, making it as light as day, while the National Anthem drowned the crackling of the flames, and rolled out its diapason of joy into the quiet air beyond.

The Englefield Green bonfire was constructed of about 1200 faggots piled up on a log platform of 22 feet diameter to the height of 28 feet. A torchlight procession went to the firing of it, and very brilliantly it burned from ten o'clock till two in the morning, helped to its brilliancy by the ingenious device of Professor Pearson and his colleagues of Cooper's Hill College. A young oak tree 30 feet high had been first planted firmly in the ground for a central support of the bonfire mass. This carried a zinc iron pipe enclosing a  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch pipe, to the top of which were attached four arms (as seen in the photograph) perforated with six holes. This central pipe was connected with a forty-gallon cask of paraffin, which was sunk in an earth well 30 feet away from the bonfire, and to this barrel was attached an hydraulic pump. By this means a constant spray of paraffin was pumped up and diffused at the top of the bonfire, and as the faggot mass dwindled the flame leapt to lick up the paraffin spray, and kept up the volume of flame. Mr. Ramsay Nares tells me that the device of lighting the mass was also original, and was owed to the students of Cooper's Hill. A box of chemicals was embedded in shavings, soaked in paraffin at the top, a heavy weight was suspended above it.



When the knife of Colonel Penycuick cut the string the weight fell, there was a bright flame like burning of Bengal fire, and in a moment the whole mass was in a blaze at the top.

The scholars of Glenalmond in the North were as keen as the students of Cooper's Hill. Aided by White, the factotum, who had devised a considerable structure, they sent the fiery cross to Dunsinane and the hill of Kinnoul, and the warden, who lit a splendid cresset of paraffin waste on his tower, was very near occasioning a general turn-out of the Perth fire brigade, who imagined the college itself on fire.

The pile at Glenalmond was built in four tiers or storeys, inside an upright frame of larch-pole staging. The floor of each storey was composed of sawn spruce; four barrels of coal, saturated with paraffin, stood on each floor, and the interstices were filled with some larch boughs and brushwood. The igniting of the mass which was done from above, was managed by an ingenious device of an iron basket of paraffin waste upon a wire strand, which at a signal was released by Mrs. Skrine, the wife of the Warden, and by its own weight made to swing down upon a mass of shavings at the top.

The mass when lit burned like a tall pillar of flame for two hours and a half, and with a steady flame for five hours. The heat evolved by this blazing column of coal was tremendous. Its success was largely dependent upon the strength of the supports that prevented the mass from collapse.

From Harlestone and Heaton Mersey came tidings of great success. Mr. Pinney tells me that the former burned brightly for more than an hour, and the latter, which was built under the organisation of the Rev. C. H. Lomax's Jubilee Committee, with a diameter of thirteen feet and a height of thirty, consisted of twenty-five tons of material, and blazed from first to last, owing to the excellent arrangements for through draught made by the constructor, Mr. Higginbottom.

Of the Malvern Beacon, of which an illustration appeared in the *Graphic* of July 3, it must be chronicled that, contrary to expectation, the huge mass toppled over at 10.19, and though it burned on till ten the next morning the effect was somewhat marred by the catastrophe. It was a gigantic mass, four hundred railway sleepers, five tons of huge piles, five tons of coral wood, thirty Stockholm tar barrels, twenty scaffold poles, two loads of saw mill waste, a

quantity of furze and 2000 faggots of wood, and two barrels of petroleum. All this was built by Mr. M'Cann, the captain of the fire brigade, round a central pillar of iron piping, twelve inches in diameter, filled in with cement concrete, and thus made to be a solid central column. Mr. M'Cann's instructions were to build a fire sixty feet high—one for each year of the Queen's reign—and he carried his instructions out to the letter. For so large a mass, notwithstanding it had a base of fifty feet, angular support as well as a central stage seem to have been needed—if toppling over was to be avoided. But it may have been that the mass, which looked at a distance like a church tower, was built of too heavy material to ensure solidity after the fire had caught it—at any rate the beacon fire of Leckhampton, which was perhaps the most successful on the Cotswold range, though when built it too looked like a tall tower, and was much in shape like the Malvern one, being composed of faggots for the most part within a frame of scaffold poles, burnt without collapsing, and was voted a great success. Photographs of this and the Cleeve Cloud and Stagbury bonfires appeared also in the *Graphic* of July 3. Sir Arthur Charles, who was resident at Malvern at the time,

assures me that nothing could be more beautiful than the outlook over the south-eastern plain set with its Jubilee diamonds that night. Without moving from his own window he could count 19 fires. By mere chance he had witnessed the ruddy glare in the horizon of the unfortunate mishap of the Cleeve Cloud bonfire a week previous, and had then been prepared, as many were not prepared to see, the far-off bonfires like points of light.

It is to this aspect of bonfire illumination that the Viceroy of India alludes. Writing to me under date July 23, he notes, first, that our Scotch list is incomplete, for his sons, who had lit one of the four bonfires on the Fife estate, had counted 34 that night, then says, "We had a good many bonfires here—but their distances are so great and the hills so high, that they looked like stars far off in the heaven." His Excellency adds, "It fortunately cleared up in the evening, after a tremendous storm, just as we were assembling for the official function." Sir Arthur Charles also told me of the astonishing swiftness with which the Malvern Beacon fire seemed to catch hold. This was notable also in the case of the Rusholm bonfire, which, though it was 40 feet high and was 103 feet in circumference, was alight from top to bottom—

according to my informant, Mr. Turner—in less than one minute.

The Oldbury bonfire, which had been erected under the superintendence of Mr. Thomlinson and gave pleasure to a crowd of spectators estimated at 40,000, was 45 feet high and about 75 feet in circumference. It looked like a gigantic beehive when it was ready for the lighting, and had taken its makers no little trouble in the building, for there were not less than sixty-five tons of wood dragged to the Rounds Green Hill. It is said that the heat evolved when the fire was at its fiercest was felt at the bottom of the hill. It again, owing to the breadth of base, burned steadily downward without collapsing, and at midnight on the following day its flames were still leaping up six feet high. The Oldbury Urban District Council contributed part of the cost.

The Skiddaw bonfires on the High Man and summit were chiefly interesting for having been good examples of peat fires. The peat cut six weeks before in a peat bog two miles from the summit were, as it is technically called, 'footed' and turned, and then stacked in small conical heaps, so arranged that the heavy rains which were experienced were partly drained off without penetrating them to the heart. They were

built up by friends under my personal supervision round a central chimney with good cross flues made in the foundation of stonework, upon a platform of rubble, collected at the summit of the hill. The peat looked wet, but those who built up the peat in the raging wind that prevailed on Skiddaw top on the Saturday and Monday previous to Jubilee Day have cause to remember with gratitude the fact that the rain had fallen and given weight to the fuel, for otherwise every brick of peat laid would have been swept off from its position and hustled into the middle of Skiddaw Forest; the photographs which were taken under difficulties show at least from the position of the figures that the wind spoken of was a reality. It is no joke building up a bonfire of peat in a hurricane which seems as if it blew off an icefield and is travelling at sixty miles an hour.

For the information of those who intend to build bonfires of peats in future, it may be stated that it was found that the easiest way to carry them was to fill sacks with them and sledge the sack-loads, well roped to the sledges, up to the top behind a couple of strong cart horses. The fires burned splendidly, for the peat though wet had been saturated with paraffin, and they were still smouldering on the

Thursday morning, so that they burned for close on thirty-six hours.

Among the bonfires on the high places should be noted not only the Skiddaw and Helvellyn ones, but a splendid fire on Cader Idris, for the glowing account of which I am indebted to my kind friend the Mayor of Dolgelly. Three fires were lit on Plinlymmon, one also on Snowdon, though the effect of the last was marred by mist and cloud.

One of the most interesting fires was built on Ben Nevis. It was hoped that it would have been fired by electricity from London, but the Post Office authorities did not think it safe to allow the transmission of the necessary electric current over the line from Fort William, so the fire was applied by Mrs. Rankine, the wife of the meteorologist in charge, and a message was at once sent by telegram from *Ben Nevis* to Big *Ben* of Westminster to give Col. Milward and the House of Commons hearty congratulation and news of successful lighting.

Indeed the message was necessary, for thick clouds entirely obscured the summit of Ben Nevis, and much praise is due to the brave lady who, in honour of the Queen, climbed through storm to the home of the cloud giants

and fired the only bonfire that shone that night among British snows.

As to general effects, doubtless the Englefield Green and the Blackstone Edge fires were most remarkable, but West Bromwich, Ewart Hill, Bedlington, and Colliers Oak were also remarkable for the brilliancy of their glow, whilst the Hampstead Heath, Malvern, and Blackstone Edge, Kersal, Maon, and Newcastle fires attracted the largest crowds.

West Bromwich bonfire, which was organised by Captain Wearing and the officers and men of the Volunteer Corps, owed its success to the careful arrangement of barrels intermingling with the mass, which created currents of air to be carried through the combustibles ; while the Colliers Oak beacon, 35 feet high, with a diameter of 54 feet at the base, was built loosely of tree toppings and coppice clearings, and enabled air to pass through and through it, giving great brilliance.

Of the photographs that really gave the effect of the star-like diminutiveness of far-off bonfires, the best is one sent me by the artist at Rosebery Topping, who, after twenty minutes of exposure, obtained the photograph ; whilst for beauty of actual flame effect nothing can compare with the Hunter Hill and Cheveney



bonfire pictures by the Rev. W. D. C. Chapman, of Yalding.

The above must not be looked upon as a full account of the bonfires on Queen's Night, 1887. One has rather attempted only to give a sketch of some of the more remarkable.

A good deal in the way of organisation and scientific construction and lighting of bonfire masses was learned, and a great deal of simple loyalty to our Queen warmed itself at the fires of 1897. It may be doubted if any better movement could have been devised for effectually celebrating Queen's Night, or for bringing into play so much of good feeling in all classes, and joining the hearts and hands of the people in such friendly co-operation to celebrate so memorable an occasion.

The hopes I expressed in the accompanying sonnet, which was dedicated to all who had helped in the bonfire celebration of June 22, 1897, were more than realised:

Now let the stars from heaven to earth be shed ;  
 Let beacon-fires with tongues of angel might  
 Speak clear from plain to plain, from height to height,  
 Till the whole land with joy be overspread,  
 Till, girt with gems of flame and diamonded,  
 Great Britain like a bride in robes of light  
 Shine forth and say was never such a night  
 For royal worth and loyalty to be wed,

And when her people on the twilit green,  
Or on the dusky mountains, with accord  
Shout for Victoria, and around the fire  
Sing with one heart and voice, 'God Save the Queen,'  
Let patriot flame from off Thine altar, Lord,  
Touch all dumb lips, all hearts with love inspire.

## A NORTH-COUNTRY FLOOD.

IT is not often that one sees two lakes nearly three miles distant from one another suddenly run together and become a roaring sea, not often that two rivers are apparently obliterated, lost beneath an overwhelming mass of white water mile on mile. Nor is it likely that more than once in a generation the inhabitants of a neighbouring town find themselves suddenly, when they rise from their beds on a Sunday morning, cut off from all access to their ancient parish church, hear no bells ring across the water flood, and feel that they must seek out some new house of prayer for this day, and leave the graves of their kin unvisited, the seats of their Sabbath use untenanted.

But in our Lake country, if after a hard, dry time in October—as dry as the driest summers—when the salmon are waiting down in the lake, and cannot make for their spawning beds;

when the children run across the river weirs, and the wells are beginning to give out at the farms; if then, with hardly a fall in the barometer, a south-west wind arises, and drives the wild Atlantic mists in moving mountains of cloud ashore, and if rain falls for two consecutive days to the depth of four inches, and then the wind increasing almost to a cyclone, drives sheets of water upon the fell-side breasts, so that in twenty-four hours another four inches of rain is chronicled in the rain-gauge, then we may expect just such a flood as it was my fortune to witness on Sunday morning, October 28th, 1888, in the Keswick Vale.

All day, as it seemed, on Friday and Saturday the sun was hid, the air was full of the noise of rain and rush of flying leaves. The salmon, who had waited patiently in Bassenthwaite till they might have despaired of revisiting again their old haunts up the River Bure in the Vale of St. John, were seen to be leaping at the weir just above Robert Southey's old house at the Greta side. The mill wheels at the various mills were stopped, for the head of water was too great; the pencil-maker, who had been obliged to work short time for want of water, was obliged to work shorter for the fullness of the supply. And still the winds roared

and the rain fell. The very windows of Heaven had been opened. Skiddaw, for the most part veiled in cloud, was, if the cloud lifted, seen to be pouring forth from his hornèd hill new streams of silver whiteness. The shepherds were on the alert; when in new places, upon the flanks of their guardian mountain, the milky torrents are seen veining the steeps of Skiddaw, they know that "t' nasty daäy" has become "something serious," and Saturday afternoon saw much cattle and many sheep gathered from the pastures by the Derwent side. It was well for them that they were so, as Sunday proved. Meanwhile news came to Keswick late in the afternoon, that the Derwent, where it issues "murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves," had so suddenly "overborne its continent," that somewhere up near Rosthwaite a Borrowdale farmer had paid the penalty of being a riparian tenant, and had lost twenty-five "as fine 't' winters' as iver carrit woo' on t' back."

"You see," said my informant, "a sheep hes a girt cwoat on, and he cannot lig it aside just when he hes a mind to, and once in t' watter he sinks t' saame as a stean."

Still the wind blew and the torrents descended; the carrier left the market early,

fearful of being unable to get across the valley to Cockermouth.

“Dar bon,” said an old peasant, who in his emphasis went back to early Norman-French days; “but it’s gaan to be t’ end of the warld. F’wolks was buyin’ and sellin’, as t’ Book tells us, when fust flood came, and it’ll be saame now, I reckon; I doubt some ov t’ marketers ull hardly git t’ hame.”

Darkness set in early, and with the darkness the noise of rising waters in the Greta and the howling of the storm made night almost terrible.

“Loud was the vale, her voice was up,” but then the storm was not gone, and very few people slept soundly on Saturday night.

Morning broke, no sun, but like a flying spectral moon the day star showed momentarily above Helvellyn and was eclipsed. The light upon our bedroom ceiling was, however, so white, that one felt that snow was on the ground. It was no snow reflection, it was the light from the wan plain of water flood that seemed to possess the whole valley.

Greta had swept into the old green park, where the monks of Fountain’s Abbey in the early days grew their pulse and vetches. A feeder from Latrigg had swollen itself into a river, and was rushing violently down the



A NORTH COUNTRY FLOOD FROM ABOVE BARROW.





ancient Pack Horse Road, by which of yore men passed from the Ford and on by Monk's Hall to Portinscale and Whitehaven.

The Ing's bridge that spans this hollow-sunken Pack Horse Road whereby, who knows, in early days the cross was set—Crossings bridge of our time, seemed to be in good risk of being swept away.

The main road that leads from Keswick to the church of good St. Kentigern was, by the splashing at a horseman's stirrups, submerged, and Portinscale was evidently cut off from Keswick.

But as we turned to look at the little town beneath its storm-dark Walla Crag, one for the moment felt that Greta was determined to sweep it from the earth. Boiling round its corner and hurrying towards the town, the torrent had risen to what, from our vantage ground, looked like within a foot of the top of the artificial rampart that is built up between it and the houses at High Hill, which form the main approach to the town. If that bank gives, there will be death and disaster! Look at yonder bridge, how close to the keystone of each arch the Greta pours! how the waters as they pass leap up and shake the white manes of their wild horses against the Pencil Mill

walls! and how the people crowd upon the bridge and watch the possible rising of the torrent stream!

Beyond the bridge the river seemed to have lost its way. The How-wray's, or field of the Holy corner, to which in the days of Cuthbert's friend 'Herebert' the saint, our Island hermit, may have pushed his rude boat ashore to give the people holy admonishment, and through which his predecessor in Christ, Saint Kentigern, may have passed with his converts more than thirteen centuries ago, to baptize them in the Derwent stream, was now entirely under water.

Lost was the Greta, lost the Derwent river, lost the northern confines of the lake; and had it not been for the upstanding of the grey parapet of the Long Bridge near Portinscale, with the white flashing, close beneath it, of the tremendous torrent, one might have felt that Derwent and Greta had ceased to be.

Far as eye could see, a calm white lake possessed the plain; the hedgerows and trees might have been so much flotsam upon the water, a huge net cast upon the flood by the giants in Heaven.

Suddenly a bell tolled out, it was near upon eight of the clock, and hurrying by a way that

one felt would alone enable one to get to the church, one was just in time, as the flood water was still rising, to reach the mound upon which the wise St. Mungo, perhaps in fear of some such flood, determined so long ago as 553 to set up a cross in token of the faith he preached, in the clearing of the wood from whence the parish of to-day derives its name—Crosthwaite. The old sexton grinned from head to foot.

“I’se kindled chuch fire, and I’se rung t’ bell, but me and chuch cats is aw th’ congregation for to-daay. They tell me Newland’s beck is burst. Fwoaks cannot git whativer from Portinscale or town. And I sud not ha’ bin here mysel’ but for t’ räailwäay; I rose be-times and climmed t’ ’bankment, and so I’se here. Eh, my, but it’s a quare doment how-iver.”

Joe was right. It was a queer ‘doment,’ for the water was still rising on the road at the church gate, and in the meadow beside ‘the dub,’ or hollow, with whose name readers of Southey’s *Doctor* are familiar.

Up the tower of the old Crosthwaite Church we went, and the sight rewarded us. Derwent Hill, the How Farm, and Salmon-guards stood out like green islands from the wild deluge; with these exceptions the Keswick valley, from

the gates of Borrowdale to furthest Caermote beyond Bassenthwaite, looked just one large lake.

Truly Bassenthwaite's older name of Broad-water seemed to have been deserved, to-day it might well have returned to it.

There was a pause in the storm, and Skiddaw for a moment ceased to hide "its front among Atlantic clouds." Dark purple, stained with the iron rust of the drenched fern, the shales upon the High Maen leaped up angrily against the cold wet sky.

The milky cataracts in fine thread lacework twisted themselves together and plunged from the heights to Millbeck and Applethwaite, of Wordsworthian memory, and the full becks hustled through the lower grounds towards the inundation. Far away Lodore showed like an avalanche of snow, and Barrow Fall leapt clear to view down towards the lake. A horseman-shepherd went by to see to charges bleating on a knoll near; the flood-imprisoned cattle lowed pitifully enough from upper pastures, and here and there, with much splashing, their udders touching the water, on the roadway, the milch kine were being driven towards the milk-pail and safety by men in carts. Then the huge skirts of another storm wiped out all view of

Barf and Wythop, and trailing after it a majestic train of rain-wove cloth of silver, another burst of rain fell heavily with voice that could be heard, upon the flanks of Skiddaw and the tower of the ancient church.

I left the sexton in the belfry, but not before I had learned that tradition told how more than sixty years ago, between 1820 and 1823, just such a flood possessed the valley.

It was Market Saturday, the day before New Year's Day, when every parson and yeoman felt it obligatory to come into Keswick, stable his horse at the inn, to which he went throughout the market days of the year, and put down 3s. for his dinner, and eat and drink success to his host. One 'Priest' Brown of Bassenthwaite lost his way home on the occasion. The Greta was out over the wall, his nag mistook the main stream for the main road, and he was swept down by Keswick Bridge to his death, "unless happen it was i' Limepots whar they fun him dead."

Again, about forty years ago, on a New Year's Day, the snows on the top of the hills melted in a downpour of warm rain, and "fwoaks dudn't git to t' ald church, and rwoads was most ter'ble cut up, and there was a girt flood i' October '46."

“About twenty-five years or more happen sen much about t’ saame time o’ year as thissen, there was sic another watter cam down by Monk’s Ha’ and went thro’ t’ gaate at Crossings, and t’ graaved a hoal i’ the midder where it bet sic a size that thutty carts or more wudn’t full it up. But I nivver in o’ my born days see’d watter rise after dry wedder as fast as this, nivver—nivver sic a thing. It’s most ter’ble straange, it happens most waayses upon t’ Sunday. There’s an old saayin’ i’ the vale :

“ ‘Morlan Fluid  
Ne’er did guid.’

But why, you know, that’s the flood at Morlan fair-time, i’ August.”

I remembered the saying, and doubting not that the old couplet chronicled some great flood at the Magdalene Feast day in pre-Reformation years, afterwards known as ‘Morlan Fair,’ I could not but remind the old sexton of the time when the church festivals were made to coincide with the convenient gatherings of the folk at their fairs, and when the man who, here at Keswick, would sell his beast well at the summer fair, felt he had not much chance of a good bargain unless first he had prayed at the shrine of the Magdalene, and

made his offering at the altar which stood beneath the window in the chapel close beyond the Southey monument.

That 'Morlan' or 'Magdalene' flood would prevent cattle getting to market and worshippers coming to the shrine of St. Mary Magdalene. I daresay if old Sir John Steyle, the last Chantry priest, who was pensioned off in the twenty-sixth year of bluff King Hal, could rise from his dust beneath the chancel floor, he would tell us the origin of the saying :

"Morlan Fluid  
Ne'er did guid."

Henceforth we must vary the quaint rhyme, and say :

"Keswick Flood  
O' St. Simon and Jude  
Ne'er did guid";

but the sexton would not away with it.

"It's my opinion," said he, "that the flood leaves behint finest dressin' for grass iver cud be; it isn't to tell what a fine lock o' ley" (*i.e.* hay-grass) "ull be for the mowin' next harvest time."

I left my old friend in full grin at the gathering waters, one 'chuch' cat on his shoulder, the other mewing at his feet, and getting on to the

railway embankment that passes the end of the churchyard, set face for home. A sense of indescribable loneliness possessed me as I turned to take a last look at St. Mungo's Church, lonely and flood-girdled, its Sunday use gone ; its glorious peal of bells for that day to be silent in the tower ; but as one gazed on the quiet circlet of graves, where

“ Each in his narrow cell for ever laid  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,”

one also realised the quiet from all fear of harm which was theirs who had crossed that other flood, and one was comforted.

Still high lifted above the trouble of the waters, as if she could breast all storms, and feared no overwhelming,

“ The snow-white church upon the hill  
Sat like a thronèd lady sending out  
A gracious look all over her domain,”

and very specially now that the meadows near were wrapt from sight did the dead ones resting beside her seem to come back to mind. With what delight, one reverently thought, would he, on such a day of storm and cataract glories, have come forth from his grave to gaze with open eyes, of whom Wordsworth wrote in the



first line of his epitaph for the monument in yonder holy house of prayer :

“Ye torrents, foaming down the rocky steeps ;  
Ye lakes, wherein the spirit of water sleeps ;  
Ye vales and hills, whose beauty hither drew  
The poet’s steps and fixed them here, on you  
His eyes have closed.”

“Crostet’s ” (*i.e.* Crosthwaite is) “not the only place where priest will ha’ nowt to dea this day,” said an old friend, as I crossed the only part of the Fitz Park still above flood water, passed the bowling green, now in possession of ruder hands than the hands of men. “They tell St. John beck’s out an aw, and neabody can git to chapel to-daay on Naddle Fell.”

One remembered as he spoke, how still the awe of the mighty waters, hurled suddenly upon Helvellyn’s side, hangs above the Vale of St. John, for all that the waterspout which wrought such mischief from Legburthwaite right down the dale, fell as long ago as 1749. But the fact is, that in this Lake country, where all the vales are just so many conduits for the storm, where, when it “siles down reet gaily, every road becomes a sike, and every sike a beck, and every beck a river, as t’ sayin’ is,” one cannot tell what is to be the issue if, when the becks are full, a storm-cloud breaks far up upon the hills.

As I spoke, just such a freshet came down the Greta, now surcharged and boiling along into the back lanes of Keswick. The sound, as this freshet crashed down, was as though the torrent had taken a fit. The hoarse crackle and cry of the gurgling wave, as it swept on beneath the bridge, had a really human note of pain and distress within it ; and a kind of tidal surge swept into the Park. And still the heavens were opened, and the rain fell !

About noon the downpour ceased for a while ; but the wind seemed to gain strength, and, with less heavily-weighted wings, rushed against the woods. The rooks that were very busy—for the waters drove their prey above ground—if they lifted from their feast were sent whirling up into the sky. The sea gulls come up from the coast alone seemed able to manage their white sails, and steer their wonderful ways wisely above the flood.

Walking to Friar's Crag, one found the lake had risen from a very low point to the highest, all but five inches, ever known. " Nine feet, at least," said one boatman, who spoke of the greatest flood as having taken place about fifty years ago ; but dates were nothing to him. It was small comfort to feel that the boats in the Squire's boat-house hard by were less in risk of

being lifted clean through the roof by five inches than half a century ago. It certainly looked now as if more rain fell, the water already at the eaves would play bad pranks with any shallop therein bestowed. As for the boats laid up for the winter on the isthmus, in the early morn they were floating bottom up, and lockers, with their contents of cushions, rudders, and the like, had gone, it seemed, to the more capacious locker of Davy Jones. The isthmus itself was an island now. Vicar's Island was diminished in size, and waters broke upon its grassy lawn. Lingholme had ceased to be; the island of good St. Herbert looked like a giant floating raft of brushwood. The rocks beloved by the cormorants had sunk their dark heads beneath the tide. The herons had fled to Wythop Woods, and the sad-faced heronry of men fished with their boat-hooks for their lost boat-furniture and such-like treasures amongst the flotsam of leaves and wreckage upon the stormy shore.

I knew that the heights of the three floods of March 1881, November 1863, and November 21st, 1861, were painted on a boat-house close by, and shall not soon forget the sight of the long white breaker of water upon the terrace of Crow Park Cottage as I went to inspect, nor

the wonderful effect of water, water everywhere betwixt us and Portinscale. "It's the biggest flood within five inches seen here in memory of man," said one. "I suppose the biggest was on Market Saturday, first Saturday in the New Year about sixty years since." "Na, na," replied another friend, "it was Candlemas Setturdaäy, i' February, 1822, was't time Priest Brown was found drowned i' Limepots beneath t' vicarage hill. Deal of ice cam' down t' beck, washed away machines at t' Forge, mashed up Shulecrow brig and fult houses wi' watter. My father kenned it weel; eh, man, but why we've a clock at yam as shows mark o' t' fluid upon t' case, and father us't to crack a deal about t' ald clock bein' flayte o' t' fluid, and niver quite t' saam i' its head efter. Candlemas Setturdaäy, mind ye, i' '22. Setterdaäy as o' t' fowks us't to paay if they'd borrit enny here i' Kessick, and a grand market day an' aw. There woz a stiffish bit of a fluid, I remember weel, three times i' '74. Most particular girt un o' the first week of October, I mind, but it didn't com' up to this, nowt like it."

As he spoke, the southern part of Derwent-water seemed to go a different colour, the water at our feet was almost clouded to a smoky yellow, but beyond, right across the lake, it had

assumed a deep purple stain, and with the roar of a cyclone, bending low the tree-tops of the wooded isles as it passed, the storm blast was upon us.

Only twice had I seen the waters of our inland lakes so lashed to agony. Once on the day the "Eurydice" went down; once on a day that wrecked two friends of rare promise for English life and English gentlemanhood here in sight of a land that does not forget them.

As the storm, accompanied with sheets of rain, broke upon Friar's Crag, we marvelled that the tough claws of the stout Scotch firs could still clasp and keep foothold. A company of girls, who had come down to see the floods, were swept asunder as if they had been leaves, and so the hurricane roared by. But determined if possible on seeing Lodore at its fullest and fiercest, through the storm we trudged.

The glare of the rich wet beech-leaves, the flash of the dark red fern, now that the wind had swept off much brave foliage and let the winter light into the Great wood—was marvellous. The air was full of cries, the trees were full of pain, and the risen waters moaned and broke among the tree-stems close by the Borrowdale road. I had never felt so forcibly that line from *In Memoriam*, "The forests cracked, the

waters curled," as now. The mysterious storm-light from the ground mixed redly with the darkness of the cloud-wrack and the paleness of the water-flood; as for the rain, it lashed the lake and thrashed the trees, and smiting upon the roadside walls, spun up in finest mist and whirled across the way.

Cat Ghyll was reached, now a double torrent, Cat Ghyll so loved of Southey and Jonathan Otley. The poet never saw it finer, no, not even on the day he went to see "the waters come down from Lodore." Struggling on through the storm voices of the wood, I reached the part of the road beneath the streaming Falcon Crag where the treelessness enabled me to hear, not unmixed with the melancholy wail of wind upon the purple rocky heights, the long-repeated roll as of a sea.

Derwentwater was sea-minded now, and broke with constant iteration of billows upon the marge. But one was struck with the crush given to the roll upon the beach by the fact that each wave was, or seemed to be, a solid line of green and gold and red-leaved flotsam, that rose, curved and broke with sough and sigh upon the bank. The green leaves seemed mostly ash-leaves, and a queer spectacle of bristling nakedness did the ash-trees present, all

the leaf peduncles still remaining on the boughs that overhung the water-flood.

At Barrow all further progress on foot was impossible ; the lake waves were beating across the road upon the garden wall of Barrow House, and for well-nigh a mile the high road was covered. But who can describe the beauty of that double leap of snowy foam that crashed down the woodland cleft behind Barrow House, and seemed as if it would sweep the very Hall away? What ecstasy of sound! The Derwent Hermit must in times of flood have heard other torrents than Lodore "peal to his orisons!" Talk of music! "The horns of Elf-land faintly blowing" may suit an idle wanderer among the hills; but he who needs a tonic for his soul, who would realise how of our mortal hearing Wordsworth rightly wrote :

"The headlong streams and fountains  
Serve thee, invisible Spirit, with untired powers."

—he who, stirred by such sound as fills the Barrow woodland to-day, or "stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore," would understand that sonnet :

"Two voices are there : one is of the sea,  
One of the mountain's ; each a mighty voice.  
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,  
They were thy chosen music, Liberty" ;

must do as we are doing, climb the rough-hewn stair, beside the Barrow waterfall, when four inches of rain have fallen in twenty-four hours, and passing out on to the top of a precipice, he must stand and gaze on Jessie Crag, full-fronting Gowder Crag, and Shepherd's Crag, with great Lodore an avalanche of snow and sound between.

Below our feet the waste of water seemed to have swallowed up the whole valley; only three little knoll-like meadows clustered about the Lodore Hotel were visible. Far as eye could scan, from farthest Bassenthwaite to Grange beneath the Castle Hill in Borrowdale, was raging water flood. Still the winds blew and the rain fell, then as suddenly ceased, and in the hush Barrow and Lodore joined in a great chorus of exultation that shook the air. Back we walked from Ashness wood to the spot so hallowed by memories of the last Lake poet gone to his rest. There at the spot whence—as he described in his poem *Resignation*—

“The eye first sees far down,  
Capped with faint smoke, the noisy town,”

we sat by the “wild brook” whose “shining pools he knew,” twice visited; now they were



clouded as amber, from the tremendous rain, but

“In our eyes and in our ears  
The murmur of a thousand years,”

was loud as it was to him, who hence gazed  
through “tears,”

“In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts  
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.”

The hills echoed with the voices of primal earth. The cataracts, as we looked up the hillside to our right, “blew their trumpets from the steep” as they blew them in the ears of the centuries long gone by. We saw, as he saw sitting there,

“Life unroll  
Not surely a placid but continuous whole.  
The life whose dumb wish is not missed  
If birth proceeds, if things subsist,  
The life of plants, and storms, and rain.”

Ah, truly with him we could say,

“The world in which we draw our breath  
In some sense, Fausta, outlasts death.”

We, in much thought of those two friends who sat here in the days gone by, were feeling deeply that at any rate their world was outlasting the death-hour, were wondering to what clearer heights of vision they had both attained, when far over the wide-watered shore to the

west, was seen to come a change. Bassenthwaite, as pale as a dead man's face, visibly glowed and gleamed with new life. The cloud-wrack suddenly parted, the curtains of the storm in mid-heaven seemed to be looped back by invisible hands, and such an aery pageant of sunset glory was enacted between Barf and Skiddaw Dodd as it has seldom been my fortune to behold.

“The cloud-capped domes, the gorgeous palaces” of such a weird city of the Arabian Nights, as Albert Goodwin can present to us, loomed up in rosiest calm, that looked eternal. We realised something of the joy of those of old when,

“O'er the misty, tumbled deep,  
God laid His sunbow, and His peace came down  
And made the troubled waters breathe of peace.”

Twenty-four more hours without rain, and I stood on the Vicarage terrace, from which at sunset time on a calm October day in 1769, Gray, the poet, saw “the sweetest scene he had yet discovered in point of pastoral beauty.” I verily believe he would still have gazed with satisfaction. The grasses on the long back of Helvellyn and Glaramara were washed into strange whiteness, the fern on Grisedale and Skiddaw was still dusky red from the recent

rainfalls, but the fields had reappeared, children sang along the roads, and men and cattle came as of old across the valley.

The Greta, murmuring loud, had sunk from sight, the Derwent shone clear and brimming as it swept through emerald meadows toward the sea. But the white face of that pastor in his Sabbath sleep, that looked up so helplessly at the man who found him in the hollow way at my feet, sixty-six years ago, haunted the scene.

One felt that the tears of heaven had called forth a grief two generations of men had well-nigh forgotten. The flood that had passed away had left sad memories behind.

## A DAY WITH THE PICTS AND CELTS OF CUMBERLAND.

“It is the first glad day of March,  
Each moment lovelier than before.”

THE bees are busy in the crocus beds; the village children, as busy as bees, are hunting along the hedgerows by the school for the first celandines and the earliest daisies. In the valley meadows I hear that never-to-be-forgotten voice of spring, the new lambkin's cry, and through the sunny air the rooks sail with their delightfully contented clamour that tells me winter is over and gone.

It is true there was a slight hoar-frost on the ground this morning, but it passed into the finest gossamer veil, and, after hanging like a spirit-film of fairy cloud for half an hour above the lake, vanished into blue sky, and left us far and near mountain, valley, and wood and water-flood one lustrous glory of tender sunshine.

On such a day as this one leaves the vale and climbs to mountain solitudes, for the valley is so full of life and industry that one can hardly have the heart to stop the man at the barrow or the shepherd at the feeding-trough to have what in Cumberland they call a 'crack' with him. And so, because one feels oneself a little bit ashamed of indolence and uselessness, one gets gone to where beyond these sweet accusing voices there is peace.

Not but what high up above the Armboth Fells the buzzard is crying, and the raven, that watch-dog of the air, barks his hoarse bark over the yellow back of the mighty Helvellyn.

We are bent to-day on a visit to prehistoric man, so we pass along beneath the hill whereon the Viking chieftains rest, "The Ridge of the Dead," Latrigg of our day, and wind through the woods of Brundholme high up above the gleaming Greta. "Great A?" said Robert Southey, "it ought to be called 'Great S!'" and Bob Southey is right, for as one passes on eastward one sees the river twist and almost flow back upon itself, and, like a serpent, coil and uncoil as it races down to Keswick. Ah! these Brundholme woods, fair to-day as when in 1792 Dorothy Wordsworth and her brother William delighted to walk and wonder at their

beauty, how doubly fair ye seem to the wanderer in your leafy wilderness, seeing that Coleridge and Calvert and Southey have here found rest of soul and inspiration. The rabbits scurry through the crackling fern, the blackbird bustles through the umber leafage, a jay scolds at us from the copse; but except for these sounds there is absolute silence, save when in gentlest whisper the long-tailed titmice pass from larch to larch.

We leave the road and descend through the woodland, grey with the shining hazel, purple with the birch trees—those fountains of life, so soon to fall in emerald rain, and, reaching the river, venture across by a railway viaduct, and so gain the southern bank. Thence up straight to the Druid Circle we go, gazing back not once or twice to take in the full glory of lemon light upon the larch tree woods on Latrigg and the yellow glow upon the winter-blanchèd back of Blencathra. Beautiful as is Lonscale's mountain side, with its bronze-coloured masses of heather, some of the beauty is marred by jet black patches from the Fire-god's hand. The shepherds know that there is nothing so toothsome for their Herdwick sheep as the new sprouting undertufts of heather, and for this purpose early in March, if the weather has

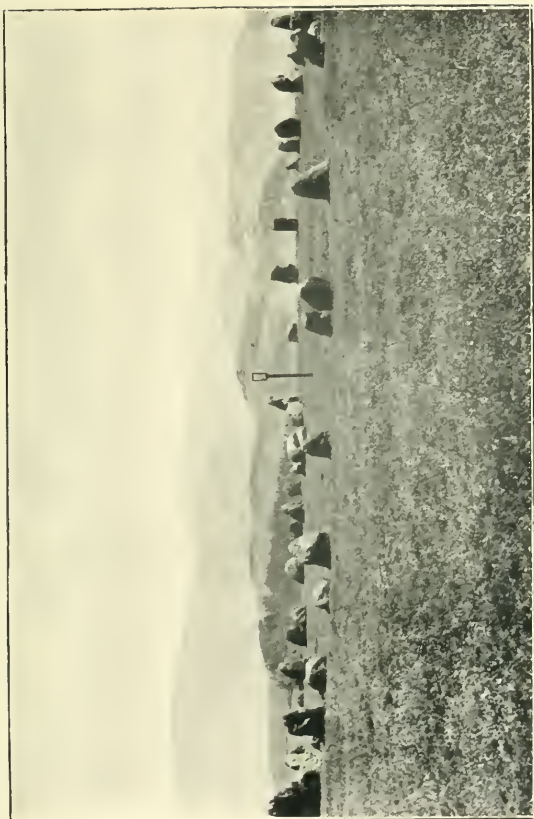
favoured them, they set the mountain side on fire and let the ling burn itself out. We passed on to the Druid Circle and thought of the times of the earlier Fire-god worshipped here. Thought of the great assemblies here on Midsummer Eve in honour of the sun. Thought of how in later Viking times the people hither flocked to their doom or judgment ring, and, while the judge presided, the bowmen kept their arrows on the string ready to pierce to the heart any 'wolf of the holy place' who dared to approach the sanctuary, and, by approaching, to defile the ring of doom. Thence down towards the most interesting of prehistoric villages in this part of Cumberland. The old village of the Picts or Pixies at Threlkeld Knott at the back of the Threlkeld Quarry. We crossed the Bure, loved by Richardson the poet, and sung of by Sir Walter in his old love-making days, and, ascending by Hilltop farm, we paused for a draught of crystal clear at the finest fountain that Helvellyn knows.

The grey crags of 'Woden,' Wanthwaite of to-day, gleamed up above us half shadow and half sun, and on up that bewitching mountain road that leads across the waste and solitary moor to Dockwray and Ullswater we went. Suddenly, when we got abreast of the Quarry,

we turned down hill to the left over the sloping fellside and found ourselves in the presence of prehistoric man. Here were the enclosure walls of their fortified village, there the remains of the foundations of their circular huts or wigwams; below, and to the eastward, lay the numberless graves of the shepherds of old time, and right in front, to the north, was plain to be seen the great common meadow, to which, in fear of the wolf from yonder wolf-craggs on Helvellyn or the robber from the hills, these primeval settlers drove their flocks at eventide. The sun shone, the lilac haze lay again against the Crossfell range out eastward, soft the lustrous vapour bathed the blue hills to the west, and I felt that the joy in my blood made it possible for me to shake hands with those old shepherd 'Pixies' of a prehistoric age, for they too had revelled in the spring sunshine, for them, though it came to them under another name, "the first glad day of March had been a reality."

I wandered thence with Scott's ballad of the *Bridal of Triermain* in my ears up the Vale of St. John, and climbed to an early encampment of the prehistoric men at the back of Castle Crag. Thence descending passed the Hill of Log, or Law-sayer, that





THE DRUID CIRCLE ON CAST-RIGG FELL.



the Vikings knew at Legburthwaite, and ascended the zig-zag by Raven Crag to the old treble-rampired fort of Buck Castle at the head of Shoulthwaite Ghyll. One could hardly believe, so calm, so peacefully at rest was all the scene about one, that the noise of war had ever sounded on this height, or scared the shepherds in the vale below, but Castle Crag frowned at one from Helvellyn's side, and this ramparted fortress on the cliff edge scowled back its answer. Then, walking through faded fern and bronze heather, I made my way across High Seat to Falcon Crag, and saw as I passed where in ancient days of warfare the prehistoric shepherds upon Blaeberry Fell kept watch and ward behind their stone dykes and village enclosures. I dropped down, with Robert Southey for my guide, down by the stream he so loved, Cat Ghyll, and felt one needed something of wild cat-life to enable one to gain in safety the Borrowdale road beyond those shales beside the sounding ghyll.

The sun had set, and a glorious afterglow lay upon the mountains, while coral-pink fleecy cloudlets streamed like 'flamingoes' to the zenith. As I wandered home to Keswick through the 'Great Wood,' the thrushes and blackbirds

seemed to be singing their hearts out, and the first star shone above Grisedale Pike before they hushed their evening hymn. I felt that star and bird bade me shake hands with the prehistoric men of Cumberland. They too had seen the gathering of the stars and heard the blackbirds sing.

## SNOW IN HARVEST.

ON Saturday last I scurried off from weary Manchester to my well-beloved corner of rest, Keswick. Sunday was full of shadow and sun, but the wind blew up the vale as bitterly as if an ice floe were off the coast of Cumberland; the swallows flew low, and looked as if they felt they had stayed too long; and when the light had died from off the Derwentwater Lake and the stars came out above Catbells I felt that winter was near. We were merry enough, however, as we bade the waiter call us for an early walk through the Fawe Park woods to our favourite Catbells climb, and our host of the Derwentwater Hotel assured us that the morning would be of the brightest. At six o'clock of Monday, October 1, we looked out of window, and the sun was reddening still the clouds from which he had risen over Helvellyn. At seven the boots called me. "Fine weather?"

I cried. "Yes, sir," he responded, with alacrity, "for Christmas, sir. It's snowing hard." "Snowing?" "Yes, sir, auld wives' feathers, as the saying is"; and, jumping out of bed, I found Lodore and Castle Crag and Catbells hid in the storm, and over the heavy, pale, leaden drift that hung on Hindsgarth I saw the white face of winter gleam in earnest. Derwentwater lay as black as ink, and the sheep in the meadow close by already stood coated with the white powder of a Christmas before its time. "A good warm Manchester mill is better than this," said my friend at breakfast. "Not a bit of it," I answered. "It is only once in a lifetime that we can see snow down in a valley in harvest time. I happened to be here in the month of June, and went up Skiddaw to do a bit of snowballing then, just because snow had not been seen on Skiddaw top in June in the memory of the oldest inhabitant; and, I'll be bound, the oldest inhabitant has not known heavy snow from crown to foot of Skiddaw and right down among the stooks of corn in this valley; so up Skiddaw I go." Forth we sallied, tumbled across the oldest inhabitant on his way to work, one of the Birketts, whose family name is so familiar in this birch-haunted corner of England. A verit-

able old man of the woods he seemed—"the oldest man that ever wore white hairs." He had never heard tell "o' sic like a job." "It caps owt," he muttered; "snaw i' harvest! It's a queer thing, man; but God A'mighty must know His own business best, I suppose." We assented to the proposition, and plodded on. Sheep huddled by the hedgerows, not a crow cawed, not a bird chirruped—even a robin in the hedgerow refused to pipe. Up the vicarage hill, where one chestnut, the only autumnal-minded tree in the district, shivered beneath its weight of winter, perhaps unknown before, and shed its leaves in masses. So across the fields to Underscar. The blackberries were as yet many of them in flower, the rag-wort was golden in the hedge; but there stood the wheat sheaves, their golden heads white as Christmas, and one wondered how all this autumnal world of life, of green leaf, of golden fruit, must feel this new pain of winter before its time. We went up through the Applethwaite farms and cottages towards the little dell of which Wordsworth wrote:

" Beaumont, it was thy wish that I should rear  
A seemly cottage in this sunny dell."

The great sunflowers hung as if blackened with fire, the dahlias seemed to have passed through

the smoke, and the cottagers leaned and looked at their garden plots and said, "Quare job, mon, this—snaw i' harvest; nivver was sic a thing told of i' this spot before. It caps owt, does this." Up the dell we trudged, then struck out for the old prehistoric encampment, the hill village of Ormr the Viking. Above Ormrthwaite the great white flanks of Skiddaw leaned upwards towards a grey blue sky, with so Arctic a look you might have believed that white foxes and ptarmigan would cross one's path instead of the red old rascal who went away towards his field, and stopped and squatted down and looked, then trotted over the hill, or the solitary grouse that whirred up from the snowy heather. The sun was hot now, and the snow fairly seemed to melt before one's eyes from the great plain beneath as the pastures flashed into green again beneath its rays. But as we mounted higher and higher the depth of snowfall astonished us. The huge mass of Helvellyn was entirely enshrouded; a newly iced Christmas cake never shone more lustreously. Lonscale Fell was marvellously clad in glistening raiment; Glaramara, beyond the jaws or gate of Borrowdale, was steel grey. Scafell shone like silver; Grisedale Pike stood out conspicuous to the west, with its fir-tree or



larch plantations, black as jet, lifting out of the milk-white damask upon its shoulders. But it was not till one had topped the hill beyond Jenkin and looked down into the great basin of Skiddaw Forest that one realised how entirely January had been forestalled. Far as eyes could see, the huge, hollow upland forest-plain was under snow. Snow that looked as if it was several feet deep, instead of really being probably a few inches. Skiddaw summit gained, the littoral plain was patched in the quaintest devices. A giant with a white paint-brush had been at work, and if only one had been skilled at runes, one would have deciphered the mysterious legend of Christmas come three months before its time in the fields beside the Solway Firth. How partial the snowfall had proved was seen from Skiddaw. The hills across the Solway seemed hardly whitened. The sun began to tell, the purple shales began to appear on the steep slopes above the Dodd, the drapery of the heather tufts flowering upon the lower slopes were seen to grow in length, and, by reason of contrast with the snow, to shine almost as purple as in their full flower time. Down to the huts, towards Latrigg, and through the larches, as yet untouched by any gold-giving wand of autumn, we went. The

robins twittered, the rooks cawed. The storm was over and gone, and the voice of the turtle was heard in the land. The vivid greenness of the valley pastures struck us much. After our Alpine climb, we both of us felt as we used to feel when we came down from the Riffelberg to Zermatt. We picked up our oldest inhabitant as we jogged on to the hotel at Portinscale, and the last words we heard from him were—“Eh! bairns, but its quare wark—snaw i’ harvest! Sic a thing was nivver telt of i’ my days, that’s for sartin—sure.”

## OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS DOINGS AT THE ENGLISH LAKES.

It all seems like a dream as I sit here in my lodging at the Heads and watch the water of the Lake carried in scud of fifty feet high from the west to the eastern shore, see the Island momentarily blotted from sight, watch the waves white upon the topmost ledges of Friars Crag and note the rain battalions marching to the assault of Walla's wooded steep. I can hardly believe that I spent an all-golden afternoon upon Skiddaw last Friday, and saw Christmas come into the Keswick vale beneath clear sky and stars.

I was tired of the fog and the filth of the town, men choked in Manchester and coughed at Preston. Red and angry glared the sun, and it was not till we reached Lancaster that he at all put on his natural colour. As we climbed the Shap Fells he faded into whiteness, but at

Penrith he was fair and good to behold. Thence all the way to Keswick he rejoiced the heart, and when I stepped on to the Keswick platform, so brilliant shone the Latrigg woods, so gleamed Lake Derwentwater, so flashed the Greta at the weir, that one almost felt May-day had come again and forgot that it was Christmastide.

Not that any could forget that who passed down the little Viking town's Main street. Such Christmas fare in butchers and in poulterer's shop was never seen. "Where are the mouths that can make meat scarce in Keswick?" I thought to myself, but I spoke aloud.

"Cush man," said an old fellow who overheard me, "its nowt to wat was i' vogue i' my daay. Theer was mebbe not sic pride-wark about fat beasts nor sic feather-wark wi' tukkeys and aw this hangment o' geese. Fwoaks plucked geese at haem moastly—what i' them daays oor pens was to mek, and beds was to fill. But theer's nae sic Kursmas fare as theer yance was hereaboot. I am going 83, and I can mind, for I leaved i' t' deales aw my daays."

Here was a chance not to be lost of a 'crack,' as Cumbrians call it, about old-fashioned Christmases in the Lake Country; and finding the old fellow was on his way to Southey's

Church to look after the 'decorators,' and seeing that I was fain to visit the laureate's tomb, we jogged on together.

"Well, you see," said my friend, "theer's no 'raised pies' nowadays. Theer's scarce a woman-body knaws how to mak 'stannin' pie i' the dales now. But i' my daays ivvery house had its haver-bread and its 'stannin' pie at Kursmas."

I soon found that 'standing pie or raised pie' was a kind of pork pie in shape and build.

"Ay, ay," went on the old man, "girt yarkin pies they were and aw. Why we wad be laaten wood for kindlin' hearth-oven for weeks befor Kursmas; ivvery house hed its hearth-oven in them daays."

"Where did you live," said I.

"Leev! I nivver leevd; I've been a wukking man from first to last. My native was Wyburn, and I was sarvin' man for a gay lock o' years at Armboth, whoar Waterwuks is at; it belengs th' Co-operative now; you hev likely heard tell of it?"

It was a coincidence, that come from Manchester I should have chanced upon the very man who could best tell me of how in olden time the Statesmen made merry at Christmas

on the lands that are now possessed by our Corporation. I made the most of my chance.

“Well, i’ my daays theer was nowt nobbut i’ the daale for a fortnight or three weeks after Kursmas. Farmers did nowt nobbut tend the cattle. Ivvery house hed its Kursmas party, and all the daale was axed, sarvints and masters. They began at yan end o’ daale and finished at t’ ’udder. Then when the old folks hed hed their party, ivvery house had a do fur childer. Theer was dancin’ and cardin’ and what not, and raised pie fur ivver.”

I remembered as the old man laughed to think of the good days in Wythburn valley how Wordsworth had written of the fiddlers:

“The minstrels played their Christmas tune  
To-night beneath my cottage eaves,”

and said, “Did you have any music or carols in the valley when you were young?”

“Music,” said the ancient, “by gocks theer was some music than. Why, o’ Kursmas Eve the fiddler and fiddler’s man began down theer at ‘Fornsett’ and called at ivvery house i’ the daale. Crossed over to Legbuthwaite, cam’ oop by Thrispot, and went to Armboth Hall for lunch at midneet. I was at Armboth than, and many a time I have gone round

with fiddler and fiddler man, best part o' the man-bodies wad gang an' aw. It wad be deeth to leave oot a house, sae ye may kna it wad tek a bit of fiddling, for theer was a tune played to ivvery naame."

"What do you mean?" I said.

"Why, fiddler's man wad stan' and caw out name of master, mistress, barns, men sarvints, lasses one by one, and then fiddler wad play a tune for each name. Then fiddler man wad mek his bow, and wish a happy Kursmas, and them as was naamed wad gie him a ribbin, which he wad stick i' his hat. By goy, I hev seen his girt boxer-hat stuck wi' hundreds o' ribbins in my time. Then fiddler man wad dance intil oppen door, and theer wad be drinks aw round, a deal mair than some fwoak cud carry. Eh, man, but we hev bedded many a decent man haufway round t' daale, in my time."

"But what did they do at Armboth?" said I, for I felt that the 'Co-operative,' as the old man called them, might perhaps like to revive an ancient custom.

"Well, at Armboth, i' my time the most partikkler thing was the Tree we snigged with horses to burn in the kitchen fire. Sometimes a yak (oak), sometimes a pine, but in it went thro'

winder, and as it burned itsel' away upon the hearth-stone, it was pushed up mair and mair, and wad burn for weeks together, till the whole length of it was burned away."

"Did they keep the end of it to light the next Christmas fire with?" I said, thinking of old British and Viking customs.

"No, not as I can mind. Theer was a girt lunch for aw that came o' Kursmas Eve, stannin' pie, and mince pies, and apple pasties, and aw maks o' things. And I mind oor master was most partikkler of fiddler ganging reet round house and barnstead to finish oop wi' efter all."

What a delightful bit of charm-music was that, thought I. "And what did the fiddler man do with his hat and the ribands that were stuck in it?"

"Dea wi' ribbins?" said my old friend. "Why, gev tham back o' merry-neet, to be sure. Fiddler gev a merry-neet week efter Kursmas at 'Horse Head'; you'll likely ken Inn o' that name at Wyburn?"

I remembered that I had seen it last summer when the coaches drew up there, and I got as good a cup of tea as it has been my lot to taste in Lakeland. "Oh yes," I replied, "it is called 'Nag's Head' now."



“Happen it may, it moastly got ‘Horse Head’ i’ them daays. Well, I was tellin’ you theer was a merry-neet at ‘Horse Head,’ and fwoaks cam fra far away—fra Gresmer, fra Ambleseed, fra Kessick, and aw the lasses and lads es hed gien the fiddler man ribbins claimed them that neet. It was to let fiddler man ken who war there, for there mud be a gatherin’ for him. And a gay lock o’ brass he maade by his merry-neet an aw.”

We had now got down to the Crosthwaite Church, of which I found my old friend was trusted guardian. He took me to Southey’s grave, and said, “Mr. Southey was partikkler fond of Kursmas ‘dos’ and sic like, couldn’t abeer change o’ customs, and I hev heard tell that Wordswuth was jest sic anudder. But than times must alter, ye kna ; it’s mebbe for best, but theer’s no ‘raised-pies’ nor haver-bread, nor hearth-ovens nor nowt”—“nor fiddlermen,” I interposed—“saame as when I was a boy.”

I shook hands and turned for Skiddaw ; the mountain burned like transparent gold ; and the larches on Latrigg in softest amber beauty bade me climb the height. As I went, I said to myself, it was worth coming all the way from Manchester for such a talk about old times, let alone all the beauty and the quiet

of Christmas air and sunshine in the Keswick vale. For now I could understand what Wordsworth meant when he wrote of the Fiddler's tune at Christmas time, that verse :

“And who but listened ! till was paid  
Respect to every inmate's claim :  
The greeting given, the music played,  
In honour of each household name  
Duly pronounced with lusty call,  
And ‘Merry Xmas’ wished to all.”

## THE TRUE STORY OF "D'YE KEN JOHN PEEL?"

LIVING by the banks of the river Derwent, here in Cumberland, I had heard on many an evening, the voice of the veritable bugle-shaped hunting-horn that the famous John Peel—"him o' Caudbeck"—wound, in the days that he followed the hounds "both oft and far."

"Over many a 'yet' an' 'topplin' bar  
Fra Low Denton Holme up to Scratchmere Scar."

For John Peel had left behind him sons to carry on his name, and one of them evidently thought that he could best honour his sire by waking echoes from the horn he loved so well, as he drove across the vale from Keswick on Saturday Market-night. It was accordingly not without interest that one learned how, in 1886, after fifty-four years of voluntary exile from his native land, John Woodcock Graves,

the author of the famous hunting song "John Peel," had been laid to rest at the ripe age of ninety-one, beside the margin of another Derwent, the river that runs beneath Mount Wellington, at Hobart Town in Tasmania.

"The place where he rests," wrote his daughter, Mrs. Hubbard, "is a lovely spot; on earth there can be no scenery more charming. Just the place where one would wish to rest for ever, living or dead. The burial-ground is about an hour's easy walk from Hobart Town. In days gone by, father used to take us for a stroll in the early mornings beyond it to the beautiful gardens and orchard."

There, then, at last found rest the fiery-tempered, restless spirit whom Death alone could tame: who was so mercurial, so full of "inventions rare," so wayward, so strong-willed and obstinate, so careless of natural comfort, so regardless of home-ties, so capricious of mood, that even his daughter, who loved him dearly to the end, must needs confess: "I have had many sleepless nights of late years on his account; but no one could do better for him than we have done. I know the spot where he rests after the turbulent storm of life through which he has passed, and as I reflect over it, what a wasted life it has been!—a total shipwreck

made of what might have been all goodness and greatness in man. Poor father!”

One was, of course, naturally led to inquire into this strange life, and Mrs. Hubbard’s letters to an old friend of her father’s, which appeared in the local press in 1887, allowed one to in some way realise the man who had, by the throwing off of one little hunting song to an old “lilt,” ready made for its singing, won an immortality in both hemispheres.

John Woodcock Graves lived, in the twenties of last century, at Caldbeck or Caudbeck on the north-east side of the Skiddaw Fells, a village famed in the dawn of history as one of the mission stations of the great apostle of Strathclyde, St. Kentigern, who probably journeyed thither in 553, but famous last century as being the birthplace of Deborah Greenup, the mother of the great chemist, Dr. John Dalton. Famed perhaps in a wider world still than of those interested in ecclesiastical history, or the atomic theory,—the wide world of sport, by reason of the fact that from “Greenrigg” Farm, at Caudbeck, sprang John Peel, the hero of the song.

That district is still redolent of the memories of this redoubtable fellside huntsman. His daughters are grey-eyed, handsome women,

past middle age, and are said to have a strong look of their father. Be that as it may, whether you turn in at the "Bell" at Ireby, or, making away across the common from the highway over Uldale Moor to Greenrigg, note the little farmhouse with its tiny windows that tell of days when window-taxes were prohibitive of light, and enter the home where John Peel lived and died; or call at the roadside house nearer the village, they will all willingly "crack for iver" of their father's doings.

There are very few of the older men in the district who were lovers of the chase but "can mind o' John Peel, who moastly what always weared a lang lappeded cwoat of hodden-grey homespun"—the "cwote sae grey"—"and leather knee-brutches and ankle jacks, and a tall boxer hat, and hed a laal bugle horn in his hand, and was terble lang in th' leg and lish (nimble), wi' a fine girt neb (nose), and grey eyes that could see for iver; and hed a laal pony that wad foller him like a dog, and gang afore him and behint him at his call, up bank and down bank." These old men will tell you that "As for his hunting, why it was aw as ivver he was made for; he studied nowt else, and them was the daays of the girt greyhund foxes as would run aw day and aw through

neet, and best part of next day an’ aw, wi’ dogs heard on High Fells, agoing aw neet long.”— A useful commentary this upon those words of the song,

“From a view to a death in the morning.”

But it was not only the crying of the hounds on the High Fells that is remembered, for the old folks of Ireby tell how, while young John Peel, the son, had a “terble musical voice, t’ auld feller”—that is the father—“hed a girt rough voice and a rough holloa, and wad put his tongue in’t cheek on him,” and that, when he came through Ireby of a night a “bit fresh,” he “wad start hollerin’ wid his ‘Go hark!’ and ‘Forred hark!’ till niver man-body, woman-body, or child-kind but was wakened fra sleep”—“Cawt fra their beds,” as the old song has it.

“And as for his drinking, by goy, he wad drink, wad John Peel, till he couldn’t stand; and then they would just clap him on’t pony and away he wad gang as reet as a fiddle. Odds barn! they wur hunters i’ them days.”

Graves, the writer of the song “D’ye ken John Peel?” has left us a biographical note of his hero:

“As to John Peel’s character I can say little; he was of a very limited education beyond

hunting, but no wile of a fox or hare could elude his scrutiny ; business of any shape was utterly neglected, often to cost beyond the first loss. Indeed, this neglect extended to the paternal duties in his family. I believe he would not have left the drag of a fox on the impending death of a child or any other earthly event. An excellent rider ; I saw him once on a moor put up a fresh hare and ride till he caught her with his whip ; you may know that he was six feet and more, and of a form and gait quite surprising, but his face and head somewhat insignificant. A clever sculptor told me he once followed admiring him a whole market day before he discovered who he was.

“I remember he had a son, Peter, about twelve years old, who seemed dwarfish and imperfect ; when Peter was put upstairs to bed, he always set out with the call to the hounds. From the quest upwards he hunted them by name till the view holloa, when Peel would look delighted at me and exclaim, ‘D—— it, Peter hes her off, noo he’ll gae to sleep.’ On such occasions the father listened as to reality, and abstractedly would observe, ‘Noo, Peter, that’s a double try-back. Hark ye, that’s Mopsy running foil’—then a laugh—‘Run, Peter. Dancer lees—flog him—my word he’ll git it



noo—but don't kill him quite,' etc., and then laugh again.

“Peel was generous, as every true sportsman must ever be. He was free with the glass ‘at the heel of the hunt,’ but a better heart never throbbed in man; his honour was never once questioned in his lifetime. In the latter part of his life his estate was embarrassed, but the right sort in old Cumberland called a meet some years since, and before parting they sang ‘John Peel’ in full chorus, closing by presenting him with a handsome gratuity, which empowered him to shake off his encumbrances and to die with a ‘hark, tally ho!’” Such are the words of his enthusiastic friend, the song-maker.

But the time came for John Peel, the Nimrod of our northern fells, himself to be borne upstairs to bed for the last time. Death the huntsman drove at last the hunter to earth. John Peel died at the ripe age of seventy-eight, in the year 1854, and he sleeps by the side of the “Cald-beck,” which had often quenched his thirst when he was hunting on the High Fells. There in the churchyard, within shadow of the yews, he who has crossed the coldest river rests at last, and a great carved headstone, whereon are pictured the hounds and the horn, preserve

to us to-day at once memorial of his passion for the chase and the record of his family.

The stone may crumble, and the children who go to the baptismal well of old St. Kentigern hard by, to draw pure water for home use, may forget the spot where the village hunter rests; but as long as Cumbrians are loyal to old traditions, and men are charmed by the rhythm of a hunting chorus, John Peel will never be forgotten, and this thanks to a village friend and follower of the chase—the woollen-weaver, John Woodcock Graves.

“ ‘My mother used to tell very precisely that I was born at eight o'clock on the morning of February 5th, 1795,’ once wrote the song-maker; ‘and,’ he added, ‘I think I am correct in the year, but how far this is so may be seen at Wigton Church.’

“ Anyone who cares to turn to the baptismal register in that old ‘Town of the Viking’ or ‘Town of the Warrior,’ as some say, may see the following entry:—‘1795, March, John Woodcock, son of Joseph Graves, Glazier, Wigton, and Ann his wife (late Matthews) born February 9th, Wilfrid Clarke Vicar.’”

All the schooling young Graves ever got he got in a “clay-daubing” in a backyard at Cockermouth; but the glazier’s son grew to be

fond of Euclid, of mathematics, of drawing, and of mechanics, took to weaving and a woollen factor’s life, married at the age of twenty-one, and was a widower within the year. He passed the next four years at Wigton, and then wedded a woman of remarkable fortitude and patience, one Abigail Porthouse, and apparently settled down for life at quiet Caldbeck, away at the back of Skiddaw.

Things would have gone on smoothly enough with the woollen-factory, but for an unlucky visit of Mr. Brougham, afterwards Lord Brougham, and a Dumfries-shire friend, who knowing Woodcock Graves’ cleverness at mechanics and love of enterprise, induced the woollen-weaver to go in for a coal-mine speculation, away across the border. From that day the woollen-mill ceased to have first place in Graves’ heart. His savings and his profits were sunk in coal. An altercation with his manager at Caldbeck Mill ended in what was no uncommon thing for Graves—for he was a violent-tempered man—a towering passion, which resulted in blows and a law court. This was in the year 1833. Disgusted with the whole business, the weaver went to London, and in a few days had made up his mind to sail for the convict settlement of Van Dieman’s Land, and try

his fortune under other stars. To the peremptory message to his wife to pay, pack and follow, came remonstrances that were unavailing. Graves had always had his own way, was headstrong and was selfish, and, in answer to the entreaties of his wife, he only sent a message that she might choose between accompanying him, or being bereft of the children whom he claimed as companions of his voyage.

Away they went, the mother with a babe in her arms, with her sons, John and Joseph, and her daughter, who afterwards grew up to be the kind angel of the sick at Melbourne, and who, as Mrs. Hubbard, the foundress of the Benevolent Asylum there, will be long and honourably remembered. The good ship *Strathfieldsay* landed them in Hobart Town in August of 1833, and with £10 in his pocket and the pictures and books he had brought from Fellside at Caldbeck, John Woodcock Graves began life anew in the convict city.

The very first night the emigrants slept in their new home, their house was broken into by convicts, and Graves began to realise that he had left "honest-land" for "thief-land." He cast about for employment, and found little or none; took to making varnishes of some of the native gums; tried his hand as newspaper cor-

respondent, and fiercely inveighed in the press against the cruelties practised on the convicts. The Government, so Graves thought, had broken its word with him in not allotting the requisite number of acres of free ground to his family. Then in a fit of temper he quarrelled with the authorities, and for the use of threats which seemed the threats of a madman, he was carried off to a lunatic asylum. It was, thanks to his love of the chase and swiftness of foot which he had learned when he followed John Peel “with his hounds and his horn in the morning,” that he escaped from this asylum. For he got into conversation with one of the visiting justices, and found him as keen a hunter as he was himself, and begged to be allowed to have some paint and brushes that he might decorate the asylum yard with pictures of a kangaroo hunt—with the justice mounted and well up, and the hounds in full cry.

The picture progressed till the time came for putting in the sky, when a ladder was required and was gladly put at the painter’s disposal. It was a grand Australian sky, blue as a sapphire, that had been daubed in, when in a twinkling, the painter hopped the wall and had left asylum, prisonhood and hunting picture behind for ever.

John Woodcock Graves might well enough have stayed in that asylum for all the help he was to his wife and family. He went off to New Zealand and Sydney without warning, and remained away for three years without sending word of his whereabouts ; when he returned he rated the gentle, long-suffering, and unselfish wife for having broken up his home.

Meanwhile, with the courage of her Cumbrian stock, Mrs. Graves, who was a well-educated woman, had turned her hand to teaching, to sewing, to washing, to anything that would earn an honest penny ; and though the tears fell oft-time down her cheeks, no word of blame for her unhelpful, unstable and unthinking husband ever escaped her.

The Bishop of Tasmania took one of the fatherless children into his family ; another of the girls obtained a situation in a doctor's family as governess ; the invalid son, John stuck to his work and obtained his articles as attorney, and became afterwards known as "the honest lawyer," while the youngest brother, Joseph, grew up to take a ship-wright's place in Southport on the river Derwent, and became the prosperous owner of timber-sawing mills.

The gentle mother died, the children were scattered with their children growing up about

their knees, but the old father was, as he always had been, a lonely man who came and went and lived, people hardly knew how or where. Fond of his dogs, fond of his walk up Mount Wellington, fond of his own way, and quite content to be regardless of anything or anybody, if only he might have a comfortable fire, and books, and minerals, and acids, and mathematical instruments, and model mechanism beside him. Always inventing, always planning, but settling to nothing, and apparently able to forget in his restless wayward life all the nearest duties he ever had owed to his wife and family.

Yet Woodcock Graves had a conscience. “Of late years,” he once wrote his friend about ten years before his death, “I have regretted much at misspent time and means.” And John Woodcock Graves had the old love of his old country ever in his heart. In a very shaky hand is preserved one pathetic note as follows :

“Hobart, Friday.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . Can you or me plan for my getting among my kith and kin.

“Very truly yours, etc.,

“JNO. W. GRAVES.”

In Coward's "Cumberland Ballads" is printed a poem he wrote, which tells the same story :

" O give me back my native hills—  
If bleak and bleary, grim and grey,  
For still to those my bosom swells  
In golden lands and far away."

I have often thought that Woodcock Graves inherited his versatility, perhaps his cleverness of hand and inventiveness of brain from his great uncle, John Relph, of Castle Sowerby. A letter is extant in Graves' handwriting which is headed " A Strange Coincidence," and gives an account of his taking over two of his aunts to see the headstone of this famous character, their grandfather, who doctored, drew teeth, bled, set bones, measured land, made bills and drew up deeds of agreement, managed parish affairs, and was looked on as the fountain of intelligence for all the countryside, but who, because he could make sun-dials and foretell eclipses, and "niver went to kurk" was believed to have dealings with the devil. The said John Relph had, to crown all his uncanniness, carved his own headstone, and when he died, people who passed the grave with the inscription would speak in whispers and say: "that's the atheist's grave, Lord seayve us and pray to God!" By a coincidence, the very day before the song-writer



and his old aunts went to visit the “Atheist’s grave,” the village school-boys had determined that they would mark their holiday by demolishing the said inscription, and much to the sorrow and indignation of the visitors to the tomb of their ancestor, and the horror of the parson-schoolmaster, they found it in fragments and laid as a kind of offering upon the communion-table in Sowerby Church. One piece of the inscription alone remained intact, which read as follows: “But believed in one incomprehensible Being.” Enough this to disprove the current tradition of the village thinker’s atheism, and also enough to show that he had been as clever with his hands as he was with his brain, for the inscription had been most beautifully cut into a slab of mountain slate.

Some few years before his death, it was thought in Cumberland that the writer of “D’ye ken John Peel” was in pecuniary difficulties, and at the instance of a kind friend, Mr. Iredale of Dalston, £100 was sent over-seas to help him. The family were deeply touched by this expression of sympathy from the old country, but the truth was, the children had grown up with the determination that for their sweet mother’s sake they would never see their father come to need.

Mrs. Hubbard, his daughter, has given us a record at once of how she cared for the last years of the song-writer ; and of how difficult a task it was to manage the capricious and unmanageable old man.

“ Father, will you go to Southport and live with Joe and your grandchildren? ”

“ ‘ No ! ’ he said hesitatingly, for he did not like to offend me. ‘ Thou knows Melbourne is ower hot for me, an’ thou knows I would just be an encumbrance. ’ ”

“ Well, father, what would you like? Shall we get you a cottage, and buy it for you for your life, and get you a housekeeper? ”

“ ‘ Ay, that will do. ’ ”

“ So it was settled that he should have a cottage of his own, and he told me of a place which I approved of. Such was the place which I have described in a previous letter to you.

“ When I proposed the purchase to Joseph, he put on the hard, determined face of the family, and, like my father, said ‘ No ! ’ ”

“ Well, but Joe— ”

“ ‘ No ! ’ was all I could get. ‘ I know father, ’ he said ; ‘ If he had a house at the top of Mount of Wellington he would want it at the bottom ; if he had it at the bottom he would

want it at the top ; if at the east he would want it at the west. I will do nothing towards the cottage, not even a single paling, but I will provide for my father liberally in every sense of the word, and he may do as he will with it.'

"So the matter was settled as far as Joe was concerned. But father urged me, and I was willing to do my best, and I bought the cottage for £250. Then I built two rooms for a house-keeper, and fenced the whole place in with a new fence. I had the orchard attended to, and above forty loads of manure, and the same number of loads of black mould put on the ground, and two men were working for a month, digging and pruning the trees. It cost me every penny I had, and left me in debt ; but I thought the fruit trees would be productive ; and I returned home after spending near £400, to wait with patience the result of my speculation, both with regard to my father's comfort and success of the garden, which was well stocked with all kinds of valuable fruit trees.

"When the blossoming time came, the manure that I had put in the ground, being rather fresh, caused a quick growth of grass, whereupon father told some people close by who had a dairy to send their cattle into the

garden to eat the grass down. The cows were put in, and every blossom was eaten off the trees, together with all the new young wood, and the whole ground was trampled down. The neighbours wrote to tell me, but what could I do?

“Then came the news that father had left the cottage altogether, and had taken a room lower down in the town, as he found the hill too much for him to climb. And mail after mail came with worse news every time. I had also taken over £50 worth of furniture from Melbourne to furnish the cottage, and that had been in great part taken away by the roughs who knew my father's habits, and had broken into the house. I wrote to the police. No good could be done, so I took another voyage across the straits.

“I found my father as usual, located in a back slum with some decent people enough, and most anxious that I should sell the cottage and give him the money for some wild scheme he had in view. I owed the bank £100, and I let them do as they pleased. My father was quite indifferent, and so one of the loveliest places on earth was sacrificed, and all my slender means lost. However, what was done was done for the best—the best I could devise

at a great amount of self-denial and pecuniary loss. It was all of no use, and so I troubled no more. From respect to the family, every inhabitant in the city was attentive and hospitable to my father; Joseph and my old friends, on my account, taking good care that no one was the loser by any kindness shown to our father.

“When father was taken ill I went over to be with him, but he was so sure he would get better till even near the last, that he would not allow me to stay; he thought I would interfere with his freedom, as I generally kept him in ‘good trim’ when I was mistress of the house. We used to have some tough pulls sometimes, but long before I was tired of my visit he would ask me repeatedly in a day, when I was going home. ‘Thou’st been long enough from home,’ he would say. To the last that I remember of him, he was sternly independent, proud as Lucifer, and just as violent as ever he was when a young man. He must have been very handsome in his youth. I remember he had beautiful teeth, not one decayed; they all fell out whole and sound from old age. His eyes were beautifully blue, just the colour of the blue sky. As I have told you before, his skin was fair as a lily, and his figure simply perfect. I think

the hunting field did a great deal towards making him what he was physically. His lungs were as sound as a bell, and to the last he was master.

“His departure from this world has left me with no regrets. I have had many sleepless nights of late years on his account. No one could do better for him than we have done, and my heart is now at rest on his account.”

The story of the writing of the famous song, “D’ye Ken John Peel,” can, thanks to his old friend Mr. Iredale, be told in the song-writer’s own words. These words were written shortly after the death of one of his grandsons away at the Antipodes. They are as follows :—

“It must be near sixty years since I penned for my darling daughters and the errand boy this missive, heedless it ever would be heard beyond my own threshold, and yet it has greeted my ear since in all lands on that side or this of the world, through all grades and conditions of men.

“They spoke only the village dialect of Caldbeck, so I then applied it as follows, but when Coward of Carlisle sent to me for it for his ballads I anglicised it (see his edition). Ah! little did I think then, when the trio were trilling it over in the kitchen, that, at so late an hour, I should be now rendering to one of their sons a

death dirge. Alas! my heart chokes.” Then follows the song as given beneath, in the handwriting of an old man, but an old man who has not forgotten, for all the years of his voluntary exile, the turns and intonations of the grand old Cumbrian dialect of his early days :—

JOHN PEEL.

Did ye ken John Peel wie his cwote seay gray,  
 Did ye ken John Peel at the breck o’ the day ;  
 Did ye ken John Peel gang far—far away,  
 Wid his hounds an’ his horn in a mwornin’.

CHORUS.

For the sound of the horn cawt me frae my bed,  
 An’ the cry o’ the hounds has oft me led.  
 John Peel’s view-hollo wad waken the dead,  
 Or a fox frae his lair in a mwornin’.

Did ye ken that bitch whaes tongue was death,  
 Did ye ken her sons of peerless faith ;  
 Did ye ken that a fox wid his last breath,  
 Curst them, O, as he died in a mwornin.

*Chorus.*

Yes, I kenn’d John Peel, an’ aul Ruby, too,  
 Ranter and Royal and Bellman as true ;  
 Fra the drag to the chase, an’ the chase to the view,  
 An’ the view to the deeth in a mwornin’.

*Chorus.*

An' I kenn'd John Peel beath oft an' far,  
 Ower many a "yett" an' toplin' bar,  
 Fra low Dentonhowm up to Scratchmere scar,  
 When we struggled for the brush in a mwornin'.

*Chorus.*

Here's to John Peel fra the heart an' the soul ;  
 Come fill, O fill to him another bowl,  
 An' swear that we'll follow thro' fair an' fowl,  
 Wheyle weare waked by his horn in a mwornin'.

*Chorus.*

There is nothing gained by the anglicising of the song for northern ears ; but the southerner, as he speeds to Scotland and the North, who looks out on the right-hand side window of his railway carriage a few minutes after leaving Penrith Station, and sees eastward the Scratchmere Scar above Lazonby, towards which John Peel and Woodcock Graves struggled from Low Denton Holm, away out Caldbeck-way westward, may be forgiven if he asks the meaning of "a yett an' toplin' bar," and is told, "Why, 'gate and fence pole,' that falls as soon as it is touched by the hunter's hand, to be sure," and should further bear in mind that the men who went with Peel to the chase were not gentlemen in pink, but running huntsmen in "cwotes o' gray."

Nevertheless, since the song is sung, not only



in “Cumbria’s native wild,” but in both hemispheres, perhaps Woodcock Graves did right when he altered the fifth verse for Coward’s “Collection of Cumberland Ballads” thus:—

An’ I’ve followed John Peel both often and far,  
 O’er the rasper-fence, the gate, and the bar,  
 From Low Denton-holme up to Scratchmere Scar,  
 When we vied for the brush in the morning.

And there is a certain gain in smoothness and directness in the use of the present tense for the interrogation instead of the past. “D’ye ken John Peel?” is preferable to “Did ye ken John Peel?” as it was originally written.

Years after, in 1882, the old song-writer corrected an edition of his song which was printed away at Hobart Town at the request of some hunters; he then returned to his original reading in the fifth verse, but added a sixth, which may have been needed to make the song understood in a land where the running huntsman did not exist, but which certainly is not wanted by Cumberland Fellside hunters, and adds nothing to the worth of the production. The verse ran as follows:—

“Our best of nags went stride for stride,  
 With ears shot forth and nostrils wide;  
 Nor fagged before ‘Ware, dead!’ we cried,  
 As we grappled for the brush in the mwornin’.”

In the same year, 1882, under date April 24th, he made a copy of his song, to which he appended the note "first written at Caldbeck fifty years ago," so we know that it was penned in the last autumn or winter of his stay in Cumberland.

Verses sent by the writer of the song have been added to it at various times. The air and chorus is so taking that it rather encourages such additional staves to suit the occasion. Nearly thirty years ago there was added a kind of "In Memoriam" verse to the English version, which was as follows :—

"Yes, I kenn'd John Peel, with his coat so gray ;  
He lived at Caldbeck once on a day.  
But now he's gone, and he's far, far away ;  
We shall ne'er hear his horn in the morning."

It is interesting to note that the dogs whose names are immortalised in the song, Ruby, Ranter and Royal, "Bellman so true," were the favourite hounds of their master, John Peel, "the best, he used to say, he ever had or saw." "I never knew," says Graves, "dogs so sensible as Peel's, or so fearful of offending him. A mutual feeling seemed to exist between them. If he threatened or ever spoke sharply, I have known them to wander and hide for two or three days



JOHN PEEL. BORN 1776; DIED 1854.



together, unless he previously expressed sorrow for the cause at issue.

“Whenever they came to a deadlock he was sure to be found talking to some favourite hound as if it been a human being, and I cannot help thinking that these dogs knew all he said relative to hunting as well as the best sportsman in the field.”

Twenty years before the writing of the narrative quoted above of how the song was written, John Woodcock Graves had given another, and slightly fuller and varied, version of the memorable incident. With this we will conclude. It will be found in the preface to such of his work as is preserved in Coward’s “Cumberland Ballads.”

“Nearly forty years have now wasted away since John Peel and I sat in a snug Parlour at Caldbeck among the Cumbrian mountains. We were then both of us in the heyday of manhood, and hunters of the older fashion, meeting the night before to arrange earth-stopping, and in the morning to take the best part of the hunt—the drag over the mountains in the mist—while fashionable hunters still lay in the blankets.

“Large flakes of snow fell that evening. We sat by the fireside, hunting over again many a good run, and recalling the feats of each particular hound, or narrow neck-breck

'scapes, when a flaxen-haired daughter of mine came in saying, 'Father, what do they say to what Granny sings?'

"Granny was singing to sleep my eldest son—now a leading barrister in Hobart Town—with an old rant called 'Bonnie Annie.' The pen and ink for hunting appointments lay on the table. The idea of writing a song to this old air forced itself upon me, and thus was produced impromptu, '*D'ye ken John Peel, with his coat so gray.*'

"Immediately after, I sung it to poor Peel, who smiled through a stream of tears which fell down his manly cheeks, and I well remember saying to him, in a joking style, 'By Jove, Peel, you'll be sung when we're both run to earth.'"

Graves was as fortunate in his selection of tune as in the choice of his words. There can be no question that it was the air of "Granny's" lullaby that has helped to give such wide-world use to the song, and we owe our thanks to the voluntary choirmaster of Carlisle Cathedral for his setting of the old rant.

Honour to whom honour is due, and in response to my inquiry as to the history of the making of the tune, Mr. William Metcalfe writes me from Carlisle as follows :

"I published my version of '*D'ye ken John*

Peel’ before I heard from John Woodcock Graves. The germ of the tune may undoubtedly be traced in the rant you mention. See ‘Bonnie Annie’ on the back of the title of the song I forward for your kind acceptance. I have written out there the version of the tune that was in common use when I set the song to music. It forms the chorus or refrain of my version, but I have altered the last three lines.”

What effect upon John Woodcock Graves, the song-writer, this setting of Mr. Metcalfe had, may be gathered from the accompanying letter. He is an old man now—1869—nearer 80 than 70, but the fierce flame of sport is hot within him still; his memory of the glorious days “back o’ Skidda” are still strong upon him.

The chorus, “D’ye ken John Peel?” brings back that ‘girt view holloa’ in the hunting-field of his old friend John Peel. He falls to rhapsody, and encloses a reminiscence of the hunter and an echo of the sound of “a voice that is still” to the composer, by way of thanks for the song. It runs as follows:—

JOHN PEEL.

“ Full oft he hunted Denton wood,  
 His breath was taint with foxes’ blood ;  
 And youth that once inhal’d that breath  
 Were hunters, ever, till their death.

“ If any be still living who have hunted in olden time, when the present field etiquette was not—when any hunter was allowed to give his belly vent to cheer the challenge of a good hound, or let out a sound view hollo to drive the breath out of a milkmaid—such may tell of the irrepressible mania every real Cumbrian hunter was possessed of fifty years ago.

“ The peril of fame, fortune, family, or health past hope, never stayed the poorest cottager when the hounds were screaming on a reeking game ; and, to be first, snatching as if to take each other's head off. Then, alas poor Peel ! the gallantest and best sportsman in all this world, was sure to be hard on the tail hounds—standing in stirrups, with day under him, and coat-tails high behind, hat aloft, bared pate, while his locks twirrelled on the breeze. Then his best of nags struck, regularly as a pendulum, fire at every stroke, save the flying leap, neat as a sea-bird tops a billow ; or, whip swung over head—crack, and hark together, while tally-ho ! echoed through woods and mountains and dales. But save us ! when Peel jambed his finger down his throat<sup>1</sup> to give that fearful scream of a view-hollo with glaring eyes. That was alarming,

<sup>1</sup> Latterly he could not give a clear holloa without ; I suppose he had strained the glottis.



indeed, but who could abide at home? Was it a wonder that men left their work or were useless if kept at it? Nay, it was ‘Weigh, laad, thou may as well gae, but meynd dunn’t brust filly. They’ll kill him ere he gits to Skiddaw; mark out for Silvergill’; and bare-back that youth would clatter away.

“I have very often pitied the wives and little ones of a poor, keen hunter, for in such I have ever found the purest hearts; so in business I ever had them in my eye to do them a benefit. I remember one still, and with tender feeling, who had an earnest wife and a beautiful large and young family, who, before I could retrace the gone day, the while staring in the fire, would haunt my quiet. If Bill had been hunting, *again* I knew Bella was fretting; so, setting his earnings if at home at five shillings, I sent that to Bella, which strengthened her nicely always, and I daresay Bill slept as quietly and as readily as myself. Poor Bill was honest, quiet, and a tough, cunning foot hunter. Many a time when we thought we had a kill to ourselves in a far country, the brush was scarcely sniggered off till a man popped from among the bushes, and Peel would exclaim: ‘By ——, if here is not Bill A——e!’”

But it is the letter that best speaks the man and his wild love for the scenes of his "early prime." His quenchless energy, his contempt for colonial sport as he found it, his thanks for the composer's help in giving what he doubtless felt was permanence to his song :

"Last evening I was agreeably startled by opening a parcel from you containing the ghost of my old vagabond song, so casually begotten. I assure you it stirred up the embers of a consumed old heart to thank you and to cordially greet you on the success of your talent. I sincerely hope you may be repaid better than I, or ever I expected to be. The moment before I had been sent for by a friend who also, by same mail, had a private letter from Carlisle, saying, 'You have in your city a man named John Woodcock Graves, a solicitor (which is an error), who left Caldbeck, eleven miles from this city, with a family many years ago. Before he went he wrote a song, 'D'ye ken Jwon Peel wid his cwoat seay gray' (I was forced to smile at this), and it has since been sung wherever they talk English, but I have it in real old Cumbrian, as he wrote it, and it rings far better. A gentleman went from here all the way to London on purpose to sing it, and he made a great company of real Cumbrian lads go quite frantic.'

'But see here,' said my friend, 'here is the *Home News*, and I think that in advertising he might have as well given your name with his own.' However, I told him that would soon be of even less consequence.

"I then had a lady to run over the air, and was glad to find but one note in trifling error—if I may say error, as I do not think injury; or perhaps you have better suited it to melody, which I love only, but never understood as science.

"I then went to other friends, principal book-sellers, etc., who took your address for copies, and shall do the like in Melbourne. For your vignette you should ask Mr. M'Mechan, Wigton, to allow you to have copied my picture of Peel, etc., which I sent to my daughter through his hands. We having no mail to or from the Cape but *via* England, I hear nothing of it. My daughters agreed (all being apart, and her it is for, at the Cape) that they would have it cromo-lithographed at my request, and give my Dear Sister Studholme or her Daughters 1000 copies.

"I wrote fully in the box it went in. I fancied to sell the impress made at first, as best we could, to defray, or repay, expense, and then if my sister got a price every cottager

could afford (and few would be without one) even here many would gladly have such. I would have the last best satisfaction of doing an essential benefit, and relieve my little time of that care and solicitude which has cost me many a sigh heavenward. I sometimes fear my letter to the Cape was lost by the way. Then I hope Sarah is doing all from the Cape in the while. However, it lowers the present sportsmen of Cumberland in my estimation that *no one* has sprung forth to enquire after or push this matter.

“I see it was yourself who sang in London and I congratulated you, cheerfully wishing you long to sing. A few sing it here, but few indeed know what hunting is, and wonder what makes ‘dogs keep a-runnin’ and hawlin’ at nothink for,’ and while they sing ‘they have not the witness of the spirit.’ Yet I tell you that, on rare occasions, my old blood has risen to singing, and I assure you that on *every one* the effect has been such as to assure me that *human nature* is in all classes and cases alike, *if the right cord be touched*; and I yet can make John Peel touch it. Unto this day I have never regretted the time spent in the field, for that was doubly regained by vigour of body and force of mind. I am gay at

approaching the octagon, and healthy and hale as ‘Ane an twenty Tam.’ While gazing into the fire, alone, I run over many an old burster, and check myself laughing like an idiot and daub out the scene with a sigh that would choke a saint.

“Again in fancy’s flight, I visit the scenery of my early prime, in glee, but find it a sepulchre in a waste, and I with not a tear left to shed over a tomb, that holds fast by remembrances this heart shall ever cherish, ‘till life’s warm streams forget to flow.’

“‘Who knows how an arrow may glint?’ the woman said, of old, in Rome, and as I am still full of invention as ever, you may soon hear more of me; for I may soon set off to the Cape and, if so, come on, unseen to see, and perchance to sigh, and silent leave, as a *dernier* farewell.

“I have yet pluck for all that, for 1,000 miles by land and five that, by water is, is to me as a pleasant evening’s walk to Thorsby—occasionally taking a step of 20 miles on a fine day and ‘pulling’ half a dozen kangaroos, but this tastes not of true sport, nor is any to join you with gusto. One day I was far in the forest alone (cheering my dogs old style) when some poor fellows came, breathless, saying,

‘Why, we thote as you was a-crying ov murder.’

“Now I close with unfeigned thanks for the gleam of joy your talent gave, and wishing all you care for to your own best hopes.

“JOHN WOODCOCK GRAVES.”

Woodcock Graves was a true prophet as well as a true song-writer. Both men have been run to earth. Their bones are sundered by wide seas, but their memories are enshrined in the Hunter's Song, and years after the last fox is seen in Skiddaw Forest or on Caldbeck Fell, the old chorus of “D'ye ken John Peel” will be their monument.

“THE OLD FOLKS’ CHRISTMAS  
DO,” AT KESWICK.

I DOUBT if there is any part of Great Britain where the tradition of holidays at Christmas time is so real and abiding as in the dales of Cumberland and Westmoreland. It is quite true that the old ‘merry neets’ have passed away, the farmers no longer take it in turn to call all their neighbours and acquaintances together to a Christmas supper and ‘three-card lant’ and ‘loo,’ but whist parties are still the order of the day in many of the fell-side farms. I have talked with men who have played whist through the whole night, the whole of the next day, and part of the next night also, with such intervals for rest and refreshment as were necessary; and still in the air at Christmas time there is a sense that is good both for man and beast, that there should be rest till Twelfth night has come in. There is a perceptible

slackening of effort to do work, and a tacit recognition that, if orders for work are given, the person who gives them must not be surprised that the work remains over till the feeling for holiday is out of the blood.

Keswick and the neighbourhood are no exception in this matter, and I was not surprised to find on the day after Christmas Day that all the men-bodies who were able and strong on their feet, had gathered together in the little Keswick market-place by nine o'clock in the morning, to meet John Crozier's hounds and "gang wid 'em for a laal bit o' spoort on Skidder's breast." The hounds came twinkling round the Royal Oak corner, and stood about the red-coated running huntsman, listening with apparent pleasure to the magnificent chorus of "D'ye ken John Peel?" with which their coming had been welcomed, and scarce had the sound of "Auld lang syne" died away when the whole market-place seemed to take to itself heels, and the black crowd moved up the Main Street and over the Greta Bridge, and away through Lime Pots by Vicarage Hill, and so down through the meadows still grey and white with fading snow, towards Millbeck and the Dodd. As one gazed towards Skiddaw, one noticed already dark figures on the white field of sight,



or against the sky line. These were the spirits ardent for the chase who had gone away, almost with the stars, to take their signal posts on the higher slopes of Skiddaw, but as for the bulk of the field they moved along, a contented mass with the red coat and the white hounds gleaming in their midst, along through the level valley ; and these were the wiser, for, as the old huntsman put it, “ Fox knaws a thing or two, and it’s not gangin’ up-bank to-daay, thoo may depend on’t.”

Half an hour after they had passed I heard the sound of a horn and the cry of the hounds from afar, and I knew that game was afoot and that the Christmas hunt had begun in earnest. But my thoughts were not so much with the young men who were going to get a good ‘breather’ on Dodd, or the middle-aged folk who were going to dream over again the days of Christmas hunting years ago. I was thinking of the old folk, men and women sixty years and upward, who were to be assembled to-day in the Oddfellows’ Hall to partake of what is known as the “Old Folks’ Christmas Dinner and Tea,” with whatever entertainment of reading, recitation, song, and speech should make time pass pleasantly between three and seven o’clock.

I had had an invitation to be present, and as I wished to see an old-fashioned 'Cumberland "Do,"' I made my way thither towards 3 o'clock in the afternoon. 'Bus load after 'bus load came rumbling up, bringing out of the countryside the guests from distant hamlet and farm. Not less than 400 invitations had been sent out, no less than 180 old folk had responded. The institution was unique in its way. Thirty years ago it occurred to the writer of one of the best guide books that exists in the English Lake District, Jenkinson by name, an enthusiastic Yorkshireman who was domiciled at Keswick, that it would be a very pleasant thing to have a social gathering to which all classes might be invited in Christmas week, and to which all who came should feel that they were there, not as it were by charity, but simply met together to chat with one another and enjoy themselves on equal terms as friends. Jenkinson's idea was warmly taken up by the leading townsmen, and from that day to this, the annual 'Old Folks' "Do"' has been looked forward to all through the year, and looked back upon with pleasantest memory. Surely it is no small thing that opportunity should be given not only for the neighbourhood to subscribe its small mite to the cause of

neighbourliness, but that the young men of the town should all work harmoniously together with the landlords of the various hotels and the principal tradesmen, to make arrangements for the proceedings and to wait upon their older guests.

Arrived at the entrance to the Hall, I found the local band making brave music. Passing up the steps by kitchens whose steamy fragrance filled the air, I was ushered into a large room decked with much Christmas evergreen. Five tables reached from end to end, daintily decorated with ferns and flowers. The Vicar of Crosthwaite, the County Councillor of Keswick, the local lawyer, the local bank managers, and some of the leading hotel keepers were seated in the place of honour as carvers, and after a whistle was sounded by the master of ceremonies all rose to their feet, grace was said, and the Chairman begging no one to hurry, impressed upon the company that the oldest and youngest were to take time to-day, and then the soup was served. The leading tradesmen of the town were told off to various tables again. To the sound of the whistle of the master of ceremonies they advanced and served their guests. At another whistle, soup was removed and the meats were borne into the room. Beef, turkey, mutton, goose were all there piping hot ;

potatoes, peas, pudding, turnips, and all other vegetables steamed on the tables. The Secretary, as I suppose he was, said something in a solemn way to the Chairman. The Chairman called for order, and announced, as if it were a matter of most urgent importance, that giblet pies innumerable were downstairs, and anybody who wanted giblet pie had simply to say the word. There was plenty to eat, plenty to drink. For those who cared for it, there was beer, but a very large proportion seemed to prefer lemonade, which was served side by side with the beer, and which was also seen in siphons all down the table. There was not much talking. Three o'clock was a late hour for many of the old folks' dinner, and they were hungry, but as hunger passed away the talk grew, and very pleasant it was to see the old folk who had not met for a whole year cracking with one another, and to hear the little bits of family gossip, to ask how So-and-So has fared and what So-and-So is doing now.

Of course there was an element of sadness in the room. The 180 people past 60 years meant 180 hearts that had seen much sorrow, but nevertheless they appeared determined for the moment to forget the past and to think happily of the future.

After the meats, came plum pudding. Again the Secretary solemnly approached the Chairman, and the Chairman as solemnly assured the company that for those who had few teeth in their heads or had eaten so many plum puddings that they had ceased to care for them, there was an abundance of rice pudding prepared, which was very much at their service. Mince pies seemed to be a kind of necessary second course to this plum pudding and rice. Then the whistle sounded again, and cheese and butter and biscuits were the order of the day. So after about an hour the tables were cleared and grace was said, and the bulk of the old folks left the hall for the carpenters to make their arrangements for the concert staging. They returned in half-an-hour and took their seats again at the tables for the entertainment, which was broken half way by an interval for tea and cake.

I saw the programme and knew that I was in for a long sitting, but it was so varied that it all passed along without fatigue. It was begun by the elementary scholars of one of the Keswick schools, under command of their master, singing four glees and reciting the ballad of the “Revenge.” Then a stalwart fox-hunter mounted the platform and gave with admirable

voice and spirit, "We'll all go a-hunting to-day." At the end of each verse, he shouted "Now all together," and one felt the roof would be lifted, by the way the 180 guests of 60 years and upwards joined in, with full accord, to assure the singer, "That they would all go a-hunting to-day." One or two songs followed, and the Chairman gave his address. He begged them to remember the founders of the feast, and spoke of the thirty-one old folk who had passed away since last meeting; 2254 years of what was working life, in the town and neighbourhood last year at this time, was folded up as a vesture and was as a tale that is told. But there were old folk still hearty and alive, old bodies of 94, 93, and 90, whom they could not help thinking of on this occasion. He brought them congratulations from one old lady who would be 93 on the 5th of the following month, and from three much honoured ladies in the town, whom he had seen on his way down to the 'do,' whose ages between them made up a total of 258. He could not help thinking that this old folks' dinner actually helped to keep people alive, they so looked forward to it. He was quite sure it kept the true spirit of friendliness between neighbours, and kindness between heart and heart, a living

thing in their midst; and talking with many old folks he had learned that in their opinion the secret of old age lay in the supping of ‘poddish,’ and he concluded by reading the following lines, written by him, in dialect, to suit the occasion and to give point to his speech :

THE SECRET OF OALD AGE.

As ah came doon the Kessick street,  
 Ah met a body of 93 ;  
 She was straight of back and strong on her feet,  
 An’ this is what she said to me,  
 “ You ask me why sea lish ah go—  
 ’Twas poddish, barn, that meadd me so.

“ What, barn ! in oor foorelders’ daays,  
 When ‘ meery-neets ’ were aw the thing,  
 When fwoaks graaved peat to mak a blaaze,  
 And fiddlers went a-Christmassing,  
 We grew oor oats, we kept a coo,  
 An’ supped oor poddish aw t’ year throo.

“ Good harden-sark oor mudders meadde,  
 We carded woo’, we larned to spin,  
 Dress-makkin was not then the treadde,  
 An’ household wark was thowt no sin ;  
 ‘ Pow-sowdies ’ for oor Cursmas do  
 We hed, but supped oor poddish too.

“ We didn’t clash oorsels wi’ tea,  
We’d milk an’ havver-bread to eat,  
An’ that is why ah’m 93,  
An’ t’ oald fwoaks’ ‘do’ is still a treat.  
If you wad hev’ your oald age so,  
To poddish back ye aw mun go.”

An excellent Cumberland dialect reading was given, and then tea was served. Another Cumberland dialect poem followed, then a fiddler mounted the platform, and the Chairman solemnly begged the company to remove their clogs. I did not know even what a clog was, but I soon found out the point of his remark. Hardly had the fiddler begun than the feet of all those aged people were heard keeping time to the fiddler’s tune. That love of dancing and sense of rhythm is native to Cumberland, and although days are past when the elementary schools had to be closed because the dancing master had come into the neighbourhood, dancing is still a passion with the people, who seem better able to express themselves in that way than in any other. Suddenly the fiddler changed his tune to an old-fashioned eight-reel, and an aged woman rose from her seat and with the accustomed cry was seen to begin to dance as she had danced it seventy years ago. It was an astonishing performance;



I was told she was over eighty, but in good truth I believe if the Chairman had not stopped the fiddler, she would have danced till she died. Great applause followed, and the old lady resumed her seat as if nothing very remarkable had happened, and the programme went forward. The Vice-Chairman was then called upon for an address. He emphasised the social character of the gathering, and spoke tenderly and kindly of all the guests who were gathered together, and ended by reciting a hearty poem entitled *Welcome into Cumberland*. At the last the Chairman proposed the health of the old folks, and called upon an old man eighty-two years of age to respond. The old fellow toddled up to the Chairman’s side, and putting his hand on his shoulder as if the Chairman was his own son, returned thanks for all the guests with admirable taste. As he did it, he could not help looking back to his boyhood and telling the company of the differences of work and the conditions of work, in the days when he was a plough boy, as he had been for fifteen years or more before machinery came in, and to-day. Wages then, he said, were a quarter of what they are now ; he remembered when salt was 7s. and meal was 7s. 6d. per stone, and he said those were hard times, but they were happy

times for all that. "We put our heart into our work and we enjoyed it." The old fellow's story of work before machinery came in, set many of us on thinking, beyond what he had imagined. With all our boasted progress and advance of wages and cheapness of living, the working men of England are not so happy in their work as they were when this old fellow followed the plough in the thirties of last century. The joy and dignity of labour has somehow or other been lost.

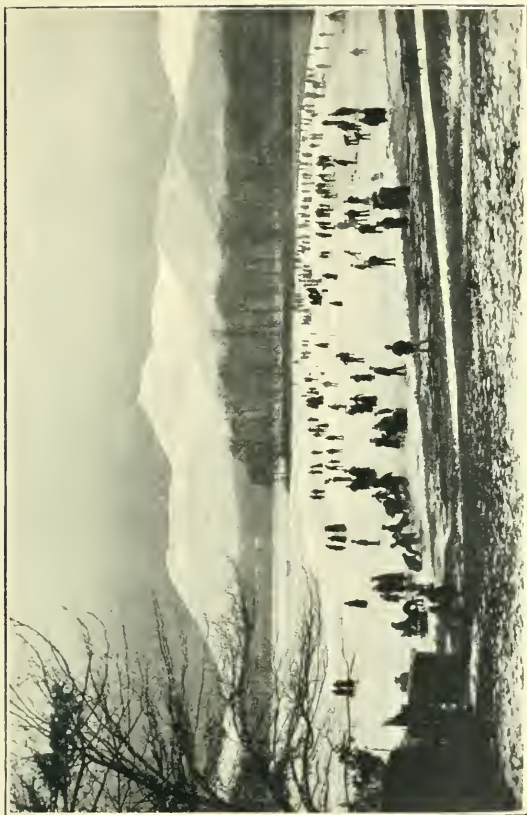
The proceedings ended with the National Anthem and a verse of "Auld Lang Syne," which filled the room and echoed out into Keswick streets, and then, after many a handshaking and "Ye'll be hear next year likely," "Ay, ay, I whoape sea," they passed back to the town and back in the omnibuses to the far-off farms and hamlets, and the Old Folks' "Do" of 1901 was past and over.

## A DAY ON FROZEN DERWENT- WATER.

WHEN I woke this morning in the valley of Ketel, son of Ormr, that old Viking who ran his boats ashore at the Wyke, and gave us the name of Ketel's Wyke, which we call Keswick to-day, I thought that he and his sons must have been very much at home in the wintry springs of the days gone by. The sun just risen upon Helvellyn showered golden light on all the mountain peaks to the west. Dark upon Robinson lay the shadow of Hindsgarth, and purple-black upon Grisedale was the image of Causey Pike. All the lower draperies of the hills were grey and white, that only waited for the sun to climb a little higher to flash into dazzling beauty. The heavy snowfall upon Helvellyn and Blencathra had been undissipated by the hot suns of yesterday and the day before, but Skiddaw, with its great flanks

facing the south, had in the past two days changed from virgin whiteness into purple russet veined with ivory, and already in middle valley the fields were green again.

As I somewhat impatiently hastened to dress, the air round my hotel seemed full of wings; they were the wings of the white doves of the sea, the harmless kittiwake gulls that, ever since a day when, a few years back, a great poisoning of fish took place in the Greta, have frequented the Keswick valley. I made inquiries about these gulls, and found there was hardly a house in the Keswick vale to which they did not come for food day after day in winter weather. As they wheeled, and folded wing, and mixed with the raven-black rooks at their morning meal in front of the hotel, one thought that these children of the sea had given the English lakeland another charm. The heavens were cloudless azure and the sun as hot as middle May, but everyone I met seemed to be bound to the lake with skates on their arms, and I followed. The sight that met me was not soon to be forgotten. The vast sheet of Derwentwater lay like molten gold from end to end beneath the morning sun. Southward, "solid mountains shone," clad in what seemed nothing else than silver mail.



A DAY ON FROZEN DERWENTWATER.



The sun had, I supposed, melted the snows, and these, refrozen in the night time, reflected back with dazzling splendour the beauty of the morning. Out of the sheet of burnished gold at one's feet, the woody Island of St. Herbert and Lord's Island lifted themselves, already somewhat purpled with the spring. Walla Crag swept to the lake in rich brown drapery, and the woods of Brandelhow and Fawe added colour to the white background of Catbels and Swinside. Except the lazy croak of ravens circling overhead, the cry of some wild duck as they went by us, there were few sounds to break the stillness of the scene. But there was one sound which, if it has ever been heard, can never be forgotten—the sound as of a multitude mourning that cannot be comforted, unearthly murmurings or whisperings of a host in pain—and that sound was simply the thousand resonances of the ringing skates that sighed along the polished icy floor.

But the ringing of innumerable skates in their confused murmuring had one other sound added to them. Over and over again, with no particular reason to account for it, the great ice sheet gave a muffled roar, as though it could contain its grief no longer and bellowed in its agony.

I left the skaters flitting to and fro, these with their hockey sticks, those with their sledges ; I left the cyclists wheeling in and out, and went off on a solitary voyage of discovery beyond St. Herbert's Island to the woods of Brandelhow. Now and again as one looked backward one saw the flashing of the sun upon the swift skates mixing in their rhythmic dance, and when one gained the shade of the hills one noted how the grey ice-sheeted floor of beaten gold was now changed into a mirror of the most exquisite steel blue. The ice when one came to examine it was just a great grey glassy network of bubbles, four or five inches thick, as it seemed. The roughnesses of a day or two ago had been smoothed out of it by the hot sun of yesterday, and nothing could exceed the delight with which one seemed to speed with wings across the marvellous mirror ; for indeed the beauty of the scene lay largely in the glorious reflections of the sun-lit snowy hills, and when one turned one's back on Borrowdale to skate for home, one seemed really to be skating partly on blue sky, and partly upon the gold-lit mountain peaks of Skiddaw.

Beautiful as frozen Derwentwater was at noontide, its beauty grew with every hour of the westering sun, and when, collecting its fire,



the sun descended upon Newlands and flashed its low light down the valley on to the lake and Walla Crag beyond, it not only filled the ice with fire, but made the yellow banks of Stable Hills and the golden reeds at Scarf Close Bay burn like molten gold. As one bent forward against the light wind, the woods seemed to move with one in one's forward speed, and one felt that strange exhilaration which I suppose the sudden powers of new speed must give unto the souls of the blessed.

But one was recalled very swiftly from heaven to earth by a cry of alarm from St. Herbert's Island. Tempted by the exceeding beauty of the reflections, one was speeding into the one danger-spot of the lake south of that island, and one's skates had almost touched the water that lay upon the surface of the ice before one was aware that, though this was ice as burnished as water, that was the mirror of an open water lane. Skating round it one again headed for home, and for the rest of the afternoon watched the weird effects which came upon Derwentwater when the sun had set beyond the hills, and the light lay only upon Blencathra's utmost peak. Lilac mists gathered above us in the valley, the frozen lake itself went into lilac hue, and lilac rose up the mountains

to the snow, and still there was sound of the ringing skate, when the stars were white and large in the west and only the grey old moon looked down upon our frozen pleasure-ground.

Later on in the eventide, when the whole scene was spectral fair in the moonlight, I visited the lake again, and watched skaters flitting about with Chinese lanterns in their hands; very beautiful was the intricate dance of these lantern-bearers as they passed to and fro, and spun and wheeled and shot and turned with their flying jewels in the uncertain light.

It had been a great day, truly. Beauty of heavenly light, beauty of light upon earth and light upon the frozen water flood; and I went to rest that night strangely weary, as it seemed to me, not only from the use of muscles rarely used, but from sheer excess of joy; one's eyes ached from the dazzle of the day, one's mind was weary trying to remember so much loveliness, and one's heart ached to think that so few of the thousands of one's fellow-countrymen in prison cities pent, had been privileged to know how near to earthly paradise a fine day on frozen Derwentwater can be.

## CUMBERLAND CHARACTER.

IT is impossible to understand or explain Cumberland character without remembering that national characteristics change very slowly, and that the geographical features of a country have something to do with the permanency of national features.

The Cumberland people of to-day are for the most part of Viking origin, and owing to the fact that the hills and dales of Cumberland have practically kept the dwellers in them very much to themselves, and to certain family strains of blood, and that until the middle of this century these dales-folk were shut off from the rest of the world, one is able to find the manner of the ancient Norseman still unchanged, and the Cumbrian character much as it was when the chieftain Thorolf or Ingolf ran his boats ashore at Ravenglass or Derwent-Muth in the ninth century, and made their way into our mountain fastnesses.

To understand Cumbrian character to-day, one must read the ancient Sagas. Therein one finds the prototype of the modern dalesman. What strikes one as one reads those sagas is that the men, though they are born farmers and only fighters when need be, yet nevertheless delight in war. That they are men with tremendous feeling for the honour of the spoken word; a man's word is his bond. That they love their home life and their homesteads or farm-steadings with passionate love. That they are, whatever may be their lives before marriage, very true to the wedding contract. That they are men of few words, fond of listening to stories and the professional story-teller, but slow of speech. That they have a great sense of law and order—the will of the Overlord or the Log-sayer at the Thing being sacred. That they are hard workers, with a great idea of lightening the weeks of weary toil with a good feast and a merry-making. That, though sober and frugal at other times, they are, at their feast makings, considerable drinkers. That they are not passionate, not easily roused to anger, but if roused, furious, fierce, and unforgiving, bearing grudges all through their days against those whom they deem have done them any wrong. That they are withal very

hospitable to the far-farer or the stranger, and apparently have great concern to see that the guest, whoever he be, shall be rightly entreated. Money they have not 'mickle' to give; they will give in kind. They are superstitious seers of signs in Heaven and on earth, but not deeply religious; at least I always think that with all their respect for Thor and Odin, they look upon the gods as very good fellows, a trifle better than themselves, and trust that in Valhalla all will be well with them, but I doubt if the fear of God was constantly before their eyes, and if the deep religious instinct that makes men into saints and martyrs was generally found among them.

Nevertheless their ethical code as regarded property and mutual trust was high. The law of 'meum and tuum' was understood, and they were, if once they were fast friends, willing to serve one another to the death. Added to this they had the instincts of a gentleman. As one reads the Sagas, one feels one is moving amongst people who have a wonderful native courtesy, and who are at the same time full of simple dignity and self-reliance, not without some considerable power of boasting. As for humour, it seems rather to take the form of 'wise sayings,' asking of riddles; their wit is

dry and shrewd, more of pith than laughter about it. One notices also that they are great observers of personal characteristics, and get much fun out of the nicknames they give to one another,—Hawk-neb, Red-beard, Long-foot, Fish-slayer, and the like.

Of bodily pain they are great endurers, stoical almost as North-West American Indians. Of death they seem to have little fear, it is with them the natural end, but they are very particular about the funeral rites, and the punctual and careful observance of the burial custom is a notable feature with all the Norse life we read of. Men may forget the 'steading' or the 'garth' where the Viking forefather dwelt, but they will not forget the 'How' or 'Heogh,' the 'High' place where, on the day of burial, he "died into the ground."

Now with this picture of the old Norsemen in mind let us come back to Cumberland of to-day, and see if the sons of the Vikings have much altered, or are in their characteristics Vikings still.

First, they are born farmers. I suppose there are few men who are so competent to make two ends meet in these days of agricultural depression as the hard-working Cumberland farmer, and there are, for the size of the

county, fewer farmers' sons who take to war as a profession than perhaps in any county in England. But they have the Viking love of adventure; the men who in our time have made their fortunes in London by sheer pluck and honest industry show this; nevertheless, go where they may, their love of home is very strong. They have a homing instinct like the heaf-born herdwick, and no matter to what part of the earth they go, or which of the seven seas they cross, the Cumbrian's heart is back among the blue hills of his native county.

Next about their word being their bond. I have come across men of the generation passing away, who in all their contracts never once used a piece of written paper. "Naay, naay," they would say, "he gev' me his word, and what, that's eneuf, or sud be eneuf fer any man."

It is this same feeling about the sanctity of the spoken word that makes a Cumbrian refuse to say he knows to any question, if he does not, and also refuses to allow him to speak ill of a neighbour except under great provocation.

As to moral life, I fear that parish registers and statistics point to Cumberland being in one matter Viking still. The Young Women's Friendly Societies have of late years done much to raise the tone of thought in this

matter, and it is hoped that young men may in the next generation think more nobly of what is due to young women, and be more knightly and more self-restrained for Christ's sake. But like the Norsemen of old, if the man and woman once wed, they are true to the contract.

They are men of few words, the exact opposite of the voluble Celt still, but they will still listen for hours to those who will entertain them with stories. They appreciate a "doun-reet good crack." I noted last year in camp that in most of the tents some one man was the story-teller, who was evidently deputed to give a bit of crack or sing his song before his mates went off to sleep.

As to law and order, where will you find men so manageable in a crowd as in Cumberland, so self-restrained. They have, side by side with their respect for order, great ideas of having their rights, perhaps almost a love of appeal to law and the judge. I think this is out of their high sense of the greatness and the majesty of law, but it is also partly the result of their willingness to abide by law.

The Cumbrian, too, of to-day is like his Viking ancestor in being willing to endure long spells of work if only he may have his Martinmas and his Christmas holiday. The



old days of the 'Murry Neets' and junketings from farm to farm have faded away, but these were direct survivals of Viking times. Notwithstanding that we in Cumberland live under the rain-belt, as a county, men seem to me to be learning to be sober. I can see a great change for the better in the last fifteen years. But the Hirings on certain Christmas and New Year festivals seem still to waken Viking echoes, and the idea prevails that at such times the wassail horn should be lifted high. This, too, I believe to be a survival from Norse Festivals.

Men in Cumberland keep their tempers; if they lose them they do not easily recover peace of mind, and the Cumbrian who thinks himself aggrieved or wronged seems to be unable to forgive and forget. I have come across instances of men who for some quite trifling reason have passed one another without a word for years. They would have been quite willing to make it up if that had not implied that one must confess to the other that he was in the wrong or had been mistaken, but this involved humility, and the old Viking spirit, as one sees it in the Sagas, does not believe in humility.

Turn next to the question of hospitality to the far-farer and the guest. We find the old Viking spirit still strong amongst the Cumber-

land folk in this matter. Indeed our Lake District is an ideal resting-place for visitors and strangers because of it. I do not believe there is any part of England where the guest, either as he passes through or comes to stay in the countryside, will find such natural hospitality, such grace of welcome, where the old idea of giving the chance-comer of one's best is so strong and quick among the country folk. They do not care a bit more than the Vikings of old to 'part with brass,' but they will part with goods in kind willingly.

As to religion, it is difficult to gauge it. There has been since Fox's time no religious revival in Cumberland. I think that part of his success with the dalesfolk was that he was being very badly treated by the magistracy, and the Cumbrian likes to see fairplay. The Cumbrian is naturally a man of few words, on religious matters of fewer. He dislikes all show or outward seeming, and is probably more religious than he would have you believe. But one thing he shares with his Viking fore-elders, the belief, that whatever happens is for the best. The sense of an over-ruling Providence, which in Viking times was a sense of over-mastering fate, is very strong with Cumberland folk. I have seen them in cases of grievous trouble, of

loss of friends and loss of cattle and loss of health, accepting it all with the simple words : " Well, it's likely aw for the best, and what yan cannot help, yan hes to bear."

Sometimes I have felt that with all this splendid patience, and longsuffering with unbroken trust in the Fatherhood of God, they seemed to think it was unmanly to give way to grief, and that it was the old Norseman's pride that prevented them giving way to sorrow.

As regards the ethics of 'meum and tuum,' the idea of taking what is not his never occurs to a thoroughbred Cumbrian. I have sometimes said if bank notes were found upon the road, the dalesman who found them would just clap them on the top of the wall and put a stone on them to prevent them blowing away, and walk on as if he had no doubt the loser would come to 'laate' them, and that at any rate they were no concern of his. One has only to go to a shepherds' meeting and to see how absolutely they may be relied upon to bring back and restore strayed herdicks, and hand them over without a "Thank you," to realise how honesty is a matter of course with a real fell-sider. And the kindness and helpfulness to one another, if they are real friends, is proverbial.

The Vikings of old were gentlemen, the Cumbrian of to-day is a gentleman. Ruskin said that round about his Brantwood home dwelt men with such manners as made him think of them as knights who might have fought at Agincourt. One of the secrets of the success in after life of Cumbrian lads who rise from the ranks is, that into what station they go they seem naturally to be able to accommodate themselves to it. I spoke with one of the masters of our new Dual School at Keswick the other day, and he said: "What strikes me about the scholars, after coming here from a public school in the Midlands, is the gentleness of the manners of both boys and girls. They seem to have no coarseness about them. They are all refined little gentlemen and ladies." It sounded high praise, but I answered: "They are the children of a Viking stock. Of course they are ladies and gentlemen."

Doubtless Cumbrians believe in Cumbria. There is often given by them to strangers the impression that "nowt varra good was ivver bworn oot o' Cumberland." The man of the South—the stranger—though he may be treated most kindly as a guest, is always made to feel that he is a far-comer and an alien. The old 'standards' speak of people whose father and

whose grandfather may have lived in Cumberland, still as if they were foreigners. I suppose this, too, is an inheritance from Viking times and the clan life and family league of the olden day. The apparent boastfulness or strong belief in "canny awld Cumberland banging the whoal warld" may be a survival of the Norseman's pride, in race and deeds of prowess.

As regards humour, there is much of it among the Cumbrians, but a large part of it is unconscious, and it takes the form rather of putting dry sayings in a striking way than of light humour. But the capacity to enjoy humour is considerable, as anyone may see who hears a good roomful laugh their hearts out at 'Bobby Banks' Bodderment' or 'Wil Rutson's law suit.' I think I can detect in their fondness for proverbial sayings a touch of the Viking strain. Certainly the old Norse delight in the humour of nicknames survives. One cannot be at any meeting where the names of several people are mentioned without hearing from some part of the room a second name, the name by which the person is better known, being suggested in an undertone. We have our 'Lang Nebs,' and 'Hairy-faced,' and 'Fish Slayers,' and 'Hunter Bills,' and 'Wet Shods,' and 'One-eyes,' just as the Vikings had of old.

There is no resentment ; a boy at school gets a nickname, and he grows up with it quite naturally, and carries it with him to the grave.

There is one matter in which the modern Viking seems to have degenerated, which, as it is akin to humour, may be mentioned here. The modern Cumbrian is not imaginative ; the old Viking was. The modern Cumbrian is not a man of artistic idea ; the old Viking was. The modern Cumbrian has a soul for the most part turned away from poetry ; the old Viking, if he was not a poet himself, was a lover of the bard and the bardic song, delighted to run into rhyme and hear the singer declaim his verses.

I do not forget that we have had in the past century a number of writers of dialect poems. That Wilkinson of Yanwath and Richardson of St. John's in the Vale were true poets, and that Cumberland has produced a William Wordsworth ; but if I have observed accurately, the average Cumbrian has not developed, or been encouraged to develop, the imaginative side of his nature. The more the pity. It is by the imagination that he becomes sympathetic, and gets the greatest good from " man and Nature, and from human life."

Last, in matters that pertain to death and the fear of death. One cannot be at many death-bed sides in Cumberland without noting how, as in the old Viking times so to-day, death is looked upon as a quite natural ending. There is no fear of it for the most part. It is accepted in fullest trust that all is for the best. Both the dying person and those around him often let fall words that make one feel that in the presence of the death hour the Cumbrian is calmly resigned and calmly confident that the proper time has come, and that there should be no questioning, no complaint, and after death words of regret or sympathy, though they may be prized, seem unnecessary. 'It was all for the best.'

As to the power to endure suffering in sickness, I doubt if amongst any other people in England there can be such patient heroism, such stoical endurance to the end. This, too, is a Viking tradition.

But if men and women in Cumberland are true Norsemen and Norsewomen in their dying, they are true heirs of the Vikings also in their feeling for the manner of burial and the place of sepulture. It is true that some of the most remarkable Viking funeral customs are fading out, but the arval cake and the sprig of box may

still be seen. The bidding of friends to the funeral is still carried out. The touching of the dead man's face before the coffin is sealed I have myself witnessed. All these are survivals from the days of our Viking fore-elders. And the place of burial is as jealously cared for now as in the days of old. It is true we have no 'heoghs' or 'hows' for our dead friends to 'die into the ground' there, as in the olden time, but the wish of the Cumbrian still is strong to rest beside his forefathers, and I have known instances of people coming down to the graveyard week in week out, for years before they died, to gaze upon the sacred spot where they, too, one day hoped their bodies would rest. I remember how Ruskin once expressed astonishment on hearing how a woman at Coniston used to trudge on Sundays right over the hill to attend worship at Hawkhead Church, and heard in answer: 'Well, well, I cuddn't dea no other; why muther ligs there, you kna'.' The attachment to the old burial-ground, so strong in the hearts of the Cumbrian dalesfolk, has its origin in the far-off time of Thorolf and of Ingolf, the Norse rovers, who, peopling our villages, gave us our 'thwaites,' and 'garths,' and 'ghylls,' and 'forces,' and 'hows,' and 'seats,' and 'sides,' and who brought with their



tall, leish limbs, and their fine features, and their grey eyes, the power to mould the Cumbrian character for the next thousand years.

## THE LAST OF THE RYDAL DOROTHYS.

FEBRUARY 25, 1890.

THE sadness of the Bratha and the Rotha, how it grows upon one! Time was when the merriest-hearted met for dance and song in that Low Brathay Hall where Christopher North wooed and won the beauty of Westmoreland.

I never pass the grey old bridge at Clappersgate without a thought of those happy lovers leaving "the sound of the flute, violin, bassoon," and passing out to gaze beneath a summer moon on Bratha's reach of laughing, rippling silver.

But as I gaze, a solemn sound wails upward from the river bed. Those canal diggers, who have, for a poor ten pound's worth of possible hay-grass, robbed the river near the Brathay

Church of all charm, all music, all glory of broken light for ever, have—heaven be thanked for it!—kept their foolishly short-sighted and ungenerous hands off the Bratha near the old Hall. And there still, as of old to the ears of Charles Lloyd and De Quincey, “the sound of pealing anthems, . . . the sound of choral chanting—distant, solemn, saintly,” steals upward ever from the river’s rocky channel. There in the dawn, “when all things are locked in sleep, and only some uneasy murmur or cock-crow in the faint distance gives a hint of resurrection for earth and her generations,” we can still hear, as De Quincey used to hear in that same chanting of the little mountain river, “a requiem over departed happiness, and a protestation against the thought that so many excellent creatures, but a little lower than the angels, whom we have seen only to love in this life—so many of the good, the brave, the beautiful, the wise—can have appeared for no higher purpose or prospect than simply to point a moral, to cause a little joy and many tears, a few perishing moons of happiness and years of vain regret.”

What is it that so fills the Bratha and the Rotha’s voice with melancholy? It is simply this, that there are great ghosts upon the river

banks from its hill-birth to its rest within the lake.

The rivers have outrun a race of men and women whose like we scarce can hope to see again.

“ Their form remains, their function never dies ;  
While they, the brave, the mighty, and the wise ”—

have vanished.

The Bratha, that soothed Charles Lloyd and his tender-hearted son the Langdale pastor, that saddened De Quincey, that gladdened Christopher North, that was the playmate of Hartley Coleridge in the days when he came to old Mr. Longmire's house in Clappersgate, to be near the Lloyd's—“ those four noble lads that were his schoolfellows, and their admirable mother,” as he tells us. The river Bratha, that was afterwards Hartley's friend when wise and good Mr. Harden of Brathay Hall showed him true kindness, and Mr. Branker of Croft Lodge gave him hospitality that was sometimes more well meant than wise. The river, by which so often Joseph Harden walked and talked with Owen Lloyd ; the Bratha, that so delighted Mrs. Gaskell in Mill Brow days ; that river that heard in later times the sweet voice of Alice Fletcher, and knew her smile.

The river Rotha, that stirred the heart of Dorothy Wordsworth, and inspired her brother the Laureate; that glistened in the dreams of S. T. Coleridge, and may have haunted De Quincey's sleep; that sighed along the lawn whereby lay Dora Quillinan stricken unto death; that made Arnold in his study at Rugby a man o'er again, when he thought the holiday was near, and the groves of Loughrigg's Cithæron were waiting to receive him; the river Rotha, that at the stepping-stones sung on in the ears of the poet's son William, and spoke peace to William Edward Forster, the man of peace, when he came for short rest beside its banks. The river, that ever recalled to her home the good and beautiful Mrs. Fletcher of Lancrigg; that cast its spell upon her Arctic son-in-law Sir John; that cheered her gifted daughter, Mrs. Davy. The river by whose banks Mrs. Hemans strayed, and Miss Fenwick found such delight, and of which Harriet Martineau mused. The river that in later times made a headmaster, Edward Thring, forget his care in holiday-song and scramble,—for no man ever loved the Rotha's pools more passionately than Edward Thring. The river that rejoiced the young heart of Arthur Clough, and that other Arthur of golden memory. That

haunted the singing-time of Matthew Arnold, the singer of both. What can these streams be to us to-day but streams of tears for the great dead gone, and brooks by which the harp in silence must be hung?

To-day the alders droop their tassels in rosiest fairness about the Rotha's bank; the willows stand almost as white as budding almond-flower; the wrens flit, as they flitted half a century ago before Faber's delighted eyes, hither and thither along the mossy walls; the water-ousel glances from stone to stone, flashes like a silver star, and disappears, then curtseys quaintly and bobs his white throat and breast from sun to shadow on the boulder's edge; that other ousel, "the mellow ousel," flutes from tree to tree,—but all is out of tune. River and bird and sunshine and blue air lack harmony with our spirits; and the wanderer by the Bratha or the Rotha to-day might say with Wordsworth:

"Your sound my heart of peace bereaves,  
It robs my heart of rest.  
Thou thrush, that singest loud—and loud and free,  
Into yon row of willows flit,  
Upon that alder sit,  
Or sing another song, or choose another tree."

And wherefore, but because to-day, Tuesday,

February 25, 1890, from yonder white house in the trees to yonder churchyard on its rocky knoll, affectionate hands are to carry to her long rest the last of the Dorothys of Rydal Mount, and the book of Wordsworthian memories is well-nigh closed for ever in this vale.

It is not only of Mrs. Harrison we think to-day ; it is of that "seraphic-faced" one to whose musical voice long years ago the people of Ambleside listened on Sunday morn, the lover of the Bratha and the Rotha, the singer of the marvellous charm of Loughrigg's height, he of whom Wordsworth once said to Aubrey de Vere that he could see more things in a mountain ramble than his own accustomed eyes perceived.

Frederick Faber, the young poet, is bound up in my mind indissolubly with the presence of that gracious lady who, with the weight of eighty-eight years upon her head, goes down to the grave to-day.

Faber was one of the Harrison household. Fifty-two years ago, or more, the young clergyman came to act as tutor to Mrs. Harrison's boys. How he loved the children of his charge may be gathered from his volume of lyrics and sonnets. What he was to Matthew, the elder, as he roved by meadow and lawn on Lough-

rigg, "on Rothay's white-lipped strand," or by Thirlmere's side, may therein be read. As he loved the children, so did the beautiful mother of those children honour him. I have watched the workings of that serene and lovely old face as Mrs. Harrison spoke of Faber—what his converse and communion with her household in young days meant ; and quite lately have been permitted to see, in a friend's album, a sonnet written in Faber's clear, methodical hand, dated August 25, 1838, which speaks volumes for the tender ties that bound the family of Green Bank to the young poet tutor.

TO RICHARD HARRISON, GREEN BANK.

"Dear little one! and can thy mother find  
In those soft lineaments, that move so free  
To smiles or tears, as holiest infancy  
About thy heart its glorious web doth wind,  
A faithful likeness of my sterner mind?  
Ah! then there must be tunes unknown to me,  
When my lost boyhood, like a wandering air,  
Comes for a while to pass upon my face,  
Giving me back the dear familiar grace  
O'er which my mother poured her last fond prayer!  
But sin and age will rob me of this power,  
Though now my heart, like an uneasy lake,  
Some broken images at times may take  
From forms which fade more sadly every hour!"



The sonnet, as printed in Faber's poems, is entitled, "To a Little Boy." That little boy fascinated Faber: he watched him in all his movements, as the sonnet "Richard's Tree" testifies; and when he was leaving Green Bank in 1840, he wrote upon the fly-leaf of a volume of poems the following words: "A Christmas gift to my little facsimile, R. H., lest we should never meet again," and thereunder these two verses:

"If it so be my corpse should rock  
 Beneath a foreign wave,  
 Or feed, as poets' should, sweet weeds,  
 Above a foreign grave,—

In lot of life, in orphanhood,  
 In talents cramped and marred,  
 Soft child! be thou, though like in face,  
 Unlike this weak-willed bard."

F. W. F.

Green Bank, 1840.

The sonnet "On My Pupil's Portrait" is but another record of the joy he felt "in the light spirits and the humours wild" of those Harrison boys at Green Bank.

It was no wonder that the poet of Loughrigg and the Bratha found warm friends in that Harrison household. Not only was he passionately fond of his pupils, but he cared for one at

least of their recreative amusements. Readers of Father Faber's poems will remember how devotedly he loved music, and the Green Bank home was a nest of nightingales. Matthew grew up with a fine baritone voice. Wordsworth's voice is remembered still. John, about whose delicate childish life so much of the gentleness of home circled, was passionately fond of music; and the fine tenor voice and cultivated singing of that son with the beautiful face, Richard, will not be forgotten by those who heard him.

Faber encouraged the singing; and not one of the least noteworthy reminiscences of Amble-side in the tourist season was the exquisite music of the little choir that the Harrison family and Faber and his "cathedrals," or collegians, led in the old church on the hill.

"You know," said an old inhabitant to me once, "we loved Faber, and do still, for all his Romish ways. Why, before he came, Amble-side was very dark. He started evening service in the old church, and monthly communion; and he it was who first got the folks to sing at the services: for you see Parson Dames was going downhill in them days, quite an old man, and he left a deal to Faber, and Faber loved the people, and the people loved him. Eh,

dear! but it was a pity he went over! And we told him so. But he used to say: 'It will be all right at the last'; and we quite expected he was coming back to us. Oh dear! oh dear! and he never came."

To-day, as one walks by the river-side, one looks across to Rothay Cottage and thinks of the music and the mind of one who was pre-eminently the poet of the two rivers, who, though he loved "the elder river," and was "solaced and calmed by Brathay's flooded noise," yet dwelt on the banks of "the younger river," the Rotha, and tells us that

"Many a night the joyousness and mirth  
Of its dear flow had been his vesper song."

To the last Faber cared for this vale, even as his memory is cared for still by the dwellers in it; and he found at Green Bank the young fresh child-life that called forth so much of his tenderness and his song.

Green Bank! Yes—so in Faber's days the home of Mrs. Harrison was called; and like enough when she and her husband, Benson of the Lund, came hither from Ulverston in 1827, the comparative absence of the present stately trees upon the lawn gave force to that name.

She cared for those trees that her own hand planted. She had something of her poet cousin's fondness for leaving the trees in quiet possession of the ground they grew in. I remember how her face flushed with pleasure when she gave me permission to ask her agent to tell the hedgerow-cutter not to disturb a beautiful young birch tree in one of the fields below her house. May that birch be spared for many a year, even as wise care has spared one or two other noticeable trees in Ambleside. May it flourish in mid valley, a monument of Mrs. Harrison.

It is a long while to look back to 1827, when she who had been married four years came to the Green Bank, overlooking Ambleside, and settled down on the How, or high place, up which the old Norse shepherds had gone when they scaled the sheep-heights, the 'Faar-felt'—the Fairfield—of to-day.

She came back into a valley that knew her well. Her cousin Dora was close by at Rydal Mount. Sara Coleridge, whose acquaintance she had made as a child, was still at "dear Greta Hall," a happy lover now for five years past.

The Lloyds had left old Brathay. The Hardens were at Brathay Hall. Wilson of Elleray had removed to Edinburgh, and only

paid flying visits to the Lake country. The Arnolds and beautiful Mrs. Fletcher had not yet come into the neighbourhood. De Quincey was under his cloud, away in London, busy upon articles for magazines, of which the most memorable in 1827 was the strange one, "Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts"; but Mrs. De Quincey, with her four bonnie bairns, was at Town End. Owen Lloyd, loveable "lile Owey," was in lodgings at Mrs. Nicholson's; and Hartley Coleridge, Owen Lloyd's friend, and joint-partner with "our Owen" in the hearts of the people, was in and out of the Ambleside houses. He had just escaped from the troubles, nay, the agonies, of being tutor against his will in Mr. Suart's school at Fisherbeck; probably he had not yet removed to Mrs. Fleming's at Grasmere.

But Mrs. Harrison would have a largish circle of friends. Beyond the Raise were the Southeys; and whenever Mrs. Stanger—Mary Calvert that was—came from London, she would call to see her old friend of the Bellevue and Rydal Mount days. Clever Miss Watson, too, was at Calgarth, the Barbers were at Grasmere, the Flemings at Rayrigg.

Whenever Christopher North did come to Elleray, he would be quite certain to come over

to Ambleside to have a "crack an' wi' girttest cock-breeder theerabout, yan Jonathan Birkett they cawed him"; and quite as certainly would he call in at Green Bank, to see the Dorothy of Rydal Mount days. For Wilson loved to look upon a fair face, and a fair face was that face of Dorothy Wordsworth, that a few years before, seen momentarily in the little stationer's shop at Ulverston, had so enchanted the widower of Water Park as to haunt his memory till he made her his bride.

"You know," said one who can still remember the day when Mrs. Harrison came to Green Bank, "she was what we call about here a very comely body, 'lish' and tall, with the sweetest mouth that ever smiled, and the straightest nose as ever was set upon face. I have seen her off and on for the past sixty-three years, and her face seemed to me to grow more likeable with every year. Other folks' faces worsen with age, hers improved with it."

It was given to me to see that comely face, with its clear girlish complexion, its benevolent smile, its dark and noticeable grey eyes, its silver setting of white hair, only when all the sorrows of life and the stress of years had passed over it; and yet so beautiful in its serenity did it appear, that I have walked miles



THE LAST OF THE RYDAL DOROTHIYS.





to gaze upon it. And I used to come away from the interview with words in my ears, written on a different subject—"Sits like a thronèd lady sending out a gracious look all over her domain."

No wonder, thought I, as she sat in state within her ample arm-chair, the snow-white handkerchief on the table close by, her hand upon her ebon walking-stick, her white cap exquisitely set on to set off her features, her red shawl carefully arranged over her black velvet gown, a perfect picture of what beautiful old age should be, that Faber the poet worshipped, that Hartley Coleridge teased her as a child by running round the table to catch her and look at her face, and that still tradition in Ambleside tells of the pretty sight of the two Dorothys clattering along, in clogs and cloaks, through the snow to school at Miss Fletcher's of Bellevue, a veritable pair of little Red Riding Hoods. And small marvel that the fair orphan child should have been welcomed by her father's cousin to be inmate of Rydal Mount.

"You know," Mrs. Harrison would say with a twinkle in her eye, "they called me at first plain Dorothy in those days. There were three Dorothys at Rydal Mount altogether,—Miss Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth, and

myself, plain Dorothy, and sometimes instead of plain Dorothy I was called 'Middle Dolly.'"

It must have been with no small pleasure that, somewhere about 1813, the year after Catherine and Thomas, the boy "whom every eye that looked on loved," had been so sadly and swiftly removed from the poet's household, the Rydal party was thus increased by the fresh young girl of thirteen summers, whose father, Richard Wordsworth, an attorney at Whitehaven, had died.

She was the oldest of the Rydal children, older than Dora by nearly four years; but she always spoke as if they looked upon themselves as much of an age, and I suspect that lessons were more in Dora's way than her own. There at Rydal Mount for six years she lived, and as she thus spent the six years of life that are the most impressionable, she naturally became Rydalian, and reverential for Rydal Mount.

One of course used to speak of those six years, but one gathered rather from what she said that there was a solemnity about Wordsworth, and an awe in her mind, that kept her, the little cousin once removed, at a distance from the poet. And she would speak of the pre-Rydalian days, and her far-off memories of the fine folk at Whitehaven going out to dinner

at 3 P.M. in their sedan-chairs and returning in their sedans from their card-parties and punch at ten, with something of relief.

But it was plain that if to her the poet's soul was "as a star, and dwelt apart," and she did not read all Wordsworth's poems, she honoured him as a man, and loved him for his tender kindness and constant thoughtfulness and affection; and there are still living in Ambleside those who remember how, on a time when Mrs. Harrison's life was hanging in the balance, the poet would walk about in the Scale How gardens, by the hour together, waiting for the latest bulletin, and how, day after day, he would take his peaked cap and cloak and go through all weathers to hear "what progress to recovery Dorothy was making."

And now that same Dorothy, Dorothy the third of Rydal Mount, having outlived her generation, has passed beyond all questionings of times that were lang syne. She who, a few weeks ago, was so full of life and apparent energy as to press a friend to come next summer to pay her a visit at Water Park, has quietly fallen on sleep.

"An old age serene and bright,  
And lovely as a Lapland night,  
Has led her to the grave."

In yonder churchyard six little white crosses, upon pedestals of grey limestone, tell how her husband and her children have preceded her to the land whence none return. And a grave is open to receive the mother of a family whereof but one remains to mourn.

I had no heart to attend those last sad obsequies, but with a friend walked up to Loughrigg's bossy height, to-day lustrous as burnished gold beneath the sun. Talk of "the first mild day of March, each minute lovelier than before"; the day was a May day, as far as light, and warmth, and blessing of soft air could go.

Windermere stretched a flawless mirror beneath an azure sky. But for the white half-moon above Wansfell, there was no speck in all the heaven. The shadows lay deep purple in the hills; the woodlands swept deep purple up the Fairfield hollow. Bratha shone from pool to pool like silver; and from the Old Man of Coniston, right round by Bowfell to Seat Sandal, from Seat Sandal to the coned ridges of the High Street range, was one unbroken pomp and glory of triumphant spring.

The thrush sang through the hazel tassels; the tits chattered from the budding birch; the mountain sheep lay in shadow of the juniper;

and the red mice ran through the gold rust of the bracken.

There on a mossèd boulder we sat, my friend and I, and suddenly the great vase of air above the grey little town throbbed, and the muffled peal told us that the sad *cortège* had left Scale How, to bear the remains of the last Dorothy of Rydal Mount to their final resting-place.

One, two, three, four, five, six. In solemn single strokes and slow the Ambleside bells tolled out. There was a plaintive tone in that C-major chime that was almost human, and when one put words to it, one found the bells saying in clear English accent, "Good-bye, old friend, good-bye."

A shepherd passed, dressed in sable weeds from head to foot. "Gaain' to th' funeral," he said; "eh my! but what, she'll be missed by many a poor person, will Mrs. Harrison now. I darsay theer's a scoor o' more hes leuked to her weekly for these years past."

One remembered how gracious in her benevolence the last of the Dorothys had been, not only to Ambleside but to Ulverston also. And one had heard it said: "Oh, you know, when anything was wanted, we turned to Green Bank. We were quite sure that if it was a good cause, it would appeal to her." She

gave to schools, to church, to Mechanics' Institute, to the Volunteers, and to all who really were in want, but she let not her left hand know what her right hand did. But not in the heart of shepherd, mechanic, or volunteer will her memory be so dear as in the heart of the village school-child. For as long as the old rush-bearing custom, which old Mr. North put on its present footing is continued, as long as Owen Lloyd's rush-bearing hymn is sung, it will be remembered that once a-year, for more than two generations, the scholars assembled on the slopes of the Green Bank meadow for tea and sports upon the Monday, and bore their "burdens" as the flowery insignia are locally called, from the Ambleside church to the garden grounds of "kindly Mrs. Harrison."

But the bell tolled on—"Good-bye, old friend, good-bye." And darkly seen between the houses in the valley, the long procession moved from Scale How to the church. Then the bell ceased. It seemed as if a hymn was faintly wafted upward, and presently from the church the congregation poured into the sunniest of churchyards; and we knew that ashes to ashes, dust to dust had been said, the prayer prayed, the last blessing given.

We rose to descend into the vale to see in

quiet the spot where, with the regret of all the neighbourhood, was laid one who, for sixty-three years, had been a generous genial presence in the people's midst.

Still the sun shone and the lake lay in perfect calm, and the birds sang as though it had been May. There was something suitable even in the day's sun and gladness to this home-going of the third Dorothy of Rydal Mount—for one remembered how Mrs. Fletcher had written of the poet Wordsworth's funeral, under date April 27, 1850:

“We saw him laid within the quiet grave.  
 . . . . . 'Twas a day  
 Of most rare brightness, and the little birds  
 Sang no sad requiem o'er the hallowed spot.  
 . . . . .  
 All nature glowed instinct with tender love.”

For the friend of Dora, her almost elder sister, gentle, serene, beautiful Mrs. Harrison of Scale How, the birds also sang, and nature glowed upon her funeral morn.

## PREHISTORIC MAN AT PORTIN- SCALE.

PEOPLE who have passed through Portinscale heretofore, have been chiefly in mind of the Romans, who perhaps ran their Finkle Street therefrom on the way to Causeway Pike; of the Vikings, who had their huts near the "Ford of the Thing," which probably gave the name of Portinscale to the hamlet; or of the Norse chieftain Sweyn, who had his "high seat" on the hill that still bears his name, "Swinside," of to-day. Henceforth they will remember that long years before the Romans came, or the Viking Shepherd lords were paramount, there were dwelling a race of men hereabout whose weapons and tools were of chert or volcanic lava, whose home was on the border of a woody swamp, and part of whose craftmanship and means of livelihood was the making of stone axes.



Anyone who walks along Finkle Street towards "Nichol Ending," en route for Borrowdale and Newlands, will note that rather more than a quarter of a mile from Portinscale, the hill slope of Portinscale on the north, of Fawe Wood on the south-east, and of Swinside on the south, sink down and converge, on the right hand of the road, in a wooded bottom—a bit of marshland, which time out of mind has been called "The Moss." Many of the landholders, the Vicar of Crosthwaite among them, have certain rights of peat-getting in the moss, and the peat-getting of ancient days has added to the swampy character of the little woodland.

The swamp comes to within 150 yards of Derwentwater; but unless Derwentwater's level was in old days very much higher than it is now, it is not likely that the lake entered the moss. The Romans, when they ran their Finkle Street, probably knew that the lake did not overflow into the marsh, and as there is enough fall for the water of the moss to the west, when the drains are kept clear, to make it improbable that if the lake at full flood flowed that way it would have permanently stayed in 'the bottom.' In the earliest times, before the peat was, and when the oak trees grew up out of the blue clay, it is, I think, improbable that there was more than

a swamp, which could doubtless have been made into a permanent bit of water if it had been dammed up at the western end of the moss. No trace of such dam is found. From the northern side of the wood the meadow land slopes up gradually to high ground between the moss and the road from Portinscale to Braithwaite. Of course it is possible that when Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite were one lake, this hill slope was an island, but that would be before the stone-axe-maker's day.

There is no fairer slope for sun and warmth than this hill-side; and I have often thought that in the olden days, when the forest was down in the meadows towards Ullock, there may have been here a clearing for huts and village life. When Mr. Birkett, the owner of the sloping meadows, determined to parcel it out for building, and an old fence was being dug down between the moss and the slope, the diggers came upon a well-made hard-gravelled road, which joined the main road from Portinscale to Nichol Ending. This may be evidence of such a village, or of the roadway to Ullock and Swinside—Sweyn's Sitting—or of the long lost ancient Pilgrim Way to Nichol Ending and St. Herbert's Isle.

As the diggers dug out the soft soil to construct the main carriage way up to the new houses from the main road, a singularly interesting little find of pre-Reformation time was found. It was the centre matrix of what had been a triple stone-mould used by some travelling moulder in old days, to mould little crosses and crucifixes, with pins for the affixing of these to the coats of purchasers; those purchasers, in all probability, being the pilgrims who came across from the west to take boat at Nichol Ending, the landing where stood the chapel of the boatmen's patron saint, St. Nicholas, and to cross over for the famous shrine of St. Herbert in Derwentwater. I have had a cast made, and a photograph taken of this, and the stone, which is of a close-grained silicious slate, is now in the Fitz Park Museum. The remarkable feature of the crucifix is that it represents the Christ, emaciated to a skeleton, upon the cross. In the British Museum are specimens of the same kind of moulder's stone, and Mr. Reid, who examined this specimen, pronounced it to be late fourteenth or early fifteenth century work. The shrine on St. Herbert's Island to his memory, and the memory of his friend St. Cuthbert, was erected in the year 1374; so that it is not unlikely that a great number of

pilgrims would be passing to the lake from the west, any time at the end of the fourteenth century or the beginning of the next.

But it is not of Roman or Viking or middle-century pilgrim we think as we gaze down on the moss to-day. It is of the aboriginal and pre-historic man who here had his abode and followed his calling. Mr. Tyndall Harris, of Moss Garth, had determined to dig out the peat moss in the meadow beneath his house on the southern side of the woodland, and make a little bit of ornamental water for fish-breeding purposes there. In the third week of October, a man named Downie found some queer-looking stones at the south-east side of the bit of pond work, and threw them aside on the bank, which they were building to form the pond side. In the last week he and his fellow-workers uncovered what seemed to be the branch of a large oak tree, or the stem of a young oak tree, about 18 inches in diameter, lying east and west. It lay on blue clay, about 18 inches beneath the peat. The tree was very much corroded, and had probably been once of greater girth; on the south side of it there were lying four more of the queer stones, not in a clump, but more or less end-on, and by the side of the tree. Birkett, the contractor, knew

these to be shaped by the hand of man, and secured them. They were unpolished Celts, but very beautifully worked, and very carefully graduated in size. These sizes were as follows :

No.		Length.	Greatest Girth.
1,	-	$10\frac{3}{4}$	$7\frac{3}{8}$
2,	-	9	$7\frac{1}{8}$
3,	-	$7\frac{7}{8}$	$6\frac{1}{4}$
4,	-	$7\frac{1}{12}$	$4\frac{3}{4}$

Chips were, so I learned, lying about, but none of these could be afterwards found, and I doubt if they were chips at all. No stone hammers nor stone polishers were discoverable anywhere near. The tree itself was lifted and buried away in the pond bank. As soon as I heard of the find I went over with a friend, got the spot marked down as near as possible, and had a photograph taken. What interested one most was to find that, lying in what appeared at first sight to be a rough circle, were small boulders of apparently the same material as that of which the celts were made, with the same white patina upon them as we found upon the 'celts' themselves. One boulder had marks upon it made either by man or by ice before the patina of ages of peat moss had overlaid it. Another small boulder was split, perhaps by fire, with a

cleavage as clean as if it had been cut with a saw.

No traces of ashes, or urn, or bones were to be found; and though there were many tree branches and bits of oak, some soft, others hard as bog oak, which had been unearthed, none appeared to have been trimmed for use. It was clear, however, that one trunk had been very roughly hacked at, perhaps with a stone tool.

I heard of only one upright, about 4 feet 6 inches long and 10 inches in diameter. It had apparently some rude tool marks on it, but I could not decide if it was the standing stem of a tree or a stake. Of course, it suggested a lake habitation, but it did not seem likely that the moss was extensive enough, nor the place of the find of the stone axes far enough from the upward slope of the hill or moss edge, to warrant more than the suggestion that this was a lake dwelling. There were no whorls, no sinkers, no shells, no fish-hooks to be found in the moss.

But the fact of the stone axes being found lying along the side of the tree trunk, made one hazard the guess that whoever worked these axes had used the tree trunk, which in those days before its disintegration was larger

in girth, as a snug and rememberable place to hide them under. Death came upon him, or he fled in some tribal attack, and never returned to claim his stock-in-trade. But the reason for their making at this particular place was plain. Here primeval man, the cunningest axe-maker for all one knows of the whole Crosthwaite valley, had found as he wandered through the wild wood just the bits of fine-grained lava and altered volcanic ash he needed for his axes, and here, with patience and skill unspeakable, he had followed his difficult calling—here he set himself to turn out the big axe for the big man, the little axe for the little lad; lava for the weapon was in plenty round about him, oak in abundance, for the axe hafting, to his hand.

I wrote Canon Greenwell of the find, and asked him if a date could be fixed for the Celts, and subjoin his reply :

“DURHAM, Nov. 26, 1901.

“I am much obliged for telling me of the stone axes, etc. It looks as if they were the stock-in-trade of a manufacturer of such tools, and which had somehow or other been left before they were finished by polishing. Though I think in the polished stone period, or even in the bronze one, some folk were satisfied to use a stone merely chipped into

shape, while others had them polished. The pieces of the same stone as that of which the axes were made seems to indicate their having been made on the spot.

“The axes were probably of Neolithic times, certainly not of Paleolithic, but stone was used to a great extent throughout the Bronze Age, and it is therefore unsafe to say that such axes as these certainly belong to the Neolithic Age.”

The experts I consulted at the British Museum, put the Celts at any date between 3000 and 1500 B.C., but were not disposed to agree with my suggestion that we had here an axe factory of Neolithic man, pending some confirmation such as the flakings of axes or the bruised stones used by the flaker, as may be seen in some of the finds preserved in the British Museum. At Ehenside Tarn, axes both rough and polished have been found; here in the Portinscale Moss only axes in the rough had been discovered. But late in January by good fortune another, making in all the eighth Celt, was found bedded in the blue clay, and this was a polished Celt. It remained for us to find some trace of the polisher's tool. This, or a stone that might well have served for this, was found in the same week, a stone that had evidently been itself polished by being used in the polishing process. At the same time in another part of the moss a flake of flint was



discovered, which bore traces of having been worked by some flint-knife or arrow maker of olden time. This looked as if the axe maker was an arrow maker as well.

But the interest of the find did not cease here. Laid on the boulder clay were smallish boulders of the volcanic ash or lava of which the Celts had been made. One had apparently been partially bored by some weapon that looked as if it had been shaped like a small hand-pickaxe; the boreholes were on opposite sides of the stone. Birkett the contractor, a handy ingenious man, determined to try his hand at axe-making after the ways of Neolithic man, and feeling that "t'awld fellers hed bean at this particular stean," he split it, and found to his surprise that within the bore holes were still sticking solid cores of whitish-grey lime, and bits of the same lime were lying on the clay near by. He remembered that his father had told him how in Borrowdale it was the custom to split boulders in this same way by use of quicklime. The Borrowdalian within the memory of man bored his boulder, put in quicklime, which he "stemmed" down or rammed tight, round a little conical piece of iron called a "pricker." The pricker was withdrawn, water was poured in, and a bit of wood hammered down tight as

a kind of bung in the bore-hole mouth. The expansion of gases evolved by the action of water on quicklime was so great that it caused the boulder to split, and, without knowing it, the Borrowdalian had been but carrying on a method his fore-elders had learned from Neolithic man in days when blasting powder had not been dreamed of.

One cannot of course do more than hazard the guess that here in the Portinscale Moss are proofs, not only that the stone axe-maker of prehistoric time was busy, but that he was helped by chemical laws he could not understand, yet could trust to do his work for him, to prepare the rough material for his clever hands. That power to split volcanic-lava stones, by the use of a little quicklime and water, would invest him doubtless with considerable awe, and we can believe that this little clearing by the Moss, with its surrounding sanctuary of oak-wood, was looked upon in Neolithic days as the abode of an enchanter and the home of mystery.

It is still the home of mystery, and if we allow of romance in the realm of prehistoric investigation, it is more than ever the abode of enchantment still. Echoes of the axe-maker hammering away at his stone weapons are lost

in the chanting of pilgrim litanies to the shrine of the friend of Cuthbert of Lindisfarne. And what can we do but reach out hands across the centuries—hands of wonder for the patience of those who chipped the lava into shapely axes, of reverence for the faith and love of the later craftsman who, near by, moulded his little crucifixes and ornaments for the pilgrims to St. Herbert's Isle.

## THE TRIBUTE OF THE HILLS.

ON THE DIAMOND JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

JUNE 22, 1897.

“CUSH man! she’s liftin’,” said the Cumbrian, with the rockets under his arm, as we came out of the sweet-scented avenue of larches on Latrigg side. As he spoke we saw the huge cloud-cap of Skiddaw, that had troubled the hearts of bonfire enthusiasts all the day, move slowly up the side of the “Little Man” and let the light from the level sun strike up and fill its bosom of filmy whiteness with gleams of emerald and gold. My heart was too full of the happy festival I had just left in Keswick, my eyes were too full of the glory of that evening light in the Crosthwaite Valley, my ears too full of the melody of birds to be thinking of bonfires. Such a day for Royal Jubilee had never been. Cool air had tempered delicious sunshine, and the children, who had

marched and countermarched, with banners and garlands; who had filled the streets with colour and the little market square with loyal song, could be heard far below us in the valley, still full of vigour at their games. Now and again the pulses of a drum and the sound of music floated up from the Fitz Park, by the side of the river Greta. Now and again the shouting of a crowd's approval was heard in mid-vale. All else, save the song of the chiff-chaff, and the flute of the mellow ouzel, was silent. But the song of birds ceased as we emerged at "the Gale" upon the mountain pasture and began to climb Skiddaw in earnest. Such silence, such quiet, after the busy day and its doings, had wondrous charm and restfulness.

Pausing at the first hut, we looked south toward Helvellyn—dappled now with the cobalt shadowing of the clouds, and white-crested with the wreath of vapour which was visibly melting into thin air. Beyond Helvellyn, eastward, the great band of stationary cloud, locally known as "the Helm," was beginning to flush with rose, and as the clanging rooks above Blencathra cawed lustily their Jubilee applause, I noted how high towards the zenith the faint blue dome was flecked with mackerel clouds—sure

sign of fair weather. One by one the tops of the hills cleared, Scafell was cloudless, the sea of mountains to the west stood revealed, and so distinctly did they stand out against the sky that even the naked eye could discern the bonfire cairns or masses, upbuilt for the evening's sacrifice of love. Helvellyn's cloud wreath vanished like a dream, but still Skiddaw was veiled. It was disheartening, for Skiddaw had been selected as the signal height for all the bonfires round. A shout from a rocketman far ahead came ringing down the open moor: "Skidda's clear!" Gladly we pressed on, and, sure enough, black against the silvery sky of evening, the great stack stood up that had to be torch to all our Jubilee bonfires hereabout.

A halt was called in shelter of the "Little Man," rockets were adjusted to their sticks and divided between the two bonfire parties. For the hill that was unveiling its double front from mid Atlantic clouds was to wear the double crown of flame to-night. The programme was rehearsed. At 9.55 a signal rocket was to be despatched; at 10 a second. These were to be answered from the neighbouring heights, then the bonfires were to be fired, and the National Anthem was to be sung. At 10.30, in honour of Scotland, all the fires were to burn

red light, a token of love from the Rose of England to the land of the Thistle. Three rockets were to ascend in symbol of the United Kingdom. The sister heights were to answer. At 11 green light was to be burned, for ever-green friendship and memory of the day, and also as a compliment to the Emerald Isle. The National Anthem was again to be sung, and the rest of the rockets were to ascend.

The sight as we gained the top of Skiddaw "Great Man" was beyond description. The mountains had all put on their solemnest apparel—the purple puce of twilight; the vast littoral plain lay like a deep Prussian-blue carpet, veined with silver where Derwent flowed, and silver frosted where light wisps of vapour hovered or rested by far watercourses. While over the Solway lay a low, flocculent mass of cloud that looked for all the world like a huge sea of ice, with berg and floe. Criffel's dark top stood out above this vaporous veil, but for the rest the land beyond the Border was hidden from our sight.

At our feet, steely grey, lay Derwentwater, the islands appearing jet black upon its burnished surface; nearer, like a polished floor of ebony, in shadow of its woods, Bassenthwaite was seen. Cold blew the wind, and folk who

had come to see the sight busied themselves with building shelters on the leeward side of the mountain, or sat huddled under the cairn hard by.

And the land darkened, but not for sleep. On far-off hills just such eager groups as were round us were gathering to their Jubilee fire stacks, or waiting with just the same impatience for the appointed hour. It was clear that either the village clock had gone wrong or patience was outworn at some of the bonfire stations in the plain, for we saw a rocket flash up here and there five minutes before time, and when Skiddaw sent its first signal up, to explode with a loud report in the quiet heaven, there were already five fires alight in the plain. But it was a sight to remember to see how, within ten minutes of our first rocket, that vast blue carpet of the Cumbrian plain was jewelled with light, and some say 59, some say 70 fires were blazing in honour of our beloved Queen. The night was ideal in atmospheric conditions for the display. We could from our distance clearly see the blue flame that was burned on Scafell, and the coloured stars on Helvellyn as the rockets soared and burst. Not the least beautiful effect of the bonfires in the distance to the north and west was that they gleamed



here and there through the rifts of the fleecy sea of low-lying cloud, and now seemed to pale, now to flash into fulness, now to be on earth, now to be in mid-heaven.

Meanwhile our bonfires, which had been lit at the top, burned torch-like downwards with a grand head of flame, and we were proving that there is nothing like peat and paraffin for a mountain Jubilee bonfire, if only the cross flues and the central chimney are properly constructed for draught, whilst we were silencing false prophets of disaster, who assured us "that unless you light from the bottom bonfires will not burn."

Those who had climbed up Skiddaw were not only able to have their hearts enlarged by joining in fancy so many goodly companies of men in far-off places about their loyal beacons; they were enabled to have a bird's-eye view of all the loyal rejoicings of the little town of Keswick at their feet. The streets sparkled with light, flotillas of fairy fire were seen to put off from the shore and spangle the dark bosom of Derwentwater. Rockets danced up and broke in golden rain above the island trees, and overhead anon red lights gleamed and died away, while fireflies flashed across the water-flood and wove intricate patterns of sparkle and

beauty upon the dim grey silver of the happy lake.

But one by one the stars in the plain and on the mountain tops faded. Still the Skiddaw fires bravely burned—the torches of their love and loyalty seemed inextinguishable; but our eyes were far away. The beacon fire of the new dawn was kindling in secret beneath the lilac bank of north-east cloud. The purple bastion was sudden fringed with fire. The first faint streamers of the morn shot trembling towards the zenith. The Pole star paled. The Plough and Cassopeia vanished from mid-heaven, and over the grey-blue plain and that wondrous pack of Arctic sea—the fairy floes of softest filmy cloud—the sun built up the master beams of his palace chamber, and came forth as a bridegroom to woo and win his bride.

19 02







DA  
670  
L1  
R35

**THE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
Santa Barbara**

**THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE  
STAMPED BELOW.**

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



**AA** 000 420 198 4

