OLD TYNESIDE

from Hedwin Streams to Sparrow Hawk

BY

Professor Albert G. Latham.

Illustrated by

R. J. S. Bertram.

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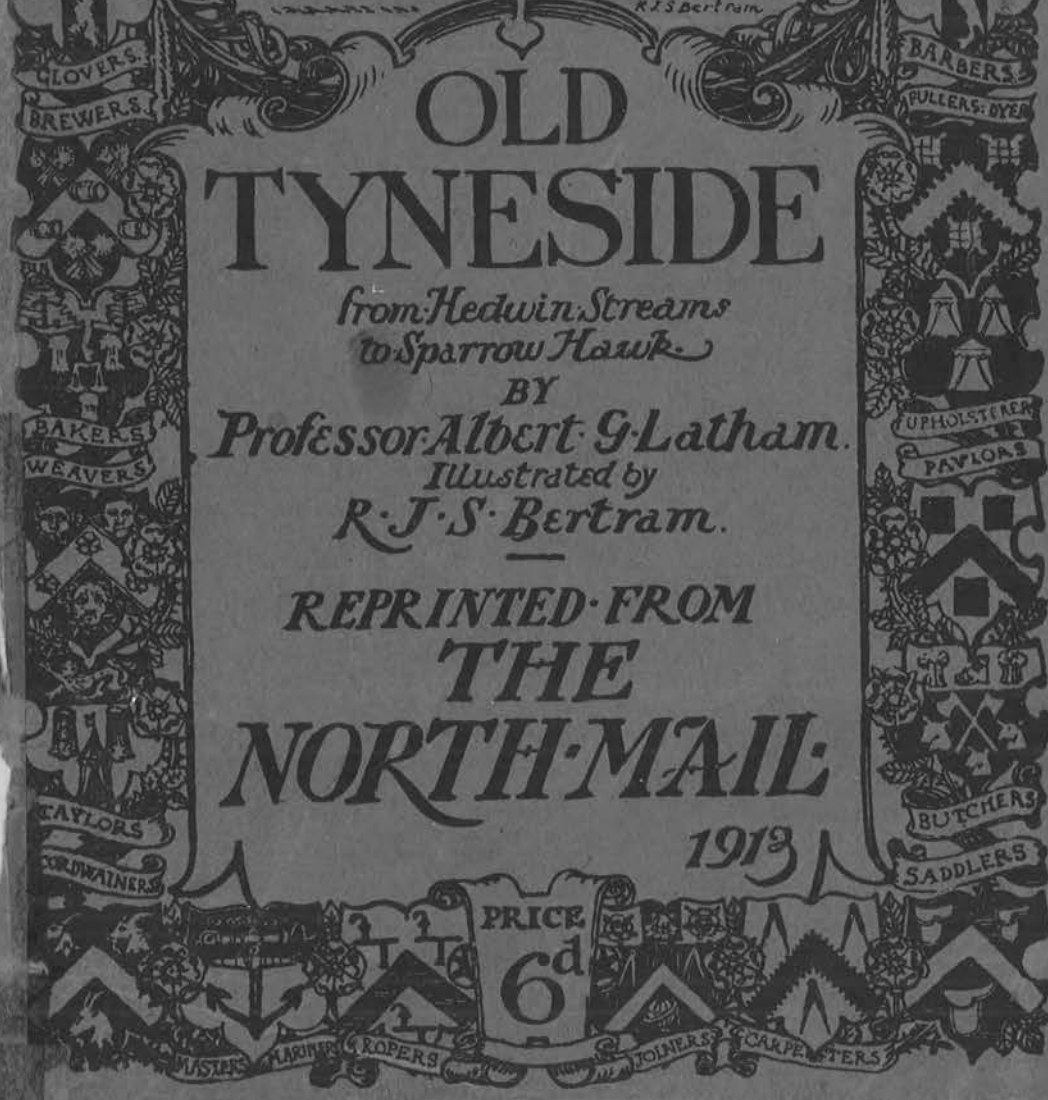

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BY

PROF. ALBERT G. LATHAM.

ILLUSTRATED BY

R. J. S. BERTRAM.

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PREFACE.

This series of articles on *Old Tyneside* will be associated in the mind of the writer with a host of pleasant memories. It will recall trips by land and water along the Tyne "from Hedwin Streams to Sparrow Hawk" with his good friend and colleague the artist, to whose knowledge of the romantic and picturesque bits of his native Tyneside the writer (and he is glad to take this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging it) is indebted for much more than the charming sketches which accompany these articles. It will recall many hours of stern self-denial—for self-denial, triumphantly achieved, is also a pleasant memory—spent in the attic chamber of a Highland farmhouse, with a cube-sugar box full of learned authorities by his side (duly taxed excess by the inexorable Caledonian Railway), and a sunny Highland loch winking temptation at him through the window. It will recall the laborious delight of unravelling the clue of the story of the Tyne from the many skeins through which it ran, and knitting up the ravelled sleave again into a web of his own. But there will scarcely be associated with it the memory of a keener pleasure than that which was his on learning—after having sent forth his articles week by week into the unanswering void—of the welcome, kind beyond all his expectations, which they had received at the hands of those for whom they were written. This welcome expressed itself in many ways—in letters; in personal thanks; and, above all, in a crowd of flatteringly insistent requests, addressed to editor, publisher, artist, and author, that the articles might appear in more permanent form.

The writer is well aware how much of this appreciation of his work is due to the innate charm of his subject, and to the loyal devotion of the Tynesider to his storied river; and he is only too conscious of the manifold shortcomings in his treatment of that subject. He can make no claim to the credit of the original historian; he has neither the time nor the technical training which the work of original research demands. In so far as his facts are concerned, he has frankly and uncritically entered into the labours of others.

But side by side with the labours of the professed historian and antiquary, who in this North-country have recovered for us such a rich treasure of the memories of the past, and whose one concern is rightly with the accuracy of the reports they bring back with them from their excursions into bygone ages, there is room for the less arduous toil of him who seeks to recreate this past in vivid colours before the eyes of a wider audience; who is concerned rather to recapture the spirit than the letter of vanished things; who wanders, he too, in history, but on that twilight border where it melts into romance. And the writer is entitled to a share in the appreciation called forth by these articles, in which he has had so many collaborators, only in so far as he may have succeeded in investing with new colours an oft-told tale, in lending a new interest for the present generation of Tynesiders to the perennially interesting story of their ancestors who dwelt along Tyne.

He is himself a Tynesider only by adoption. Perhaps that has been no disqualification for his task. To him, plunged with undulled senses into this world of glorious romance, it has appealed with such freshness of colour as the world itself wears to the eyes of the child who first opens them curiously upon it. Yet in his love for the old river and his admiration of its enthralling story he is second to none of the true-born sons of Tyne. And if the dues of adoption which he has paid in these essays have been

accepted by his adoptive brethren as a not unworthy tribute to their common Father Tyne, if it is their wish to have them gathered up between the covers of a booklet, it is not for him to say them nay on the ground that they have been overgenerous in their estimate.

The writer had himself intended—in that misty future wherein we all propose to perfect what we leave imperfect in the present—to shape these fugitive leaves into more lasting form. But time, alas! is measured out to us but scantily and that future is only too often a to-morrow which never comes. And so he has allowed himself to be easily persuaded not to wait for an ideal perfection, but boldly to throw himself upon that generosity which takes the will for the deed, and to content himself with putting his cargo a little more shipshape for its new voyage, adding to it only a few bales which, not by oversight, but for a particular reason, were not put aboard on the first trip.

These added episodes, to quit the language of metaphor, are concerned with the old Tyne Bridge and with the Priory of Tynemouth. They were omitted in the serial issue because they had appeared in a similar series published in the "Evening Mail" so recently as last year. But they belong to the story of Tyne, and are accordingly here put into their rightful place.

Mr. Bertram, as part owner of the ship, has also increased his cargo, his additions being represented by the design on the cover and the pictorial view of the Tyne. The former presents a feature of special interest in the coats-of-arms of the Newcastle trade-guilds which are set round it. In the latter, like the writer in the letterpress, the artist has aimed rather at epitomising the spirit of the Tyne than at reproducing literally its familiar features. And for this character-sketch of the river he has placed himself in the latter part of the seventeenth century.

The writer did not deem it in place, in the flying leaves of a daily journal, to make formal acknowledgment of his great indebtedness to the work of others, though he was never without a grateful consciousness of it. But it would scarcely be becoming to omit it here. Were he, however, to print a complete list of all the books that found a place in the cube-sugar box aforementioned, the witty reader might be tempted to exclaim: "Much cry and little wool!" It is indeed surprising how many ears of corn you must reap to bake one poor little cake! The following list therefore includes only the books to which he has felt himself most indebted:—History of Newcastle and Gateshead (Richard Welford); County History of Northumberland, Vol. VIII. (H. H. E. Craster); Charlton's History of Newcastle; Vestiges of Old Newcastle and Gateshead (Knowles and Boyle); The Making of the Tyne (R. W. Johnson); the River Tyne (Guthrie); History of Northumberland (C. J. Bates); Local Records (Sykes and Fordyce); Brand's History of Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Tomlinson's Guide to Northumberland; Boyle's Guide to Durham; Life of Ceolfrid, Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow (Boutflower); the Fathers for English Readers—the Venerable Bede (Browne); Diocesan Histories—Durham (Low).

The writer is not without hope that the publication of this list may not only quit him, in some measure, of his debt to the authors of these books, but may perhaps also achieve the further end of persuading some of his readers to contract a debt of gratitude to them on their own account.

ALBERT G. LATHAM

Armstrong College,
In the University of Durham.
November, 1913.

OLD TYNESIDE

FROM HEDWIN STREAMS TO SPARROW HAWK.

CHAPTER I.

From Hedwin Streams to Newburn.

Introductory.—Between the old and the new. Heddon-on-the-Wall. Ryton. Newburn Ford. King David Bruce and Saint Cuthbert. The burning of Ryton. Tostig, Oswulf, and Copsig. The murder of Copsig. The battle of Newburn.

Tyne River, running rough or smooth,
Makes bread for me and mine.
Of all the rivers, north or south,
There's none like Coaly Tyne.

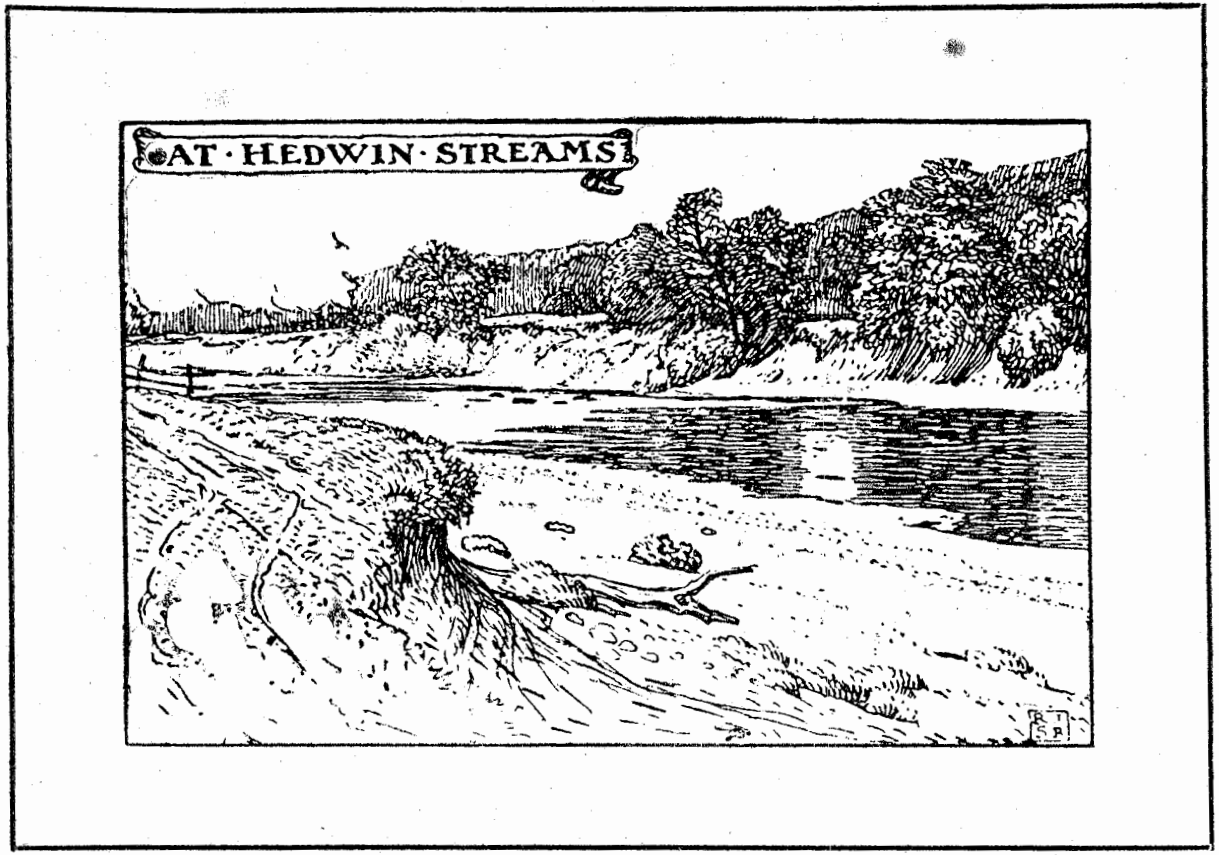
The artless verse well expresses the indebtedness of the Tynesider to Father Tyne, and his loyal and justifiable pride in the ancient river. "Tyne river, running rough or smooth," is the generous dispenser of bread to all of us who dwell upon its banks. Newcastle, and the busy communities of Tyneside, are the gift of the Tyne. Had it been suffered—as at one time seemed by no means unlikely—to be choked out of existence with silt and ballast and refuse of every kind, most of us would have been getting our bread elsewhere, or never have needed bread at all.

And if the Tyne made Newcastle, Newcastle—a little against the grain, it must be confessed, and not without help from other of Tyne's children—has, within the memory of men still living, made the Tyne; has transformed it from a petty stream into one vast coal-spout, pouring forth upon the world at large its precious wealth of black diamonds, and into a breeding mother of mighty ships, launched from her sounding yards to go forth upon their errands of peace or war into all parts of the globe.

The old verse tells no less of a truth in its second couplet. Blot out the Tyne and all it stands for, and you change the history of the world. The Tyne has two histories, as unlike each other as well may be, and yet who can say which is the more interesting? For its modern romance of industry followed upon a long epic of wild and romantic deeds, such as would scarcely pale before what is told of Tiber or Scamander or any river of old renown. Its second history, indeed, is still in the making. Its greatest chapters—we trust—are still to be written in the book of time. But whatever fortune the future may hold in its hands for us, we can take comfort in the confident reflection that, should its quay walls moulder again into its waters, its gigantic piers become the unreclaimed prey of the hungry ocean, and its waters no longer channelled and curbed by men, take, as in the past they threatened to do, another course to the sea, the Tyne has played such a part in the history of the country and of the world as will make it live in the memory of man as long as more highly-favoured streams.

The tale of the Tyne has been often told, and to some of my readers I am well aware that I shall have little that is new to bring. Yet even to these the stirring-up of the old reminiscences may not be unwelcome. It is odd indeed to think that amongst them may be some old stagers who remember having tucked up their trousers about their knees as urchins, and waded across from Newcastle to Gateshead, where now the largest ocean leviathans have a comfortable depth of water beneath their keels! But for our young folk, and the strangers within our gates, who have been accustomed to take the Tyne as they found it, for them I have surely many surprises in store. Let them but accompany me in the spirit on my voyage down the Tyne, and I can safely promise that they will look upon our river with other eyes, when next they embark in the flesh beneath the shadow of the High Level Bridge for a trip to the sea.

Let the reader, then, imagine himself afloat with me on the waters of the Tyne—mingled, it may be, with the waters of the sea, for so far does the tide make itself felt—at the boundary stone by Hedwin Streams, above Ryton. We are between the old and the new—above us the beautiful, untouched Tyne of nature, rippling down in twin streams from the Cheviots and the Pennines, offering a hundred varying scenes for the artist's canvas, a hundred romantic stories for the poet's pen; below us the Tyne of man, almost wholly refashioned to his purposes, laden with the ships of all nations, spanned by daring bridges, lined with dock and wharf and staith, with workshop and warehouse and shipyard. We turn our backs resolutely on the sweet childhood of our river, on its scenes of rural beauty, glimpses of which still stretch away on either hand in the green uplands, and set our faces to view its dusty, if grimy, manhood, wherein nevertheless we shall still find lingering, as dreams of the fairyland of his childhood still haunt the memory of the toil-worn and dust-stained man, many a reminiscence of old romance.



The limit of the tidal-waters of the Tyne, and of the jurisdiction over the river in ancient times of Newcastle, in modern times of the Tyne Commission.

The limit of the tidal-waters of the Tyne, and of the jurisdiction over the river in ancient times of Newcastle, in modern times of the Tyne Commission.

At the very outset of our journey we are not without such reminders of the past. On our left, perched high up on the hill, stands the village of Heddon-on-the-Wall, recalling a masterful race whose great engineering feat of a millennium and several odd centuries ago is still crumbling away there, so hard a nut has the tooth of time found it to crack. It is a fit preface to the achievements of a no less masterful race which await our contemplation on our journey "from Hedwin Streams to Sparrow-hawk."

On our right we pass almost at once the picturesque little village of Ryton, with its pointed spire overtopping the willows which fringe the river bank, whilst the square tower of Newburn Church is a conspicuous feature in the landscape on the left. Between Newburn and Ryton was a ford, probably known to and fortified by the Romans, and there was none other down stream before Newcastle. The old romance of battle and bloodshed naturally clusters thick about a river ford, and we may moor our barque beneath Ryton Willows and plunge at once into the past.

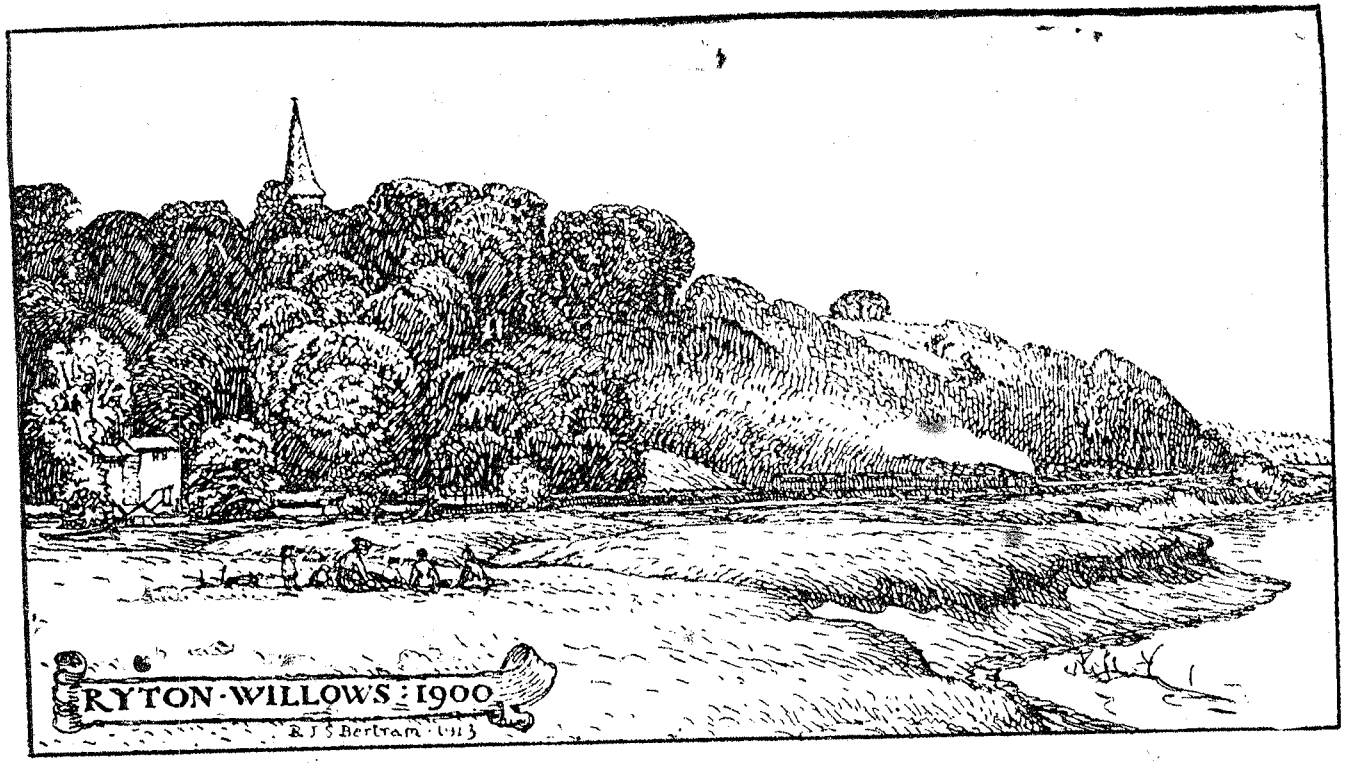
King David Bruce of Scotland, so the story says, invading the neighbour kingdom, crossed the Tyne by the ford at Newburn, and was warned in a dream at Ryton by St. Cuthbert himself of the evil that would befall him should he enter with an armed force the patrimony of the Church. The reader may believe the story or not, as he chooses, but he cannot deny that the saint was as good as his word at Neville's Cross.

And Ryton has another tragi-comic reminiscence of Scottish invasion. But whether the story was tragic or comic depended upon which bank of the river you happened to be on. To those on the north bank it was undoubtedly comic, but to those on the south bank it was as certainly tragic. On the north bank was Wallace, marching with an army along the river to Newcastle. On the south bank were the men of Ryton, and between them flowed the Tyne in spate. The opportunity was favourable for the indulgence of those natural feelings of contempt with which we are inspired towards a dreaded enemy who cannot get at us. And the men of Ryton unburthened their hearts of many a biting gibe and taunt. But the enraged Scots forded the unfordable river, and burnt the village of Ryton to the ground. This was in 1297.

Newburn Church is of Norman, if not even of Saxon, architecture, and portions of the original church still survive. These old stones, could they speak, would have thrilling stories of butchery and of battle to tell. Two of the scenes there enacted shall have us as eye-witnesses. It is the year after the Conquest. Tostig, the traitor brother of Harold, hero of our schoolboy hearts, had been Earl of Northumberland under the Confessor. Driven forth of his earldom by a rising of Northumbrian thanes, he had joined arms with the Norwegian Harald Hardrada, and, though crushed at Stamford Bridge, had irretrievably weakened those forces which at Hastings were to make a vain stand against a more formidable invader. The traitor Tostig had upon his banishment been succeeded in his power by Oswulf of Bamburgh, and Oswulf, alone amongst the great nobles of the north, will not bow to the Norman yoke. So Oswulf is deposed, and a new earl, Copsig, a former lieutenant of Tostig, is appointed in his stead.

It is the 12th of March, 1067, and there is high revelry at Newburn. For the new earl has entered his earldom by the familiar ford, and the wine flows freely to welcome him. But outside the banquet room black vengeance is stealthily enambushed. The outlaw Oswulf, lurking amongst the neighbouring woods and hills, has gathered about him a band of like desperate men, and bided his time. And now it is come. The revels are at their height, when the clash of steel is heard outside. The revellers spring to arms, the tables are overturned, blood mingles with the wine spilt upon the floor. In the confusion Copsig escapes, and flees for sanctuary to Newburn Church. Vain hope! The Church may not be polluted with blood but—oh! the casuistry of man—it may be burned with fire. The red flames leap up into the midnight sky. Copsig leaps forth like a hunted animal from his lair, and Oswulf, lying in wait at the door, strikes off his head with his sword as he rushes past. Yet for Oswulf, too, the avenger of sacrilege lies in wait. But a few months later he too is slain in inglorious wise by a robber to whom he is giving chase.

We overleap six centuries, and find ourselves in the year of our Lord 1640. It is the 26th of August. Charles I. of England has dissolved the Short Parliament, and the Scottish Covenanting Army, a force of some 30,000 men, has crossed the Tweed, and reached Heddon Law without resistance. Its aim is to cross the Tyne by the ford at Newburn, and to take Newcastle on its weak side, from the south. Lord Conway, who holds Newcastle for the king, is between the devil and the deep sea. For the citizens are disaffected, and the garrison itself seething with mutiny. He can only afford a small force of 2,000 foot and 1,000 horse to defend the ford. Two sconces, or breastworks of earth, are hastily thrown up on Stella Haugh, and each manned with 400 musketeers and four guns. Meanwhile, the Scotch occupy Newburn, plant guns on the church tower, and line houses, lanes, and hedges with musketeers. Let us take our stand beside the Scotch gunners on the tower. From our point of vantage we command the dis-



Before the reconstruction of the banks. The spire of the 13th century church shows above the trees.

puted ford, and see parties of horsemen on either side of the river riding down to water their cattle.

A Scottish officer, with a black plume nodding in his cap, rides down to the river from one of the thatched cottages, and pauses to consider the sconces. There is a sudden flash, a vicious spit from the far bank, and he tumbles from his saddle into the dust. The Scotch reply with a volley of musketry, the guns beside us chime in. The duel continues until, between three and four of the afternoon, the ebbing tide leaves the ford practicable. The Scottish artillery has rendered the sconces untenable. With wild cries of triumph the Scots swarm across the river, foot and horse, but give way in confusion before the English horse who thunder down upon them.

But now the Scottish battery gives tongue, the English waver, they break, and again the Scots stream over the river and up Ryton and Stella banks. The Royal Standard is taken, a futile attempt is made at a rally under cover of a wood, and the English army breaks in utter rout. Frenzied fugitives carry the panic into Newcastle: "Fly for your lives! Naked devils have destroyed us!" Conway abandons the town, Sir William Douglas demands its surrender from the Mayor on Tyne Bridge, and Leslie enters it in triumph on Sunday, proceeding in solemn state to the church of St. Nicholas, where the heathen music of "organs, sackbuts, and cornets" is put to silence. Blush for shame, my fellow-townsmen! Yet why should ye blush? For Newcastle was a house divided against itself. Only four years later the stain shall be wiped out, and there shall be inscribed for ever upon your escutcheon the proud device, "Fortiter defendit triumphans."

CHAPTER II.

From Newburn to Gateshead and Newcastle.

The marriage of George Stephenson. Stella and Blaydon. Lemington and Scotswood. A lesson in etymology. Benwell. Elswick and the King's Meadows. William the Conqueror at Gateshead. The murder of Bishop Walcher.

But Newburn has other associations than those of war and bloodshed. Let us take our stand in the spirit in its storied church on the 28th November, 1802. A lowly couple, a pit-engineman and his bride, are plighting their vows before the altar. What can there be to arrest our attention in a simple village wedding? See, the bridegroom is signing the marriage register in a clumsy scrawl, and from the end of his awkwardly-held pen there drops a great black blot over the newly-written name. Do not laugh at him, pray. He could not get education for the asking, as you could. He has lived for years in a poor one-roomed cottage in the village, working from an early age in the pit, and it is only a year or two since he painfully learned to write and cypher in a night school during the winter.

Now he takes his bride before him on his pad, and they amble off to their new home, at Willington Quay, if rightly we catch his remark to a friend. You see, there is no railway from Newburn to Willington Quay, and it is too far to walk, so we must not grudge them the little extravagance. By and by there will be a railway from Newburn to Willington Quay. There will be railways all over England. There will be railways all over Europe, and all over the world. For the humble pit-engineman is George Stephenson.

Eighteen years later he will again stand at the altar in Newburn Church with a stalwart son by his side, who will sign the marriage register at his father's second wedding in a much more flowing hand than his father himself did at his first. The son, too, is worth more than a passing glance. For that is Robert Stephenson, in whose life's work the building of Newcastle High Level Bridge is only an incident.

Thus we have already realised, in the stories that cluster round the ford at Newburn and in the two weddings in Newburn Church, something of the two stories, of ancient and modern romance, that the Tyne has to tell us. And as we cast off from Ryton bank and drift slowly down stream the scenery on either shore reflects both stories. Verdant and wooded uplands tell us what the Tyne was; its painfully regular banks, ironbound between neatly piled slopes of blocks of slag, where as yet scarcely a blade of grass has found roothold, show only too plainly the interference of the hand of man. Vainly now should we seek the historic ford at Newburn, and moored in mid-stream an unwieldy dredger reminds us that the meddling creature who has rebuilt—and disfigured—the river banks, is also busy scooping out the river bed.

Man, alas! has not yet learnt Nature's art of "mixing the useful with the sweet." Some day he may yet find even that feat not beyond him, and in the meantime we can only hope that kindly Nature will take in hand the raw edges of his work, will sift with untiring hand her fruitful dust into the chinks of his barren slag, will scatter into them her countless seeds, and clothe them with the green beauty of which she holds the secret.

Stella and Blaydon demand a passing tribute to the memory of the two distinguished Northumbrians who dwelt in the one, and whose industry and commercial genius developed the other. The names of the two Joseph Cowens are deeply graved on the tablet of the great men of modern Tyneside, but it would be superfluous, even

The Royalist breastwork at Stella Haugh, as it appears at the present day.

were it possible, to enumerate here all the achievements of the great moderns who have built monuments to themselves in the mighty industrial works which will meet us in increasing numbers in our voyage down the Tyne. But it is fitting to note that the name of Sir Joseph Cowen, which we have encountered on the threshold of our travels, is that of one who, as an active and enlightened advocate of the Tyne Conservancy Bill, and as chairman for twenty years of the Tyne Commission when it was at last formed, is entitled to be considered as one of the foremost amongst the makers of modern Tyne.

Lemington and Scotswood need not detain us long. Yet it is worth while to recall that from Wylam Colliery, where Stephenson's father was fireman, to Lemington Staiths, ran the first railway on which the creator of railways ever set eyes, a literal "railway," or way of beechwood railings—whence the familiar name now used in many tongues, usually with no thought as to its origin. And it is a curious and suggestive reflection that the width between the wheels of the carts drawn by horses along these first rails has determined the gauge of railways in all countries, and apparently for all time. Thus is man, in a thousand unremembered and unrecognisable trifles, tied down irrevocably by his own past.

The wooden rails were afterwards plated with iron to make them more durable, and so, again with little thought as to the original significance of the word, we still call those who lay our railway lines "platelayers."

Scotswood perpetuates the memory of the encampment of the Scottish army during the invasion in the reign of Charles I. Its suspension bridge dates from 1831.

Passing beneath the Suspension Bridge we see on our right the junction of the beautiful Derwent with the Tyne. Our keel is furrowing the classic waters whereon the once famous Tyne Regatta was rowed. Its glories are departed, yet its heroes were the idols of the crowd, and thousands followed to the grave that "genial friend, worthy citizen, and matchless oar," Harry Clasper.

On our left, on a height above the river, Benwell reminds us that the Roman Wall still accompanies us, mostly, it is true, as a phantom of the past, but here and there cropping out into mouldering reality. Benwell was the Roman Condercum, the third station from the east on the line of the wall. This is thought to have been the site of the oldest coal pit in the country; a Roman altar dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus, the tutelary deity of miners, which was unearthed here, would seem to testify that coal was wrought here at least as far back as the days of the Romans. The original Benwell Tower was the summer residence of the priors of Tynemouth. Benwell Hall is associated with the infamous name of Andrew Robinson Bowes, "Stoney Bowes," whose disreputable story is well worth telling as a study of human depravity, but cannot be told now, and Benwell Dene House has pleasanter associations with the name of the lamented Dr. Hodgkin, our great North-country historian.

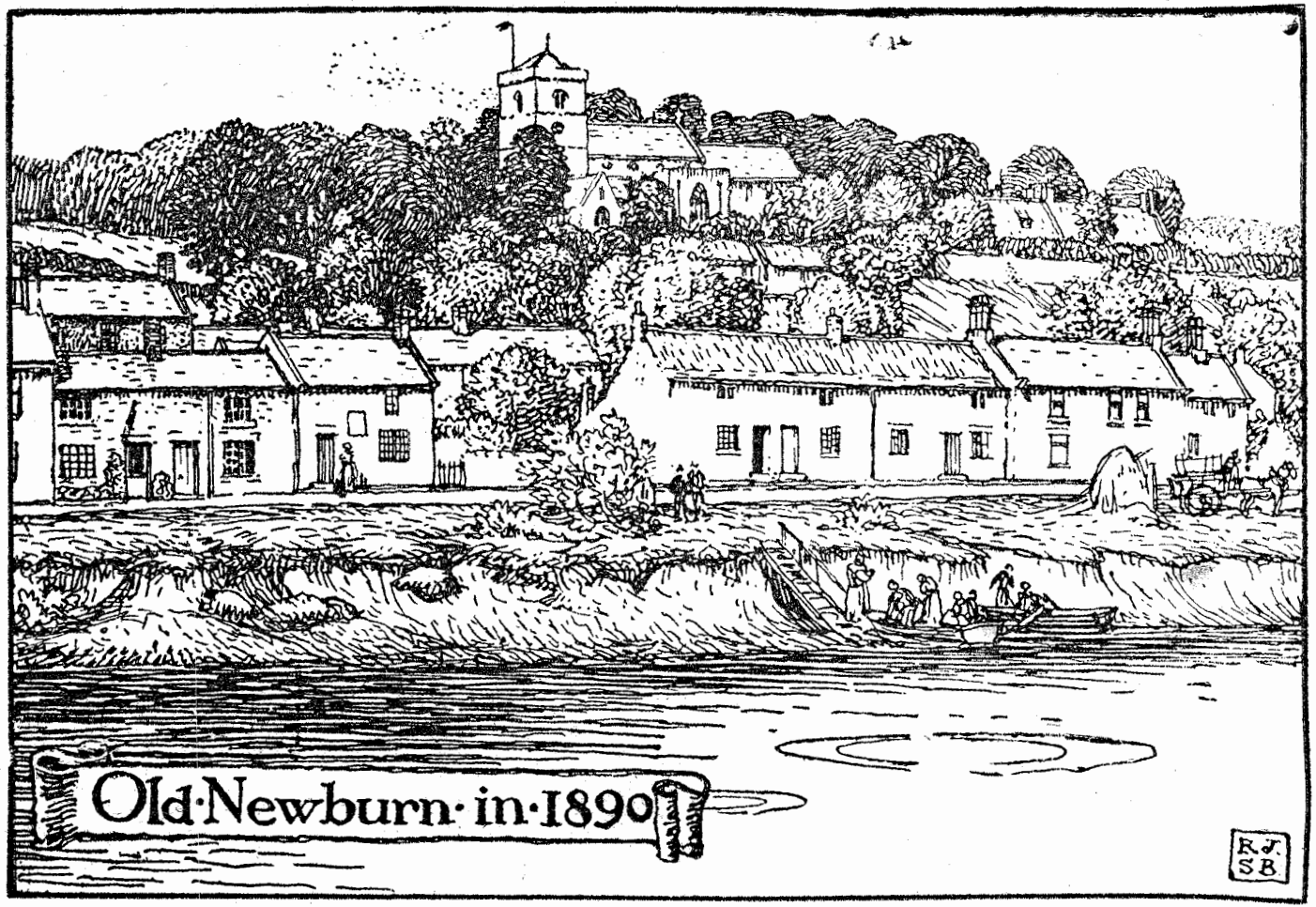
Elswick brings us back with a shock from Roman and medieval and eighteenth century England to the pulsing heart of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hard, indeed, is it to realise that here, where now the super-Dreadnought takes the water at its birth, there still stood in mid-stream, well within the memory of living men, the pleasant islands of the "King's Meadows." On the larger of these, extending from "Paradise" to the mouth of the Team, there were held popular carnivals.

At the mouth of the Team the Viking Halfden, of whom more hereafter, is said to have moored his fleet in the winter of 875. In 1644, during the siege of Newcastle, sentries were posted by the Scotch on the King's Meadows, and the burial register of Whickham Church contains a record of the burial of a poor fellow who was shot by them "as he was coming up the water in a boote."

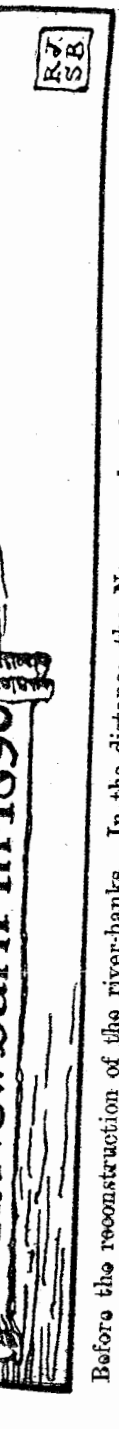
The King's Meadows have been scooped up by dredgers, carried down the Tyne in hoppers, and now lie dispersed about the bed of the North Sea. Of the marvellous hive of human industry which the genius of Lord Armstrong has created, where, in 1847 there were still the open green fields, what need is there to speak to a Northumbrian public? Through this narrative there speaks the voice of the past—the present can speak for itself.

And now we drift in between the rising shores of Gateshead and Newcastle. Here, for the time being, we must moor our boat, and, quitting the material and the actual, drift hither and thither for a while on the breast of the river of time. The present chapter may conclude with one or two reminiscences of Gateshead. They relate to the troubled time following immediately on the battle of Hastings, into which we have already had a glimpse at Newburn, when the North-country made its gallant but ill-fated attempt to shake off the—as yet—lightly-sitting Norman yoke.

On Gateshead Fell, the story says, the stark Conqueror himself encountered and overthrew in 1068 the forces of Edgar Etheling, the rightful heir to the crown of England, and of his ally Malcolm of Scotland. Newcastle (not yet Newcastle indeed) was laid waste in the terrible harrying with which the Conqueror in his wrath visited the rebellious country, transforming Northumbria from the Tweed to the Humber into a wolf-infested desert.



Before the reconstruction of the river-banks. In the distance the Norman church. Typical North-country rows of stone-built, red-tiled cottages.



Before the reconstruction of the river-banks. In the distance the Norman church. Typical North-country rows of stone-built, red-tiled cottages.

Let us place ourselves at the 14th of May, in the year of Our Lord, 1080. Draped in black, with a crucifix at its prow, and rowed by monks in robe and cowl, a barge glides slowly down the Tyne from Gateshead to Jarrow. A mournful chant floats over the waters—funeral psalms and prayers for the dead. Stretched in the bottom of the boat, with a monk kneeling at its head and at its feet, lies a sorely mangled corpse, over which are thrown rich episcopal robes. The monks of Jarrow are conveying to their monastery the body of the murdered Walcher, but a day agone Bishop of Durham and Earl of Northumberland; what now, no man knows.

The Northumbrians had resented the appointment of the foreign prelate-earl to succeed their own Saxon Waltheof, beheaded for conspiracy against the Conqueror; they were embittered by the unavenged murder of Liulf, kinsman by marriage of Waltheof, and himself a Saxon noble who as chief adviser to Walcher stood for English influence in his councils, wherefore he was butchered through the jealousy of the Normans. And now the bloody story of the murder of Copsig at Newburn is repeated in almost all its details.

The good and gentle Walcher, who would seem to have had no part in the murder of Liulf, his own valued friend, save that he had been unable to govern his turbulent servants, appoints a conference at Gateshead to make the peace. Thither gather the angry men of Tyne, with little thought of peace in their hearts, for they bear swords concealed beneath their gowns. The threatening crowd surges fiercely about the council chamber. They will have no council. "Short rede, good rede," cries one. "Slea ye the bishoppe." (Short counsel is best. Kill the bishop.) The guards are put to the sword, and the bishop seeks refuge in the church, with a few attendants, amongst them Leobwin his chaplain, and Gilbert his chief agent, both alike hated of the people. The church is promptly set aflame, and those within make hasty confession of their sins, receive absolution from the bishop, and come forth to die.

Last comes the earl-bishop, a prayer on his lips, his face veiled towards the howling multitude. A spear-thrust pierces him to the heart, and his body is cruelly mangled with swords, and left till the pious monks of Jarrow take it into their boat. But vengeance breeds vengeance. The fierce Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, will be sent as minister of the king's wrath, and the newly-devastated country will again be laid waste amid frightful scenes of plunder and carnage.

CHAPTER III.

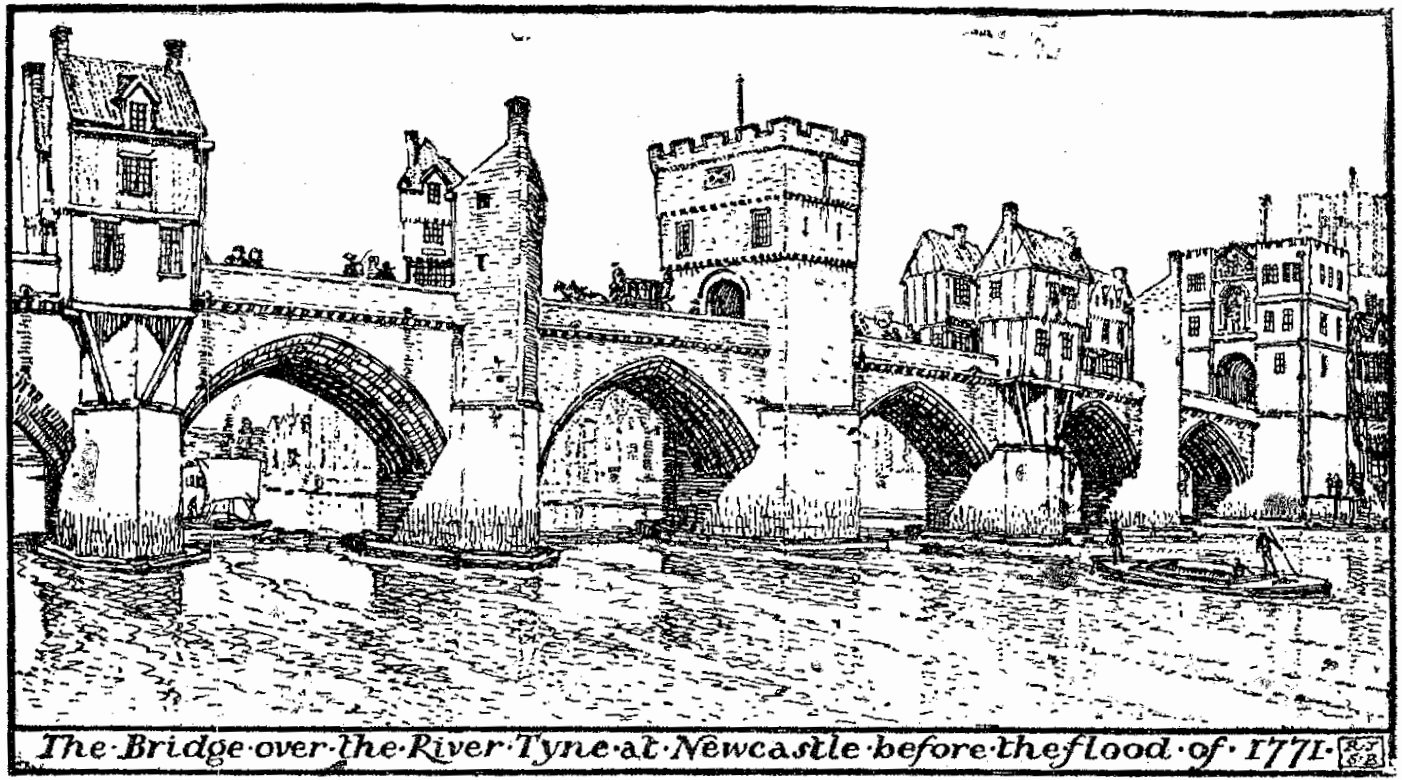
The Romance of the old Tyne Bridges.

The romance that clings about a bridge. When Newcastle had no bridge. The Roman bridge, and the sights it saw. Saxon, Dane, and Norman. William the Lion led captive over Tyne Bridge. The Lion at bay. The second Tyne Bridge. How it was built and what it looked like. Reminiscences, tragic and comic.

If I were a herald, drawing up armorial bearings for mankind, I should blazon in the very centre of the shield a bridge of seven arches (the mystic number) on a field azure. What more fitting emblem of the characteristic to which he owes all his strength—his striving after union with his kind—than the daring link he forges over river or chasm—first of wood, then of stone, then of steel—to bind himself with ever-stronger bonds to those of his brethren from whom nature has sundered him? And what human interests cluster about the town bridge! There all classes jostle elbows together; there the sinner is pilloried in life and gibbeted after death, that no eye, scornful, or it may be pitying, may be blind to his shame; there in his nook the beggar takes his toll of the king, in good coin of the realm, and in the little chapel the dead takes in pious prayers his toll of the living. There honoured guests are welcomed, and there deadly foes are repelled.

And all these motley sights the eye from which the scales have fallen may behold upon Tyne Bridge. There the whole history of our race defiles before us. There, when the site of Newcastle was still clothed with the primeval forest and cleft asunder by the beds of streams, Fancy may see the primitive dug-out or the coracle of stretched skins shoot out furtively from the covert of the trees and paddle to the further shore. Then came the Romans, those mighty bridge-builders, and carried their road over the river on balks of timber, poised on massy piers, and called after the bridge their great northern stronghold, Pons Elii, as who should say Eliusbridge. The bridge stood for centuries, and deep down in the river bed are doubtless still vestiges of its piers, as was testified sixteen centuries later by the discovery, in the ruins of a later bridge, of coins that had passed to and fro between Roman hands.

The Roman bridge saw, about the end of the fourth century, the failing hand of its builders withdrawn from their conquest, and its namesake Roman town, Pons Elii, in dire straits from the northern barbarians. It witnessed the arrival of the Saxon keels and the rise of a powerful Saxon kingdom, with its capital a little lower down the river at Pandon, "Ad Murum." It saw the ruined Pons Elii rise from its ashes as Monkchester, a renowned seat of Christian piety and learning. Beneath it sailed the terrible



The Bridge over the River Tyne at Newcastle before the flood of 1771.

The illustration shows the brick and timber houses perched on the piers of the old Gothic bridge, and the two fortified gate-towers on the northern half.

dragons of the viking Halfden to their moorage at the mouth of the Teams, Monkchester sank in ruins, and the Danes ruled over Northumberland.

It resounded to the mailed tramp of the Normans, and saw the restored Monkchester again sink in ruins beneath their pitiless vengeance. But the Normans could build as well as destroy, and where had been the Roman camp of Pons Elii there frowned a Norman fortress, built of wood by Robert Curthose, replaced by William Rufus with a castle of stone; and where had stood a Roman temple there arose a Norman church, the first St. Nicholas. Time has blotted out again the wooden fortress of Curthose and the stone castle of Rufus, but the later keep of Henry II. still towers above the river, and down to the present day, when its black old castle is one of the oldest things it contains, the city has been the "New Castle."

Throughout these changes it was, it would seem, still the same bridge, in the sense at least in which the reader of these lines is still the same man as when he was first swaddled. Take your stand upon it with me in 1173. A man of kingly mien is being led captive across it, strongly guarded. "There goes the scourge of Northumberland!" cries one of the burghers. "Now gramercy to the bold Sir Ranulf de Granville!" exclaims another of the gleeful crowd. "He hath pared me the Lion's claws to the quick." "Tell me, gossip," asks his neighbour, "how came the Lion to let himself be taken?" "The hunting party stole out from Newcastle by night, and took him sleeping in his lair at Alnwick." "And prithee whither shall he now?" "Marry, he shall to a safe cage at Rouen, far from his native haunt, and if he should break his heart there, as they say your whoreson lion will do in a cage, there will be never a wet eye between Tyne and Tweed, I warrant you, neighbour."

But William the Lion did not languish long in his cage. Stand with me on the bridge again in the following year. The burghers again crowd upon it, in angry mood. "But how comes it that the Lion is to be enlarged again?" "He hath been ransomed, neighbour." "Ransomed?" "Aye marry, ransomed. Speak I not plain English? Bought back for Scottish gold." "I would they had their ribs tickled with Scottish steel, whose fingers itch so after Scottish gold. I tell thee, neighbour, it is English blood they have sold for their scurvy Scottish gold." "And English soldiers shall give him safe convoy from York into Scotland!" "I tell thee, neighbour, if the freemen of Newcastle have the heart of a louse under their doublets, a thousand devils shall not give him safe convoy across Tyne Bridge!"

With such ugly murmurs the crowd awaits the return of the Lion—middle-aged burghers, used at a moment's notice to exchange the ell-yard for sword and pike, with sullen, louring faces, and light-hearted 'prentices, scenting sport, and caring little for the cause if only hard knocks are going. And of these there are more than enough when the convoy arrives, for Tyne Bridge is strewn with the bodies of those slain in the fray. But the bloodshed is in vain, for the Lion bears him valiantly, and escapes from the toils.

In 1248 Newcastle was destroyed by fire, and Tyne Bridge perished in the flames. No time was lost in replacing it by a new bridge of stone. The interruption of the main highway between England and Scotland was a national catastrophe, and throughout the sees of York, of Carlisle, of Rochester, even of Waterford and of Caithness, the pious contributed of their pence to the rebuilding of Tyne Bridge, encouraged thereto by the indulgences and pardons and prayers offered by the Church.

A bridge was at that time such an object of public benefaction as is now a hospital or a college, and land, money, and building material were freely contributed for its construction and maintenance. Many and curious were the devices adopted to gain the means for its support. Voluntary alms and enforced tolls were collected in the chapel of St. Thomas the Martyr upon the bridge, and a portion of the fines inflicted for the infringement of the guild-laws was devoted to the same purpose. The famous Roger Thornton, Newcastle's "Dick Whittington," remembered it in his will.

This Tyne Bridge of 1250 would present a curious and picturesque appearance. It had twelve arches and three towers, one at either end, and one in the middle, the space between being crowded with wooden shops. Then there was the chapel of St. Thomas the Martyr, already mentioned, and later, in the centre tower perhaps, a chapel of Our Lady. It is recorded that in 1429 a recluse lived in a hermitage thereon, and amongst the ruins of this tower there was found in 1771 a stone coffin containing a skeleton. In the centre of the bridge there was a blue stone, marking the boundary between the Newcastle and Durham halves of it.

This bridge weathered the storms of five centuries. Our illustration shows the appearance it presented before its destruction in 1771. Of it there have survived many reminiscences, some tragic, some comic, some of high historic importance, some mere items of "general information" of past times. I shall cull amongst them with indifferent hand, for old news, like other antiquities, however trifling in itself, derives a value from the mere fact that it is old. We are loth to let perish the memory of anything that once has been.

Tragic is the memory that in 1305 there was exposed on the gateway of Tyne Bridge, according to the barbarous custom of the times, the severed right arm of the heroic William Wallace, after his betrayal and execution. And richly comic is the story of Harry Wallis. Harry Wallis was one of

gate-towers on the northern half.

those "lewd and disorderly persons" of whom Bourne speaks, who "were kept in the tower on the bridge till they were examined by the mayor, except the crime be of a very gross nature, when they are removed to Newgate." Harry's crime was not of a very gross nature. He was a master shipwright of Newcastle, and having in jovial company looked too deep into the tankard, and being, as will appear in the sequel, a man of some imagination, he wagged his tongue somewhat too abusively against Mr. Alderman Barnes.

In the lock-up on the bridge he found himself in what for such a malt-worm should have been congenial company, for in the same chamber there lay a quantity of malt. But Harry, in repentant mood, saw in this the author of his woes, and, seizing a shovel which lay ready to his hand, he shovelled it out of window into the Tyne, singing the while (who shall now say that we are not a poetical stock on Tyneside, at least when John Barleycorn inspires us?):—

"O, base mault,
Thou did'st the fault,
And into Tyne thou shalt."

And thus Harry Wallis's extempore verse, by the whim of chance, outlives many a loftier rhyme.

CHAPTER IV.

A Queen of Peace Crosses the Old Tyne Bridge.

A gorgeous pageant. High holiday at Newcastle. Princess Margaret crosses Tyne Bridge. Her dreams as she lay in the Austin Friary. The queen forsaken and the king forsworn. Flodden Field. James V. of Scotland. The headsman's block. What the old nurse thought of it all. James I. of England on Tyne Bridge. Hurryings to and fro over Tyne Bridge. The nightmares pass, the dream of peace abides. Ghosts that vainly crave to live again.

Of all the sights of mirth or of woe witnessed by the old Tyne Bridge, none was fraught with more golden promise for the citizens of Newcastle, none was destined to be of greater moment for this island as a whole, than the gorgeous pageant of which it was the stage in the high summer of the year 1503. For at length the happy marriage is arranged that is to heal the long and cruel feud of kindred races, of Englishman and Scot, and to bring lasting peace to this outpost of England that for so long has borne the brunt of the strife. It is July 24th of that year. The citizens of Newcastle and Gateshead have hung out bright cloths in all the streets; every window, every height, the pinnacles of the churches, the ships on the river, are crowded with gaily dressed folk, and a crowd is streaming down to the Quayside and congregating thickly in the neighbourhood of the bridge.

For the Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry VII., is making a triumphal progress to Scotland, where awaits her a Royal bridegroom, James IV. of Scotland. For over a month she has been on her way from London, accompanied by a splendid retinue. My lord of Northumberland has gone as far as York to welcome her fair Grace, and in the gay throng, who more gay than he? He is apparelled in crimson velvet, with precious stones glinting through the slashings; his boots are of black velvet broidered with gold; gold embossed are his arms, his saddle-bow and harness refulgent with gold. He is mounted on a right fair steed, and does not disdain to display his horsemanship in many a graceful curvett.

The royal train had entered Durham in the richest array, and there the Earl of Northumberland made further display of the treasures of his wardrobe. For "he wore a gown of goodly tinsel furred with ermines. He was mounted on a fair courser; his harness was of goldsmith's work; all over the same was sewn small bells, making a melodious noise when he moved; and he did not spare gambades (caracoles)." And this morning the Princess and her train have departed from Durham, in fair manner and good order to come to the good town of Newcastle. The Prior of Tynemouth has ridden forth three miles to meet her, with 30 horsemen, all in his livery. Likewise Sir Ralph Harbottle, with 40 horsemen in livery.

There is a stir and a flutter amongst the crowd. The Princess is coming! The Princess is coming! Over the bridge from Newcastle moves the procession to meet the Royal guest. Priests and friars lead the way, bearing crosses which are offered to the Princess to kiss. Then follow the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen on foot, and after having welcomed the Princess, Mr. Mayor mounts on horseback and bears the mace before her into the city. And so the thirteen-year-old bride passes beneath the gate, whereon are many children arrayed in white surplices, "syngyng mellodiously hympnes, and playing on instrumonts of many sortes." But there is no sound of artillery or ordnance. It is peace, not war, that the child-bride brings to the distracted old Border town.

Well may the good folk of Newcastle gather in their thousands to welcome her, and shout and throw their caps into the air and hang their streets with gay cloths, and ring their bells until the steeples rock again! For the girl-bride does indeed, could they see into the future as we visitants from that far distant time can do, bring peace and healing to the long feud. Through her Scotland and England shall be one; the old walls of Newcastle shall crumble into dust; the old, romantic, cruel days shall pass away, having enriched Northumberland with food for poetry and romance for generations to come, as they had impoverished it in all material wealth for generations past.

And so the Queen, as the herald already calls her, is brought to her lodgings in the Austin Friary (whereof you may still see a fragment as you stand on the platform of the Manors Railway Station), and, wearied with her protracted journey, flushed with the tributes of a people wrought up to a passion of intenser loyalty by the frail girlhood of this bearer of the olive branch of peace, she lays her tired head on the pillow and sleeps.

Were the prophetic spirits of the night busy about the couch of the sleeper, weaving in shifting phantasmagoria the web of the future before her inner vision? May the poet venture to pursue her even into the shadowy realms of the visionary world? From the blackness of oblivion the sleeper passes into the grey twilight of a dream. She sees a solitary castle, and in the castle a dimly-lighted chamber, and in the chamber, alone and deserted, the figure of a weeping woman. The castle is Linlithgow, the lorn figure is Margaret Queen of Scots. And in a companion picture she sees a gaily-lighted palace, and a hall in the palace, and in the hall a gay and brilliant throng, and gayest and most brilliant of the throng a gallant of kingly mien, stooping with amorous dalliance over a fair lady—fair, but with something of over-boldness in her looks—who lightly fingers a harp and sings frivolous songs of love. The palace is Holyrood, the gay throng the Court of Scotland, the gallant her own recreant lord, the King she is even now on her way to marry. The lady is Dame Heron—or another, for the fickle King is unfaithful even in his infidelities.

Again the dreamer sinks into the black oblivion of sleep, whence she awakens with the cold hand of fear at her quaking heart. She hears a tumult of battle, hoarse cries of triumph, shrieks of panic and a flurry of flight, and then, borne past her on a rude bier improvised of pikes, she sees a gory and mangled form—the corpse of her faithless lord—whilst the wails of a nation proclaim that the "flowers o' the forest are a wede awa'." Did not all tell her that this marriage of hers was to be betwixt the twin kingdoms a pledge of eternal amity and peace? What, then, is the meaning of this phantom of battle—of this dreary voice sighing over desolate moors the fatal name, as yet to her unheard, of Flodden Field?

There is one shaft of sunlight in the sombre landscape of her dreams. For one fleeting moment it seems to her as if she feels the warm and rounded limbs of a babe nestle into her bosom, and still the heaving terror of her labouring heart. And some day, she knows, as we strangely do know things in dreams, this babe shall be king, shall be hailed James V. of Scotland.

The weight is lifted off her heart. She breathes more lightly. The babe has surely brought her surcease of evil dreams. For this can be no dream of evil, despite the sombre black which drapes the scene, this picture of a beautiful, queenly woman kneeling at prayer. But, O horror, that is no praying-stool, it is a headsman's block. The fair white swan neck is laid across it, the ghastly weapon flashes through the air——.

The sleeper awakens with a moan that brings to her bedside the old nurse who is going north with her nurseling. She finds her sitting up in her bed, her face buried in her hands, sobbing as if her heart would break. Then is there no word of princess or of queen. To the withered crone who nursed her the princess is a babe again. It is all "my dove" and "my pretty," and "dear heart," and "jewel," intermingled with muttered objurgations on "their royal progresses, with a wanion to them!" and "their Scotch marriages, beshrew them!" and "their reasons of State, forsooth, and what has a babe like her got to do with State!" And so the girl-bride is hushed off to sleep again, and delivered over, bound hand and foot to the prophetic spirits of the night.

And at first, these are kind to her. They show her a solitary horseman, thundering at dead of night across the old Tyne Bridge she has crossed this day, that he may be the first to bring to her great-grandson, the son of her granddaughter who was beheaded at the block, the news that the proud realm of England, the would-be tyrant of Scotland, is now the heritage of the Scottish crown, that he is first King of the United Kingdom. They show her her descendant, crossing Tyne Bridge from north to south, as she had crossed it from south to north, amidst no less hearty demonstrations of popular joy. They show her Mr. Mayor, louting full low as he tenders the sword and the keys of the good town of Newcastle, with humble duty and submission, whilst the townsfolk shout, as they only can shout who see fell Discord gathering up her blood-tained skirts to quit them for ever; and the King, with good-humoured condescension declares that "by my sawl they are ower much to spoil a guid Keng."

They show her another king of her race, Charles, first of that name, crossing Tyne Bridge on his way to be crowned in Scotland; and again crossing Tyne Bridge at the head of an army, proceeding to the chastisement of his unruly Scottish subjects. They show her the same Charles, a fugitive, caught in the act of attempted flight on the banks of the Lort Burn, and ignominiously led back to duress in Newcastle. They show her another scaffold.

But it is I who am dreaming, and not the fair girl-bride, the Princess Margaret. Sleep sweetly, fair Princess, in our old town of Newcastle, and if thou needs must dream, let it be that the olive branch of peace borne in thy hand, though it be long in budding,

does bud at length and blossom abundantly, and bless with its fruit this brave old town of Newcastle and this goodly land of England. Those other visions of horror were but passing nightmares. This dream is true, and it shall abide!

And now, as around Odysseus in the underworld thronged the "airy shoals of visionary ghosts," eager to taste the steaming blood of his sacrifice, and win again for themselves a few brief moments of substantial life, so around me as I stand on old Tyne Bridge there crowd a host of phantoms, if haply I will summon them back for a span to the sweet life of day:

Fair pensive youths and soft enamour'd maids,
And withered elders, pale and wrinkled shades:
Ghastly with wounds, the forms of warriors slain
Stalk with majestic port, a martial train.
These, and a thousand more, swarm o'er the ground.

Entreat me not, ye pale and piteous phantoms! What am I, that I should reverse the common doom of all created things? The very bridge on which I stand is tottering to its fall, soon to perish in flood, as its predecessor in flames, and I must hasten forward to that dread consummation.

CHAPTER V.

Flood and Fire.

The Great Flood. An unheeded warning. First victims. Entrapped in the midst of the torrent. The rescue. Incidents of the flood. Modern Tyne bridges. The Great Fire. Another unheeded warning. The catastrophe.

"Two o'clock, and the Tyne rising rapidly!" So may have cried the watchman on Tyne Bridge on the Saturday night, 16th November, 1771. If he did, the warning fell on deaf ears. Had not the old bridge stood since time immemorial? Aye, and longer, for even our unconscionable law does not expect the memory of man to go back five centuries. Was it not scant eight years ago that the water had risen full three feet higher than had even been known before—the sloop Billy, do you mind, was borne like a cork on to the Quay, and left there high and dry with a crowd of smaller craft by the ebbing tide? But it stood staunch, did the old bridge! Never fear, it will last our time. . . . And the dwellers on Tyne Bridge turned them over snugly on the other side, and let the river roar on through its arches beneath them.

But the water, good folk, is already six feet higher than in '63, and is still rising. Between three and four in the morning Peter Weatherley, a shoemaker, is awakened by the unusual roaring of the waters, and uneasily pops his head out of window. He sees a little cluster of wayfarers mak their way over the bridge, a man, t women, and two children. Was he assured by the sight of passengers on bridge? Or did he know them for nei bours, and smile at their fears? Brrr! h cold it was! He would shut the window a go back to bed.

Even the faint-hearted souls who are f saking the bridge have no inkling of nearness of the impending catastrophe. the fugitives have reached in safety Gateshead end, when the maidservant s denly wails: "My bundle! I've forgot my bundle!" Her good-natured mas turns back with her to fetch it. Mrs. Fid and the children wait at the end of t bridge. Suddenly, without warning, t arch crumbles in before their horrified ey and husband and maid vanish from th gaze for ever!

Weatherley hears the crash. Frighte now in good earnest, he alarms his fami rushes out, and starts back shuddering. has almost tumbled into the river, wh foams past at his very feet. It is the a next his house on the north that has fal in! With sinking hearts the family hu in the other direction the pavement hea ing and cracking beneath their feet, wh O horror! they find themselves standing the brink of another gap. Two arches the south side have collapsed, and they helplessly entrapped on an island in t middle of the torrent.

Half-naked, shivering with cold and ter in the darkness of the winter's nig father, mother, two children, and ma huddle together in their refuge—a platfo six feet square, which threatens eve moment to sink beneath them and engu them in the torrent. The water is st rising. Oh, the anguish of those wea crawling hours! At long last the grey d dawns, and discovers them, clinging t gether in piteous plight, to the anxio crowds on either shore. The water is n twelve feet above high-water mark. boat could stem that fierce torrent; human help can avail them. They are in vocably doomed!

No human help can avail them. T morning wears on. The crowd stands wi quivering lips, with anguished hearts. "G pity them, poor souls! God pity them, po souls!" And God pities them, and sends strong man to their rescue, a man wi brain swift to plan, with heart bold to da Though the arches are broken, the beams timber laid across to support the shops st maintain their precarious hold upon t piers on the east side of the bridge. B the shops, too, unfortunately still stan and bar their way to safety.

George Woodward, a bricklayer of Gat head, elbows his way through the crow his bag of tools on his shoulder. He brea his way through the wall into the first sho

and taking his life in his hand, steps on to the trembling beams. He breaks his way through into the second shop, and so from shop to shop in this terrible hurdle race, wherein the prize is human lives, and the penalty of loss is death to himself. But the gallant fellow is to live, and to live again as often as the story of Newcastle is told. He wins through to the hapless family.

Can you not hear the triumphant cheers, above the roar of the torrent, and down the intervening years, as, half dead with cold and the utter anguish of fear, they crawl back to safety through the way he has opened to them. Were there not other deaths to chronicle, all the devastation wrought by the great flood would be paid and paid again by the priceless memory of this one heroic deed.

Six lives were lost in all, some of the bodies not being recovered until they were found a year later amid the ruins of the piers. One house took a trip bodily down the river, and came comfortably ashore at Jarrow Slake its only tenants, a cat and a dog, being none the worse of their adventure. Boats plied on the Sandhill in six feet of water. The quay was swept clean of merchandise, but three sloops and a brig were left stranded upon it by way of compensation.

The banks of the Tyne and the coast at its mouth were strewn with the wrecks of ships. One mother's heart must have suffered strange alternations of anguish and gladness, for a wooden cradle was picked up in the sea off Shields, with a babe in it alive and well! One bridge alone on the Tyne was left standing, that at Corbridge, which was built on Roman foundations. Here a company of the foolhardy stood late at night, and washed their hands at the parapet in the waters as they rolled past. They risked their lives, but they have their reward, for their freak lives in history.

The new bridge, a stone bridge of nine arches, was begun in 1773 and completed in 1781. The first bridge perished by fire, the second by flood, and this, the third by the hand of man. Tyne had made a titanic effort to shake off the yoke of man, but his grip tightened yet more upon the rebellious river. A new era had dawned. Tyne bridges must henceforth carry upon them the thundering wheels of ponderous engines —they must let leviathans of steel pass beneath them, or through them. The babe that was born of the humble wedding in Newburn Church spanned the valley of Tyne from brink to brink, between 1846 and 1859, with the colossal High Level Bridge, which dwarfs the trains that crawl across it to the petty proportions of a child's toy. The young solicitor who dabbled in hydraulics, and was led on to make guns and build ships, found in the Tyne Bridge of 1775 an obstacle to the passage of the mighty men-of-war he was building and equipping, and, returning to his first love, replaced it by the present Swing Bridge, whose mighty arm, weighing 1,450 tons, is swept through the air by hydraulic power as lightly and as surely as I move my arm to take up another sheet of paper.

. . . . . .

It is barely a century later when another midnight alarm summons the dwellers in riverside Newcastle to witness another and a greater calamity.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" The brazen tongues of the alarm bells shriek in the affrighted ear of night, the fire engines clatter through the empty streets, and early as it is—one o'clock in the morning—curious sight-seers stream out of street and chare, line the river banks, clamber up the rigging of the ships. Newcastle Quayside in particular is a splendid vantage-ground. There you are in the stalls. You can see the crimson conflagration repeated in the mirror of the river. And you are quite safe, you know. So you tell one another, with a suspicion of a shudder, as you gaze across at the fantastic city of flames, where the black silhouettes of the firemen flit about at desperate grips with the rushing fire.

The sight was well worth getting out of your beds for. The fire, starting in a worsted factory, has now spread to a chemical warehouse, and the barbed tongues of flame shoot up into the blackness, tinged with greens and crimsons, with yellows and blues and purples. Rivers of molten metal, lead and manganese, and copperas and iron, streams of blazing brimstone, naphtha, and salt leap forth in curving rainbow-tinted cataracts, tier above tier, from the various floors, whilst the jewelled fire-flakes dance and flutter through the air. It is a sight of appalling splendour. But you are quite safe—the whole width of Tyne is between you and that flaring hell.

Suddenly there is a short, sharp report, like the crack of the starter's pistol at a race. It provokes no uneasiness, nothing but a few flippant remarks. Oh, the blindness of mortals! Had they but known what it portended, that signal would have palsied the whole vast crowd with fear. For to many among you, ye heedless crowd, it is a death knell: to many more it betokens bereavement and life-long mourning, or wounds, and mutilation, and disfigurement till death.

Without further warning the sky is rent by an appalling roar, the firm-set earth reels and totters, windows are shattered, houses crash to the ground and miles away in the country the sleepers wake trembling in their beds, and marvel. Yet happy they who are far away! The luckless sightseers are smitten to the ground, exposed to the pitiless fiery rain of the falling wreckage, and to add to the horror and consternation, the twin cities, save within the lurid sphere lit up by the flames, are plunged in darkness.

On the extreme left the beginning of the Walls, with the Close Gate (square) and the White Friar Tower (round). Then the Close, showing mansions with gardens down to the river and old Mansion House on river front. St. Nicholas still has its spirelet at the crossing of the nave and transepts, and the Castle its corner towers. On the extreme right the old "All Hallows" Church, where now stands the new "All Saints."

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For a brief moment the silence of death. Then one universal wail of anguish. The hands that would help are paralysed by the spread of the flames. Gateshead is ablaze. Newcastle is ablaze. The explosion has hurled ponderous, blazing timbers like so many kindling torches from bank to bank (if you call at Trinity House they will show you one of them), and all along the Quayside and behind on the hill around All Saints' the fire is raging unchecked. For the fire engines are destroyed, the firemen all disabled or dead.

Fifty-three persons were killed, how many wounded who shall say, and eight hundred families were homeless and destitute. Such was the great fire of Newcastle, to many of the older of our fellow-townsmen still an indelible personal memory, and its date (the 6th of October, 1854) to some haply still a day of mourning.

CHAPTER VI.

Mediæval Riverside Newcastle.

The Close. Midnight sorties by the Close Gate. The Earl of Murray caught napping. Glass-making on the Tyne. The water-gates. The intelligent reader makes a shrewd speculation. Which is, of course, wrong but leads up to a discussion on pirates at Newcastle. Why the water-gates were watched by night. The "Dirty Duck" and the "Vulture." The Sandgate. Scotch enter Newcastle near the Sandgate. The Swirle and the Ouseburn. Shipyards, glasshouses, and ballast hills. The three saints of whom one was no saint. Dent's Hole. Whalers and salmon fishers.

And now let us cast a passing glance at mediæval riverside Newcastle. It was divided by Tyne Bridge into two halves. Above the bridge was—and still is, though sorely changed—the Close. Here, along the river frontage, the wall which girt the mediæval town was discontinued. Since the shipping could not then come above the bridge, no quay space was needed, and the houses could be built down to the water's edge. They seem to have been looked upon as forming in themselves a sufficient defence. Here lived the gentry of Newcastle—their houses, with gardens to the river, and steps to the boat-landing, are well shown in the illustration (Newcastle-upon-Tyne from the Rabbit Banks).

The (square) Close Gate and the (round) White Friar Tower are seen on the extreme left of the picture. Here the town wall ran inland from the river. In 1342 the Close Gate was the scene of a gallant exploit. King David Bruce and the Earl of Murray are encamped before Newcastle with a powerful army. The Scotch, after a fruitless assault, are sunk in heavy sleep, and in their confidence have set no watch. But the gallant Lord John Nevil of Hornby, the captain of Newcastle, is by no means asleep. Before the first glimmer of dawn the Close Gate opens, and some two hundred shadowy forms steal forth, and glide with ghost-like silence round the outskirts of the Scottish camp. Then with a great shout they hurl themselves at full gallop upon the sleeping foe.

By good luck they fall upon the quarters of the Earl of Murray, whom they take sleeping in his bed, and before the bewildered Scots have well rubbed the sleep out of their eyes they have set him on a horse and led him prisoner into the city.

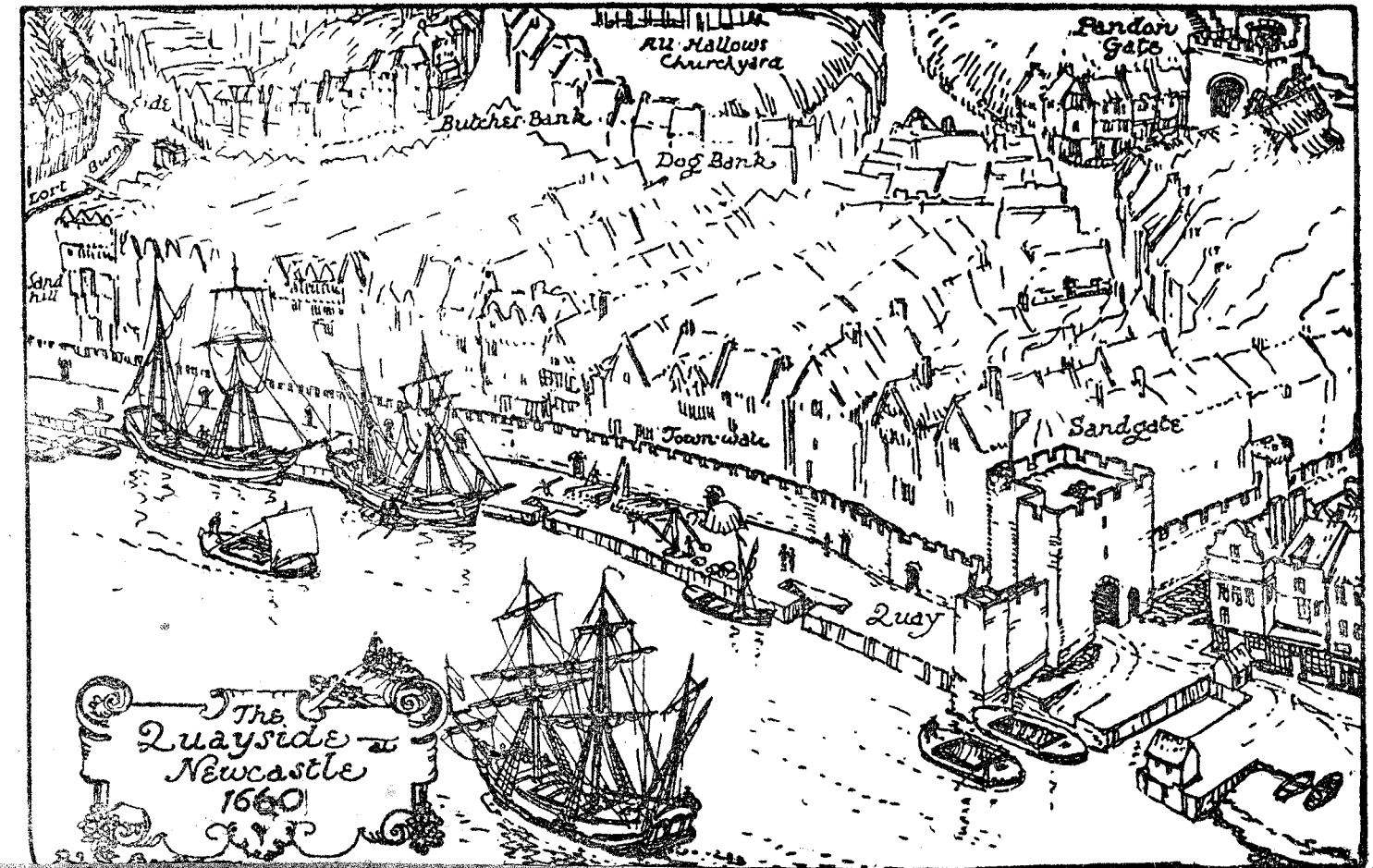
A mighty tumult arises, the Scotch alarm-fires flare up on every side, but the English withdraw unscathed into the city, leaving many of their foes dead upon the ground. Furious at the capture of their commander-in-chief, the Scotch sound their trumpets and deliver a fierce assault all next day upon the walls, but they accomplish nothing. For this gallant feat the Forth was bestowed upon the burgesses of Newcastle, to be a place of recreation for ever.

At the Close Gate, too, the once thriving industry of glass-making first found a footing on the Tyne. It was introduced by Huguenots from Lorraine, fleeing from the persecution of the Protestants shortly after the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The Henzels, Tyzacks, and Tytorys are named in this connection, ancient families of Lorraine, who largely intermarried among themselves and kept the secrets of their craft in their own hands. They were doubtless attracted to the Tyne by the cheapness of coal, and settled later at the mouth of the Ouseburn, where the old "Glasshouse Bridge" still spans the stream.

Below the bridge, the town wall ran along the quayside, turning inland at the Sandgate. In 1616 there was a walk both inside it and outside, and indeed also along the top. The wall was pierced with a number of "water-gates" to give access to the river, but these were locked every night, with the exception of one or two, left open for the convenience of the shippers, and these were carefully watched.

"Why watch these warriors armed by night?" the thoughtful reader will be tempted to ask. At this date it could scarcely be "'gainst Northern force or guile," lest the fause Scot should threaten Newcastle's lordly towers. Right, shrewd reader. It is a joy to write for one so subtle. They watch lest the maids should steal furtively down to the river. What, you take me? You will prove yourselves worthy to be my readers, and swap verses with me? For those are surely rhymes you are murmuring:

"Some girl, who here from castle-bower,
With furtive step and cheek of flame,
'Twixt myrtle hedges all in flower
By moonlight came.


All Hallows Churchyard
Pandon Gate
Butcher Bank
Dog Bank
Sand hill
Town Wall
Sandgate
Quay
The Quayside at Newcastle 1660

"To meet her pirate-lover's ship,
And from the wave-kissed marble stair
Beckon'd him on, with quivering lip
And floating hair."

You are wide of the mark, dear reader. I fear my confidence was misplaced. Yet it is a charming picture that your verses conjure up and I thank you for the quotation. Neither is it perhaps, after all, so wildly extravagant a picture. The "myrtle hedges all in flower" and the 'wave-kissed marble stair" belong, indeed, to a more southern clime, but pirates even at that date would not have been an incongruous element in a picture of Newcastle.

For in the reign of James I. the aldermen of Newcastle were empowered to fit out a ship against the pirates infesting the seas, in 1619 the Newcastle merchants were assessed in a contribution of £300 for their suppression, and in 1634 there is a curious story of a Spanish patache, the St. Peter, scudding into the Tyne with a Dutch man-of-war at her heels.

Mutual charges of piracy were made, but the case looks black against the Spaniard. For when the Hollander undertook to prove that she had plundered both England and Hamburghers, if the mayor would stay her four-and-twenty hours, the Spanish captain promised to make good his defence, but in the night he went off with the ship's boat and some dozen of his crew, and was not heard of again.

But the furtive visits of the maids to the riverside under cover of the darkness were for an entirely prosaic errand. They sought, idle sluts that they were, to tumble into the sacred waters of Tyne the contents of their refuse-bins, thus saving themselves the trouble of carrying them further afield. And what between discharged ballast and domestic refuse, sea sand and river silt, the Tyne bade fair soon to be choked up and refuse to flow.

It had not yet occurred to the wise fathers of the city to collect and dispose of the refuse themselves. The sight of squalid hoppers on the river laden with the unsightly detritus of civilisation reminds us that we are so much further on the way to wisdom, and one is grateful for the touch of Tyneside humour that has raised them into objects of interest if only by reason of the names they bear. The "Vulture" and the "Dirty Duck"—could they be more fitly dubbed? Who shall say, with that gleam of humour lighting up a grimy landscape, that our material pursuits on Tyneside have entirely quelled the human soul within us?

The Sandgate was, as the old song reminds us, the home of the sturdy race of keelmen, a race apart, and well worthy of the niche in my story which unhappily I cannot at present give them. The Sandgate proper, the gate in the city wall which gave its name to the quarter, is seen on the right in the illustration of the old Quayside.

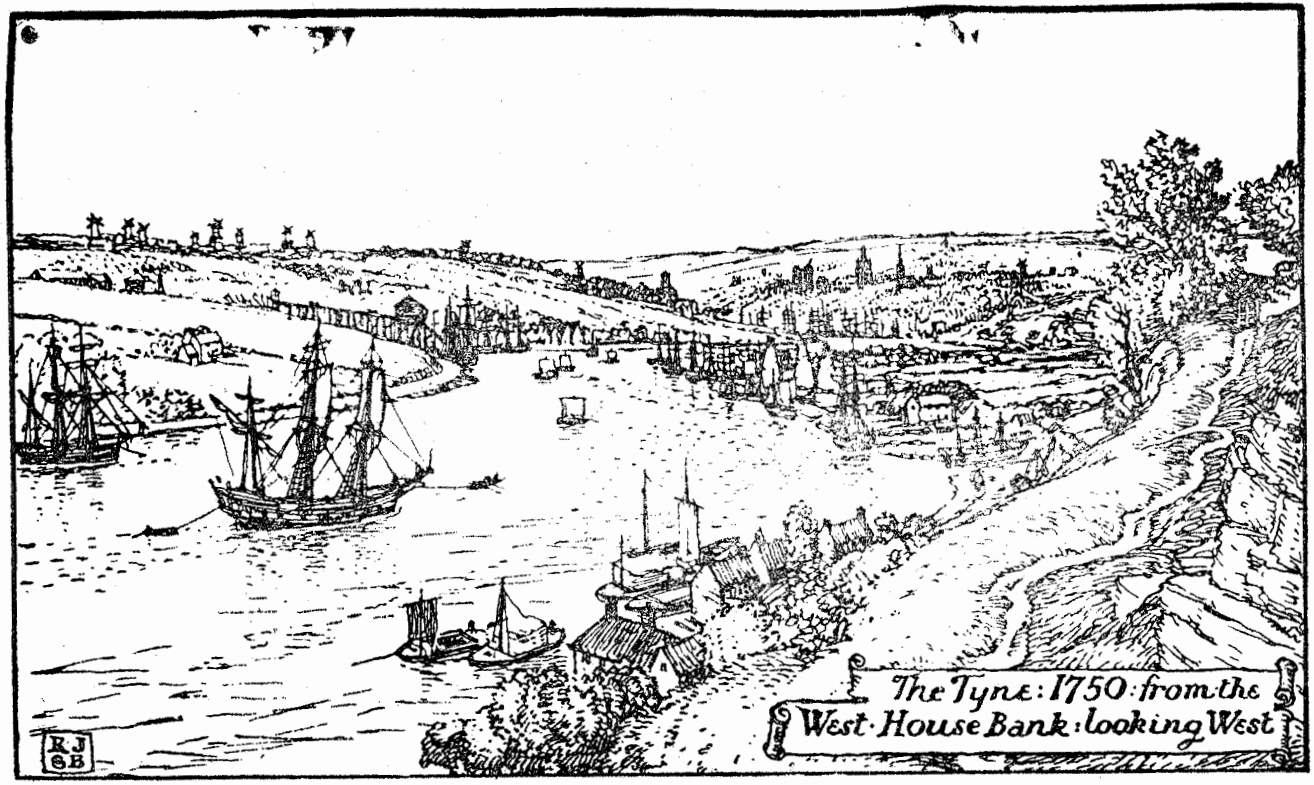
In February, 1644, Newcastle being then under siege, the Marquis of Newcastle, who was in command of the city, set on fire the whole of the suburb without the walls at the Sandgate, so that it might not offer cover to the besieging Scots. He would seem to have been right in deeming it a weak spot in the defences of the city. For when the Scotch again beset Newcastle on their return from the victory of Marston Moor, the Earl of Calendar occupied Sandgate, i.e., the suburb, and made a bridge of keels over the Tyne for the "passing and repassing of his forces," and "for the Countrey people, that brought daily provisions for the Armie."

And it was at this gate, and at the White Friar Tower, which, as we have seen, was at the other extremity of riverside Newcastle, that the Scotch finally effected an entrance on October 19th. At both places the walls were undermined by the colliers of Elswick and Benwell, "under one John Osbourn, a false rebellious Scot." Thus the walls were blown up, and the Scotch entered by the breaches.

The site of much of the modern Quayside along the old Sandgate shore was before the days of iron ships occupied by shipyards. Here the prettily-named Swirle joined the Tyne, and a little further down-stream the Ouseburn still pays its sullied tribute, and marks the eastern limit of the Quay. The glasshouses here to which reference has been made once supplied the greater part of the kingdom with window glass. At the Ouseburn we enter the region of the ballast hills, which still remain a conspicuous feature in the lower reaches of the river. The ballast shores on either side of the Ouseburn were purchased by the city of Newcastle in 1549 from the manor of Byker.

We are now entered upon the St. Peter's reach of the stream. St. Peter is sandwiched in between two other saints, St. Lawrence and St. Anthony's, whose saintship is better authenticated. For the Peter from whom it derives its name was no saint, but a knight, Sir Peter Riddell, to whom in 1630 was leased a wharf hereabouts. He owes his canonisation to the popular tongue, which assimilated his title to those of the neighbours to east and west of him. See what keeping good company does! St. Lawrence owes its name to an ancient chapel dedicated to that saint, of which, above ground, but a tumble-down gable remains. The explanation of St. Anthony's must wait till next chapter, for we are coming to anchor in Dent's Hole.

This was in the undredged days of the Tyne one of the few places where a ship of great draught could find a berth. There, in the old days, the Greenland whalers would lay up for the winter, and there the salmon fisher would haul in his nets, tumbling with their silver booty. At Dent's Hole we enter on the Felling Reach of the river, which will carry us to St. Anthony's Point. And there, spreading the sails of fancy, we glide again into the past.



Newcastle in the distance on the right; on the left Gateshead, with its crowd of windmills and the square tower of St. Mary's. On the left, in the middle distance, the Felling Staiths and on the opposite shore the conical chimneys of bottle-works at St. Peter's and the old dock at Dent's Hole. In the foreground, on the extreme right, one of the old grindstone quarries.

CHAPTER VII.

Dame Lawson of St. Anthony's.

St. Anthony, the patron of Tyne mariners. His picture banished from the Tyne by the Reformation. Contraband traffic in Popish priests and Popish emblems. Execution of a seminary priest. Dame Dorothy Lawson's substitute for the picture of St. Anthony. Her home at St. Anthony's. She is indicted as a notorious recusant. Arrest of recusants in the Tyne. The exequies of Dame Dorothy Lawson.

We are in the days when England was still a Catholic country. We are perhaps sailing across to Flanders with a cargo of Cheviot fleeces, or perchance with lead from the Pennines to roof Continental cathedrals, or it may even be that our freight is already coals. As we approach the wooded bluff of St. Anthony's all hats are reverently doffed, and we all fall upon our knees, and implore the good saint to shield us from the dangers that lie in wait for our frail craft in the deep towards which the tide is rapidly bearing us. See, there stands his picture, fixed upon a tree overhanging Tyne water, so near that, as we glide past, we can read in his face the gracious promise of protection. When we return we shall light a candle at his shrine amongst the trees, mindful of the winds that have been chained up for us at his intercession.

It is now some centuries later. A new spirit has breathed over the land, and the passing seamen who have remained true to the ancient faith look wistfully, but look in vain, for the once familiar picture that comforted them on their departure and welcomed them on their return. To address one's vows to a picture is now idolatry. Mass is no longer performed in England save by stealth, and under risk of severe pains and penalties. Popish books and Popish pictures are contraband; Popish priests who enter the country carry their lives in their hands.

But the Tyne penetrates deep into the heart of a country still largely tinged with sympathy for the Catholic cause. It has constant comings and goings with the Catholic countries of the Continent, and affords along its shores facilities for the stealthy landing of forbidden guests, who may there lie hidden in the houses of those who share their faith, and thence be smuggled inland as favourable opportunities arise.

So the Tyne adds to its legitimate trades this contraband traffic in Popish priests and Popish emblems. And be it said, in some little extenuation of the barbarous methods adopted for the suppression of this traffic (though, judged by our happier modern spirit of larger tolerance and our more merciful penal code, they will scarcely admit of extenuation), that it was the political intriguer, as well as the conscientious apostle of what was now become an alien faith, that it was thus sought to intimidate and exclude.

Let us turn aside for a moment to see what those methods were. The municipal accounts of Newcastle for 1592, in their matter-of-fact items of the costs of the execution of a seminary priest, set forth in cold blood in the mere routine of business, furnish us with a picture so ghastly that the writer's pen would be better employed in softening than in heightening its tones.

The unhappy victim was hung on the town moor, and the bill runs as follows:—"Paid to a Frenchman, which did take forth the seminary priest's bowels after he was hanged, 20s.; for coals which made the fire at the execution of the seminary priest, 6d.; for a wright's axe, which headed the seminary, 4s. 6d.; for a hand-axe and a cutting knife, which did rip and quarter the seminary priest, 14d., and for a horse which trailed him from the sledge to the gallows, 12d.; for four iron stanchels, with hooks on them, for the hanging of the seminary's four quarters on the four gates, 3s. 8d.; for one iron wedge for riving wood to make the fire on the moor, 18d.; and for a shovel for the fire, 2s.; to a mason for two days' work, setting the stanchels of the gates fast, 10d. a day, 20d.; for carrying the four quarters of the seminary priest from gate to gate, and other charges, 2s.; for fire and coals for melting the lead to set the stanchels of the gate fast, 8d."

Professing Catholics or "recusants," though energetically persecuted, were punished in less vindictive fashion. Yet even they were visited with fines, imprisonment, and confiscation of their goods. And if their religious convictions carried them so far as to aid and abet the "Rome-made" priests who braved the law which forbade them the kingdom, they shared their fate when taken. Picture, then, the amazement of our sailors, when they turned their wistful gaze, somewhere about 1620, to the wooded bluff whence the patron of the Tyne had been accustomed to watch over their goings out and comings in, and saw there a brand-new house, and at the end of it, close upon the water, "the sacred name of Jesus, large in proportion and accurate for art, that it might serve the mariners instead of St. Anthony's picture." This was the work of Dame Dorothy Lawson.

Dame Dorothy belonged to the well-to-do gentry who had clung to the Catholic faith. Her husband was recently dead, and the bereaved lady resolved to devote her widowhood to deeds of charity, and in particular to the comfort and succour of the distressed adherents of her faith. So she removed from Heaton, and built for herself this house at St. Anthony's, a house "most commodious for pleasure, and pleasant for all commoditys: the rich and renowned river Tine ebbing and flowing in such a proportionable distance from the house, that neither the water is inconvenient to it, nor

Newcastle in the distance on the right; on the left Gateshead, with its crowd of windmills and the square tower of St. Mary's. On the left, in the middle distance, the Felling Staiths and on the opposite shore the conical chimneys of bottle-works at St. Peter's and the old dock at Dent's Hole. In the foreground, on the extreme right, one of the old grindstone quarries.

does it want the convenience of the water. The vast confluence of ships which it brings to Newcastle for coles (and this is looked upon as one of the greatest sorts of traffic in the kingdom) pass under the full view of the house, and notwithstanding, Catholics may resort thither with such privacy, that they are not exposed to the aspect of any. The name of Jesus she caused to be drawn so public for two reasons.

"The first, her own safeguard and protection, esteeming herself ever safest under that standard, especially when she had greatest frequent of priests. . . . The second reason, that seafaring men of other nations might know it to be a Catholic house, and fly thither, as truly they did in swarms for their spiritual refection. And when the fabric was ended, she dedicated the whole to St. Michael and St. Anthony, and each room (the chapel excepted, which was consecrated to the Mother of God) was nominated and publicly known by the name of some particular saint."

A stout-hearted lady, of a verity, and a tender, was Dame Dorothy Lawson. She was now some forty years old, and doubtless had a lively recollection of the grim execution of 1592 and of others of a like character. Probably she ran but little risk, in those days of abated persecution, of incurring a like fate; but to lesser annoyances of a sufficiently grievous character she was without doubt still exposed. Indeed, in 1625 Bishop Neile of Durham indicated her, together with Sir Robert Hodgson, of Hebburn, to the Mayor of Newcastle as notorious recusants and dangerous neighbours.

The municipal authorities of Newcastle, belonging to the rising middle-class of commerce and industry, were strongly Puritan, and were not backward in their efforts for the suppression of the forbidden religion. But the Mayor of Newcastle, for one reason or another, was disinclined to harass Dame Dorothy. "I understand," he wrote, "my lord of Durham desires to be satisfied concerning the danger of Sir Robert Hodgson and Mrs Lawson's houses and of the recourse of each other by boats over the river. I and the aldermen my brethren, hearing of such report, made inquiry touching the same, and could find no matter thereof but idle report, other than their keeping of boats for crossing the river.—Your loving brother, Thomas Liddell."

Yet two of the priests attached to her house were apprehended and lodged in Newcastle Gaol. Dame Dorothy in no wise disguised her connection with them. She provided them with comforts, bodily and spiritual, visited one of them in prison, and made suit to the magistrates "that he might enjoy the liberty of the town for his health."

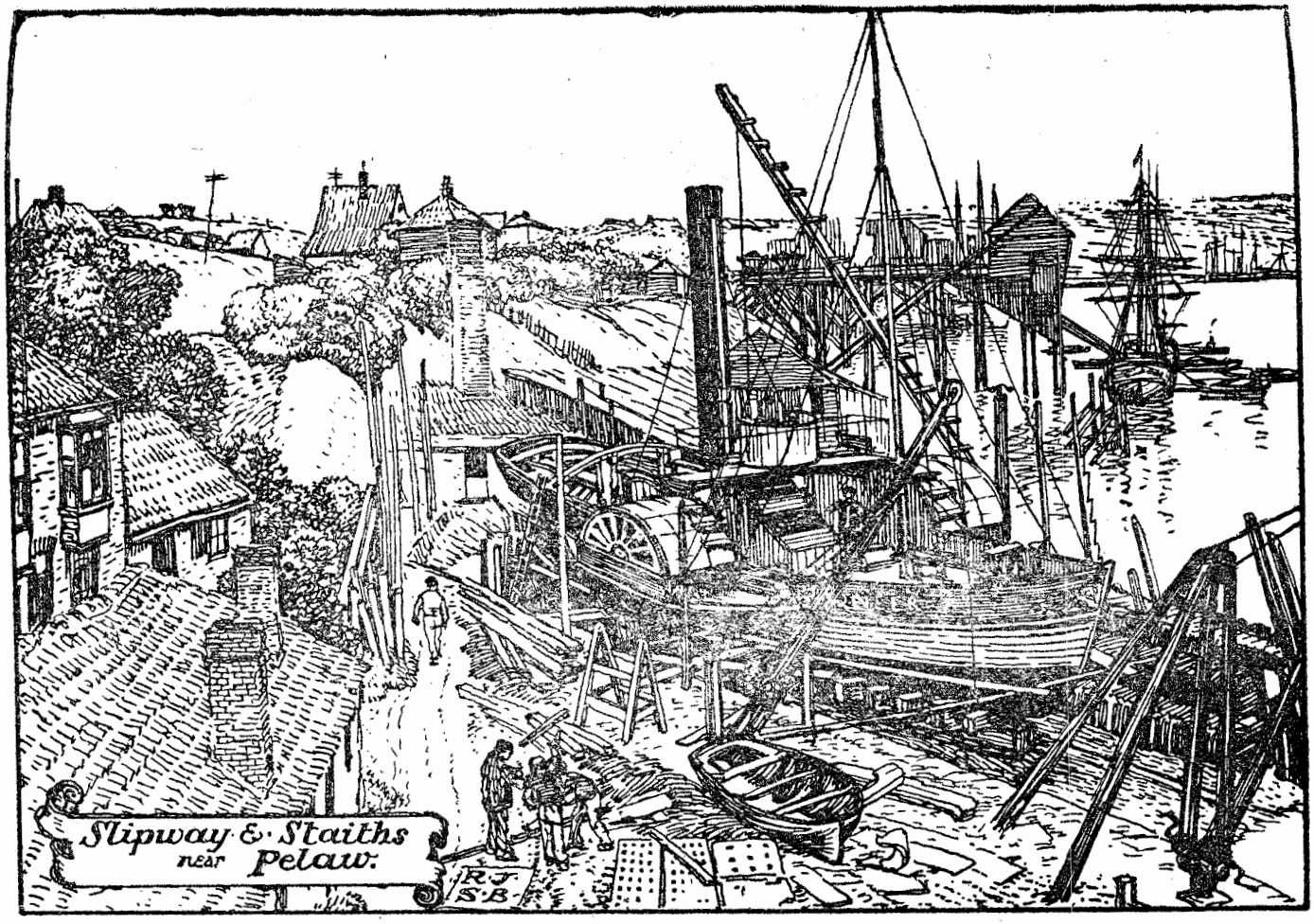
In the following year the Customs officers Newcastle found a bagful of Popish bo in a Hamburg ship, the Flying Hart; a s bound to Calais was found to have on bo a man and a boy disguised as mariners, t man being, it was thought, a semina priest; another ship, the Good Fortu arrived in the Tyne from Calais with "th passengers, and many books, relics, a faculties of priests."

The suspects were duly arrested, lod in gaol, and examined, and reports the forwarded by Mr. Mayor to the Pri Council. And Bishop Neile also report to the Privy Council concerning "Sir Rob Hodshon at Heborne, Anthonye Berrye a John Davel at Jarroe, and one Mrs. Law at St. Anthonie's," that they were all "c victed recusants, reported pragmatical in offices of conveying, receiving and harbo ing persons of all sorts ill-affected to State," the redress whereof he "huml leaves to their lordship's wisdom."

Whatever may have come of all this c it does not seem that Dame Dorothy seriously molested. On March 25, 16 Tyne river was enriched with yet anot memory in the solemn pageant of exequies. From all quarters the mourn gathered, many being brought in boats fr Newcastle. The funeral baked meats hav been consumed, the mournful process glided ghost-like through the darkn between the banks of Tyne; first in deceased lady's own boat, the bier, cove with a black velvet pall and a white sa cloth, the tapers glowing through the ri mists like amber stars at its head and at foot; then a score of other boats and barg escorted by the shadowy figures of horsem moving slowly along either bank.

On the landing-place at Newcastle th waited "the magistrates and alderm with the whole glory of the town, which state is only second to London," amids blaze of light, for the streets were "shin with tapers as light as if it had been noo As the barge of the dead with its twinkl stars grew forth from the gloom of river, they reverently received the body carried it to the church door, where, "w a ceremony of such civility as astonished (none, out of love of her, and fear of th daring to oppose it), they delivered it to Catholics only, and laid it with Cath ceremonies in the grave."

The church was All Saints. It se strange that a burial with Catholic r should have been permitted at that time a Protestant church. The magistrates, h ever, stopped short at the door, and gether with the ladies were conducted "t sumptuous banquet in the finest house the town, where they expected (i.e., wait enlarging themselves in discourses upon praises till all was ended in the church."



Present-day survivals of the old order of things on Tyne. The wooden staiths, the slipway, with the clinker built paddle tug hauled up on it for repairs, and the cottages among the trees, all belong to what will soon be a vanished past.

CHAPTER VIII.

e Government of the Tyne, Old and New.

w Newcastle ruled the river. Disputes with the Bishops of Durham and the Priors of Tynemouth. Jurisdiction of Newcastle confirmed. Ralph Gardiner and the "River Dragon." "England's grievance discovered." The darkest hour. The River Tyne Improvement Act. Across the bar on foot. The *Mauretania* and the *Conside*—a contrast. Fruits of the labours of the Tyne Commission.

We shall henceforth meet on either hand reasing evidences of the changes wrought the hand of man in the river which he s refashioned to his own needs. We shall erefore do well to pause midway in our rney downstream, and review, in such ef compass as space will permit, the tory of the government of the Tyne down the time when man first took its fate iously into his hands, and the vast anges it has since undergone.

From the earliest time of which any ords remain, Newcastle exercised a spotic jurisdiction over the tidal waters of e Tyne, i.e., in the frequently recurring mula of the charters, "from Hedwin reams to Sparrow Hawk," or Spar Hawk, andbank off the Tynemouth Promontory.

No ships must load or unload any merandise whatever, fish, salt, coals, wool, nes, grindstones, anywhere but at Newstle. Fisheries, ballast-wharfs, and the e sources of profit, must be nowhere built thout her sanction. She reserved to her- f the right to victual all ships that put o the Tyne; no bread must be baked, no er brewed elsewhere, save for private conmption. Even dead bodies found in the ne on the Durham side were dragged to wcastle (presumably for the sake of the roner's fees) before they could be given pent burial in the church of their own tron saint, St. Mary's, of Gateshead.

Had Newcastle had her way entirely and through, as indeed she did have it on the ole for centuries, there would have been Gateshead, no North or South Shields, town save Newcastle alone on the whole etch of the Tyne "from Hedwin Streams Sparrow Hawk," so jealously did she seek nip in the bud every community which ove to blossom forth upon its banks in alry to herself.

The inveterate opposition of Newcastle the growth of other communities on neside doubtless made for the common al so long as England was exposed to the nger of Scottish invasions. Of these she re the brunt, and it was better that there uld be one strong and wealthy city on e Tyne, able to oppose a strong resistance Scotch inroads, than that there should several weaker communities.

This no doubt explains how it came about that, with few exceptions, Newcastle succeeded in sustaining claims that now seem to us—as they always seemed to the communities which the logic of circumstances, in spite of the opposition of Newcastle, did nevertheless succeed in planting on the Tyne—unreasonable and not to be borne.

With the Bishops of Durham, who sought to foster the historic old town of Gateshead and the little cluster of fishermen's "shiels" or huts where now is South Shields, and with the priors of Tynemouth, who sought to do the same for the cluster of "shiels" on the other side of the estuary, where now is North Shields, Newcastle was throughout the centuries in constant dispute. Time and again the priors of Tynemouth tried to convert their cluster of shiels into a town, with quay, and inns, and breweries, and bakeries and houses for the drying of fish, that they might get a share of the wealth which even then trade brought to the Tyne.

Newcastle harassed them, fined and imprisoned the merchants, impounded the ships, and got the priors condemned to remove at their own expense the quays and buildings. With the bishops of Durham, Newcastle waged a similar warfare with varying fortunes; but on the whole the victory was with the northern city. The imperious city even laid bold hands upon the bishop's end of Tyne Bridge, and built upon it a tower in order to defend it against him. But this they were compelled to restore, tower and all, to the indignant bishop.

In 1447 the ever-recurring disputes led to a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole question, and Newcastle won all along the line. "The water of Tyne, and the soil of the same by the water covered, from a place called Sparhawk in the sea to a place called Hedwin Streams," was found to be a parcel of the liberties and free customs of the city of Newcastle, all the disputed privileges were confirmed to it, and the encroachments of the priors of Tynemouth during the past sixty years were recognised as illegal. With fluctuations which it would be tedious to note, this ruling remained valid until the establishment of the Tyne Conservancy.

The rising communities along Tyneside continued to suffer impatiently enough but without redress, beneath the tyranny of Newcastle, the "River Dragon." However, there never yet was a dragon, in romance or in history, but in the end there was raised up a champion to encounter it. The "River Dragon" of the Tyne seemed to bear a charmed life, but sturdy Ralph Gardiner's spear-point very nearly found the gap in its scaly armour of charters. Ralph Gardiner was a brewer at Chirton, near North Shields. His trade was an infringement of the old irksome monopoly, still claimed and enforced in his days by Newcastle, in the brewing and sale of beer, at

that time, we must remember, one of the first necessaries of life. And so Ralph Gardiner was imprisoned in the castle of Newcastle, and, worst of all for a man who brewed good ale and knew the flavour of it, was made "to drink the jailor's beer, not fit for men's bodies." The tyrant city fined him, and prosecuted and persecuted him in a score of ways.

Having felt the dragon's claws, the doughty champion drew his trenchant blade and aimed at it a stroke which was like to have severed its head from its body. He addressed a petition to Parliament, recounting the high-handed deeds of the tyrant city and its neglect of its duties in the matter of the Tyne, and praying that "the trust of the river might be put into faithful commissioners' hands."

With the cunning of a serpent he argued that the ancient charters behind which Newcastle always buttressed itself had lost their validity with the breach of continuity in the constitution. "Kings were before corporations . . . yet being found a grievance, were taken and removed for their arbitrary actings." Such a plea addressed to Cromwell could not fall upon deaf ears, and naught but the dissolution of Parliament by the Protector in 1653 saved the worm-eaten charters of Newcastle from being swept into the dust-bin.

Gardiner published a history of the investigation which he had provoked, "England's Grievance Discovered in Relation to the Coal Trade," and from this illuminating document it appears that Newcastle, far from abating one jot of her old pretensions, had even added to them. None but a freeman of the carpenters' guild of Newcastle might repair a disabled ship, none but a freeman might pilot a ship into the Tyne. Gardiner's comment upon this gives a very favourable idea of his style, through which there still breathes the vivifying breath of our Elizabethan prose.

"If these men could command the wind and seas not to rage and swell, but be hushed into a calme, and the river kept from friezing until they sent down help from Newcastle, their reply might be admitted: but since the wind, sea, and air are not controllable by their charter, what abominable tyranny, what savage inhumanity is it to deny ships in distresse such help as is at hand to preserve themselves; cases of necessity make void proprieties."

The Restoration effectively disposed of Gardiner's most effective plea and the nineteenth century found Newcastle still in possession. Steam was ousting wind: ships were increasing in size: commerce was rapidly expanding, and the river dues with it: neighbouring ports were rapidly developing and improving their harbourage: and still the Tyne continued to shrink, and still the Corporation refused to budge.

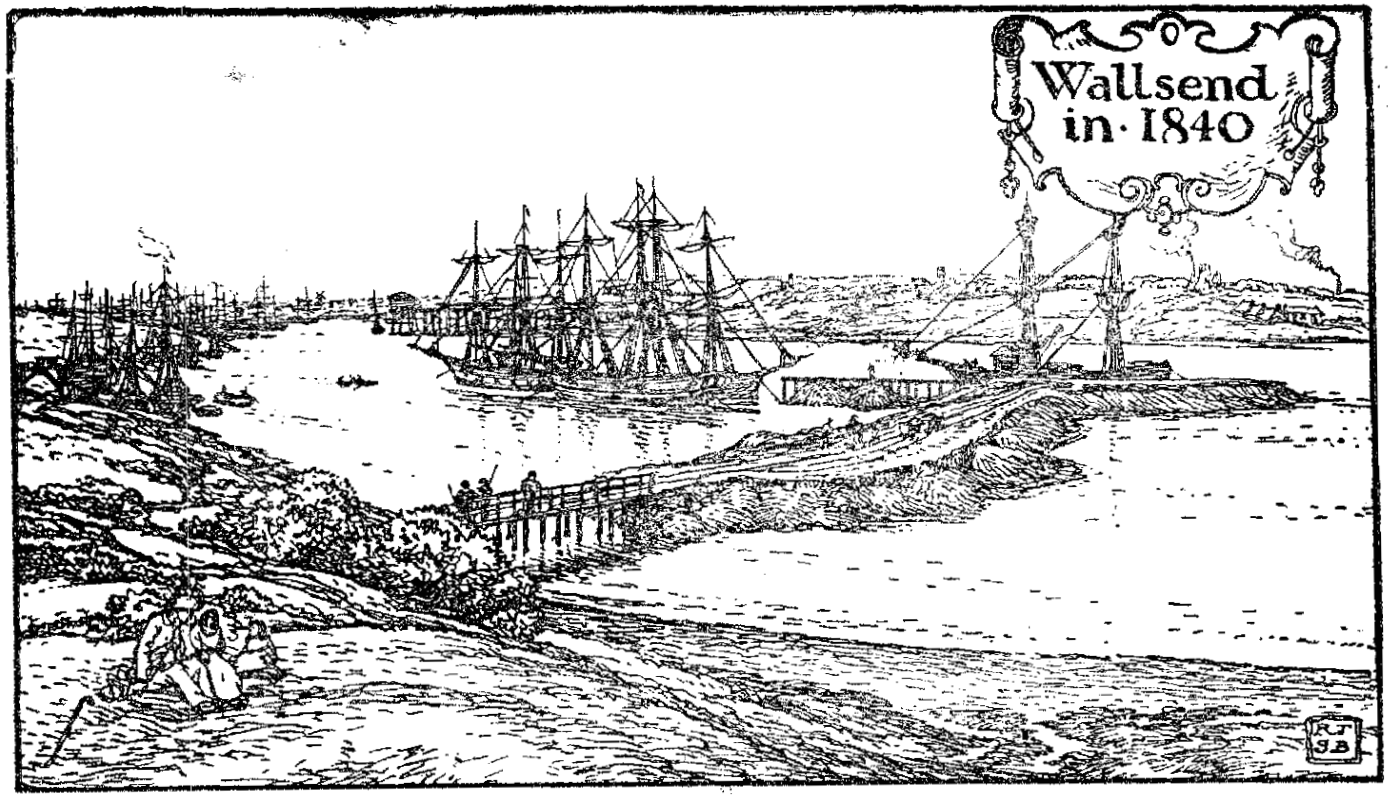
To all protests they retorted: "The river has not become any worse," a very disputable proposition, and continued bleeding the river to feed the town. Happy the ratepayers of Newcastle in those days, for huge were the surpluses which streamed from the river dues into the town coffers! Yet vested interests, though they have the lives of nine cats, are nevertheless happily mortal, and in 1850 the River Tyne Improvement Act at length dealt the death-blow to the "River Dragon."

As recently as 1843 a Shields pilot, like Remus leaping in contempt over the walls of Romulus, had waded across Tynemouth bar at low water. We have in recent years had a magnificent counter-demonstration, as evidence of the fine work accomplished by the Tyne Commissioners in the majestic progress of the Mauretania down the Tyne. Compare with her uneventful trip the hazardous journey of the screw steamer Conside, as reported in the Admiralty inquiry of 1849. "This vessel was partly laden, and appeared then to have drawn about nine feet of water. She first grounded at the low part of the Newcastle Quay, and lay there half-an-hour; she then stuck fast on Tyne Main shoal, at one mile and a quarter below the bridge: got clear across Hebburn shoal by giving her full speed over the ground, but in doing so sunk a craft, and went against a lighter and sunk her also; then she went to sea." It was as adventurous a trip as the first circumnavigation!

Of the labours of the Tyne Commission I can only briefly indicate the results. Age-old landmarks have disappeared, and new ones, likely in their turn to last for ages, have been established. Shoals and sandbanks, including that Sparrowhawk or Sparhawk which figures so prominently in the ancient charters, have been dredged away. Great ships float over the sites of historic islands, such as the "King's Meadows," over against Elswick, which are no longer aught but a name.

Jutting rocky headlands have been shorn away, such as Bill Point, the tree-crowned "Lorelei" of the Tyne sailors, a picturesque bluff 72 feet high, the delight of the artist and the terror of the sailor. The bar has been removed, and the channel deepened throughout. The often wide-spreading stream has been here and there confined between massive walls of masonry. Spacious docks, the Northumberland Dock, opposite Jarrow; the Tyne Dock, between Jarrow and Shields: the Albert Edward Dock at Cohle Dene, have been constructed; the stone bridge over the Tyne at Newcastle has been replaced by the Swing Bridge.

And most audacious enterprise of all, the North and South Piers have slowly stretched forth their mighty granite arms to receive and shelter the storm-tossed wanderers of the deep, and to hold forth flaming torches to guide them through the blackness of the



On the further shore Jarrow Colliery on the right, Jarrow Staith on the left, and between them in the distance Jarrow Church. Old-time collier brigs, such as supplied London with "sea-coal," waiting till the tide serves. Beneath the mound in the left foreground are the ruins of the old Roman station.

night to the haven where they fain would be. And so by the resolute enterprise of the Tynesiders, Newcastle and the Tyne have been saved from the slow but sure destruction which the apathy and blindness of the old corporation were preparing for them, to become one of the most valuable assets of our native land; one of the most potent factors in its strength; the birthplace of mighty inventions of commerce, of industry, of war, and of humanity; and the pride of all Tynesiders, who see no limit to the growth and development which still lie before them.

And, for the comfort of the humiliated Novocastrian who winces as he reads of the narrow and selfish policy of his forbears, we may remember that amongst the Tynesiders who rescued the Tyne not the least prominent were citizens of the old monopolist city. The old spirit is dead, and never more shall we see seriously debated a measure "to prevent the growth of trade at Shields."

CHAPTER IX.

The Bill Reach.

A region of busy industry. The birth of Behemoth. The ballast hills. The wily mariner. Quaint penal device. A leaf out of the Penal Code of our ancestors. Treasure-trove in the ballast. Roman camp at Wallsend. The spooks of Willington. The Stephensons at Willington.

The Bill Reach, which begins where once stood Bill Point, will carry us almost due north from High Walker to Wallsend. Nowhere on the Tyne have the footsteps of the past been more completely blotted out. It is a region of busy industry, crowded with shipyards, engineering works, coal staiths, chemical works, brickworks, boiler-works, and the like. Gigantic cranes loom fantastic in the air, quaint fabrics of filigree of steel, like mighty cobwebs, whose spider dangling in mid-air at the end of a strand of steel is perchance a massive boiler or a huge piece of ordnance; and a fanciful mind could picture in the ribbed skeletons of the ships the carcases of the victims picked clean to the bones.

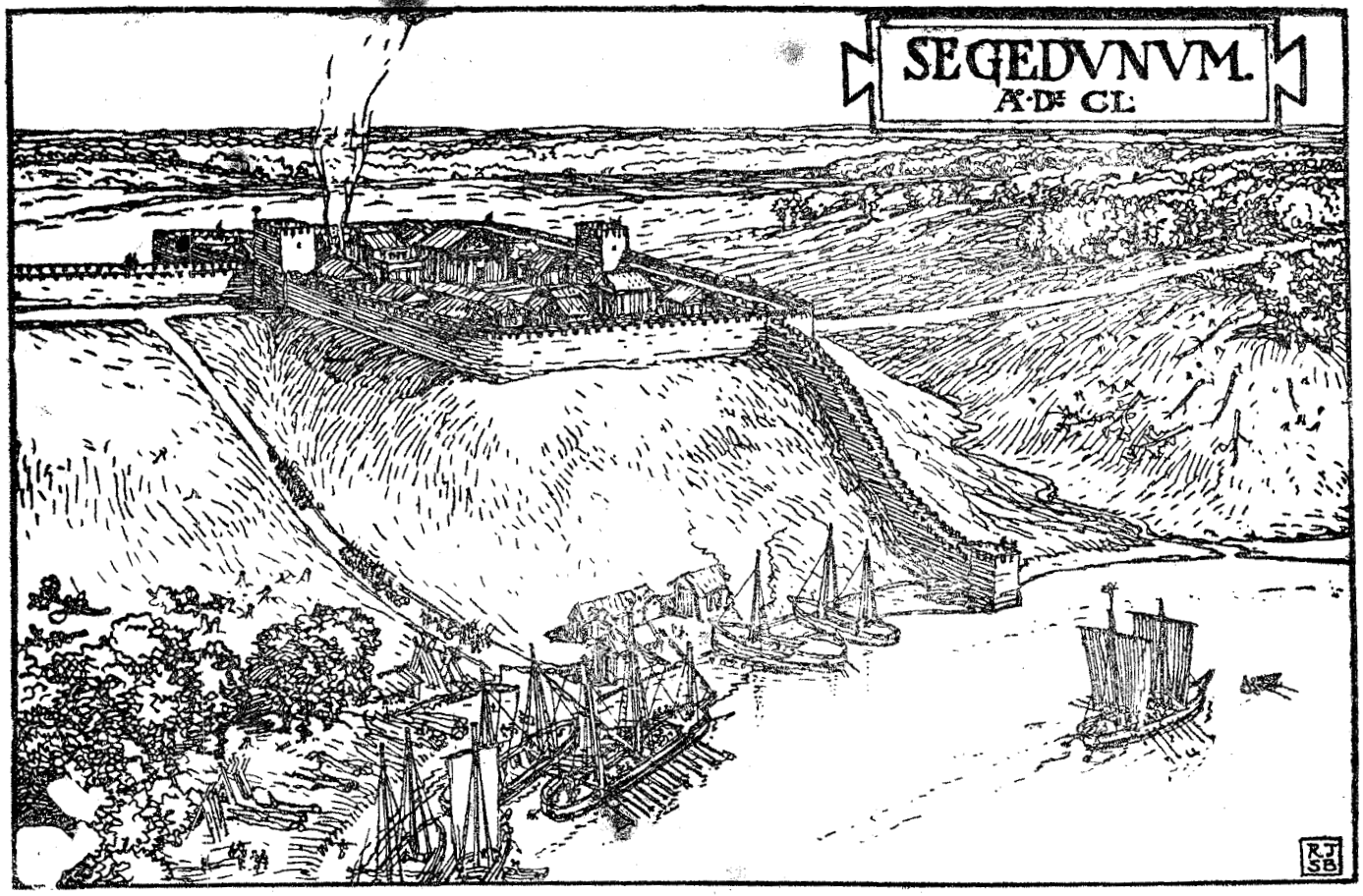
Not decay is here, however, but growth, the mysterious evolution of a new life. What practised skill of a thousand active hands, what intricate calculations of a hundred subtle brains, must go to the creation of this marvel, wrought within the space of a year or so from the rude and formless iron ore wrested from the treasure-house of earth, where it has slept for hundreds of thousands of years awaiting this consummation! What a waste of labour, what a heart-break to the creating minds which have planned and directed its growth, should some unforeseen flaw, some seeming trifling miscalculation, frustrate all hopes at the last moment, in the turning of a hand, and confront the toilers with a maimed and useless mass of wreckage!

And how difficult, how almost impossible, it seems to the uninitiated watching his first launch, to foresee and provide against every contingency, to balance weight with weight, to support adequately the huge burden laid on earth, and yet leave it free to move at a touch! And yet how rarely does the birth of a ship prove a miscarriage! The inert mass begins to move, imperceptibly at first, then slowly, slowly. One's breath is stifled, for one thrilling moment one's heart ceases to beat, as swift now and ever swifter the monster glides forward, with perhaps one or two theatrical spirts of flame from the chafed timbers, whilst the henceforth useless props fall asunder on either side, and with a long-drawn groan, with a mighty thrilling rush, Behemoth leaves the land and leaps into its element, a living thing, checks like a steed that feels the curb, and swerves round beneath the guiding hand of its creator and master.

The ballast hills which still remain a notable feature in the landscape of the lower reaches of the Tyne have quite a curious history of their own. The greater number of the ships plying between Newcastle and other ports carried only an outward cargo of coals. Their journey to Newcastle must be made under ballast, which in the form of gravel and sand was brought to Newcastle in immense quantities, and piled mountains high on the shores of the Tyne.

The "ballast-shores" were either the property of the city of Newcastle or were leased by it to private individuals. The tyrant of the Tyne would not even permit the erection of ballast shores at Shields for the convenience of ships that were taking in their cargo there. All must come up to Newcastle, and there pay their ballast dues and otherwise spend their pennies, though the double journey should cost them a fortnight, part of which they might haply spend stranded on the shoals and sandbanks which the greed and inertia of Newcastle permitted to remain, or even to grow.

The earlier of these ballast shores date far back in the history of the Tyne, when the ballast was carried by women on their heads in baskets to the shore. But in spite of every precaution much of the ballast found its way into the river. Some fell in, through accident or by design, in the process of unloading. Now and then a ballast wharf would collapse beneath its ever-growing burden and discharge an avalanche of gravel into the Tyne. And the wily mariner, despite every precaution and penalty, was ever on the watch for an



The Roman Station at the eastern extremity of the Wall, with gate towers east and west, and curtain wall down to river. The smoke marks the position of the armourer's forge. In the left foreground the naval station with its refitting shops. At anchor a cruiser of the Roman time, with its three masts and double rank of oars. A steep road leads up from the naval station to the camp.

opportunity to shoot his ballast bodily into the river, and thus save himself the cost and labour of disposing of it in the legitimate way.

The inventive ingenuity of our forefathers in the matter of penal devices surpassed itself in their manner of dealing with such defaulters. They were had up to the town chamber, and "there, in the presence of the people, had a knife put into their hands, and were constrained to cut a purse with moneys in it, as who should say they had offended in as high a degree as if they had cut a purse from the person of a man, whereby they might be so ashamed that they would never offend again therein."

To call a man a outpurse was, as appears from recorded incidents, the extremity of insult, and one pictures the bronzed face of the hardy mariner suffused with conscious blushes as he left the presence, henceforth not a mere caster of ballast in forbidden places, but an undeniable, though unwilling, cutpurse. It is to be feared that our consciences are no longer so tender, but it might be worth while to vary a little the monotony of our penal code by reviving the custom and extending it to other offences. Thus a tar caught with contraband tobacco in the soles of his boots might be provided with jemmy and centre-bit and made to crack a crib; for many a weak-principled brother makes light of smuggling who would shudder at the thought of burglary.

The pitman taken playing pitch-and-toss in a field corner might be conveyed to the Town Moor and made to fire a haystack. The conscience that can stomach gambling might be queasy about arson. For making an inaccurate income-tax return the culprit might be pressingly invited to commit murder—not, of course, upon a living subject, at least, not in the first instance—though in the case of a peculiarly heinous offence, when it was desired to impart peculiar solemnity to the ceremony—such as trying to dodge the super-tax or the payment of unearned increment, public opinion might in the course of time be educated up to the point of consenting to abandon a condemned criminal to this beneficent purpose.

But at first, and always in the case of ordinary offences, the punishment being essentially symbolical, it would suffice that the offender should be made to plunge the homicidal knife into the breast of an effigy, which would naturally be made as lifelike as possible, and might be provided with a bladder of stage-blood beneath its waistcoat.

It is said that strange exotic plants have been introduced to our Tyneside with the ballast brought from outlandish shores, and have flourished for a time at least amongst us. But a stranger find was that of the fortunate loungers who were watching the John and Mary, Captain Cummins, plying between Newcastle and London, cast her ballast at South Shields in May of 1778. For a number of silver coins were seen glittering amongst the gravel. Then was he a happy man that could lay his hand upon a sieve! A large number of gold and silver coins were sifted out, shillings and sixpences of Queen Elizabeth and gold coins of the Henries, all well preserved. The ballast had been taken up in the Thames.

Wallsend carries us back from the twentieth century to a time when as yet the first Englishman had not set foot in England. Its name preserves, after a millennium and a half, the memory of an engineering feat which rivals, though it scarcely surpasses, the triumph of our modern Tyne engineers. Here the river bends in the form of a huge V, its two legs being represented by the Bill Reach and the Long Reach. Relying for defence upon the increasing width and depth of the river, the Romans fixed here the eastern end of their mighty rampart, and at the very point of the V, where it commands an uninterrupted view to the end of both reaches, they planted the first of their protecting camps or forts.

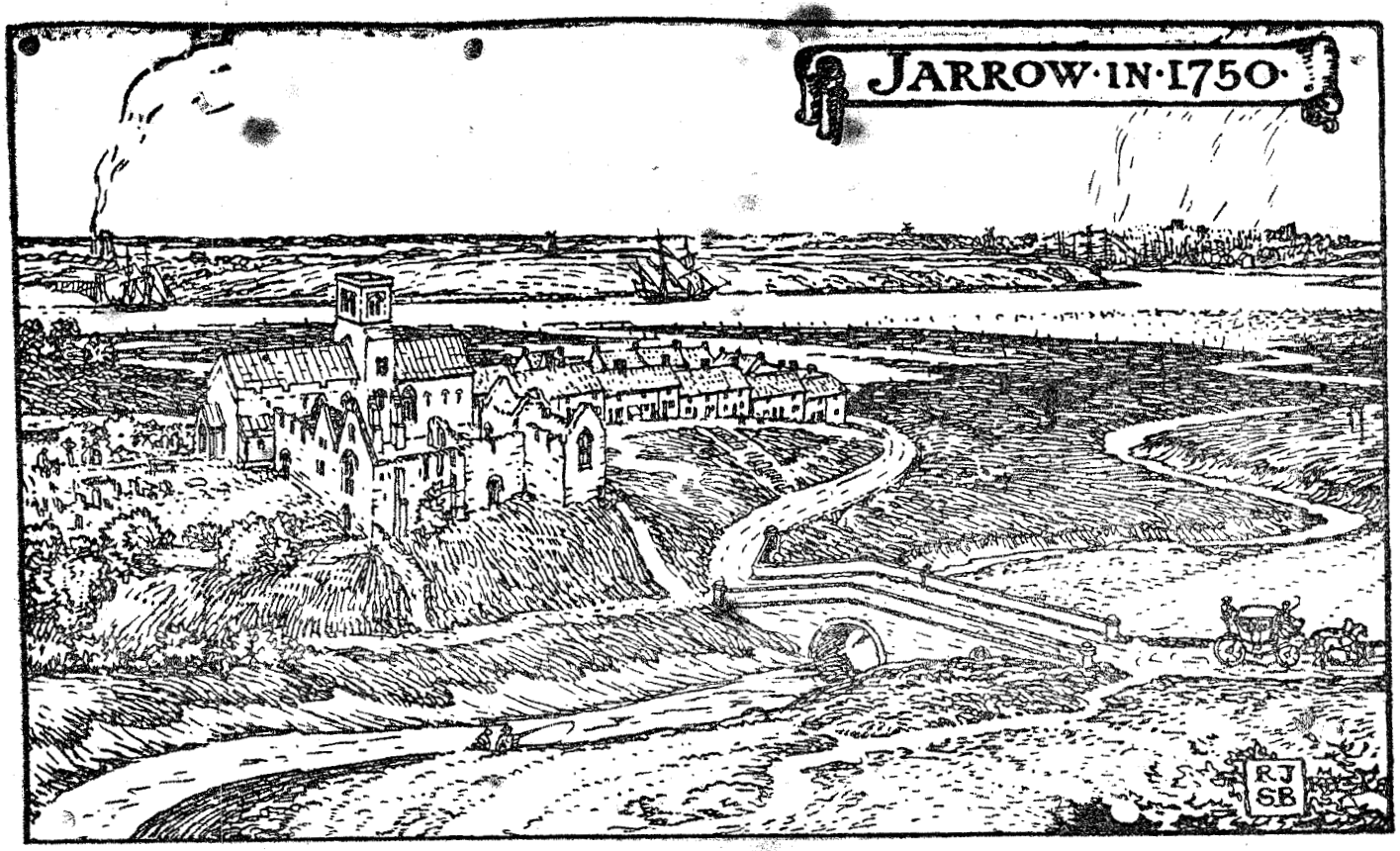
Then in a wide and barbarous country, this extreme outpost of their empire may be compared with one of our frontier fortresses in India. Guided by such indications as remain from earlier historians, and by the known uniformity of construction of the Roman camps, Mr. Bertram has undertaken to give us a suggestion of its probable appearance. It would stand four-square, with east and west gate protected by towers, with an open forum or place of assembly, and doubtless a temple.

The rising smoke suggests the armourer's forge. The beginning of the wall is seen on the left of the picture, covering the west gate. A curtain wall runs down from the camp to the river, completing the enclosure of the fortified space, and carried into the water below low water mark. Beneath the camp lies a little haven for the Roman galleys, and here may well have been the earliest shipyard on the Tyne. A steep road leads up to the camp itself.

About a mile below Wallsend, on the left shore of the stream, is Willington, famous, the better part of a century ago, all over England for the inexplicable freaks of a company of "spooks" which held high jinks in an old house opposite the mill there. If the spirits of those who in the flesh have played a part in dark and bloody deeds do indeed "revisit the glimpses of the moon," then, as appears abundantly in the course of these articles, the phantoms of the dead might well jostle the living along the whole course of Tyne.

But there does not appear to be any sufficient reason why they should have chosen Willington as the scene of their

refitting shops. At anchor a cruiser of the Roman time, with its three masts and double rank of oars. A steep road leads up from the naval station to the camp.



In the distance, across the water, North Shields on the right, Percy Main on the left. In the middle distance Bede's Church, then still in a ruinous state, and the old village of Jarrow, then still new. In the foreground the bridge over the Don, still standing, and the Don itself, winding to the Slake. On the extreme right, in the middle distance, the gibbet, and in the foreground a gentleman's coach, accompanied by an armed footman.

somewhat pointless antics. They do, however, seem to have had a very jolly time there, without showing the least consideration for the feelings of the families of Messrs. Unthank and Proctor, proprietors of the mill, who occupied the haunted house turn and turn about. The manifestations, whether of sound or sight, were of the most varied character. Thus sounds were heard like "the thumping of a pavior's hammer, the galloping of a donkey in the room overhead, the falling of scrap-iron over the fireplace and fender, the clattering of peas or pebbles upon the floor, the crackling of sticks when burning, the crumpling of newspapers, and the tapping of pencils.

"The visions took the form of a lady in a lavender-coloured dress, a whitish cat, a rabbit, a large and luminous sheep, a female attired in greyish garments, with head declining downwards and one hand pressed upon the chest as if in pain, and the other, the right hand, extending towards the floor with the index finger pointing downward; a female figure of a misty substance and bluish-grey hue, a bald-headed old man in a flowing robe like a surplice, and a lady with eye-holes but no eyes."

Amongst others two ministers of religion watched in the house, but to them no vision seems to have been vouchsafed, though they too heard inexplicable sounds. One might be less sceptical about these visitants from another world were their conduct a little more purposeful; but perhaps in intelligence, as in visual appearance, they are but the shadow of their former selves. It is not strange, however, that mysterious sounds should be heard in a neighbourhood honeycombed with the galleries of coal mines and percolated by subterraneous waters, and the very variety of the visions suggests that over-excited human imaginations may have had the largest part in creating them.

But Willington has more substantial claims upon our attention from the fact that here, as already stated in an earlier article, George Stephenson brought home his bride from Newburn to a little two-roomed cottage, and that here, on the 16th October, 1803, Robert Stephenson was born. Here, too, George Stephenson first exercised his inborn mechanical genius in the mending and cleaning of clocks; respecting which occupation a speech of his own is worth quoting: "In the earlier period of my career, when Robert was a little boy, I saw how deficient I was in education, and I made up my mind that he should not labour under the same defect, but that I would put him to a good school, and give him a liberal training. I was, however, a poor man, and how do you think I managed? I betook my self to mending my neighbours' clocks and watches at night, after my daily work was done, and thus I procured the means of educating my son."

And whilst the father toiled to pay for the son's schooling, the son imparted to the father the education he had received during the day. The annals of Tyneside present us with many a touching picture, but surely not with any more worthy of being perpetuated than that of the dimly-lighted cottage-room, the father with deft fingers busy with wheel and rack and pinion, earning and sharing the education of the son, both alike unconscious of the destiny which was shaping their ends, purposing to work through them the greatest transformation which the ages have witnessed in the lot of man upon the earth.

CHAPTER X.

Jarrow, the Cradle of English Learning.

Sermon in stone. England on the stithy of war. Jarrow "even now." Jarrow at the dawn of its history. Benedict Biscop. He founds and adorns an abbey at Wearmouth. And a sister-abbey at Jarrow. His last pilgrimage to Rome and his sad homecoming. War and pestilence. Death of Biscop. The child of the sanctuary. The silenced choir. Bede kindles the lamp of English learning at Jarrow. The two Tyneside Universities. Bede, scholar and writer. Bede, the sweet story-teller. Holy ground.

DEDICATIO BASILICAE
SCI PAVLI VIIII KL MAI
ANNO XV ECFRIDI REG
CEOLFRIDI ABB EIVSDEMQ
O ECCLES DO AVCTORE
CONDITORIS ANNO IIII.

The nameless hand that carved these words and the king and the priest whose names are recorded amongst them have been blent with the dust for twelve centuries. It is the pathos of man's earthly lot that his deeds outlive him, but it is also his glory. The words themselves may still be read, the stone on which they were carved being built into the wall over the west arch of the tower of the church of St. Paul at Jarrow. And the deed, too, which they commemorate still lives on, invisibly, as is the way with spiritual things, and untraceably, borne hither and thither like a cloud-wreath on the wind, melting ever into new shapes, rent and shredded and dispersed; but it still as surely lives on in its influence on a thousand thousand hearts, and you who read and I who write are not quite the same men we should have been if it had never been done.

The inscription, being interpreted, reads: "The dedication of the Basilica of St. Paul on the ninth of the Kalends of May, in the fifteenth year of King Ecfrid, and in the fourth year of the Abbot Ceolfrid under God the founder of the said church." It is the dedication stone of the church of

St. Paul, which since the day on which the stone was first set in position (not, indeed, where it now stands) has undergone many transformations, for material things, too, melt and flow like a cloud into ever new forms, but of which so much of the primitive structure still survives as to entitle it to be looked upon as one of the few very oldest buildings in our country.

When that church was built England had not yet been welded into one united kingdom, and many were the blows with which it must still be beaten on the rude stithy of war before that end was achieved. But it was already taking form. The seven kingdoms of the Heptarchy had been reduced to three, amongst which Northumbria, reigned over by Egfrid, was not the least. The Britons, rudely thrust by the invading Saxons into the mountains of the West, had never acquiesced in the new order of things, but the victory of "Heaven's Field," in 634, gained by Oswald, uncle of the Egfrid of our inscription, had reduced them henceforth to impotence. Oswald had fallen in battle with Penda, the fierce and uncompromising Pagan king of Mercia, at Maserfeld, in 642. Penda himself had perished by the sword in battle with Oswi, father of the Egfrid of our inscription, at Winwaed, in 655, and with this death England was lost for Paganism.

Jarrow even now—and to whoever knows Jarrow that "even now" is eloquent of meaning—but, even now, Jarrow is not wholly and hopelessly defaced by the unhappy results of man's industry. One is grateful for the green oasis in which the church stands, and for glimpses of green slopes beyond. And if you will take your stand towards sunset on the south shore of the river, and look aslant across Jarrow Slake to the northern shores, your gaze will embrace a scene which it might still be worth an artist's while to transfer to canvas. But Jarrow, at the time of the dedication of the little church, when the green hill crowned with church and monastery rose out of the flat marshland which gave it its name (for the name in Saxon meant a marsh), with the winding Don—now a nameless horror, then a crystal stream—rippling past its base, and opening with a broad estuary into the proudly swelling Tyne, must have been a matchless scene of tranquil green solitude. Into this solitude, some four years before the dedication of the church, Benedict Biscop had planted the monastery of Jarrow.

The tree was to bear noble fruit; it is meet that we consider what manner of man he was who planted it. Benedict Biscop was a Northumbrian of noble birth who had found favour in the eyes of King Oswy. At the age of 25 he abandoned his brilliant prospects of worldly preferment "that he might engage in the service of the Heavenly King, and so attain to an eternal kingdom in heaven." Several times did he repair to Rome, becoming confirmed in his pious enthusiasm, and returning laden with books, relics, and art treasures. After his third visit, King Egfrid, the son of his first patron Oswy, bestowed upon him a grant of land on the north side of Wear mouth, and there Biscop built the monastery which gave its name to Monkwearmouth.

The artistic tastes of Biscop were no less marked than his leanings to a life of piety, and for the building and adornment of his abbey he summoned masons and glass-makers from France, the art of the latter having been hitherto unknown in England. Costly vessels for the altar he also caused to be brought from abroad, and himself returned from another visit to Rome laden with sacred pictures for the church, "in order that all persons entering the church, though unable to read, wherever they looked, might contemplate the amiable aspect of Christ and His Saints." And no less careful that the services in the church should be enriched with music than that its walls should be adorned with paintings, he persuaded the Pope to allow "John the Chanter," the precentor of St. Peter's, to return with him to his distant Northern home and teach the English the true ecclesiastical chant.

So charmed was King Egfrid with the account to which Biscop had turned his first gift that he made him another grant of land at Donmouth, on the Tyne estuary, and here Biscop built the monastery of Jarrow. Twenty-two brethren were chosen from Monkwearmouth to form the new community on the Tyne, and Ceolfrid, the friend of Biscop, his chosen associate in the founding of the abbey of Wearmouth, and the companion of his last journey to Rome, was appointed to govern the new monastery. And whilst its walls were rising Biscop set out on his fifth journey to Rome, and brought back with him pictures for its adornment.

These were a series of pairs of companion pictures, illustrating the symbolical parallelism between the Old and the New Testaments. Thus Isaac bearing the wood for the sacrifice was linked with Christ bearing the Cross, the brazen serpent set up by Moses with Christ hanging on the Cross, and so on.

It was a sad home-coming that awaited Biscop from this, his last pilgrimage to Rome. He found his munificent patron dead, slain with the flower of his army by the fierce Pictish barbarians of the North; and the sister foundations of Wearmouth and Jarrow, into which had overflowed all the affections of his wifeless and childless heart, sorely ravaged by pestilence. At Wearmouth Abbot Eastorwin had fallen a victim to the scourge, and had been succeeded by Sigfrid. But Sigfrid already bore the seeds of a fatal malady within his frame, and slowly declined, the first recorded victim of that fell disease of consumption with which we are only now coming seriously to grips. And Benedict himself was within a brief space stricken

with paralysis and chained a prisoner to his couch. We must not linger by the touching story of their decline, solaced by unwavering faith. Shortly before the end Sigfrid was carried into Benedict's cell and laid upon his couch, the two helpless heads being brought together that their lips might meet in a parting kiss, and within a few months the one of the other, the two passed into the Vale of the Shadow.

Meanwhile there was growing up in the abbey of Jarrow, like the little Samuel in the Temple, a child who had been devoted to the service of the Lord, and was by Him called to great things. Born in the territory of the Abbey of Wearmouth, according to tradition in the village of Monkton, near Jarrow, he had at the age of seven been given up to the Abbot Benedict Biscop to be educated, and at the age of ten was one of those who accompanied Ceolfrid to the newly-founded abbey at Jarrow. Over him, too, the grim spectre of the plague had hovered, but its hand had been stayed, for there was work for him to do.

Of all the monks whom the care of the pious Benedict had caused to be instructed in antiphonal chant, the plague had spared none save the Abbot Ceolfrid himself and this little child of the sanctuary. With many tears the two between them maintained within the desolated walls such choral service as they could, singing the Psalter, but omitting the recitation of the antiphons. But after a week of these maimed rites they could bear it no longer, the antiphons were restored, and the two bore the whole burden between them until such time as others of the brethren could be trained to share it with them.

This little child of the sanctuary, whose whole life was circumscribed within the cloisters and the Church at Jarrow, grew up to be a man of the widest learning, the profoundest piety and the deepest humility, saint, scholar, and man of science. In his cell at Jarrow was the lamp of English learning first lit, and thither it attracted scholars from all parts of England and Europe, till the little body of 22 brethren who, with this child of ten set in the midst of them, had moved hither from Wearmouth, was grown into a community of six hundred monks, not to mention the strangers whom the thirst for instruction drew to sojourn amongst them. Thus did Jarrow become the first university on Tyneside, and twelve hundred years were to elapse, with all their countless strange vicissitudes in the history of England and the world, before there should be a second.

Those who are most ambitious for the future of that second Tyneside university—and amongst its founders and its teachers are cherished no mean ambitions for its success—but not the most ambitious could wish for it a higher distinction than that it should produce another scholar and teacher as pure of life, as unselfish of aim, and as accomplished in learning as the Venerable Bede, nor a fairer fame than that which its predecessor at Jarrow acquired through his God-given genius and life-long toil.

Bede's own writings are voluminous and varied. Of him can be said, what has been said of few Englishmen—as of Bacon and Milton in the past—and what with the growth of knowledge will scarcely ever be said of any man again, that he had mastered all that was to be known in his time. The forty-five works he left behind him, apart from the various theological treatises to which he himself attached most importance, included text-books on astronomy and meteorology, physics and music, philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, and medicine—a whole encyclopaedia, in short, of contemporary knowledge.

He was, as we have seen, a skilled musician; he wrote a Latin that put to shame the Latinity of the Pope himself; he possessed the then rare accomplishments of Greek and Hebrew, and yet withal was a lover of his and our dear English tongue, then only lisping its first baby words. He was the first English historian, and his "Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation" alone it is which has saved for us from the pitiless effacing hand of time many a chapter in the history of our country and our county which we could ill spare. It was meet that it should have a king to its translator, as, indeed, it had in the person of Alfred.

And who could tell a simple story with a charm at once so artless and yet so vivid? Is there in the whole range of our literature, or in any literature, anything more touchingly impressive than those stories, graven on all our minds from boyhood, of the little fair-haired, blue-eyed boys of our blood who stood out in their strange beauty amongst their tawny Southern brethren in the slave-market of Rome, "not Angles but angels," and of the sparrow that flitted across the council chamber where the gravest problem of human life was being discussed, out from the darkness, none knew whence, and into the darkness again, none knew whither, an emblem of the life of man. So the great teacher and humble servant of his fellows wrote and taught and wrought for fifty years, now winnowing and threshing corn, now giving the lambs and calves to drink of milk, not disdaining the tasks of garden, kitchen, and bakehouse, but ever back again to the cloisters to his teaching, or to his quiet cell, to pen golden words which will be treasured when the State of England itself shall have followed him into the dust.

Put off your shoes, ye who shall tread the ruined cloisters of the abbey of Jarrow, or at least hush your voices and doff your caps, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground, in all England none holier. Diligently and faithfully had the good Benedict Biscop sown and watered, and God with lavish hand gave the increase.

Coble Dene, as it was before the construction of the Albert Edward Dock. Behind the old tiled cottages on the left a ballast hill. Collier brigs on the right, and in front stores of timber.

CHAPTER XI.

Closing Chapters of the Story of Jarrow.

The libraries of Wearmouth and Jarrow. The manuscript Bibles. A meet offering to the Holy Father. Death of Abbot Ceolfrid. The vanished manuscript. The "Codex Amiatinus." Its garbled dedication. A riddle for scholars. The riddle read. From Jarrow to Florence. Death of Bede. The Danish scourge. The restoration of Jarrow. The bones of Bede. The medieval cult of relics. Elfrid Westoe, the relic hunter. Bede's last resting-place. Modern Jarrow, the cradle and the grave of ships.

A seat of learning without an abundant store of books is as helpless as a man rich with the long experience of a past life who has lost his memory, and the munificent and far-seeing Benedict Biscop, when he cared for the unlettered by his gifts of pictures to the abbeys of Wearmouth and Jarrow, did not forget the needs of the learned. Never did he return from his travels without new acquisitions of books. Shortly before his death he requested earnestly that the large and noble library which he had brought from Rome should be preserved in its entirety, and neither be injured by neglect nor dispersed."

He reckoned, alas! without the Danes. But Ceolfrid industriously added to the store, and many were the precious manuscripts which the monks of the twin foundation painfully but lovingly copied out with their own hands on fair vellum, and illuminated with crimson and azure and gold, and adorned with quaint grotesques and artless portrayals of scenes from Holy Writ.

Amongst others, three copies of the Vulgate, or Latin translation of the Bible by St. Jerome, were made by the industrious monks for Ceolfrid, who destined them one for each of the sister monasteries and one as a gift for the Holy Father himself. We can imagine the care which the monks would bestow on this offering of gratitude to the Head of the Church on earth, how they would choose the most flawless vellum with a surface like ivory, the choicest minium and lapis lazuli, the finest gold; with what scrupulous exactitude they would transfer every jot and tittle of the sacred text, and how they would put forth their utmost skill in the illustrations, so that their gift might be a masterpiece and testify at Rome of what artistic work they in the remote North, on the ultimate limits of Christendom, had become capable. And now in the year 716, Ceolfrid being 74 years of age, the old, old man set out on what was to be his last journey to carry the gift in person to the feet of the Holy Father.

With difficulty do I restrain my hand from painting the picture of his departure, but it belongs to Wearmouth rather than to Jarrow. He laid down the burden of life at Langres, in France, and his large retinue divided—some to bear home the story of his death, some to remain beside their beloved master, and some to carry the gift to Rome. What became of this costly manuscript? It was too precious a treasure to be willingly destroyed. Does it still survive, and can it be traced?

In the Mediceo-Laurentian Library at Florence, forming indeed one of the chief ornaments of that famous collection, there is a beautiful manuscript of the whole Bible in Latin, which is considered by critics to be the oldest and best copy of the Vulgate in existence, and which is amongst those ordered by the Pope to be consulted for the latest Catholic recension of the Scriptures. It is known as the Codex Amiatinus, having once belonged to the convent of Monte Amiata. "Even on a modern spectator," says a scholar, "this prodigy of a manuscript leaves an impression not far removed from awe."

On the back of the first leaf is a dedication in halting Latin elegiacs setting forth that Peter, an abbot in Lombardy, sends the volume to the venerable monastery of the Saviour. But the verses halt only because Peter has manifestly stolen the dedication of someone else, and clumsily adapted it to his own purpose, scratching out the inappropriate words and inserting in their stead others which do not scan. And the sense halts as manifestly as the verse. Peter is but a poor bungler at Latin verse, compared with the original writer of the dedication. What is the origin of this exceptionally beautiful manuscript? Can it be traced?

Ingenious scholars, Italian and English, set their wits to work. Guided by the faulty rhythm they restored one by one the words the disingenuous Peter had so clumsily superseded. One expression which was little appropriate to the new donor "abbot from the extreme confines," pointed to the truth. And then came one of those happy discoveries which too rarely gladden the hearts of antiquaries, and threw a flood of light upon the question. An anonymous "Lives of the Abbots of Jarrow" was brought to light, wherein the story of the gift was narrated, and the dedication which it bore quoted at length. And this dedication, save for one word, which had escaped the conjectures of the scholars, and for a trifling transposition of words, doubtless due to the faulty memory of the scribe, was identical with the restored reading of the dedication of the Codex Amiatinus.

It stated that "Ceolfrid, abbot, from the extremes confines of the English, sends to the shrine of Peter, exalted in merit, whom lofty faith dedicates as the head of the Church, this pledge of his devout affection, praying that he and his may ever have a place mindful of them in Heaven, amidst the joys of so great a Father." Other proof there is, but other proof is not needed.

Cuthbert Bede, as it was before the construction of the Albert Edward Dock. Behind the old tiled cottages on the left a ballast hill. Collier brigs on the right, and in front stores of timber.

The beautiful manuscript Bible, the pride of the Laurentian Library at Florence, is the same which the monks of Wearmouth and Jarrow wrote with pious care over a thousand years ago for their abbot to bear as a meet gift to the Holy See at Rome!

Bede died as he had lived, thinking and working for others. The touching narrative of his last days has been preserved for us in a letter of one of his disciples. Often as it has been told and retold, the closing scene at least must here be rehearsed again. His last task was the translation into English of the Gospel of St. John. This was carried on amidst painful sufferings, with failing breath, so that those about him entreated him to husband his strength. "Nay," he answered, "for I would not have my lads read untruths, or toil for nothing after I am gone." So he continued till Ascension Day of 735, teaching, singing psalms, and working bravely at his task.

Then the last day dawned. At the third hour (9 a.m.) his disciples left him, to walk in procession with the relics of the saints, according to the custom of the day. But one remained beside him, to act as scribe. "Dear master, there wanteth yet one chapter. But it is hard for thee to question thyself any longer." "It is easy," answered the dying man. "Take thy pen and write quickly." Thus the day wore on to evening, and the weeping pupils gathered round him, receiving from him simple little gifts, and laying up his last words in their hearts. "There is yet one sentence unwritten, dear master," said the scribe. "Write it quickly" came the answer. "It is finished now," said the boy, laying down the pen. "It is well," answered Bede. "Thou hast said truly, all is finished now." And the soul of Bede, the great, the brave, the tender, was exhaled from the faltering lips in company with a pious song.

But the unwarlike foundations of piety and learning were as yet in our England but tiny islets where peace found a precarious asylum in the midst of a surging ocean of strife. The waves beat round about them with constant menace, from time to time they dashed over them, not infrequently they overwhelmed them. To the diminishing feuds of race with race and tribe and tribe within the island there succeeded the dread onslaught from without of the Danes, who were rapidly becoming a name of terror on all the coasts of Europe and in every creek and river up which their galleys could sail. The very sites of the Northumbrian monasteries, which had assured them of defence to landward, exposed them to the pitiless attack of the Vikings from the sea.

In 793 they descended upon Lindisfarne, and laid it waste with fire and sword. In 794 they plundered Jarrow. But swift vengeance overtook them. The Saxon chronicle says: "The heathens ravaged among the Northumbrians, and pillaged Ecgferth's monastery at Donemuth (i.e., Donmouth or Jarrow). And there one of their leaders was slain and also some of their ships were wrecked by a tempest, and many of them were drowned, and some came on shore alive, and they were soon slain at the river's mouth."

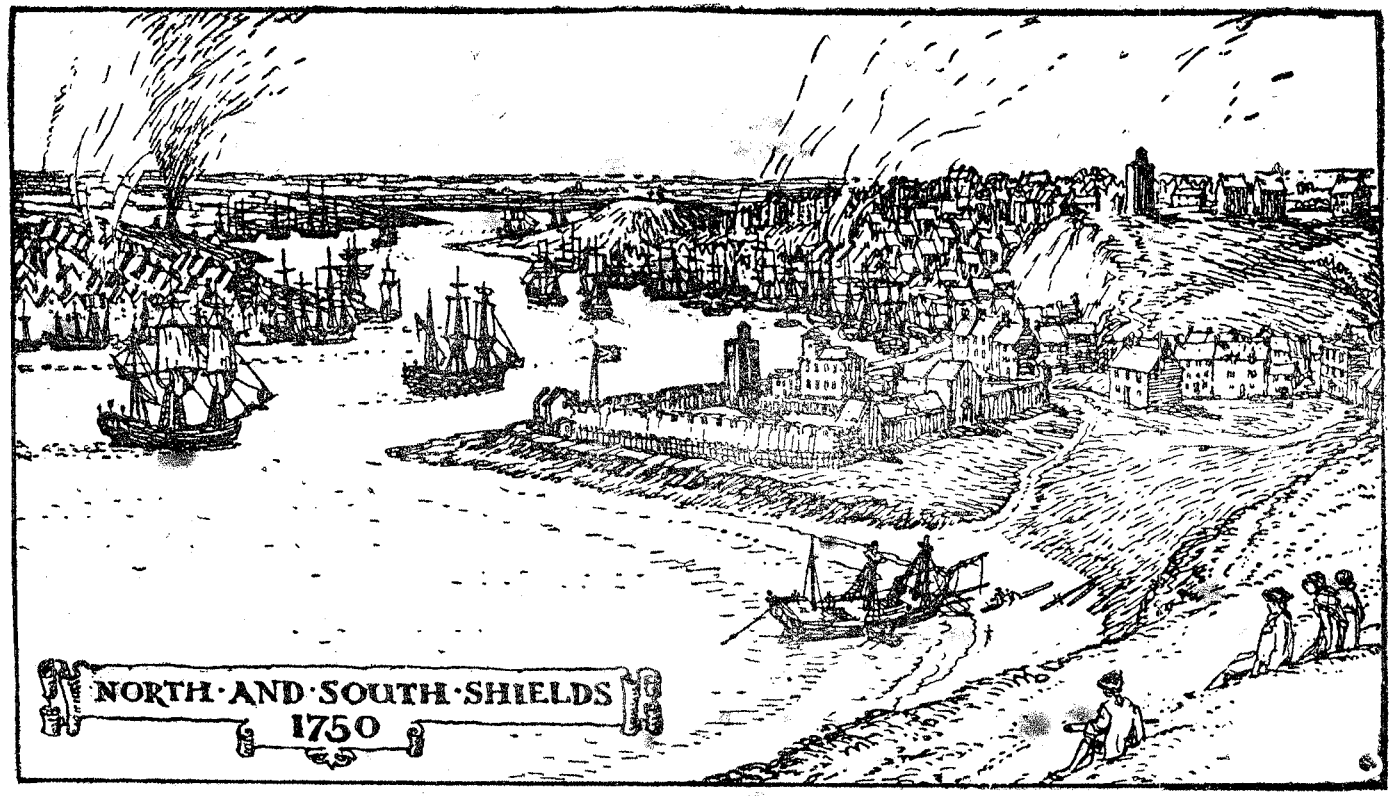
But this reverse procured only a brief respite. In 800 they plundered the monasteries at Tynemouth and Hartlepool. In 832 they were routed at Tynemouth, and driven back to their ships, but in 866 a new horde under Hinguar and Hubba laid waste many Northumbrian monasteries, Jarrow, Wearmouth, and Tynemouth amongst the rest. In 875 the Viking Halfdene wintered in the Tyne with his ships, and, with the spring, raged cruelly throughout Northumbria, plundering Wearmouth, Jarrow, and Tynemouth, and again destroying Lindisfarne.

Whether Jarrow survived this last catastrophe is not known with any certainty. The story of Elfrid Westoe, to which we are coming in the next paragraph, would suggest that Jarrow was occupied by monks in 1022, and the body of Cuthbert rested there in 1069 for the first night of its travels from Lindisfarne to Durham. In that year, too, the church was burned by the army of the Conqueror.

In 1075 the monastery of Jarrow, "of which only the walls, without any roof, were then standing, affording scarce any sign of the ancient grandeur of the place," was restored by Aldwine, a southern monk, to whom it had been granted, with lands for its support, by Walcher, Bishop of Durham. We have seen in an earlier article how the monks repaid the gift with pious service when they took up the poor mangled body of Walcher at Gateshead and conveyed it down the Tyne to Jarrow.

Throughout the havoc of these blood-stained years, the bones of Bede, it would seem, rested undisturbed where they were first laid, in the south porch of Jarrow church. But even after death a saint of such reputation might not have surcease of his labours. Pilgrims flocked to his tomb, and miracles were performed at the shrine.

The material and the spiritual were strangely blent in the faith of the Middle Ages, and the mediaeval cult of relics is a curious, sometimes even a painful, chapter in the history of the race. The relics of a saint of repute were a source of great wealth to the monastery which was so fortunate as to possess them. It is to be feared that they were often more valued than had been the living presence of the man to whose holy life they owed their sanctity. Sometimes even the moment was greedily awaited when the translation of the saint to another world would endow the monastery with the priceless possession of his wonder-working bones.



In the distance Jarrow Slake, and nearer the Ballast Hill. The conspicuous square towers are the "Old Lights" of 1728, the leading lights for ships making the harbour, of which several are seen, some traders and one man-o'-war. In the foreground Clifford's Fort, assigned to 1680, and a wreck in process of dismantling. The smoke at South Shields is that of glassworks.

As eagerly and suspiciously as expectant heirs haunt the last days and watch round the death-bed of one to whose wealth they hope to succeed, so fearfully and jealously would the monks guard the last moments of a prospective saint. Was he ailing, they could not bear him out of their sight, lest he should die elsewhere and endow others would the precious heritage of his bones. They were haunted with fears lest his body should be stolen from amongst them before the breath was well out of it. Nay—in hushed whispers be the horror told—there are even cases on record when they were suspected of having precipitated the last moment to ensure themselves possession of the relics.

Not such, happily, had been the end of our Bede, surrounded by his weeping disciples. But towards 1022 a monk of Durham, one Elfrid Westoe, was wont to visit the shrine of Bede at Jarrow upon the anniversary of his death, and there "devote himself to watchings and to prayers," to watchings, it is to be feared, even more than to prayers. This Elfrid, a fanatic, in truth, rather than a thief, obeying as he thought the command received in a vision, had visited the sites of the ancient monasteries of Northumberland and unearthed the remains of many of the saints, leaving them above ground. "that they might be exhibited to the people and venerated," but always carrying off a portion of the sacred spoils to lay them with the relics of Cuthbert.

So he continued to haunt the tomb of Bede, until one morning early he returned alone to Durham, manifestly shunning observation. And though he lived for many years longer, he was never known to return to Jarrow. He had, as he confided to a few intimate friends, secured his object: the bones of Bede now lay in the shrine of St. Cuthbert. But let them carefully guard the secret, for the church of Durham was haunted with strangers whose dearest wish (we can imagine his pious indignation) was to "carry off the relics of the saints, and chiefly those of Bede."

Bede's relics remain at Durham. His bones no longer perform miracles, but in these gross mediaeval superstitions there was a half truth; the great works wrought by such men in the flesh continue when the flesh has decayed. And those who have stood above the blue slab in the Galilee at Durham, with its familiar inscription, and thrilled to think that the few handfuls of indistinguishable dust which it covers once enshrined the tender soul of our great Northern teacher, will not be entirely without sympathy for the error of Elfrid Westoe and those of his day.

When last I sailed down the Tyne the most conspicuous object at Jarrow, and that which most attracted the attention of my fellow-passengers—for so far as I could see only two on board had any eyes at all for Bede's old church—was the Queen Mary, lithe and sinister-looking as a panther, the last word in the application of the genius of man to purposes of destruction. Alas and alas! But battleships are at least no new and monstrous portent of the twentieth century at Jarrow; the workmen who built Bede's church could see the war fleet of King Egfrid riding at anchor in the estuary of the Don, which spreads itself over the flats to form Jarrow Slake.

And Jarrow is not only the cradle, but also the grave of ships. There, in the unnavigable shallows of the Slake, whither they have crept aside from the tide of traffic to die in peace, lie the unnumbered hulks of ancient wooden craft, pathetic derelicts, their gaunt belly timbers showing against the sky-line for all the world like the beribbed carcases of camels withering away in African deserts. There they lie, and slowly rot and moulder into the river whose current they were wont to stem so proudly. Their own little day is past, the very race of them is slowly but surely disappearing from off the face of the sea.

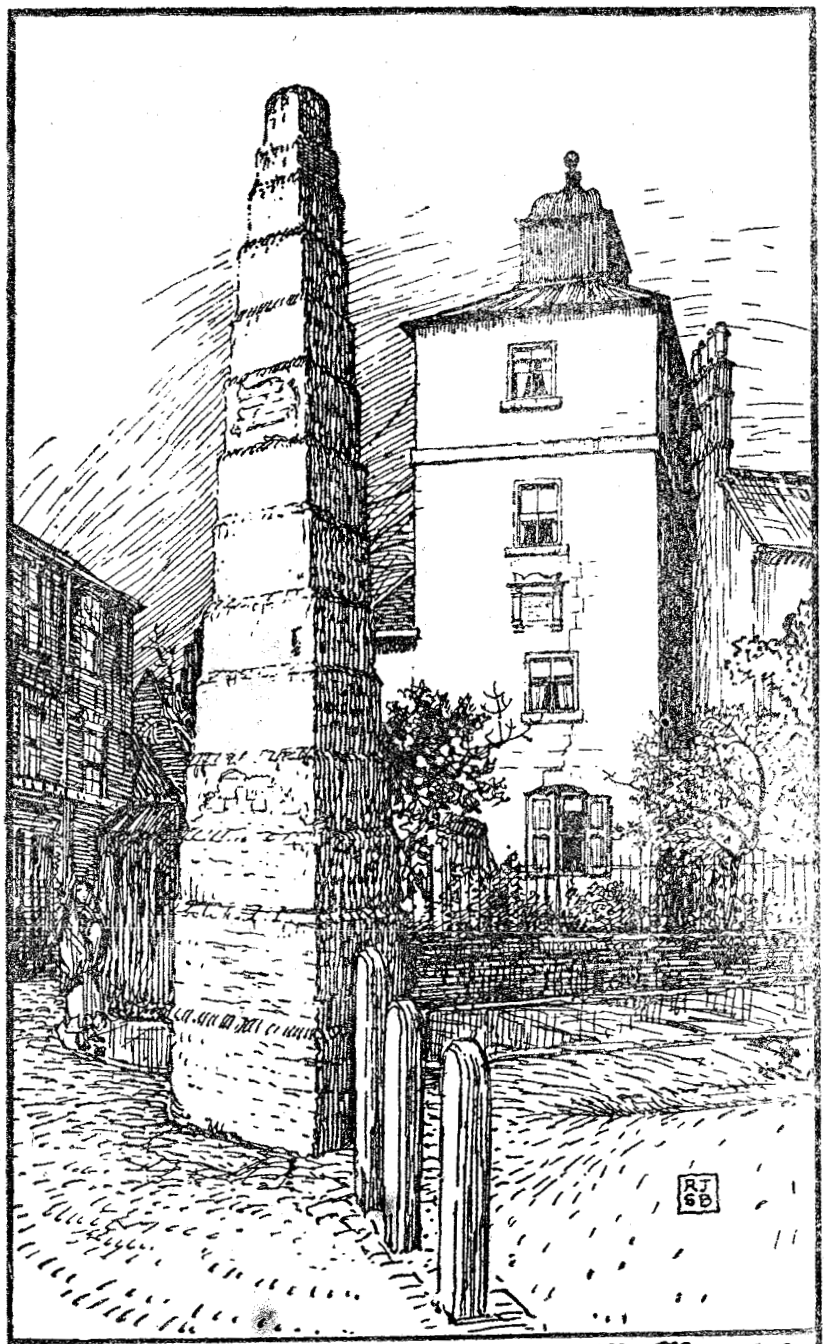
CHAPTER XII.

The Harbour Towns.

The sea! the sea! The call of the deep. Wrecked in the harbour-mouth. Cruel as the jaws of hell. Scylla and Charybdis—the Black Middens and the Herd Sands. Tragic romance of shipwreck and death. The loss of the "Adventure." Man's helplessness. The glory of South Shields—the lifeboat. The loss of the "Stanley." Man's humanity to man. Discontented Tynesiders. Fine word of a fine old Tynesider. The glory of North Shields—the Volunteer Life Brigade. Somehow good.

Away! away! for the sea is calling us. The briny breath of it is in our faces. The cramping banks recede on either hand as the river widens, and our hearts thrill and leap as we glide out into the magnificent expanse of the harbour and feel beneath our keel the rhythmic swell of the ocean. The High and the Low Lights of Shields already twinkle through the twilight, the mighty piers stretch far out into the sea their gigantic arms in majestic sweeping curves, and beyond them, vaguely shrouded in the evening mists, full of menace, and yet—and, therefore to the restless, daring, aspiring, yearning spirit of man—full of a resistless charm, lie romance and adventure; the untried and the unknown; mystery; infinity.

And our Tynesiders have followed the lure in their thousands out and away from the safe familiar land, past the craggy headland, crowned with its castle and its church, past the twinkling star of the lighthouse on its point, with a heave and



Old Lighthouse & Beacon: No Shields

a dip that sent them staggering as they crossed the bar, lest perchance they should glide unwarned over the threshold of land and sea, the dividing line between safety and peril. The fluttering kerchief has faded from their straining eyes, the twinkling star of the lighthouse has set in the waves, and left them alone in the wide waste of waters.

Fain to go were they, but after seeing the marvels of strange lands afar, after wrestling night and day with wind and sea, after hairbreadth 'scapes from perils manifold, wearied and spent, sick at heart for the things of home, for familiar tongues and familiar faces, fain, how fain to return! And to many was vouchsafed even such a homecoming as their hearts desired. But many, how many, perished afar, and lie lone in strange lands. Many, how many, are washed hither and thither down the dark and weedy aisles of the ocean depths! And many, alas, how many, who departed in a season of calm weather, returned on a night of storm, and with the home fires gleaming in their eyes, with the home-voices ringing in their ears, yet never made the desired haven, or made it only to be borne amidst mute and weeping crowds to the graveyard on the hill.

The mouth of the Tyne in a storm could be as cruel as the jaws of hell. There, on either hand, Scylla and Charybdis lay in wait for the home-faring mariner, on the north the sinister reef of the Black Middens, on the south the treacherous shoal of the Herd Sands. But Ulysses had at least a fairway between the terrors on either hand, whilst on Tyne, between reef and shoal, stretched the bar, an impassable barrier save when the tide served, and even then a dangerous obstacle. Add to these difficulties the complication of a gale from the east, or, worse still, with a few points of north or south in it, so that it blew aslant the harbour mouth, and it will be seen that the entrance to the Tyne presented a riddle which it might often pass the skill of seamanship to read, though the penalty of failure was death.

So the romance of Tynemouth is a tragic romance of shipwreck and death, of the insurrection of the seeming unconquerable elements against the seeming puny might of man, and of the triumphant rebellion of man, goaded to frenzy, against the tyranny of the elements. For, to the woeful loss of human life at the mouth of the Tyne, the world owes two institutions which have saved more human lives than the hungry sea off Tynemouth has engulfed, and the glory of having initiated these is divided with admirable symmetry between the twin towns which guard the entrance of the port, standing, in the phrase which the short-sighted jealousy of old Newcastle has made proverbial, "where no town ought to be"—between North and South Shields.

We are in September, 1789. A fierce storm is raging at the entrance to the Tyne. The shores are lined with thousands of spectators, and every straining eye and every anguished heart is turned towards the piteous spectacle of a ship that lies stranded on the Herd Sands, so near that the hoarse, despairing voices of the sailors can be heard above the tumult of wind and waves, and yet, alas, so far that no human hand can avail to rescue them. No boat yet built can hope to live in that seething hell, and so, as the masts swing to and fro upon the surges, one by one the numbed hands lose their grip on the rigging, and one by one the hapless creatures drop to their death.

The heart-wringing loss of the "Adventure" resulted in the saving of thousands and tens of thousands from a similar fate. The spirit of man rose indignantly against his helplessness, and the outcome was the invention of the lifeboat. The details of the invention are clouded in obscurity. With it are generally associated the names of Wouldhave and Greathead. Others have thrown doubt upon their claims, and have sought to divide the credit with a committee which sprang into life under the spur of the terrible incident recorded above.

It is not in my power to adjust the conflicting claims, and even if it were, I should have little inclination to do so. Every man who labours in such a cause, though his labours result in failure, contributes to the final success. It is enough for me that all were men of South Shields, and that amongst them the lifeboat sprang to birth.

The first lifeboat ventured out to its first wreck on June 30, 1790, and saved no fewer than 1,000 lives before it was withdrawn from service. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution was founded in 1824. I have no recent statistics at hand as I write, but between 1824 and 1871 the Lifeboat Institution had to its account a total of 20,746 lives saved. This in England alone, but the lifeboat is in use in every civilised country. Truly, the sea had a bad bargain in the wreck of the "Adventure."

It had no better bargain in the wreck of the "Stanley," whose story of heroism and of disaster I am now to tell. It is the 24th of November, 1864. The long rollers sweep in imperious procession into Tynemouth harbour impelled by a bleak gale from the east-south-east. As the winter night sets in, the little group of watchers by the Spanish Battery descry a large steamer off the end of the yet unfinished North Pier. Will she ever weather it? Yes, thank God, she is safely past. She wins safely across the Spar Hawk sands. But she is caught in the fierce race of the waters streaming towards the Narrows, the wheel is wrested out of the governing hand, and she crashes helplessly on to the skirts of the Black Middens.

Swift the rockets! Swish-h-h! Like some mighty, flaming eagle the rocket soars through the night, but alas, it swerves, it is swept aside by the gale. The shores are swiftly lined with a sympathising crowd. Another rushing bird is borne through the air on fiery pinions, and yet another. At length one reaches the goal. The line is hauled aboard, and made fast. "To the mast, man alive, hitch it to the mast!" The warning voices are beaten back by the wind, and the line remains attached to the bulwarks. We must do our best. A man is drawn ashore, buried in the surf; brave men rush into the seething waters, heedless of danger; they are swept from off their feet, but the wave subsides; they touch ground again, their fingers close with a grip of steel upon the now unconscious sailor, and he is borne into safety. Yet another is snatched with like peril half drowned from the swirling waves. Then the life-line is fouled amongst the rocks.

See, they are lowering a boat from the wreck. It is crowded with passengers. Can it live for a moment in that welter of waters? There it swings from the side of the ship. Lower away! Lower away! Good God! Only one tackle has been let go, and they are hurled one and all into the sea. Every man is drowned.

But there is no time now to mourn the dead. The first duty is to save the living, if saved they may be. Swish-h-h-h! Again a rocket hurtles like a meteor through the air and yet again. All in vain, the sea is too wild, the wreck is too far, the crew on the ship, the willing workers on shore, are too unskilled in the use of the appliances. But the rescuers refuse to accept defeat. Swift counsels are held ashore; perhaps the attempt may be made with better hopes of success from the further side. A cart rattles off to North Shields with a new set of apparatus. It is a race against time, for life, for life!

At the quayside lies a tug under steam, the apparatus is hustled on board, and away down the river into the very heart of the storm. All in vain. What could not be done from the firm land is still less to be achieved from the deck of a vessel tossed like a cork in the tumult of the waves.

Meanwhile the would-be rescuers at Tynemouth have their hands more than full. For see! Some hundred yards to westward of the "Stanley," a schooner is ashore. Out with the lifeboat, out with it now! There is a swift bustle at Prior's Haven. The gallant crew leap aboard—not all to return, but little they reck of that. The boat crunches over the gravel, sways on the billows and crawls resolutely on, followed by anxious straining eyes. But as she rounds Spar Hawk, and emerges into the full force of the storm, a mighty sea meets her with fearful shock.

Women shriek and veil their faces, men gaze with tense lips. She is gone! No, she lives, she lives! Aye, she lives, but at the mercy of wind and waves. The oars are all broken, except two, and herself a wreck she is swept helpless past the wreck she had put out to help. Four of her crew leap on board the schooner as she passes. The rest are picked up by another lifeboat that has put out from South Shields. But the schooner shortly goes to pieces, and every man on board is drowned, save two of the lifeboat crew, who are kept afloat by their cork jackets.

Meanwhile the battle for the lives of those on board the "Stanley" has not been abandoned. But there is an enforced lull in it. The rising tide has interposed a greater width of water between the ship and the shore, and the life-saving appliances have been exhausted. Away to Cullercoats for more, away! Slowly the tide creeps up, slowly it ebbs again. At four o'clock in the morning the new apparatus is here, and the tide serves for another attempt.

Swish-h! The flaming messenger of safety carries its thin line over the vessel; the captain, profiting by his error, has the gear fixed high on the mast; and one by one the rest of the passengers and crew of the "Stanley" are brought back to safety from the very brink of death. Thirty-six are saved, but thirty-four have perished. The Tyne has witnessed many black and bloody deeds, but such a night—and it has witnessed many such—goes far to redeem them all. In the face of it what man so false and craven as to despair of his brother man?

But that was not to be the end of the wreck of the "Stanley." These dogged Tynesiders were actually discontented with their achievement! They had saved thirty-six from the wreck, but with more perfect appliances, with more effectual help—better trained, that is, for braver or more willing they could not have—all might have been saved.

The Army Volunteer movement was then still a new thing, and to John Morrison, a member of the Tynemouth corps, there came a bright inspiration. Why not a volunteer life brigade, which should train itself for its humane duties by regular drill, and on stormy nights hold itself in readiness? The scheme was mooted. Then was said that fine word of a fine old Tynesider, of Joseph Spence, to John Foster Spence, Quakers both, and therefore little in sympathy with the Army Volunteer movement, "That is a sort of volunteering we can go in for." They went in for it with a will, and many with them. They trained weekly in fair weather, and in foul they stood sentry in the open, through the wild winter nights, ready, aye ready.

After the first few winters they built a house commanding the entrance of the harbour to shelter their vigils, and the house grew, and was fitted with all that

was needed to revive and comfort the rescued. But why dilate further upon the success of the scheme? Who does not know the Brigade House overlooking the Spanish Battery, surrounded by the well-won trophies of its victories? Like the lifeboat, the movement spread. Cullercoats had a Life Brigade. South Shields had a Life Brigade. In 1895 no fewer than 230 of these exemplars of man's humanity to man had sprung into existence round our coasts, ready at a moment's notice; nay, watching the opportunity to spring to the help of unknown men, strangers it might be in blood and in speech, seeking no other motive than that they were brother men and in deadly peril of their lives.

And so the glory of South Shields is the lifeboat, and the glory of North Shields is the Volunteer Life Brigade; and which is the greater glory, who would care to decide? And thus from the pitiful wrecks of the "Adventure" and the "Stanley" did there grow in the increasing purpose somehow good.

CHAPTER XIII

Tynemouth.

Ruins on the headland. Clustering memories. Vignettes of a vanished past. The Romans. Monks in deadly peril. The wind shifts round at Cuthbert's intercession. Edwin's chapel and Oswald's monastery. King Osred buried at Tynemouth. The Viking scourge. The treasure that escaped the Danes. Recovery of Oswin's relics. Tynemouth sacked by the Conqueror's soldiers. And restored by Robert de Mowbray. De Mowbray's rebellion and the two sieges of Tynemouth. The wealth of Tynemouth. Royal guests. Monks eaten out of house and home. How the Devil carried off brother Pygun. The pious chronicler and the sceptical reader. Tynemouth in the 12th century—a picture of desolation. A companion picture from the present day. The dust of kings in unnamed graves. How a peasant of Monkseaton lies buried in Dunfermline Abbey. Surprises of the resurrection. Bodies of Malcolm and Edward. How St. Oswin saved his monastery. The end of the Priory. Curious relics. A Satanic soliloquy. The author takes his leave of the reader.

Of the ancient buildings, castle, priory, and church which erstwhile crowned the picturesque headland of Tynemouth, there remains little that attracts the eye save the eastern and southern wall of the chancel of the church. These, with their stately lancet windows, are eloquent of the grace and beauty of wrought stone with which pious hands once adorned this rugged and tempest-beaten site.

Yet memories in abundance remain, memories of siege and of sack by Dane and Norman and Scot; memories of quaint monkish superstition; of kings and queens that have tarried within the vanished walls of the once wealthy priory; of kings and of saints who have found there a last resting-place, and whose bones still moulder in some unknown corner, undistinguished from the common dust of those whose names were never written in the roll of history, for "sceptre and crown must tumble down, And in the dust be equal made With the poor crooked scythe and spade."

Scant justice can I do in this last brief article to the wealth of human interest that clings about Tynemouth. I cannot even begin to tell its tale. As an artist, when called upon to illustrate a story, picks out here and there a subject, not guided so much by the importance of the incident as by the consideration of its picturesque effect, so I must be content to limn a few vignettes; and as one who has not time, or patience, or skill to read the book gathers some vague notion of its contents by turning over the leaves and glancing at the pictures, so the kind reader must content himself if my sketches answer but one or two of the questions he must needs have put to himself when standing amidst the ruins of a vanished past on the jutting crag of Tynemouth.

Had the Romans any station at Tynemouth? At the present day the question remains unanswered. The few Roman-worked stones that have been found there throw no light upon it, for wrought stone was a precious commodity in the Middle Ages, and the Roman wall and its forts were a convenient quarry from which church and pele and farmhouse and byre were constructed all along its line, the stones often being brought from considerable distances. It would be strange, indeed, if the Romans with the shrewd eye for a defensive position which is testified by so many of their camps, should have passed over this all but impregnable natural fastness commanding so important a position as the mouth of the river, but there has been discovered no indefeasible proof of their presence.

The first story which attaches to Tynemouth lacks no element of the picturesque. Like so much of the early story of Northumbria, be it history or be it tradition, we owe it to Bede, who had it from a monk of Jarrow, who had it from an eye-witness of the scene. It belongs to the seventh century.

The saintly Hilda, best known as Abbess of Whitby, who was of the blood of the Northumbrian kings, and one of the earliest of the Northumbrian Christians, having been baptised by King Edwin, was building a monastery where now is South Shields. A party of monks had been sent up the river to cut timber from the woods that clothed

its banks, and were drifting down stream with the tide on five rafts, intending to land at South Shields; but a strong wind sprang up from the west, and, in spite of the attempts of their brethren to render help in boats, they were carried out helplessly to sea.

Their comrades on the south shore abandoned the useless boats, and, kneeling on the Lawe, betook themselves to prayer. But on the headland of Tynemouth there gathered a crowd who rejoiced with a fierce joy at the discomfiture of the monks. Far from seeking to render assistance, they jeered and gibed as the rafts swept past them and away out to the horizon, carrying their occupants, as it seemed, to certain doom. One lad alone amongst the heartless crowd was touched with pity. "Why curse ye those," he cried indignantly, "who are being drawn to their death? Were it not seemlier and kinder to pray to God for their return than to rejoice in their danger?"

The Christian faith, be it remembered, had as yet struck but shallow root on Northumbrian soil, and the crowd turned upon the boy and reviled him. "Let none pray for them! May God have mercy upon never a one of them! They have taken away our old gods, and what man can live as they would have us live?" Then Cuthbert, for he was the lad, knelt down and laid his face on the earth, and prayed ardently, and even as he prayed the wind veered round and brought back the rafts safe to shore with their freight.

Where had stood the jeering crowd round the kneeling boy, King Edwin, we are told, built a chapel of wood, which Oswald replaced by a monastery of stone. However this may be, before the beginning of the eighth century there stood an abbey on Tynemouth bluff, and there, in 792, was buried Osred, some time King of Northumbria, who was slain by his successor, Ethelred, in a vain effort to recover his kingdom.

But a year thereafter the Viking scourge came upon the land, and one after another the Northumbrian monasteries were desolated by the Danes. Tynemouth Abbey was first plundered in the year 800, and as the heathen ravagers grew in strength and daring it was, in 875, utterly destroyed. The Danes, under Halfdene, established themselves on the strong rock of Tynemouth, and thence spread their dominion over Northumberland.

Of one treasure, however, the Danes had not despoiled Tynemouth—a treasure that was to be a source of wealth and fame to the new monastery that should be founded there. It was, indeed, a treasure which the heathens were not at all likely to covet, being none other than the bones of the saintly King Oswin.

Now in 1065 there appeared in a vision to a priest of the Church of the Virgin Mary (which stood hard by the yet ruined monastery) an angelic form, and said: "I am King Oswin, who was betrayed and put to a terrible death by King Oswy, and I lie in this church unknown to all." He had indeed lain there, if he did lie there at all, for four centuries since Oswy had deprived him of his kingdom and his life.

After hours of digging, when the workers were half persuaded that it was a lying vision that had appeared to the priest, a stone coffin was found, and the strange fragrance which exhaled from the relics bore witness to their sanctity. The body was washed, wrapped in fine linen, covered with rich garments, and suitably enshrined.

The reputation of St. Oswin was already so great when the Conqueror visited the North-country that the leader of one of his foraging parties quailed from possessing himself of the provisions which the inhabitants had entrusted to the protection of the saint. But his hungry troops did not share his scruples. Tynemouth was despoiled, and the church was given to the flames. This was probably about 1089. The monastery was finally restored by Robert de Mowbray, who summoned monks from St. Alban's to rebuild and repeople the desolate cloisters, and thus Tynemouth became, and for the most part remained, a cell of the monastery from which it had been founded anew.

In 1095, De Mowbray, the founder of the new Priory of Tynemouth, rose in rebellion against William Rufus. He held the castles of Newcastle and Tynemouth, to both of which the Royal forces laid siege. Tynemouth held out for two months, and then surrendered with the whole of the garrison and De Mowbray's brother. The fall of Newcastle followed, and De Mowbray was closely besieged in Bamborough.

De Mowbray now conceived a daring scheme. He slipped out of Bamborough, leaving the greater part of the Royal forces engaged in its blockade, and aimed at recovering Newcastle and Tynemouth, thus cutting off the army of Rufus from its communications with the South. But the garrison of Newcastle had timely warning of his approach, Tynemouth was a second time besieged and taken, and Mowbray was dragged from his sanctuary in the church, and carried south to a long captivity. He spent his last days as a monk in the monastery of St. Alban's.

The priory of Tynemouth was a wealthy and powerful foundation. It had receipts from fishery exports, coal-mines, and salt-pans, in addition to court dues, etc., amounting to upwards of £1,000 per annum, whereas at the dissolution of the monasteries the annual revenues of Blanchland amounted only to £40, those of Brinkburn to £60, and even those of Hexham only to £122, all of which sums must, of course, be multiplied many times over to arrive at

their equivalent in modern times. And the Prior of Tynemouth needed all his princely income, for he had to maintain numerous armed men for his castle (which, as we have seen, had been able to withstand a two months' siege on the occasion of Robert de Mowbra~'s rebellion); he had to keep up an imposing mounted retinue, which we have also seen welcoming the Princess Margaret to the North-country; and he had to furnish effective protection and meet entertainment for Royal and other guests, amongst whom Edward I. stayed on no fewer than four occasions, whilst his queen, Margaret, was accommodated for a lengthy period between June and October of 1308.

And yet it would seem that his resources were not always equal to the demands made upon them. For a quaint story tells how once upon a time Abbot Simon of St. Alban's, with a hungry train from the south, descended upon Tynemouth like a locust-swarm, and made so long a stay that they had almost eaten the hapless friars out of house and home. Only one poor yoke of ploughing oxen remained. These the unwilling hosts brought with tears in their eyes, declaring that they were the only things eatable that were left to them, and inviting the sharp-set visitors to make an end of their baleful work, and devour them too. Abbot Simon, we are told, took the hint. We can well believe it!

Amongst the distinguished guests who honoured Tynemouth Priory in the days of its glory was one whom my readers will be not a little surprised to find on its visitors' list. This was no other than his swarthy majesty, the Prince of Darkness himself! But he paid only a flying visit, and though an unbidden, he was not, it would seem, altogether an unwelcome guest.

The abbots of St. Alban's, into whose governance, as we have seen, the Priory of Tynemouth had passed, found in this bleak headland on the northern seas a very appropriate penitential abode for erring brethren whom they saw fit to punish with exile. One such was one William Pygun, "no monk, but a cowled devil, a Lucifer among angels, a Judas among apostles." Pygun had treacherously forged a charter conferring the patronage of the cell of Binham on Earl Robert Fitz Walter, and had abstracted by stealth the convent seal wherewith to seal it. The white lambs of Tynemouth, "angels" and "apostles" all in the eyes of the chronicler, were not greatly edified by the presence amongst them of this black sheep. But they were shortly to be purged in startling wise of his unholy presence. His end was such as befitted the enormity of his crimes. One night the brethren heard above the thunder of the surf the heavy snores of brother Pygun. Suddenly the snoring ceased, and the trembling monks heard a loud cry, as if a man should hound a terrier on a rat, of "Seize him, Satan, seize him!" And when the morning light restored their shaken courage they found him dead where he sat. "Perhaps," says the pious chronicler, "he had caught a chill. I prefer to think he was struck by the divine vengeance." To which the sceptical modern reader will probably reply, not without a touch of sympathy for the erring brother left alone in his utmost need: "Perhaps he was struck by the divine vengeance. But to me it looks uncommonly like an apoplectic seizure." So much depends on the point of view.

It is a desolate picture that an unknown monk, haply, like brother Pygun, exiled for his sins from St. Alban's, paints of the Priory of Tynemouth at the end of the 12th century. I quote the abridged translation (for the original is of course in Latin) from Mr. H. H. E. Craster's version in the County History of Northumberland:—

"Our house is confined to the top of a high rock, and is surrounded by the sea on every side but one. Here is the approach to the monastery, through a gate cut out of the rock, so narrow that a cart can hardly pass through. Day and night the waves break and roar, and undermine the cliff. Thick sea frets roll in, wrapping everything in gloom. Dim eyes, hoarse voices, sore throats, are the consequence. Spring and summer never come here. The north wind is always blowing, and it brings with it cold and snow, or storms in which the wind tosses the salt sea foam in masses over our building, and rains it down within the castle. Shipwrecks are frequent. It is a great pity to see the numbed crew, whom no power on earth can save, whose vessel, masts swaying and timbers parted, rushes upon rock or reef. No ring dove or nightingdale is here, only grey birds which nest in the rocks, and whose screaming cry is a token of coming storm. The people who live by the sea-shore feed upon black malodorous seaweed, called "slauk," which they gather upon the rocks. The constant eating of it turns their complexion black. Men, women, and children are as dark as Africans or swarthiest Jews. In the spring the sea-air blights the blossoms of the stunted fruit trees, so that you will think yourself lucky to find a wizened apple, though it will set your teeth on edge should you try to eat it. See to it, dear brother, that you do not come to so comfortless a place.

"But the church is of wondrous beauty. It has been lately completed. Within it rests the body of the blessed martyr Oswin in a silver shrine, magnificently embellished with gold and jewels. He protects the murderers, thieves, and seditious persons who fly to him, and commutes their punishment to exile. He heals those whom no physician can cure."

The poor exiled brother had a picturesque pen, and a not untruthful one withal. The last time the writer visited the ruins of Tynemouth Priory, though the month was already June, the staging was such that the

old monk's doleful account scarcely seemed exaggerated. The sea-frets rolled up round the grey old ruins, and streamed through the vacant windows of the shattered choir, and curtained off the headland with their dank folds from all the rest of the world. And pierced to the marrow by a fine cold drizzle, the writer felt a thrill of sympathy with the poor father who for his sins had exchanged the sunshine and juicy fruits, the doves and nightingales of St. Alban's, for the sea-mists and wizened apples, the hoarse grey gulls and the heart-wringing shipwrecks of this penitential exile.

Not only did Tynemouth entertain living kings, but somewhere amongst its unnamed graves still lies the dust of kings dead. In 792, as we have seen, Osred, son of Alcred, a dispossessed king of Northumbria, was buried here. And if Matthew Paris is a reliable chronicler, the dust of Malcolm Canmore, King of Scotland, lies in an unnoticed grave on the promontory of Tynemouth, and in Dumfermline Abbey there lie in its stead the bones of an honest farmer of Monkseaton, who little recked of the posthumous honours to be thrust upon him.

For when Malcolm made his fifth invasion into Northumberland, he was surprised and slain on the banks of the Aln, November 13, 1093, and his body was conveyed in a cart and interred at Tynemouth, in the new Norman church then building. His son, Alexander I., "impudently made petition that the body of his father might be restored to him," and receiving in good faith the corpse sent to him, had it buried in Dunfermline Abbey, bestowing upon the church in return "his peace and the peace of God." But the English that time had been one too many for the "fause Scot," for the body they had sent was that of "a certain man of no rank of Seaton." "And thus," chuckles the chronicler, "we cheated the dishonest Scots."

Imagination, pointed by the graveyard reflections of a Hamlet, follows the dust of kings into strange places, but amongst all the surprises of the resurrection—Alexanders, whom the Last Trump finds stopping a beer-barrel, and Caesars patching a cottage-wall, not to speak of lowly sinners emerging to their infinite amaze from costly shrines which had been thought to house the bones of saints (for even the genuineness of the relics of the revered Oswin was scarcely above suspicion)—but amongst all these surprises will any, we wonder, be more startling than that of the honest churl who finds himself, to his own unspeakable bewilderment, bursting the cerements of a king, to rise, not through the familiar clay of the fields of Monkseaton, but from all the pomp of a royal tomb, amidst the splendours of Dunfermline Abbey? And will the goodly company of quondam kings and princes who will rise around him turn up their erstwhile royal noses at the clod who stands abashed in their midst? Or will they humbly bow to the decrees of Death the Leveller, and be hail-fellow-well-met with their unlooked-for companion in the last muster? Or will they be too urgently occupied with their own affairs even to note his incongruous presence amongst them?

In 1257, in the course of excavations for a new building, two coffins were brought to light at Tynemouth, one containing the body of a man of unusual stature, the other a body of slighter build. These were thought by the then prior to be the bodies of Malcolm and of his eldest son, Edward, who was slain at the same time with him.

The post of patron saint of a mediaeval monastery was no sinecure. He was expected to requite by the performance of frequent miracles the honour shown to his remains, though it is but fair to add that the monks were ever ready to credit him with any out-of-the-way occurrence which could be wrested into the semblance of a miracle. But if he failed to manifest his power on an urgent occasion they were ready to scold him like a naughty child.

Once, in the early morning hours, the monks were startled by seeing their guest-house in flames, which a strong west wind swept dangerously near to the thatched roof of their dormitory. The monks rushed hither and thither in confusion, some to battle with the flames, some to rescue their treasures from the church.

But the prior and the sub-prior seized the reliquary containing the remains of the saint, and carried it forth to the grass-grown square within the cloisters. There the prior spoke his mind very freely to the saint. "What are you about, Saint Oswin? Do you mean to let your house be burnt down, and let the blame be thrown on me? If you are a saint, if you are God's friend, help us in our need. Why so tardy? I shall not budge from here, neither shall you. We will burn together. If you have no thought for your monastery, have at least a thought for your corpse."

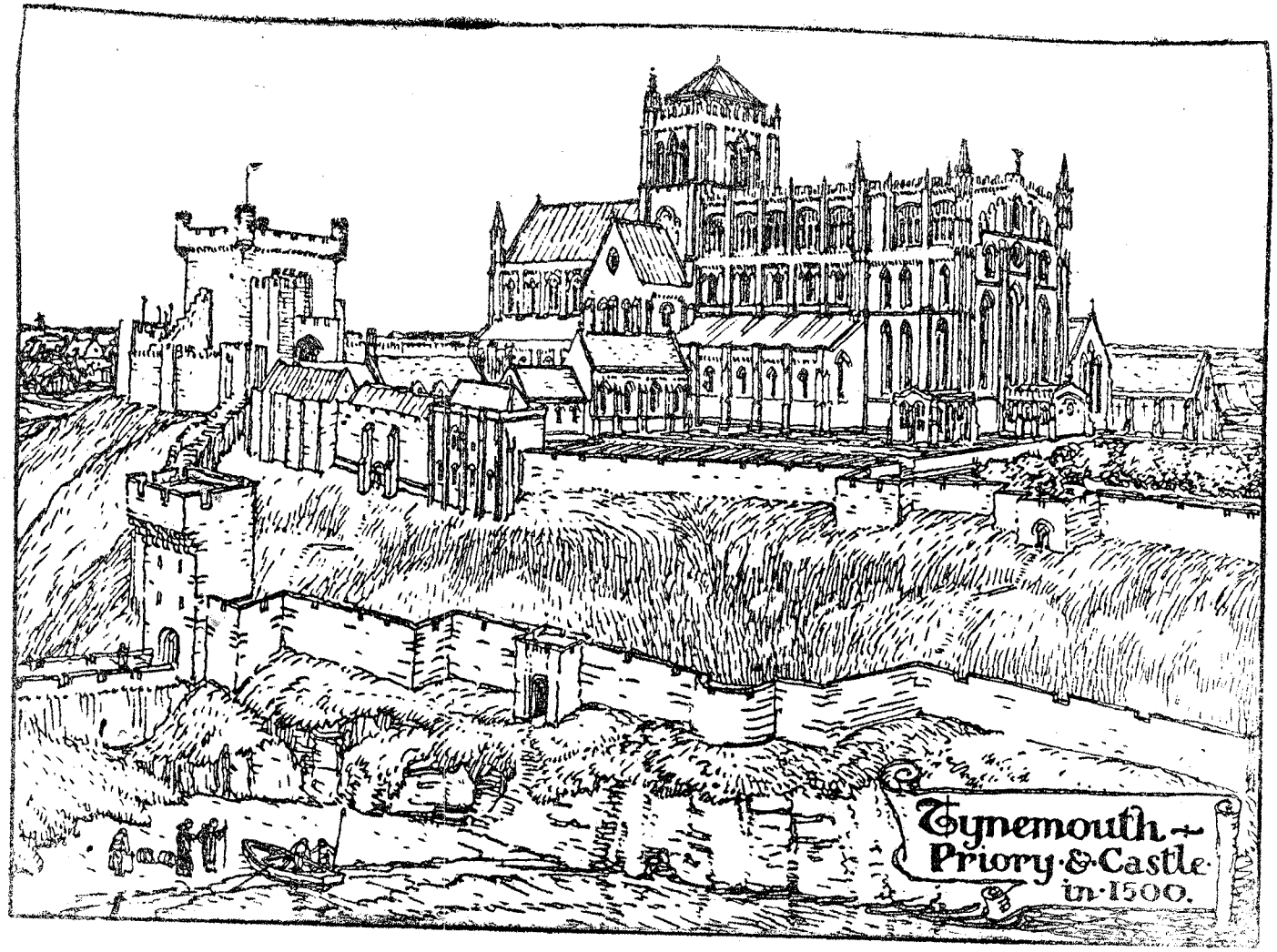
The exhortation was not in vain. The wind fell, and the monastery escaped, though not altogether without scathe. Then it was that brother Richard had a narrow escape. He had climbed the dormitory roof to escape from the fire, but had only exchanged one peril for another; for an ill-aimed jet of water brought him tumbling from his perch.

But space fails me to pursue the theme. The monasteries, as we all know, were dissolved by Henry VIII. and his Minister, Cromwell. Serious charges were brought against them, into whose truth or falsity it is not my part to inquire. There can, however, be little doubt that the wealth they had accumulated was not the least of their offences. And Tynemouth was not the least of the offenders in that respect, for at the time of its dissolution it was richly endowed with lands in all the surrounding country.

It was a plum well worth the picking, which duly followed on January 12th, 1589. From the inventory made at its dissolution it appears that it possessed relics more curious, though it is to be feared of even less authenticity, than the bones of Saint Oswin. For, not to mention other trifles, it included amongst its treasures the bush which had burned before Moses without being consumed, and—most venerable of all human relics—the earth of which Adam was made!

For what a fantastic scene might not a fanciful imagination derive inspiration from the presence of this latter relic! Such a mind might picture the Enemy of mankind, pausing for a moment before his midnight call on brother Pygun, to meditate, in vein serious or sardonic, according to the turn of the writer's wit, upon this handful of pregnant clay; to review all the fluctuating fortunes of his prolonged feud with mankind; to revile in turn all the saints who had strewn thorns in his path, not forgetting Oswin, so strangely asleep whilst this gaunt wolf was prowling about within his fold; and to gloat over all his triumphs celebrated in their despite, from the crime of Cain down to this his latest sorry prey, whose portentous snores, soon to be so rudely stilled, punctuate the pauses in his Satanic soliloquy. But the pen of a Milton —or of a Swift—would no more than suffice to such an undertaking. The present writer modestly shirks a task so greatly beyond his powers.

And now, kind reader, who hast accompanied me on this my voyage down the Tyne "from Hedwin Streams to Sparrow Hawk," and hast lent so patient an ear to my yarn, we must part company, for thou and I must be gone each about his own business. Whither thine leads thee I know not —back again, it may well be, in sober reality to that Tyne down whose stream we have glided together borne on Fancy's sails. But as for me, I know not of any business I have upon Tyne—my excursion in its waters has been only the freak of a summer-holiday. So I will put thee ashore at Prior's Haven, thanking thee for thy good fellowship, and set my prow for those other waters on which it is the will of fortune that I should sail. And may Heaven speed the twain of us with favouring gales!


Tynemouth
Priory & Castle
in 1500.