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To the Editor of the *North Devon Journal*.

THE GUDE OLD TIMES IN WELCOMBE

Zur,—Zince I sent me last litter, I've bin hinformed thit some vokes have bin hinquring ware Welcombe is, and wat zort uv a plase 'tis, so I think I must tell min. Wel, to be short, if you com down vrom Bideford towards Bude, wen you git jist past the 15th mile stoan you'll com to a four cross way ware there's a sine pawst that they cawl the "passon," cus thay say he pointh the way but dithen go hissel, and if you do as he tell'th ee an turn to the rite you'll be in to Welcombe. An if you keep strite on so vur as you can go, you'll get to the say wich is the tether end aut. 'Tis bout three miles long an nearly a mile wide, an they tell me the parrish containeth about 2,000 aykers of land. 'Tis purty level at the east hend, but there's a stream rinth down aich side. The rite hand wun sepperates it vrum Hartland and vallth into the say at Welcombe Mouth, and the left hand stream sepperates it vrum Morwenstow in Cornwall, an emtys at Marsland Mouth, ware smugglin used to be carry'd on, an wich I shall tell ee about bamby. Out against the say the wholl parrish is only wan ridge like the rufe of a howze with his hend

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to the say. Some vokes say the hi kliffs an the valleys an the rocks an the say makth a gran site, but us doant think nort of it down yer. I seed a man down yer vrom Barnstaple wan time a looking at the wild flowers an weeds, an he sed "The seenery is grand," ware he sed it to playse us or no I don't naw, but I shude think he seeth grander things hup thare in a fine town. Thay sed he wis a skulemaister, so I spose he's the wan I've yerd of thet goeth abrawd. This is a place of little himportance except to them thet livs yer, but I dare say 'twill be netter nawd wen us all git the vote, an I s'pose thay'll be sendin thare letters to R. Giles, axin vur me vote. Well thay may send so many letters as they like, but I hop thay want call to my howze, if thay do I shant promise nobody, cus I doant like kanvassin an think no wun ought to do it. Moast of the natives of the place be purty well hoff, none very rich an only about wan family thet hath always bin pore. Thay've allways bin considered rather zari and niver had enny henergy; wan o' min did go six miles away some years ago. Wen he started an got awver pon the hill pon the Cornish side, he loked back an sed, "Soddom, I'll niver put my fute inside thee no moar,"—nor he didden fur about six weeks.

A gintleman cawld Walker com down vrom London a vu yers ago an bort som land, an bilt a big hous. Hith got all the land on the kliff. Thares a raud, goth dru it vur to go down to the baich ware the vokes hav bin vur ginerashuns arter sand, and of koose thay have tu go wen the tide is out, but he put hup a notis thit no wun was tu go down to the kliff betwayn sinset an sinrise, but I doant think henybody took moar notis uv it thin tu tare down the borde. He tride tu stap hup anither footpath thit ad bin in use vur ginerashuns, an wudden let the childern pas thare tu go to skule, so he put hup a hi fence an put a man thare tu luke arter't. Farmer Hoak went an nacked town the fence an the man tu, an that ended it. All the rest of the parrish is farmed by the Hamblys, Heddons, an Howards, an thare konnekshuns, an thayse dree familys be all konnekted by marrige.

The ould Church hath lately bin raystored, dru the hefferts of Mr Walker's family, an the help uv all church vokes an Methodys, vur I shude say thares a chapple in the parrish. Thares niver no vallin out betwayn min vur thay moast all go tu church an chapple in turn. I've hoften wondurd how tis thit the passons' moast allways praych out of a buke, and thit the dissenters doant use any, so I axed a man thit I thoat hundurstood about moast things, an he sed jist like this, "The passons be all larned men an they must be vury cawshus thit wat thay say is korrekt or helse thare wid be a lot of talk about it,

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but the Methodys be moar honheddicated an if thay make a mistake nobody seth hanything about it." I daresay that may be the case moast times, but tisen allways so, vur I've yurd ov a passon who'd git his sarmon all wrote out, an som wicked chap got at it an altured a word wich made wat he wis gwain to sey zound vury odd. He'd got a text wrote in "The whicked shal flurish like a grean bay tree," but they'd made tree into hoss, an wen he rayd it hout he thot it didden zound well, zo he lukid back again an he sed hoss tis. I shude tell ee thit wan of the bells in the tower, the tinner wan, wis kracked for neerly 40 yers, and thit the passon hath had en nu kast lately an wud be glad if any wan wud send en a fu shillins towards clarin hoff the kost.

I shude think that this wis wance a place of moar note thin it is now, and thit moar people liv'd yer, as wan ov my hansesters wis a ginerall marchant in a large way. In S. Baring Gould's life of the Rev. R. S. Hawker, vicar of Morwenstow, and incumbent of Welcombe for 30 yers is the followin hadvertisement:—

"Roger Giles, Surgin, Parish Clark, Skulemaster, Groser, and Hundertaker, Welcombe, Respectably informs ladys and gintlemen that he drors teef without wateing minit, applies laches every hour, blisters on the lowest a farms, and vizicks for a penny a peace. He sells Godfather's Kordales, Kuts Kornes, bunyons dokters hosses, clips donkies wance a munth, and undertakes to luke arter every bodies nayls by the ear. Joes-harps, penny wissels, brass kanelsticks, fryinpanes, and other moozikal hinstruments hat grately redooced figres. Young ladys an genelmen larns their grammur an langeudge in the purtiest manner, also grate care taken hoff their morrels and spelling. Also zarm-zinging, tayching the base vial, and all other zorts ov fancy work, squadrils, pokers, weazils, an all country dances tort at hoome and abroad at perfekshun. Purfumery and snuff in all its branches. As times his cruel bad, I beg to tell ey that I has just begunned to zell all zorts of stashonary ware, cox, hens, vouls, pigs, and all other kinds of poultery. Blachin-brishes, traykel, godly bukes and bibles, mise-traps, brick dist, whisker-seed, morrel pokkeranckerchers, and all zorts of swatemaites, including taters, sassages, and other gardin stuff, bakky, siggars, lamp-oyle, tay-kittles, and other intozzikatin likkers; a dale of fruits, hats, zongs, hare oyle, pattins, bukkits, grindin stones and other aitable. Korn and bunyon zalve, and all hard-ware. I as laid in a large azzortment of troye, dog's meat, lollipopes, ghinger-beer, matches, and other pikkles, such as hepsom zalts, hoysters, Winzer sope, anzetrar. Old rags bort and zold yer and



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nowhere else, new lade heggs by me Roger Giles, zinging burdes kepted sich as howles, donkyes, paycox, lobsters, crickets, also the stock of a celebrated brayder. Agent for zelling gutty-porker souls.

P.S. I taches gografy, rithmetic, cowsticks, jimnastics, ond other Chynees tricks."

I must stop a vawr next week to begin my tale of old customs, wen I hop to giv som akkount of the hold smugglers of past deys.

Yours truly,

R. GILES

Welcombe, July 25th, 1885.

