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Text type: Varia; Prose

Date of composition: 1864

Editions: 1864

Source text:

Anonymous. 1864. "Yorkshire". *Cornhill Magazine*. IX (January).
London: Smith Elder and Co.: 88-96.

e-text

Access and transcription: April 2015

Number of words: 4,316

Dialect represented: Yorkshire

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**THE
CORNHILL
MAGAZINE**

VOL. IX

JANUARY TO JUNE, 1864

LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER & CO., 65, CORNHILL

1864

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Yorkshire.

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Not only their Riding and their farmers are the best of the species, but their women, their landlords, their horses, and their beasts, their mills, waterfall, rivers, & c., are better than all other men, women, beasts, mountains, and rivers existing, of what kind soever notwithstanding. At the great

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Agricultural Show in 1851, in London, a short-horned heifer of stainless pedigree, and in value almost priceless, was sent up for exhibition, and while in the show-yard, received, according to the dignity of her position, the sole and exclusive attention of her own attendant. This man, almost a patriarch in years and appearance, stood imperturbably listening to the admiration freely bestowed upon the magnificent animal, all of which he received as but a just tribute to her beauties, her descent, and her birthplace. A first-class prize was awarded, and when the man and heifer returned to their own place, in the neighbourhood of the Richmond Dales, his gossips freely questioned him concerning his travels, reception, adventures, & c., to which he answered slowly and emphatically, as follows:—

"And didst thou see t' Queen?"

"Ay, ah did."

"An' didst thou see Prince Albert?"

"Ay, ah did; airm i airm like onybody else."

"And what said t' Queen when she coomed t' woor beest?"

"She says, says she, 'Surely, Albert, this mun be t' grandest beest iv all t' show-yard,' and them were her varry words."

The Yorkshire dialect, in its full purity, is absolutely incomprehensible to natives of other counties, though it is complicated by no special difficulty, such as the Northumbrian burr or the Scotch twang. "What does 'sither' mean?" was asked of us by a southerner; "is it a nickname?" "Why do you ask?" we not unnaturally replied. "Because as soon as I appeared in the village the lads called after me, 'Sither, sither.'" It was, in fact, the call to *reconnoitre*. "See thou, see thou" (to the stranger).

We find the following remark in a document bearing date 1395: — "All the longage of the Northumbers, and especialisch at York, is so scharpe, slitting, and frotting, and unshape, that we Southerne men may that longage unethe understande. I trowe that is because that they beeth nyh to straunge men and nations that speketh straungelich, and alsoe because the Kynges of Engeland woneth alway far from that country." To those unused to them, the dialects of all the Ridings would sound equally uncouth and unintelligible, but each one is really different, not merely in accent and pronunciation, but in words and idioms, and to the accustomed ear every man can be known by his tongue.

"The common people here speak English very ill," says an old writer, "and have a strange affect pronunciation of some words, as hoose, moose, coo, for house, mouse, cow, but whatever they do in softening their words, they are equally broad in the pronouncing of others." This apparently points to the North-Riding dialect, which is the broadest, fullest, and most sonorous in sound. "Our broon coo," a North-Riding man would say; "eur braune keow" would be the West-Riding expression. We have said that not only in the idioms and pronunciation of the language the Ridings are distinct, but the same things are called by different names. Thus, in the North Riding, the highlands are called muirland, while towards the west they are termed fells. Rivulets are gills or becks in the

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North, but in the East they are gypsies, with the *g* hard. In the West, cliffs are edges, scars, or crags (scar being derived from the British word *sgor*, and craig being the unchanged British word for rock); in the North they are cliffs or nabs, and in the East

they are wolds. Waterfalls are forces, both North and West; and in the North marshy grounds are cars, but in the East they are marishes and swangs. In the last-named Riding, barf signifies a detached hill, and meer a lake; while water is often used for lake in the North and West, as Malham Water, Summer Water.

Irrefragable proof of early Teutonic habitation is afforded by the numerous towns which bear the Anglo-Saxon termination of *ton*, as Northallerton, &c.; *ham* (*heim* in South Germany), as Malham, &c.; and *ley*, as Helmsley, &c. *By*, which is a Danish termination, is, in accordance with our previous remarks, chiefly found along the coast, as Whitby, Selby, Hunmanby, &c.

Evidence of the language of the ancient and powerful Brigantian race is decisively stamped on the nomenclature of the Yorkshire rivers; some of these derivations we subjoin as being suggestive and full of poetry: —

Rivers	Derivations	Signifying
Aire	British and Gaelic	Rapid stream
Calder	British Erse	Woody water.
Douglas	British	Blue water.
Eden	British	Gliding stream.
Humber	Gaelic	Confluence of two waters.
Ribble	British	Tumultuous
Dun	British Erse	Dusky.
Derwent	British	Fair water.
Dove	British Erse	Black.
Greta	British	Swift.
Nid	British	That whirls.
Wharfe	Gaelic British	Rough.

The same remark is applicable to the names of mountains: Penyghent, Penhill, and Pendle-hill being all traceable to the same Cymraic root.

Tumuli are generally termed hows throughout Yorkshire. Heather is spoken of as ling. Whin is gorse or furze. Thorpe is a small farm or hamlet; and in the East, wyke is a

little bay; grip, a small drain; and griff, a narrow, rugged glen. A Yorkshire tyke is a well-known expression, signifying now a sharp cunning fellow, but in its original acceptation an old horse. Yode is another word of the same import, but retaining its old meaning. Teeastril is a villain or rascal; a broad striped pattern is breead ratched; to scold is to flyte. A gowpin is a double-handful; a reckon creak is the crook suspended from the beam within the old wide chimney by with to suspend pots or pans. "He toomed and toomed, but never typed," would be that a man swayed, or nearly overbalanced, but did not fall over. Ask is dray or hard, clarty is sticky. "It is a soft day," means a wet day. Draff is used for grains indifferently; the sediment of rivers or floods is called warp; dree means long, and dowly, dismal; to "fettle off" a horse, garden, or gate, is to trim them up;

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dench signifies over-fastidious. "Thou art a feckless sluthergullion" (*i. e.* fingerless slovenly lounge, a malingerer), we heard an old woman exclaim; "And thou art the illest contrived auld wife i' the toon," was the retort. Sometimes the diminutives have the same character as the Scotch; thus plummock is a little plum. One day two young lads were busy robbing an orchard; one was aloft in a damson plum-tree, pulling the fruit at random and throwing them below to his comrade; the other at the foot was engaged in hot haste, stuffing them into his pockets, and from time to time hurriedly bolting one down his throat. Silence and expedition being imperatively incumbent in the situation, the first had not much time to select which to gather, nor the other which to put into his mouth. Suddenly the lad below inquired fearfully of the one above, "Tom, has plummocks legs?" "Nooa," roared Tom. "Then," said Bill, with a manly despair, ""then I ha' swallowed a straddly-beck." Now a straddly-beck is a frog, from straddle *beck*, a ditch or rivulet.

As respects politics the farmers and agriculturists of the North Riding are chiefly Tories, loving things which are, or even things now gone by, of which the name and shadow only remain so far as concerns their sufferings. Protection to wit, as example. When they are not Tories they may be termed Conservative Whigs. And in such case it

may generally be attributed to the fact of their landlord being of an old Whig family. The tenants of Lords Zetland, Fitzwilliam, and Carlisle are Whigs to a man, while those on the broad lands of the Duncombes and Lascelles are as keen on the opposite side. Nor must it be supposed that coercion is either used or required. The costly contests for the Ridings at each dissolution have from time immemorial stirred up party strife as bitter as can be excited in the phlegmatic and placable breast of the farmer; each pitched battle has renewed the strife, and so the father hands down his political faith to his son to be passed on to generations yet unborn. Of course in respect of any pet grievance which presses on them as agriculturists, such as the malt-tax, Acts relating to repairs, highways, &c., they expect their Member, whether Whig or Tory, to console and support them; this accorded, their idea of the liberty of the franchise is liberty to fight, to shout, and to vote, to make a show of hands (and of fists also, if required) in behalf of the landlord to whom they and their forefathers have paid their rent for many generations. In 1857, the North Riding was contested by a Duncombe (son of Lord Feversham), a Dundas (brother to Lord Zetland), and one of the Cayleys; the first being Tory, the second Whig, and the third a Whig indeed, but in such high repute for his protectionist theories as to have been long dubbed the "farmer's friend." In consequence of this there was undoubtedly a desire among the Tory farmers (of whom a large proportion were tenants to the Duncombes) to ensure Cayley's election, provided always that their man was first made safe. To effect this called some management. It was necessary that their votes should be given a certain juncture *en masse*, not sooner, and not later; but once dispersed, who would answer for their

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presence at the proper moment in the polling booth? As a dissenting minister plaintively remarked, with reference to a scandal-giving member of his flock, "the lambs will play," but with some 420 lambs playing at John Barleycorn and pipes, what sheep-dog might hope to shepherd them to their fold? In this dilemma one of the farmers proposed that they should be locked up like jurymen, and the measure being approved of, these lambs were detained in the far-famed castle-yard until Duncombe was fairly ahead, and

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Cayley hopelessly in the rear; then the gates opened, and a compact phalanx of good men and true poured down the narrow streets of York four abreast; the tide was turned, and the desired victory followed. "Ay, slave and slave-driver," said a small radical newsagent to a burly farmer: "it were like a flock of lambs to the slaughter." "Nay, man, but like a magnificent charge o' horse to the battle, an' I'll give thee a sack full o' sair bones if thou sayst it was aught else."

So strong and general is the mutual feeling of trust between landlord and tenant that long leases, or leases at all, are the exception, not the rule. And it is now a commonly received opinion among the intelligent and thoughtful of the farmers, that less capital is employed, and less energy and enterprise in proportion is bestowed in the management of land held by a long lease, than when the arrangement is one of yearly renewal or tenure. Due allowance is made for money expended in draining, building, enclosing, clearing, and similar improvements, and altogether the position of the North and East Riding farmers and agriculturists is that of a body of men who acknowledge their responsibilities and discharge their obligations with intelligent fidelity. Passing away, though slowly and regretfully, there yet exists among the small holders and labourers a strong remnant of the feudal sentiment, in virtue of which a certain respect and duty is yielded in exchange for a kindly sympathy and friendly protection in evil times. Some aid and consideration are expected when Giles is in trouble or in sickness. The squire would forfeit his character were his family five hundred years old, if he allowed his man to go to the workhouse under such circumstances. In return Giles stands by the squire through evil report and good report, and his womenkind do so even to a greater extent, that is, if the squire be a true man according to their standards for any secret meanness, bad faith, avarice, or cowardice, or other qualities held in especial detestation by the rural population, is quickly detected by that feminine acuteness which so infinitely transcends the sagacity of the male kind.

In a certain hamlet, lying on the borders of the Northern dales, there lived a poor woman somewhat weak in mind, and of stammering and defective speech. Owing to her peculiarities, and to some rude resemblance to a particular word in her imperfect articulation, she was known as "poor Genagen." She either was or imagined herself to be engaged to a well-to-do young farm-servant: probably, after the fashion of some of

our worthless sex, he had amused himself by imposing on the poor woman's credulity. However this may be, Genagen considered herself

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shamefully betrayed and wronged, when it was told her, as certain news, "that her Joe was to be married to another lass, and *sune*." She made known the burden of her griefs far and wide, and thus lamenting, one day met the squire. He inquired what was amiss. To which she replied, unfolding her wrongs, and concluded with, "An he and his lass are to be asked i' church Sunday morn, and what mun I dee, squire?" "Well, Genagen, you must forbid the banns, there is nothing else for it," said the squire, and so dismissed the matter from his mind. On Sunday, at morning service, the squire sat aloft in his square pew, and Genagen appeared in the middle aisle, her mind bent on business. When the banns were published, naming the recreant lover, and concluding in the usual way, "If any one knows any just cause or impediment why," &c., Genagen arose and said, firmly, "*I forbid the banns*." There is generally an absence of form in these out-of-the-way places, and a more direct way of coming to the point is practised than is witnessed in large towns. So the vicar put on his spectacles, and, bending over the reading-desk, inquired mildly, "By whose authority do you forbid the banns?" "Why, by the authority of t' auld squire up there, to be seer," was the reply.

The same trust and deference is generally exhibited in the conduct of rustics towards the clergy. That there is abundance of dissent in the agricultural districts is unquestionable; but it is not of the same bitter and political spirit which prevails in manufacturing towns. The farmer, or small tradesman in a dale town, who attends the Ebenezer in the evening, has, most frequently, that very morning slept under the ministrations of his legitimate pastor in the parish church. If he was not baptized there, he was married there, and would look upon it as something akin to disgrace not to be buried there. "I like a parson, and steeple, and all that," said Tittlebat Titmouse to his friend; and the same sentiment is entertained, more or less, by others of greater intelligence, for no better reason. It is likewise a fact, well known to those best acquainted with the ways of the agricultural poor, that they require their clergyman to

be a gentleman in his habits and manners. Any want of refinement in accent or language, or the slightest departure from that strict courtesy which they have learned to regard as the sign-manual of the well-born and the well-bred, is sure to be detected and commented on. We remember a case where great offence was given by a zealous pastor and most worthy man, whose usage it was to open the cottage doors, and enter without invitation. "Our last parson always knocked at a poor man's door, and *he* were t' auld squire's son." A rich and varied store of quaint and humorous sayings is frequently gathered by the clergymen in their intercourse with their parishioners in these secluded regions. One day the vicar had been called on to endeavour to benefit, by his ministrations, a certain old woman (then supposed to be dying) who had lived a somewhat discreditable life, and had not, either then or at any previous time, evinced signs of repentance, much less of amendment. The clergyman

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performed his duty, but finding that he had to do with a very obdurate nature, he read to her the parable of the guest who came without her wedding garment, concluding with the sentence, "And there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth;" and took that opportunity of assuring the aged impenitent that such would, in all probability, be her lot in the future—which elicited the following reply: "Them many nesh 'em as has 'em, parson; *I* haven't had a tooth i' my heead these twenty year come Michaelmas."

As regards the various forms of dissent, Baptist (particular and otherwise), Independents or Congregationalists, Unitarians and Socinians, & c. predominate among the operative artisans and manufacturers, while Methodism prevails among the miners and agriculturalists. Hardly anything can be more moving and pathetic than to hear the full chorus of men and women singing the old Methodist hymns, as they follow to the grave any fellow-labourer who has, by some sad and special calamity, been suddenly removed from them. That particular form of Methodism called Primitive, the followers of which are known indifferently as Ranters or Jumpers, seems more popular than the old kind. The doctrines are strictly Arminian, and those who follow them hold that salvation is free to all, in opposition to the Calvinistic theory of predestination; they also

believe in instantaneous conversion. Their preachers (male and female) are not stationary, but travel from point to point, and they are much addicted to open-air worship, camp-meetings, and watch-nights. Their music is more than lively, and their preaching of a very denunciatory and exciting kind. We give verbatim the words of a hymn, so-called, sung at a ranter's open-air gathering in the North Riding, premising that however grotesque, or even irreverent, the language may sound, it is, nevertheless, used by these poor people in the spirit of earnestness and sincerity: —

I'se boon for the kingdom, wilt thou gang to glory wi' me?

Aye marry, that I will, wait till I wesh me.

Niver mind thy feeace if it bean't varra white,

If thy conscience bean't black thou'rt see to be all reet.

Coom, coom along, for the I cannot wait;

If thou doesn't look sharp they're seer to shut t' gate.

Let's walk i' narrow path, and niver from it rooam,

Till we sit doon side by side i' kingdom come.

Probably one of the best specimens of the humour and dialect of Yorkshire exists as a song detailing the adventures of a truant lad out of Wensleydale, who ran away to Leeds. We venture to transcribe it, in the hope that it will be new to the majority of our readers: —

When I were at home with my fayther and mother I never had no fun;

They kept me going fra morn till night, so I thowt fra' them I'd run.

Leeds Fair were coming on, and I thowt I'd have a spree,

So I put on my Sunday Coostat and went right merrily.

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First I saw were t' factory. I niver saw one before.

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There were threads and tapes, and tapes and silks, to sell by many a score.
There were a strap turned ivery wheel, and every wheel a strap;
Begor, says I to t' maister man, old Harry's a rare strong chap.

Next I went to Leeds auld church; I were niver i' one i' my days,
And I were maistly ashamed o' myself, for I didn't know their ways.
There were thirty or forty fooak in toobs and boxes sat,
When up comes a saucy old fellow; says he, Noo, lad, tak off thy hat.

Then in there comes a great lord mayor, and over his shoulders a cloob,
And he got into a white sack poke, and got int' topmost toob.
And then there came anither chap, I thinks they called him Ned,
And he got into t' bottomost toob and mocked all t' other chap said.

So they began to preach and pray—they prayed for George our king,
When up jumps chap int' bottomost toob, says he, Good fooaks, let's sing.
I thowt some sang varra well, while others did grunt and groan.
Every man sang what he would, *but I sang Darby and Joan.*

When preaching and praying were ower, and fooaks were ganging away,
I went to t' chap in toppermost toob, says I, Lad, what's to pay?
Why nowt, says he, my lad. Begor, I were right *fain*.
So I clickt haud o' my great cloob stick, and went whistling oot again.

We remember when in 1851 a group of females from the West Riding were passing through the picture gallery of the Exhibition, and the beautiful little gem of "The Three Marys" (the property of Lord Carlisle) particularly engaged their attention. From our position we overheard their controversy on the subject. Reference to the catalogue told them that these were indeed the three Marys, but *what* Marys?— that was the question. "There'll be Virgin Mary, and Mary Magdalen, maybe," said one, dubiously, "but who's

t' other?" "Why, Bloody Mary, to be sure," responded her friend, in a sudden burst of inspiration, and this happy idea was at once adopted.

Out of his own country the native shrewdness and mother-wit of the Yorkshiremen stand him in good stead, and generally enable him to turn the tables on a chance adversary. In 1851, a burly yeoman went up to town accompanied by some half-dozen of his friends, all men of huge weight and size, and there they enjoyed themselves after their fashion. One night they entered an exhibition of *poses plastiques*, a new, if not edifying, performance to their eyes. For some time they argued with each other as to whether it was statuary or living flesh and blood that they beheld; five of them inclined to the first opinion, but the sixth maintained the contrary, and continued to watch the performance with vigilant and distrustful scrutiny. Suddenly he roared out from the pit at the top of a most powerful voice, "That lass is wick (*anglicè* alive). I seed her wink iv an eye." An awful uproar followed. The models could not restrain their mirth, while the audience commenced the cry of "turn them out." But this was sooner said than done; half-a-dozen

* *Glad.*

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middle-aged farmers standing each over six feet, and weighing on an average eighteen stone apiece, were not easily dislodged, and amid a scene of indescribable confusion the curtain dropped.

In some of the most secluded parts there are people living who have never set foot out of their native dale, some who have never been farther than the nearest market town, and many who have never in their lives beheld a railway engine, and are more than content to receive their letters as often as once in the fortnight. The male part of the population are born jockeys, hunters, and sportsmen, and in common with the rest of the North-Riding men enjoy the well-earned reputation of being able to breed a horse, buy one, train, ride, and, lastly (as many know to their cost), sell a horse against the world. The women are, according to the old Saxon custom, kept in a certain subjection, and

this is in some places so far carried out that they wait upon the men at meals, and do not eat until their masters are served.

Nevertheless, these dalesmen are a fine, well-grown race, hospitable to strangers, shrewd and honest (except in the matter of horse-dealing), strong and fearless by nature, independent in thought, and curiously primitive in their manners, customs and speech. One illustration of this must conclude an article already unreasonable in point of length.

In the early part of this century, when England was in hourly expectation of a French invasion, and militiamen swarmed as the riflemen do at this time, a regiment was raised and equipped in these districts, composed entirely, men and officers alike, of dalesmen. One of the royal dukes came down for the purpose of inspecting it, and intimated his intention of afterwards honouring the mess by his presence. The officers were, with the exception of the colonel, drawn from the class which corresponds to the gentleman farmer or substantial yeoman of the present day, and were an exceedingly soldier-like, stalwart, good-looking body of men. At dinner his royal highness complimented the colonel repeatedly on his possessing such a handsome gentlemanly set of fellows for officers, and he latter bowed his acknowledgements, earnestly praying the while, in his inmost heart, that they might hold their tongues until the duke should have left the room. But it was not to be. Dinner progressed, the wine circulated, and speech was loosened. A stentorian voice was heard from the other end of the table. "Coornel! coornel! ah say, coornel!" The unhappy colonel affected deafness, and continued to converse, in desperation, with the duke. "Colonel," said the latter, "I think one of your officers is addressing you." The colonel had no choice but to give his attention to his subaltern, who had now risen, and was striking the table with his huge fist, the better to attract his commanding officer. "Ah say, coornel! what's to be doon wi' a hofficer and gentleman as teems (*anglicè* pours) his wine frae his awn glass back intiv t' bottle?" His royal highness never forgot the joke, nor did Colonel Sir —— soon hear the last of the "officers and gentlemen" of the mess of his Majesty's —— Regiment of Militia.