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Original Correspondence.

To the Editor of the *North Devon Journal*.

THE GUDE OLD TIMES IN WELCOMBE

ZUR,—Avaur I begin me next litter lit me jist sey thit som vokes think wat I sed about the bad times of the past days in yore paper of the 23rd July wis honely a vancy picter vur to playse a vu of yer rayders, so I'll give min wan fact an let min jidge vur thirsels ware twis tru or no. Less thin 40 yurs ago I wis livin in varm sarvice in Hartland parish, an thare wis 2 konstant day laburers workin pon the same place. Thay both livd in cottiges pon the varm. Thare wages wis 7 shillens a week aich, an thay worked wan day out of it vur the howse rent—ballence 5s. 10d. Thay payd 7 shillens a bushill vur thare whayt if twis hi or law. Wan aw min had a wive and dree-childern tu maintain besides hissels, but tis fare to zay thit tha men had thare billets hat the varm howse in arvest. If nessesary I cude pruve this by livin whitnissis.

Now lit me pass on to me tale of Rivel Zinday in the gude old times as thay cal't; but I zay agin thit the present times be the best, an I beelieve us be livin in the times thay used to zing about thit wis comin if us wud weit a little longer.

Twis Zaterdag nite in the munth of June, nixt day wis Trinity Zinday, onkle Jan wis jist com vrum Prankis-week to spind the rivel with us; mother had got together the best provishens twis posible in thim days. Fayther had bawt haf a bushell of whayt, wich he haden dun sinse Krismas, an mother had bakt som white brayd an cakes, an her had a send dun to Betty Gay's vur tu pound of bakon, som of wich her fryed vur onkle Jan, an us had a dubble trayt, som of the wite brayd dipd in the bakon fat. Arter talkin auver owld times a beet us all got to bayd, but us didden lye thar very late in the mornin, vur rivel Zunday and Munday in Welcombe wis the wan grayt event of the yer, an wance vur the yer neerly ivirybody went to church a Zinday arternoon. An then a Munday thar wis fine sprees, rashin, cock-fitin, dog matches, an other interestin amuzemints. Arter breksis us wint out pon top of hi kliff. The zun wis shinen out luvly. The zay wis like a pond, with honely jist a little rippel pon it. Thar wis a gentel breze blawin hup the Chanel, an that wis abuot 20 vessels of diferent sizes zailin hup an wun or tu tryin tu git down. Away to the rite heer wis Lindy Iland, wi Long Peek poyntin tuwards it, to the left wis Gull Rock lukin green with wile beets, betwayn the rock an us wis Marsland Baych, whar miny a bareel of liker hith bin landed avaur now. The tide wis just leyving Betty Gilbert's Rock, but the water wis deep awl aroun it vur haf a hower arter the rock wis dry, an it comith in around a long time avaur anyone is aware awt. So the pore old humman wis drownd dru it, an they cald the rock arter her. Oncle sed twas a butiful place—"Ware iviry prospick playses, and honely man is vile." Thar wis a lot out tu kliff bezides us, about 20 wis out pon the rocks pikin limpets, fur this wis the honely animal food miny of min got in thim days, som wis lyin down pon the baych, others wis down pon top of cliff amongst the zand heeps havin a frenly turn to get into the way awt vur the nex day, an som wis bathing out pon sand. Jack Gay into Strawberry Water had jist turned out his kow, old Tom Prist had drauve out his owld hoss an wis gwain up auver Nags Hill to zee his sheep, an old Dick Sandercock wis lyin down asleep with his hed pon a heap of sandbags. I shude think awltugether thar was 70 or 80 vokes down thar passing away the mornin.

I must pass auver the dinner time, not thit us did it then, and tak'ee auver to Church Style, were us was zune arter tew, neer haf a hower avaur time vur prare. The ringers wis jist got in the belfry, an very zune Jack Gay struck off the tinner bell, and the rest volled, —ding—dong—bell—doll. Already the vokes wis gatherin roun purty theeek. Thar wis Farmer Warminton, George Humbly, Jack King, Farmer Horred, Jack Vish, Dick Sandercock, Jan Burrow, Jack Aston, and a lot of others. Some aw min wis dressed hup very fine, wey thar blish breeches and bucle shoes, and swalla-tail cotes with yeller buttons, and wide brim hats; wile the wimmin wis dressd hup in awl the cullers of the rainbaw, an patterns thit they make bed furniter of now-a-deys; au wis lukin up to the tip top, vur this wis thi time wen they comd out tu shaw thersel hoff to the best hadvantage. The yung chapps had a grayesd hup thar butes wanse vur the yer, an loked as if thayd wipt thar hans down auver thar hare at the same time. Thar wis 150 vokes thar by the time the passon arrived vrum Hartland, ware he lived, vur I shude sey thit he honely got about £60 vur his services, though the tithes be a lot moar thin thit. So us never seed un in the week unless he wis vitched to enny sick body, or to a weddin or berrin. Arter sayin "Gud day" tu us all he passed in by the gate war the stocks was. A fu old wimmin stude in a row an made thare kurchy as he passed, an as us turned in arter the passon a fu wis jist comin pakin out auver the tether style vrum the Blue Fox, whar thayd bin to wet thare wissel an take the revel beer. Twas haf past tew, the time vor sarvice begin, an the bells stoppd an most of the vokes got into church, but a fu stayd outside an Tom Stanbury and Ned Luxton had to stay thar to keep min quite, an if it haden been revel zinday thay wud as thay sed, have put wun or tew in the stock vur thar bad gwain on. Inside the church twassen very much better, vur the chaps during prares wis luking across the hile draein sheepshies to the maidens, an thay wud luke out vrum their cawl-skuttle bunets an du the same to the chapps, an if they loked strite across no wun cude zee min, vur

'Twas wen the girls thare bonnets waur,
Projectin haf a vute avaur,
Wen bewty was thus hidden deap,
'Twis seldum you cude git a peep,
But now, aw wimmin's fickel mind,

The Salamanca Corpus: "The Gude Old Times in Welcombe" (13th August 1885)

They ware thare bonnets all behind;
Wile men thare fases hide with hare,
The wimmin go with fases bare,
And fancy awl hadmire who stare,
So thet this wil in histery's page
Be kalled the "wimmin's bare-fased age."

The passon seemed tierd arter the mornin sarvis auver to Hartland, an the jorney dru the Pillamy rawds, so he didden keep us in very long; wen the zarmin was hended they zinged the 92nd Salm—How good and pleasant must it be to thank the Lord most High—An us wis awl out agen by 20 minnits past 3, but thare wis moar biznes tu be dun, so the Parrish Klark mounted the stile an cald attenshun, and sum lissend to wat he had to say way moar aygerness thin thay did to the zarmin in Church. He sed—"Take notis that man-traps an spring guns wil be set in Well Orched, that a survey wil be held on Wensday vur sellin varmer Hoak's grass up to Mickelmas; that varmer Hockridge had lost a two-tooth sheep an 5 shillins reward wis hofferred to enny wun thet wud bring en back." The penalty vur staylin sheep at thet time wis hangin, but very few suferd the penalty, vur wen a man was brot up an charged with it, the jureys sed us doant like to have min hanged vur it, so us must say thay baint gilty. Very zune arter this the law wis awlterd so thit a sheepstayler shude hev his desserts. It was also hannounced thet sum valluabel prises wud be rasseld vor at the Blue Fox the nex day, an a nu hatt was shawd as wan o' min, an 'twas also sed thet Will Hissett wis reddy to take the fust commer.

To be kontinued.

R. GILES

Welcombe, Aug. 10th, 1885