



THE
HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES
OF THE PARISH OF
HEMINGBROUGH

IN THE COUNTY OF YORK

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OF TURNHAM HALL

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P R E F A C E.

IT has fallen to my lot on several occasions to be the introducer to the world of the literary efforts of friends who have been taken away from their work before it was completed. Some are too diffident about the merit of their labours to bring them into the daylight. Others begin too late in life, and lack the special training and educational gifts which make research easy and composition fluent. The world is full of incomplete work. The task of editing the book of a friend is a somewhat melancholy one, but there can be little doubt as to the way in which it ought to be discharged. It seems to me to be the duty of an editor to endeavour to grasp the mind and the aspirations of his predecessor, and to try to make what has been left as full and as complete as its beginner desired. Perfect accuracy is, of course, an impossibility ; but no effort should be spared in endeavouring to reach it. This should be the ideal of the editor of such a work as the present, and a true friend will always, I conceive, keep such an ideal before him. Let him never have cause to reproach himself for not seeking to lessen the number of the defects which meet him, by his own earnest and unselfish exertions.

Thomas Burton, the author of this book, was born at Turnham Hall, and was baptized in Hemingbrough church on August 31, 1801. He died in the house in which he was born on May 30, 1883. The Burtons had been resident in Hemingbrough for at least two centuries. Mr. Burton's father was engaged in trade in Hull, and,

through his marriage with Elizabeth, only child of James Keighley, Esq., became in early life the owner of Turnham Hall, a nice estate, of about 800 acres, on the bank of the Ouse. The house took its name from Robert de Turnham, the famous baron, and, after him, it passed into the hands of such noble families as Mauley, Ros, Scrope, and Manners. The *genius loci* soon exerted its influence upon Thomas Burton, whilst the stately church of the neighbouring village of Hemingbrough touched his sympathies in another way. It had a grand history of its own, but the neglect of centuries had brought it to decay. In its ruin, the crumbling fabric seemed to appeal from the present to the past, and to call upon some one to show how it had fared in those better days from which it seemed to be sundered for ever. Thomas Burton answered to the appeal. There are notes and drawings of his, made soon after he was of age, showing in what direction his mind was tending. But opportunities were wanting. He was one, although the eldest son, of a very large family, and he had to make his way in the world for himself. He adopted the profession of a portrait and landscape painter, and much of his work remains to show to what excellence he attained. But, in the pauses of his professional work, Mr. Burton never forgot his antiquarian aspirations. The history of Hemingbrough, like that of every other place, was, of course, to be found in repositories of MSS. With these Mr. Burton made himself acquainted, and, to peruse them with effect, he acquired, with much labour, the power of reading old handwriting, at which so many stumble. He was one of the most painstaking students that I have ever known. He thought nothing of going to London, or Oxford, where he used to spend every hour of the working day, week after week, in reading through long ranges of muniments, on the mere chance of finding something connected with his own parish in the North.

The principal evidences of the history of Hemingbrough lie, as is well known, in the muniment room of the Dean and Chapter of Durham, who have inherited the greater part of the documentary treasures of the Prior and Convent of that ancient church. Thither Mr. Burton, of course, went, about the year 1849 or 1850 (if my memory serves me), and there, in the cloistered solitudes of the sacred precinct, he spent several months at a desk, transcribing document after document with eager delight. It was at Durham that he made the acquaintance of the late Dr. Raine, who loved every honest searcher into the history of the past, and who assisted him in his work, and gave him, unreservedly, the help of his wise and cordial advice. Crook Hall, where Dr. Raine resided, is on the bank of the Wear, among orchards and gardens, in full view of the stately towers of the cathedral and castle, and also of the river, whose waters come streaming down, as if making for the very house, from under the long-drawn arches of what has been erroneously called Ranulph Flambard's bridge. Crook Hall is an ancient manor-house of the time of Edward III., upon which a more modern mansion has been grafted. A fit home for a student it was, quiet and engaging. There was no scholar, passing North and South, who did not find his way thither. In Dr. Raine there was the most charming companionship, and a sympathetic, intelligent appreciation of almost every branch of literary research. He worked hard, and published much himself, but he did even more, if that were possible, by the influence which he exerted over others, and by the school of history of which he was undoubtedly the founder. One after another, those who were brought within the circle of his attraction bowed to his genial influence, and followed his leading. There are many still living who will read these words with thankfulness and pleasure. But how great should be the gratitude of one who had the filial privilege of sitting at his feet, and who

offers as a tribute to the memory of his sire every little success which he himself has been able to achieve.

Mr. Burton, after gathering together what he could find at Durham and elsewhere, began to put his accumulations into form. It was his intention to publish them, and to dedicate the volume to the Surtees Society, which had done so much for Northern history. This dedication constitutes the preface to one of his MS. volumes, but it was abandoned, and the author yielded to the temptation of waiting for fresh matter. He was, in addition, very diffident as to his own powers, and was always making alterations in his MSS. as new facts presented themselves to his notice.

About the year 1866 a topographical scheme was started which had a considerable influence on Mr. Burton's design. It was resolved, if possible, to make a combined effort to complete the history of Yorkshire. The volumes were to range with Mr. Joseph Hunter's great work on the Deanery of Doncaster, and it was thought desirable that a guarantee fund of not less than 2,000*l.* should be provided for each Wapentake, to insure the carrying out of the scheme in a satisfactory way, and to protect the writers from any pecuniary loss. Three gentlemen promised the editor of this volume the funds requisite for four Wapentakes, and more, no doubt, would have come forward if the project had been more widely known; but the scheme came to an end, through the want of writers and collectors of sufficient calibre and experience. The materials for such a general history are much larger and more accessible now than they were then; but there is still a great need of further inquiry and research, before any History of Yorkshire can be written in a satisfactory manner.

In the scheme which has just been mentioned, the writer was too greatly interested not to take an active part himself; and he made himself responsible for the gathering together of materials for the history of the small

Wapentake which takes its name from the rivers Ouse and Derwent, by which it is chiefly bounded, and at the south-eastern extremity of which the parish of Hemingbrough lies. Mr. Burton, I need not say, regarded this undertaking with great favour, and was most willing that the materials which he had already collected should be used and included in the larger work. For this undertaking a large body of information has been collected by the writer, which, except for the purposes of the present volume, is as yet unused.

The later years of Mr. Burton's life were spent at Turnham Hall, of which he became the owner at his father's death. He amused himself with rural pursuits, and enjoyed the rest of which his advanced age stood in need. But his care for the History of Hemingbrough never deserted him. Not many years before his death, he had a scheme for coming to reside in York, that he might be able to complete it, and he specially asked me to allow him the use of what I had collected myself. His request, I need not say, met with a glad assent; indeed, I had given him already many things that had occurred to me, in which he took the most lively interest. In the spring of 1883 he paid me two visits in York. The chief object of his coming was the publication of the History of Hemingbrough, and to prevail upon me to bring it out after his decease, in combination with my own collections about the parish. I did not see my way at the time to assent to his request. I well remember the conversation of that last evening, and how my old friend opened his mind to me. We parted, neither of us imagining that we should never meet again in this world. Within a fortnight I heard of his decease. He had passed away in his own home, carried off by one of those comparatively slight ailments which are formidable only to the aged; and he rests not far from the fine tower of the old parish church to which he was so deeply attached.

The request which Mr. Burton made to me, over and over again, in his life-time was renewed in his Will ; and the present volume indicates my compliance with it. The reader will, therefore, understand what this book is. It is the combination of two different collections of materials, and the plan adopted is that which Mr. Burton and myself regarded as the best. Mr. Burton's MSS. were prepared in the most neat and methodical way, but they required considerable alteration and abridgment. This has been done in accordance with his request. Some portions have been almost entirely re-written ; to others large additions have been made, especially to the ecclesiastical part of the work ; and also to the pedigrees, a branch of archæological research of the most fascinating kind. The history of the land is the best representation of Mr. Burton's own work, and very much of it is in his own words, with additions and illustrations. For the architectural description of the church Mr. Burton was mainly indebted to Mr. Coad, a pupil of the late Sir Gilbert Scott. The account of Barlby and one or two other places was left unfinished and required much attention.

The parish of Hemingbrough had the honor of being singled out by John Burton, M.D., the author of the " *Monasticon Eboracense*," to serve as a pattern of the way in which he proposed to treat a General History of the county. He chose it because he was at that time, in right of his wife, the owner of the estate of Woodhall in the parish. His " *History of Yorkshire*" began and ended there ; indeed, if it could have been carried out, as its designer wished, it would have been thoroughly inadequate.

At the time that John Burton was making his preparations, William Potter, the Vicar of Hemingbrough, was quietly putting together in a volume a number of notices of his parish and people, which have been of much use, and for the loan of which the writer has to thank Mr.

E. T. Clark of Cowick. The effort of Thomas Burton far surpasses all the labours of his predecessors, although there are deficiencies and weak places in it which I have been unable to fill up or amend. If the early Register of Howdenshire Wills, which James Torre saw about the year 1680, had been now in existence, it would have supplied a wealth of illustration for the history of the whole district.

This book is humbly offered as a sample of the way in which the history of a country parish may be written. If it had formed a part of the annals of a whole Wapentake, considerable curtailment would have been necessary ; as it is, much has been omitted which appeared to be of minor importance. My readers must judge for themselves whether too much has been retained. But, putting this aside, I do most earnestly plead, in behalf of our parishes and towns, that they who essay to write their history will at least take the pains to make original researches, instead of contenting themselves with extracts from printed books and newspapers, many of which are of no authority whatever. There are materials for the history of a great number of the Yorkshire parishes quite as abundant as those which have been unearthed for Hemingbrough. Has the *natale solum* lost its sweetness ? There are writers enough, but of what kind ? One untrained person after another springs up, and writes, and, of course, prints almost immediately, the *history* of a place, as he calls it upon the title-page of his book. What a misnomer ! I am not blaming the enterprise of the writer, or his longing to do honour to what is, probably, his birthplace. Instead of that, I honour the feeling by which he is, no doubt, animated. All I say is, that if the place is worthy of the affection he bestows on it, as it probably is, it is worthy of a greater effort than he has cared to make in its behalf. If he is untrained, let him prepare himself. Let me urge him not to be in a hurry, but to wait and

acquire. So many records and evidences are being printed every year, that history, whether local or general, will soon have some chance of being written with precision and exactness. And yet this progress is too slow for some who wish to be in advance of it. "The more haste, the worse speed."

Had this volume been printed by Mr. Burton himself, he would, no doubt, have thanked some for their help, whose very names, perhaps, are unknown to the writer. When they turn over the pages of this book, may it be a pleasure to them to think that they have had a hand in it. Unknown as they are to myself, I thank them heartily for the kind service which they rendered to my friend. On my own part, I have received help from many, wherever, indeed, it was sought, and especially from the Rev. C. B. Norcliffe and John Sykes, M.D., upon whose unvarying kindness and willing aid I can always rely.

J. R.