



P R E F A C E .

The present volume consists principally of articles selected from the "Local Notes and Queries" columns of the *Leeds Mercury Weekly Supplement*. These contributions have been appearing during the past two years, and have added much valuable information to our previous acquaintance with the habits, customs, pursuits, sentiments, and surroundings of our forefathers.

Having been favoured with several most interesting original contributions, I have as yet used but a small proportion of the articles in "Local Notes and Queries," and it is my intention, should the present venture meet with the approval of my subscribers and the public, to issue another volume of "Old Yorkshire" in the autumn of the present year, and subsequently, a volume on the first day of March in each year. Each of these issues will contain choice selections from the *Mercury Supplement*, together with original contributions; and the series, will it is hoped, be a worthy addition to the history of our ancient county, and tend to save from perishing much that is curious, valuable, and interesting.

In order to make the successive volumes of "Old Yorkshire" as interesting as possible, I shall be glad to receive MSS. and other communications, also gifts or loans of wood and steel engravings, as well as suggestions from all who feel interested in the project.

My apology for undertaking the task of editing the work is to be found in the fact that repeated representations have been made to me

that something should be done to give the valuable "Notes" which were appearing weekly, more permanence than they could possibly obtain in a newspaper.

I am wishful to make the work a depository for matters of interest relating to the County, and now that a taste for Archæology is becoming more general, I trust the successive volumes of "Old Yorkshire" may be taken advantage of by antiquaries and others, to place on record any remains of antiquity existing in their own immediate localities, or some of those numerous discoveries in Topographical and Archæological subjects which are made from year to year, and from want of being published are lost to the world for ever.

I am anxious to see literature of this class published at such a price as to bring it within the reach of the artisan class (which has not hitherto been the case) and it is a source of great satisfaction to me that the present volume will find its way into the homes of upwards of two hundred of my fellow-townsmen, nearly all of whom belong to the class named. In this way it is hoped they will become acquainted with the history of that part of England with which they are connected by birth or residence.

To those who have in any way assisted in the bringing out of the present volume, as well as to all the subscribers, I beg to express my most earnest and sincere thanks. More especially would I desire to thank the following gentlemen for their loan of engravings:—The Rev. C. E. Camidge, M.A., Thirsk; Llewellyn Jewitt, Esq., F.S.A., of Derby; Messrs. Thomas Harrison & Son, of Bingley; and Mr. Abraham Holroyd, of Eldwick, Bingley.

In conclusion, I would say that my labour in connection with this book has been mainly that of collating, arranging, and classifying what has been written by more competent hands, to whom belongs such merit as the book possesses. Whenever practicable, I have given the name of the contributor.

W. S.

OSBORNE HOUSE,

MORLEY, NEAR LEEDS, *April*, 1881.



INTRODUCTION.

A book about Old Yorkshire is sure to be welcome, especially to Yorkshiremen who have wandered far away from the old sod. I have found such men all over these States; they think of Yorkshire with the pride your Scot feels for Scotland; will talk by the day about the grand old county; bring forth pictures of their own town or countryside that were hidden away in their hearts, and dwell on them with the most tender and moving interest.

I was wandering through a pretty vale in Wisconsin one warm summer's day and stopped at a farm for a drink of milk. It turned out that the farmer was a Yorkshireman from that same Rayingham where the schoolmaster lived whose rhymes about all the kings have been printed in the *Mercury*. He had been away from the place more than thirty years, but it seemed still so near and dear to him that I was fain to send down to my library for Poulson's Holderness, and then, though it was in the very heart of harvest, and he had six weeks of time to read, he would sit up until two o'clock in the morning, poring over those very stupid volumes with endless delight. I lent my "Craven" to another Yorkshireman from Burnsall, who lingered over it lovingly for the best part of a year, and then it went to Milwaukee to a working man from Hartshead, who nourishes the same sweet passion for the old land, and there it stays still, to my own pure pleasure as well as that of my friend, so, if ever I take to tramping, as so many thousands do over here, to our grief and shame, I shall just make out where they live who come from Yorkshire, and then I have no doubt about getting quite a

royal welcome, all the way from Eastport in Maine, to San Jose in California, just for talking in the old dialect, and telling stories of the queer old life.

I think such books must always be welcome too, both at home and abroad, in the square of their simplicity and freedom from the ponderous and learned dulness of the days when such things must be printed in quartos and folios, and sold for ever so many pounds. Dear old Tommy Gent tried the more popular method 150 years ago, so far, at least, as form and cheapness went, and though he mingles many things absurd and grotesque, through better work, there is such a quaint charm in what he has done, together with such a wealth of gossip about everything that takes his fancy, that, while the poor old fellow had hard work to make both ends meet, no books of the kind now touching Yorkshire are more highly prized, or have risen so in value, in proportion to their original cost. And so it must be with all those books which are well and faithfully done. It is cold comfort, I suppose, to tell those who adventure on them, usually to their loss, that if they could only live a hundred years, the adventure would pay splendidly ; it is not cold comfort to tell them, if they care at all to be remembered in a hundred years, that there is no surer way to such a purpose, than to print a sterling book about their village or town ; not a mere hash of all that has been said about the place from Camden down, but a genuine bit of work which will contain a picture of the antique life, complete in itself, and then connected as well with the vast tides of life which bear on the nation from age to age, and are felt in every corner and cranny, as the tides which rise and fall at the foot of my street find the obscurest little bays about Long Island, and are felt within the shells of the oysters that are making haste to be served at our tables—and how good the “blue points” are, to be sure ! Such books are needed also to awaken an interest much wider and deeper than anything we can see so far, and nowhere more surely than in our fine old county.

“Where did Ralph Thoresby live ?” I said to a man who kept a shop in Kirkgate, Leeds, nine years ago, as we stood chatting about the town ; “he must have lived very near you, pray point out the house.” “Thoresby, Thoresby,” he answered slowly, “I declare I don’t know. I have kept shop in Kirkgate almost thirty years, and remember

all the men of any account, but there has been no Ralph Thoresby among them. Do you remember what line he was in, sir?" I believe I said he was in oil cake at one time, and then got me speedily away. Such a man is but the instance of the utter ignorance and indifference of Yorkshiremen to everything touching Old Yorkshire until within these few years. All the castles and abbeys that were knocked to pieces by Cromwell, the most of those you would meet could tell you forty years ago. They were quite sure about Ilkley; that Bolton Abbey stood a siege from him, and that the drumsticks were somewhere round he had used before he took to his guns. Yet those who cling to the soil cherish first that touch of dream-like romance, away down in their hearts, to which the enchantment of the past is most welcome. Those who hover still about Towtonfield can show you how the wild roses there are blended with white and red, and tell you, also, there are none like them in England. I knew a man some years ago who lived in the town Mr. Dickens has pictured as Eden, at the foot of the State of Illinois; he was raised near the great battle-field, and remembered how old folks in his day told of that vast white sheet of snow that fell through that dire Palm-Sunday, and how mass and evensong were over in Saxton Church before the worshippers were aware that Cockbeck was pouring blood into Wharfe. Hints and touches of tradition like these, however they may have been twisted out of true, show how close the common heart sleeps to the old haunts of history and romance. The peasants are shy of telling such tales to the "quality," but they hold on to them all the same, and send them down. The two Cromwells are one now with them; he of Harry's day had dropped out of their reckoning, and when, in my childhood, the moor-side farmers about Rockgill cursed them "aud Rooamans" for the road they had made, and hidden among the heather, to the overturning of their loads of peat on Blubberhouse Moor, they were very apt to confound the masters of the world with "them papishes" of which you found here and there a family staunch and true, ever since the Reformation. But there is this slumbering love for the old time everywhere among the people, and it only needs to be waked up and informed, to kindle in them thoughts and feelings of kin to the finest, and to turn them into conservators of such remains of the ancient time as are left. Nor can I imagine anything better as a means to this end than the column of "Local Notes and Queries" printed in the *Leeds Mercury*, from which this book is in the main gathered. The boys and girls will catch these stores of

anecdote, incident, and information, answer to them if there is any touch in them of a nature above "haver-cake, bacon, and brass;" find how they push back the curtains of the past; start their life along the lines which reach beyond the Conquest, and cover every hill and valley with a braidery of human interest.

In this country we do far better than you do in Yorkshire, by our local history. There are very few towns in the north, certainly, of which such a history has not been written, while New England swarms with them. Some man sets to work in the newer towns and counties of the west, while the "old settlers" are still alive; gathers up the early days to the least item of interest, and prints a volume with pictures of the old home-steads and portraits of the old worthies, together with the descent of their families. It costs perhaps a couple of dollars, perhaps one, and you find it in two-thirds of the log houses you visit. It will be a good stroke of work when that is done in England, and especially in Yorkshire, where the interest is so thick sown and replete with charm. And one can hope that a book like this, so choice in its matter and so helpful to this end, will find an eager and instant welcome, and be one of many devoted to some special locality, or the ingathering of the whole wide life of the county, cast into such a shape and published at such a price as will bring them within the reach of the labourers and artisans, while they are still welcome to those to whom the love of antiquity is like a sixth sense or a second nature.

New York, March 1st, 1881.

ROBERT COLLYER.